



Editor's Keyboard

Marta Mestrovic Deyrup

In many ways, this issue is a wake-up call to look at the way our profession is responding to the younger generation, both as consumers of our services and as employees. This topic, which has been discussed extensively of late in the library press, the general educational community, and within LAMA itself, poses a dilemma for any bureaucratic organization. How can our libraries, which are generally conservative in their orientation, and which focus as much on the preservation of knowledge as on its creation, adapt to technological developments that are so far-reaching and so fast-moving? How can a graying profession attract younger individuals and mentor them into higher levels of management?

Richard T. Sweeney, university librarian at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, has spent several years researching the Millennial generation (born 1982–2000), as described in his paper. He has come to the conclusion that this generation, because of its lifelong engagement with electronic media, uses information in profoundly different ways than any of the preceding generations. Sweeney proposes a radical restructuring of the library as an institution. Some of these changes have to do with the library as a place—creating new physical structures that can be easily altered to support multiple uses. Others rely on a very different conceptual model of access to information. Still others require that library administrators take on the mindset of their younger patrons in developing services and if not, to get out of the way and let Millennial Generation employees do it themselves.

Pixey Anne Mosley, director of access services at Texas A&M University Libraries, focuses on the sometimes unsuccessful integration of Generation Xers into the library workforce. She cites, among other sources, an excellent article written by columnist Bonnie Osif, "Generations in the Workplace," which appeared in the Fall 2003 issue of *LA&M*. Readers may want to refer back to it in thinking about this issue. Mosley asks whether current management practices are distancing these librarians (born 1966–1981) from their organizations. Mosley sees Gen X as being willing to risk, to experiment, to value nonhierarchical management styles—and to be perfectly willing to move on if it is not satisfied. She notes, "Generation Xers are not afraid to walk away from a job that is not living up to their

expectations. However, this is something the librarianship profession cannot afford. Conforming or not, Generation X is the future of the profession and is already making inroads into middle management with varying degrees of success." Mosley believes that current library leaders have to acknowledge both the strengths and weaknesses of this generation and commit themselves to creating a smooth transition of leadership.

Jeanne Cross, digital learning librarian at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, comes at this topic in a slightly different way. She reports on the results of a survey, commissioned by the LAMA Education Committee, that looked at opportunities for internships in library administration. Not surprisingly she found that although all library schools provided internship experiences as a kind of practicum, very few offered genuine training in library administration. This is also a goal that LAMA will be looking at in the upcoming year.

Gisela Von Dran, the director of the Library and Information Science Program at Syracuse's School of Information Studies, has based her article upon a course she team-teaches with Ray Von Dran. This article is particularly valuable for individuals who want to get a sense of current management practices and how they have evolved over time. Von Dran provides an overview of fifty years of management development theory and its relevance to transformational leadership, a management style that she believes is the most relevant to today's libraries, which are themselves in transition. Von Dran's synthesis of the literature is accompanied by an exploration of ways in which transformational leadership works best. She notes, "Transformational leaders use empowerment to develop individuals so they can let go of their fears of failure and take on increased responsibilities. Empowerment is a long-term process that results from encouragement, motivation, the removal of barriers from job performance, trust and most importantly, patience." Her article is particularly timely because it is cross-generational—it looks at all managers as being able to develop a skill set that motivates and encourages their employees and leads to the growth of all the members of an organization. This article can be read

continued on next page

Marta Mestrovic Deyrup (deyrupe@shu.edu) is Associate Professor/Librarian II at Seton Hall University Libraries, South Orange, New Jersey.

President's Column *continued from page 162*

valuable. For LAMA, this means giving one's time to support leadership development opportunities, programs, and networking. It means being a mentor as well as having a mentor. In the future, I hope that you will be willing to not only join LAMA but also to become active participants in the development of the next generation of library leaders.

References

1. Rosabeth Moss Kanter. *Confidence: How Winning Streaks and Losing Streaks Begin and End* (New York: Crown Business, 2004), 325.
2. *Ibid.*, 329.

Editor's Keyboard *continued from page 163*

in tandem with John Lubans's column, which examines coaching through the prism of a case study of the Chamber Sinfonia Orchestra of the Manhattan School of Music. The orchestra functions as a self-managed group of musicians, without the direction of a conductor. Lubans writes of this experiment, "Telling someone they are *empowered* is not the same as guiding them to genuine empowerment. A

self-led team of smart and dedicated people can be more effective than the same group led by a boss. Achieving a self-directed staff takes more than desire—guidance is essential to move from concept to achievement."

I hope that you will take away new ideas from the articles in this issue—some of which are radical, others practical—all of which are thought-provoking.

ALA Fundamentals Series

Fundamentals of Library Supervision

Joan Giesecke and Beth McNeil



Guiding supervisors through the intricate process of managing others, this comprehensive handbook addresses the fundamental issues facing new managers. It also serves as a welcome refresher and reference for experienced managers facing new challenges in the complex and changing environments in their libraries.

- *Specific strategies for brand-new supervisory staff*
- *Tips for encouraging a positive work ethic, maintaining productivity, and building teamwork*
- *Proven advice on practical supervisory issues like hiring, firing, interviewing, and training*
- *Policies and procedures that maintain fairness while addressing potential legal landmines*

Price: \$42.00
ALA Member Price: \$37.80
176 pages, 6 x 9", Softcover
ISBN: 0-8389-0895-0
© 2005

phone: 866-746-7252 fax: 770-280-4155 online: www.alastore.ala.org

