



### President's Column

Virginia Steel

I recently had the honor of serving as a panelist on a Web cast sponsored by the American Distance Education Consortium that focused on the topic of digital libraries. Peter Young, director of the National Agricultural Library, and David Seaman,

executive director of the Digital Library Federation, were the other speakers. As the moderator asked us questions and we responded, I couldn't help but notice how many of our answers included comments about the need for multiple collaborations and partnerships. This emphasis caused me to reflect again on the fact that very little of what we do as library managers and leaders is done in isolation. We work in increasingly complex organizations that often have cooperative arrangements with other local libraries as well as memberships in regional, national, and even international consortia and associations. Although my library school training didn't stress the need to be able to work effectively with others, it has certainly been clear to me from the beginning of my career that the most successful administrators are those who have excellent people skills and can collaborate with others. They must also be able to understand how their organization fits into the big picture of the entire information industry and how to position the organization so that it continues to thrive despite new kinds of competition (for instance, Google).

We all know that the pace of change in the library world continues to be relentless, and the list of areas affected by change is long. Among the most significant trends are the:

- technological changes that have required libraries to modify workflows and processes for selecting, acquiring, managing, and preserving content;
- changes in the expectations our users have for quick and constant access to information regardless of location;
- demand for expert assistance available either on-site in a library or remotely; and
- demand for library buildings that are well equipped with up-to-date technology and spaces that allow users to work in groups.

On an individual level, one of the benefits LAMA membership offers is the opportunity to meet librarians, library workers, and others who are part of our library world and to develop collaborations on projects or topics of interest. These can grow out of conversations in section committees and discussion groups, or they can happen as a result of people getting to know one another and realizing that they face similar challenges.

On a larger association level, LAMA has a long-established tradition of collaboration with other associations. One of the most prominent traditions is the Library Building Awards Program jointly sponsored by LAMA and the American Institute of Architects that "encourages excellence in the architectural design and planning of libraries." Another award program sponsored by H. W. Wilson and LAMA is the John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award that "honors outstanding library public relations, whether a summer reading program, a year-long centennial celebration, fundraising for a new college library, an awareness campaign or an innovative partnership in the community." This award has been in place since 1946. In addition to these, there are numerous other cooperative activities in which LAMA participates and works with other divisions within ALA including the Leaders of the Pack program that involved NMRT, LSSIRT, ALA's Office of Diversity, and the Council of LAMA Affiliates. In a different vein, in recent years LAMA joined forces with PLA and ASCLA to create the Certified Public Library Administrator Program. A task force has just been appointed to develop plans for offering LAMA courses and institutes that will enable public library managers to enhance their skills in the required proficiency areas.

As LAMA looks to the future and begins to prepare a new strategic plan, I expect that we will continue to actively engage other organizations in the development of new programs to support and recognize LAMA members. As I write this column, discussions are underway about the possibility of creating a new type of library facility award, and we have begun exploring potential collaboration on further development of our continuing education offerings in the area of leadership development. We have liaisons in place to represent LAMA in other ALA committees and task forces, and we will be alert to any new ideas for ways in which we can combine forces and build on our strengths.

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Today, Turock, who retired sixteen months ago after twenty-three years at Rutgers, serves on the board of the American Library in Paris and is still involved in a number of projects as a member of the Board of Visitors of Johns Hopkins Medicine (Maryland) and the boards of the Trejo-Foster Foundation for Hispanic Library Education (Arizona) and Keystone College (Pennsylvania). She also chairs the advisory council of the Rutgers School from which she retired, where she still heads dissertation committees. In ALA, she is a member of President Carol Brey-Casiano's Advisory Committee and continues as a founding member and past chair of the Spectrum Advisory Committee and the Curley Lecture Committee. When asked whom she sees on the horizon as upcoming women

leaders within the profession, she lists Camila Alire, Leslie Burger, Rhea Lawson, Sally Reed, and Patty Wong.

On a final note, Turock adds, "The demographic bal- lasts of our country are shifting, even as our professional moorings remain static. The need to recruit and retain a diverse workforce continues to be desperate. At the same time the literature repeatedly cites data that show women have made strides in reaching leadership positions in the past two decades. But none of these figures reflect women in leadership ranks in proportion to their numbers in the profession. The conclusion that in the future more women and minorities will enter leadership positions overlooks the necessity to root out the discrimination that is still preva- lent in our profession. That mission is not yet complete."

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If you have any suggestions about ways in which we can partner with other groups, I am eager to hear them. One of the facts that govern our existence these days is that there is far more to do than we can afford to do, so the best way to make progress in some areas will be to work with others.

If we are successful in doing this, our programs will expand and our value to members will increase. I hope you'll be on the lookout for new opportunities that will benefit LAMA!

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