



President's Column

Molly Raphael

Changing the name of our division to the Library Leadership and Management Association—now clearly showing our commitment to *leadership* as well as management—has made me think a lot lately about how leaders develop. I hope that what I have to say in this column will make you think about your own experiences with leadership and also stimulate conversations around the topic at your workplace.

I was reminded of the impact of early experiences in life on leadership development when we recently recruited for a senior leadership position. One candidate responded to a question about management and leadership style by talking about how being involved in team sports for so many years made her identify most with Robert K. Greenleaf's "servant as leader" style. The observation made me think about the many ways we have opportunities to try our hand at leading long before we even think about what we want to be. As we go through the first twenty-plus years of our lives, we find ways of leading and testing out how effective we might be. Opportunities are everywhere even though we may not recognize that we are building leadership skills and talents for the future.

A few decades ago, we saw many books and journal articles about leadership, most of which were in non-library publications. The American Library Association (ALA) and its divisions paid some attention to leadership, but I think it would be fair to say that we talked about and developed programs more around *management* rather than *leadership* topics.

More recently, it seems as if there has been an explosion of interest in leadership issues. There are so many resources now that it is difficult to sort them out. Organizations such as the Center for Creative Leadership (which was founded in 1970) have seen their businesses expand into many different markets, including government and nonprofit organizations. Programs like those offered by Harvard's Kennedy School and other academic institutions are available across the country. Many professional and trade associations offer leadership development programs and seminars such as the

National League of Cities. Leadership programs at the local level, such as Leadership Portland in my own city, build understanding of local issues facing local communities and draw leaders from all types of backgrounds. Virtually all of these programs result in lifelong networks that aid participants for years to come.

If you take a look at ALA offerings now, you will find large numbers of programs directed at leadership development. We see this in ALA Annual Conference programs, at division conferences such as those held by the Public Library Association (PLA) and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), and in the many publications ALA produces. In addition, divisions such as PLA and ACRL offer competitive grants to members participating in some of the most successful external leadership programs. Our ALA affiliates and chapters also have stepped forward, some offering remarkable leadership development programs such as the Urban Libraries Council's Executive Leadership Institute.

So why, you may ask, did LLAMA's leadership (and membership) decide that we need to do more? What can we add to the wealth of offerings for so many different leadership development opportunities? At LLAMA, we are committed to not reinventing the wheel. We do not want to duplicate programs and hope to find a way to help support not only what many divisions and units within ALA are doing now but also fill gaps where needed. We will not be trying to do this alone but rather in partnership with other ALA and external entities. We hope to have someone from the next cohort of ALA's Emerging Leaders take on the task of helping us take a big look at what is already being offered across ALA. We also want to involve the LLAMA membership in helping us identify and connect members to the many leadership development opportunities.

Finally, by adding the word *leadership* to our name, we have made a strong statement that leadership is as important to us as the many management areas in libraries represented by the LLAMA sections. We hope to provide a "home" division for not only members already in leadership positions but also those who may—though they may not be sure—be thinking leadership is part of the future they envision.

We will be developing ways to make it easy for you to provide input. Together we can build a future for LLAMA:

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- where value to our members truly drives decisions;
- where leaders and managers at all levels can strengthen their expertise;
- where professional development opportunities enhance leadership and management; and
- where we are known as the preeminent professional organization that develops and supports library leaders and managers.

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In reading through the years, it would seem that the journal has more than met those goals and has served the membership well in this regard. Our columnists are among the most popular with readers. From past issues of *LA&M*, I note that by the mid-1990s, Bonnie Osif had begun contributing Manager's Bookshelf and, soon after, Julie Todaro was on board with her column The Truth Is Out There, both of which continue today. Earlier this decade, Bob Moran served a term as editor of *LA&M* and has also become a regular contributor.

There was an emphasis, particularly in the early years, on issues built around a theme.² This has been continued through the years, most recently with the fall 2007 special section "International Perspectives on Library Management" as well as the ongoing ChangeMasters series.

In keeping with this historical approach, the spring 2009 issue of *LL&M* will have the theme of leadership in libraries, and will present the best and latest in trends from the field in a forward-looking approach to leadership. Watch for it.

References

1. John Berry, "From the LAMA Executive Director," *Library Administration & Management* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1987): 2.
2. Charles Lowry, "Themes of Future Issues," *Library Administration & Management* 4, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 126.