



## President's Column

Molly Raphael

I start my year as your president with a big “thank you” to our membership for giving me the privilege and opportunity to lead our newly renamed division, the Library *Leadership* and Management

Association (LLAMA). Our division draws one of its greatest strengths from the diversity of our membership. We are librarians, architects, HR professionals, fund-raisers, budget and finance experts, paraprofessionals, editors, trainers, consultants, and so much more. Some of us are seasoned—some might say over-seasoned—managers and leaders (my category). Some are aspiring leaders. We come from higher education, public libraries, government and nonprofit organizations, and a variety of other types of libraries and organizations. That diversity is what attracted me to our division more than twenty-five years ago. It is what I still find so invigorating and inspiring today.

I am writing this column having just returned from the ALA Annual Conference. The experience seemed somewhat surreal. Anaheim is the home of Mickey Mouse et al. and that fact was apparent in conference hotels with young visitors wearing mouse ears and excited children arriving everyday. The conference-city sense one normally has of being surrounded by others who are there for ALA programs, exhibits, and committee work seemed to disappear at times. A pedestrian-only, restaurant-and-retail area called Downtown Disney provided the venue for many conference receptions and special events. Some conferees brought families along, and the kids went off for a day at Disneyland while one of the parents attended conference events.

LLAMA's programs were rich and full, attracting good audiences in a highly competitive programming environment. I continue to be grateful for the program-planning skills of our seven sections and many committees. We launched a formal mentoring program, recognized the design of interior library spaces in collaboration with the International Interior Design Association (IIDA), presented libraries with the highly coveted John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Awards sponsored by the H. W. Wilson Company, and provided a wide range of programs to inspire and assist our colleagues in very specific areas of their work.

During my presidential year, I will focus on how we can fulfill our commitment to make leadership as important to our division as management. We already offer members many leadership development opportunities. If we want LLAMA to be the foremost ALA division for leadership development, we must be leaders ourselves in seeing that we develop new offerings where needed, while at the same time identifying and not duplicating programs that exist elsewhere within the larger ALA structure. We also must continue to look outside our profession for leadership development opportunities, as we did in Anaheim with the very successful preconference, “An Inside Look at Leadership,” presented in partnership with the Pacific Institute, and a thought-provoking program for Bede Mitchell's President's Program with David Magellan Horth of the Center for Creative Leadership discussing “Visual and Verbal Literacy—Skills for Contemporary Leadership.”

During the upcoming year, I also want to build on the excellent work that LLAMA has been doing, supporting the many projects, programs, and activities of our division volunteers and staff. I want to strengthen our efforts to attract new members, providing a home division that is recognized for supporting not only current library leaders and managers, but also those who are considering leadership and management positions in their desired futures.

For the past year, I offer special thanks to Bede Mitchell, dean of libraries at Georgia Southern University, and now LLAMA's immediate past president. Under his leadership, I was able to prepare myself to lead LLAMA in the year ahead. Members of the LLAMA board have also been very supportive, and I am deeply grateful. Last but not least, my thanks go to the LLAMA staff, Executive Director Kerry Ward and Marketing Specialist Fred Reuland. Kerry and I learned together, since he was new to LLAMA in July 2007. He was a tremendous help even at the beginning as he always found answers to questions and provided whatever I needed. I know that the entire LLAMA board joins me in thanking the LLAMA staff.

We have an exciting year ahead as we build an even stronger organization. I hope you will share your ideas with me and through the LLAMA website and other opportunities for communicating with us. The volunteer leaders and staff of LLAMA are here to serve you—our members—so be sure to let us know how we can serve you better.

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