



President's Column

W. Bede Mitchell

I write these words within three days of returning home from ALA's largest Annual Conference ever, where LAMA members celebrated our division's fiftieth anniversary with an outstanding President's Program featur-

ing Frances Hesselbein and a great party. I am pleased and proud to be LAMA's fifty-first president, and I look forward to working with you all in getting LAMA's next fifty years off to a great start.

As you may know, LAMA was one of three divisions that celebrated fiftieth anniversaries at the 2007 Annual Conference. The ALA Council approved a resolution from LAMA councilor Sue MacTavish, with a second from long-time LAMA member Charles Kratz, paying tribute to LAMA's fifty years of excellence. The widespread recognition of LAMA's success has kept membership growing and helped the division weather some difficult financial trends. However, many challenges remain for both the division and the profession. To meet those challenges, in 2006 LAMA adopted a strategic plan aimed at solidifying our image as "a welcoming community where aspiring and experienced leaders from all types of libraries, as well as those who support libraries, come together to gain skills in a quest for excellence in library management, administration and leadership." The plan is organized around four key goal areas: providing value to members, expanding and strengthening leadership and management expertise at all levels for all libraries, facilitating professional development opportunities, and ensuring organizational excellence that enables LAMA to achieve the other three goal areas effectively and efficiently. I invite you to examine this blueprint for success at the LAMA web site, www.ala.org/ala/lama/aboutlama/lamamemresource/lamagovernance/LAMA2010StrategicPlan.pdf

The adoption of a strategic plan is only the first step, however, and my primary focus while president will be to help our association fully implement the plan. We need to:

- align our annual budgeting, services, programming (in the broadest sense), and marketing with our strategic priorities;
- involve our members in identifying the steps that will lead to accomplishing our strategic goals;
- communicate and coordinate the activities of our sections, committees, task forces, and discussion groups to make the most effective use of our resources.

We especially need professional support for the work of our units and volunteer members. Without it we cannot act systematically and cohesively. We took a big step in that direction when we hired Kerry Ward to be LAMA's new executive director. Kerry comes to us after serving almost a decade as associate and then executive director of our sister ALA division ALTA, and he has several years of experience as an association executive director outside the library field. He is ideally suited for his new job, and I know you will enjoy working with him. Among the many priorities we will throw at him will be working with the Executive Committee and myself to effectively communicate with members and involve you in the strategic plan implementation process.

My presidential theme this year also is aimed at increasing membership involvement in developing strategic initiatives to benefit LAMA. Taking a cue from our fiftieth anniversary, and with many apologies to songwriter Paul Simon, I have adopted the theme "Fifty Ways to Lead Your LAMA." I will be encouraging members to submit suggestions for new member services, methods for improving existing member services, or means for generating new revenue streams for the division. Obviously, if we can offer you programs and services that you want and are willing to support through membership or registration fees, then we can grow our budget and provide seed money for more new offerings you want. Perhaps even before this column appears in *LA&M*, I will announce some incentives for you to propose suggestions, so be watching the LAMA electronic discussion lists and Web site.

You may have noticed the frequent references to leadership in this column so far. LAMA's envisioned future, as stated in the strategic plan, is that "LAMA will be the foremost organization developing present and future leaders in library and information services." We

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are aggressively pursuing initiatives for serving members who wish to become leaders, whether they plan to be managers or not. This emphasis has led many to question whether our name adequately describes us. The name "Library Administration and Management Association" connotes for many a division aimed at library directors or others whose career paths are heading in that direction. When then-president Andrea Lapsley and I met with several dozen Spectrum Scholars at the Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., we were struck by the fact that the majority of these new librarians had that perception of LAMA. Therefore it has been suggested we consider incorporating the word "leadership" into our name. If the membership likes the idea, we could consider adding the word, inserting it in place of another word, or even starting from scratch. I am pleased that Ernie DiMattia will chair a task force, consisting of past-executive direc-

tor Lorraine Olley, Maureen Sullivan, and Paul Anderson, that will manage a process for members to consider and discuss this possibility. Should there appear to be sufficient interest, we could develop a name change resolution to be brought to a vote. Please respond to the task force's invitations with your ideas and suggestions so we can assess the level of member interest.

Let me close by thanking everyone who volunteered to serve in some LAMA capacity this year. If you volunteered but did not get appointed, please continue to let us know of your interest and we will do the best we can to get you involved in LAMA affairs. I also would like to express my appreciation to past-president Andrea Lapsley for doing such a wonderful job on our behalf, and to Fred Reuland in the LAMA office for doing all he could to keep the division afloat during the half year we were without an executive director. Now on to the next fifty years!

contribute. I will monitor it and place queries on your behalf, but unless you, dear readers, take ownership of the blog, it will become a void.

Finally, let me call your attention to the other contributors in this issue: Darren Sweeper's installment of our own ChangeMasters feature looks at the career of Howard McGinn; Taecock Kim and Paula Pompa present a practi-

cal case study on the operation of an automated retrieval system; and our columnists—John Lubans, Bonnie Osif, and Julie Todaro—do their usual superb job.

Now, I'm ready to log off my computer, and if something goes awry, I wouldn't mind chatting again with my new friend in Sri Lanka.