



## President's Message

Janine Golden

Hello Everyone, I am both honored and excited to be working with you in LLAMA and getting to know many more of you this upcoming year. If you are new to LLAMA, I welcome you. If you renew your membership annually as I do, it's good to be working with you in this capacity for the 2011-2012 year. For those of you who may have been browsing online and just happened upon this particular issue of LL&M, read more about LLAMA at <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/llama/index.cfm>.

Each year as I continue my membership in both ALA as well as a few other divisions, I cannot help but wonder what return I'm receiving for my money. As incoming president of LLAMA I've given some thought about what value we as LLAMA members receive by joining this particular division. The cause for me to ponder this most recently stems from being asked this question by a few of the Spectrum Scholars while I served as a LLAMA representative at the Spectrum Professions Option Fair in New Orleans.

As I researched materials for this piece, I continually ran across phrases that refer to "LLAMA's value to members" in terms of what LLAMA does, what LLAMA can, and what LLAMA should be doing for its members. However, in reality as a member, am I not considered as a part of LLAMA that can and should be doing things for its members? Is not the sum of an organization its collective membership?

Esoteric thinking perhaps, but my point is this... if LLAMA is providing value, then as a member of LLAMA, am I not actually responsible for contributing to providing this value? If I'm not, who is?

I've never thought about membership value in these terms. Yes, the realization is that LLAMA does provide value to the membership by providing opportunities for networking; leadership and management training through continuing education programs and webinars; and most certainly the production and access to Library Leadership and Management Journal. But, what piece of this value do I personally provide? In fact, what value do we all and can we all provide within and to our own selves as members? How do and can we as LLAMA members benefit each other the most?

Each year LLAMA has a particular focus generated by the incoming President. You may remember a few highlights in the past years have targeted change, strategic planning, leading LLAMA, and unexpected leadership.

As President, I have chosen to direct my efforts this year on the theme of fostering career development through LLAMA. Involving current as well as future leaders, this theme encompasses the concept of helping to foster career leadership development through opportunities provided through LLAMA such as networking, continuing education, coaching, and mentoring.

I chose to focus on this area because I believe it is here that LLAMA members can best provide value to one another through direct involvement. For the many years that I have been positioned in library administration I have repeatedly seen that each of us has to take charge of our own learning and career development.

As we know, change in our organizations and in the knowledge and skills we need to perform our jobs require us to keep learning in order to keep up with the rapid growth. Yet without a doubt, in today's times the responsibility for learning and for the development of career paths is up to each individual.

I have no difficulty understanding and accepting this responsibility for my own career development. However, throughout most of my working life, I was concerned with focusing entirely on my own career. It has been only within the past eight years that I began to pay attention to how others in our profession develop their leadership skills and how we as leaders/managers are assisting those new to the profession foster their own growth. It was actually when LLAMA Past President Andrea Lapsley offered me the opportunity to work with a terrific committee in order to create LLAMA's successful mentoring program that I became an active participant. This began my role of helping to assist new leaders and managers within LLAMA to learn from the expertise of our more experienced members. This is what I perceive as LLAMA value.

All things considered, what I have discovered through various conversations is that there are many of us who have in the past, considered jumping to another organization for career advancement. However the question posed now is whether we still dare to

think in these terms today. I've also found that there are those of us who are currently employed in libraries, administration or otherwise, wondering if in today's financial times, our positions are secure. And last but not least, we are all constantly reminded of the number of newcomers to the library profession who are entering into the field at a time of incredible change. What I've learned is that many of us, educators and practitioners alike, are questioning whether these newly graduated students will have a job. My resulting question here is can we as LLAMA members provide the support, the value, to one another to assist with each other's career development?

Consider your interest in fostering your own career development by asking yourself the following questions:

- Where am I in my career?
- Where would I like to be?
- Am I playing a role or writing the script?
- How could I take more control of my situation?
- What is my vision and how can I start making it happen?
- What can I change about my setting, scenery, costumes or focus?
- Have I made room for new productions or new opportunities?<sup>1</sup>

Now, consider the following:

- Why am I a LLAMA member?
- Do I know what others are bringing to LLAMA?
- What do I personally bring to the LLAMA table?
- What do I want to bring to this table?

I wonder if we actually realize how much value we can contribute to others in our profession. I also wonder how much of a commitment we are willing to make.

The challenge facing us this year is to accept the realization that as LLAMA members, collectively we must create and provide some of our own value to ourselves and to each other for this 2011-2012 year. How? Since many non-members believe that they must be an administrator to be involved with LLAMA, consider sharing information about LLAMA and bringing into the division a new non-member; offer your expertise as a mentor or become a mentee in our Mentoring Program; provide ideas for programming and webinars; volunteer on a committee; take advantage of our division's networking

opportunities; reach out to current MLS students, who incidentally receive a reduced rate; and finally reach out to a member of the New Members Round Table and introduce yourself as a LLAMA member.

This upcoming year we are in the process of creating a new three-year strategic plan for the division. What a perfect time for us to create a solid direction based on the strength of the membership. LLAMA's most important value to its members is its members.

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<sup>1</sup> Katharine Brooks, "Career Wisdom from Bad Movies: Can Watching Bad Movies Lead to a Fulfilling Career?" *Psychology Today* 19 March 2009. Accessed July 18, 2011 at: <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/career-transitions/200903/career-wisdom-bad-movies>

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