On To-Do Lists Past and Future

Like many of you, dear readers, I keep a daily to-do list. Mine is generally ranked into categories of priority: “Overdue,” “Due Imminently,” and “Due Sooner Than You Realize.” I also create subcategories reflecting the amount of effort that will be required to complete these tasks: “Overwhelming,” “Burdensome,” and “Don’t Fool Yourself. It Will Be More Work Than You Think.” So, for example, the number one task on today’s to-do list is both “Overdue” and “Overwhelming.” This is the most lethal combination. I will not elaborate on the further details (there are ten specific functions listed that must be done in order to complete the bigger task), but the point is that for this day, when I turned over the page on my desk calendar, that heart-stopping task I’m actually working on right now is “finish Volume 22(4) of LA&M!”

For the last four years, there has been some task related to LA&M on my to-do list every single working day. Even in between deadlines, these tasks have never been relegated to any category less than “Due Sooner Than You Realize” and “Don’t Fool Yourself . . . ” In other words, this is the kind of a job in which a person can never get caught up. I’d be lying if I said there weren’t days that I got very sick and tired of LA&M. Even so, it may seem contradictory, but I have to admit that I’ve loved every minute of it, and I’m going to miss this gig.

Diversity is about respecting minorities. We are all minorities in different ways; some are more obvious than others. Patrick Valentine looks at one aspect of diversity that is fairly evident—multilingualism—and discusses ways that the Web can help to cross language barriers. As a member of the ambivalent minority gender in the profession of librarianship, I appreciated Aloha Record and Ravonne Green’s review on the motives of men in library administration (it’s a “guy” thing). Being of a certain age, I also resonated with Chris Long and Rachel Applegate’s article on “bridge generation” librarians and how they keep up with technology trends. Marcy Simons’s interview features insight into Jerry Campbell, a person who, by his own admission, isn’t afraid to “shake things up” in librarianship. To be controversial is, by itself, embracing a kind of minority status, and some people, like Campbell, thrive on it. And finally, because the freedom to be controversial is something that must be guarded, Gary Chafee’s review of the effects of the USA PATRIOT Act is worthy of serious consideration.

As I proceed into my post-editorial future, I look forward to starting in a brand new position as dean of library and media services at Evergreen State College, where I’m sure that my days will be filled with many expansive to-do lists. Sometimes I wonder if I wouldn’t get more things done if I did not invest so much time in making them.