Editor's Keyboard

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This issue grew out of a conversation I had during 2005 Midwinter in Boston with Bob Moran, library consultant and former editor of *LA&M*. Bob half-jokingly told me that one of the things he had excelled in during his years as a library director was running a meeting and getting participants to reach a consensus in a timely fashion. As all of us know, meetings are the lynchpin to making things happen in an organization, yet they are often ineffectual, frustrating events for all those involved. Part of the reason for this is that although they seem simple to plan and coordinate, meetings are actually quite difficult to run. "Bob," I immediately replied, "share your experience with *LA&M* readers."

Moran took up the challenge and has written "Meetings: The Bane of the Workplace—It Doesn't Have To Be So," an excellent primer on the subject. Bob focuses to a large extent on the dynamics that involve human interaction. He notes that, "Meetings are not merely discussions of work-related issues. They are small group interactions with all the dynamics of small groups. Behavior is determined by much more than an interest in a solution to the problem before the group. Since these dynamics affect both meeting process and outcomes, they need to be understood." Elinor Folger Foster, university librarian at the University of North Carolina, Pembroke, also draws upon her extensive knowledge of library organizational structures in her article, "Staff + Committees = Added Value," to provide an interesting and lively overview of how to successfully organize committee work.

I took away from this conversation with Bob—and with other writers in this issue—how easy it is overlook or brush aside the skills that we have acquired over the course of our working careers. This "toolkit" defines our success as library administrators as much as our interaction with the users of our services. It is unfortunate that this is often overlooked in discussions about professional librarianship and the training younger librarians need in order to be successful.

Richard McKay, director of the San Jacinto College South Campus Library, Houston, Texas, has drawn on his years of experience in developing library staff in his article, "Inspired Hiring: Tools for Success in Interviewing and Hiring Library Staff." McKay takes the reader step-by-step through the hiring process and provides excellent advice on how to select candidates who will fit into the organization. In likewise fashion, Irene Herold, director of Mason Library, Keene (N.H.) State College, addresses the practical aspects of running a public lecture series program in "Planning and Executing an Annual Library Lecture." The author had no prior experience in running such an event and is willing to share with readers the trial-and-error method she used to develop this program into a high-profile asset for the library. One of the things that Herold learned was that in an academic environment, "students did not want to attend a night lecture, which they perceived as their social time, and faculty could not bring their class if the lecture was held at night. Having the lecture right before the dinner hour and after most classes for the day were concluded provided a significant boost in student attendance." Though perhaps a truism, such an observation could not have been made without the willingness of the author to keep experimenting until she found out what worked and didn't work for her audience, an approach from which we could probably all benefit.

One of the things that struck me in my conversations with several of the authors is how an individual may need to develop a skill set that is used only once or twice in his or her career. This frequently is the case with large, often costly and time-consuming projects. How many times have we wished that we had known earlier what we learned only after an assignment came to completion. One such project is a library building expansion. Michael Esmay, an architect in the New York metropolitan area, has carefully considered the role the public library director should play in such an expansion and provides practical advice on handling such a project. Some of the topics he addresses are: "How do library expansions end up being so large (and costly)?" "What is involved in reaching consensus and getting to yes?" and "How do you keep the process on track and get a successful library expansion?" He writes:

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form. Continuing to support its print publication is decreasing LAMA's financial ability to support new initiatives to strengthen services and attract new members. To continue to provide timely, practical advice to members and to meet the standard of delivering value at a reasonable cost, plans are underway to convert *LA&M* to an electronic journal. The process will start with making past issues available online and progress to creating a new form of *LA&M* that combines the best of print with the flexibility of electronic delivery. As one of the LAMA members discussing this transition noted, we cannot ask the users of our libraries to accept e-journals if we are unwilling to transform our professional literature as well.

As you read this issue of *LA&M,* enjoy the practical advice it contains about many activities that help translate strategy into action—running meetings, interviewing and hiring people, and planning a library lecture. Also consider how an online form of *LA&M* could provide articles and theme issues, an online archive to use at the point of need, and, better still, new ways of delivering content that increase networking and allow for the exchange of ideas between the readership and the authors. I personally cannot wait.

References

1. Donald E. Riggs, "Plan or Be Planned for: The Growing Significance of Strategic Planning," *College and Research Libraries* 58, no. 5 (1997): 400.
2. John M. Bryson, *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement,* 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 8.
3. Ibid., 63.

On the whole, the public's usage of the library helps to define the needs that should be met with the library expansion. Every library I have worked with has had different usage patterns. . . . However, usage patterns can only tell part of the story. Sometimes there are areas in a library that are underused because they are badly laid out or inaccessible. A library expansion gives the library administrator a chance to adjust the relationships within the library to best serve the needs of the library population.

Lastly, this issue features, as part of our ChangeMasters series, a profile of Hannelore Rader. Author Cheryl McCain, library instruction coordinator at the University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, has provided a wonderful overview of Rader's career, in particular Rader's ability to look at a situation and then find a way to make things happened—advice that is applicable to all of us, in whatever stage of our career. McCain asks:

What about the willingness of leaders to take risks? To this question Rader responds, "You have to have ideas and visions for the future. I think a good leader has to have that and then find ways to make it happen." For Rader, making things happen is partly accomplished by being assertive. "That is where your pushiness and your consistency and your strength come in," she says, "because you have to find ways to get the support and the funding to do all of those things."

These remarks serve well to sum up this issue.