

Leadership—what is it? ALA President Leslie Burger has me thinking about it a lot these days. As I write, the LITA Board is in the process of determining who LITA will sponsor in the ALA Emerging Leaders Program. The task is difficult. LITA has many new librarians who have strong potential for leadership. Consequently I feel assured that LITA has a strong future because what is an association, if not its members? So one of the questions the Board asked was what does it mean to be an emerging leader? When has one emerged? Personally, I feel that I am still emerging because there is always more to learn. Lifelong learning, isn't that what librarians are all about?

In preparation for my presidency, I attended an American Society for Association Executives seminar facilitated by Tecker Consultants. They defined four types of influential leadership: servant, visionary, expert, and catalytic. I see all four types of influential leaders within LITA and they are all important. The servant leader provides service to others. In a volunteer organization like LITA, a lot of servant leadership is being exhibited. These are the people who keep the organization humming, making sure we have the programs and education opportunities that make LITA relevant to its members. The most obvious place we see visionary leaders in LITA is at our Top Technology Trends; however, it is not the only place where visionary thinking occurs. LITA members are often cutting-edge, applying new technologies to solve problems or to provide better solutions and services. Visionary leadership is where one sees what the future could look like. LITA programs are filled with expert leaders who share their technical expertise and lead the profession in applying those technologies. However, we also have many expert leaders who have important insights into what the association can be. The catalytic leader brings people together and leverages their capabilities. The LITA Board works with other LITA leadership to ensure that our goals are reached and to bring together all of the LITA offerings to make membership a comprehensive professional benefit.

My challenge as the current LITA President with the ALA Emerging Leaders Program is to ensure that our sponsored member has a meaningful opportunity to become a superb leader both within LITA and within the

profession. In addition to attending the leadership training workshops for all of the emerging leaders, each sponsored person will be appointed to some service role within ALA or one of its units. The LITA Board has elected to have our sponsored emerging leader work closely with the officers, in particular our Vice President/President-elect Mark Beatty, on strategic planning for the next two years. I am hopeful that we will learn a great deal from our emerging leader regarding what new members are seeking out of the organization.

When I think about a good leader, I think about someone who listens, who allows others to think creatively and to take risks, who inspires, who sees the big picture, who can make decisions and make others understand the reasons for a decision, and who communicates well. John Buchan put it this way: "The task of leadership is not to put greatness into people, but to elicit it, for the greatness is there already." My goal this year, in conjunction with, but not limited to, the ALA Emerging Leaders Program, is to grow our new members into future LITA leaders. I have been rewarded in all of my work within LITA to witness rising stars take on exciting roles and projects. I hope everyone reaps the joys of mentoring new professionals at some point in their careers.

In my own leadership role, I take seriously the need to implement LITA's strategic plan. In that vein, the board has created an Assessment and Research Task Force that will make recommendations on gathering assessment data and feedback from members. With the appropriate knowledge base, we can ensure that value is being received. The board has also created a working group consisting of the chairs of the Education Committee, the Regional Institutes Committee, and the Program Planning Committee to make recommendations on our education programs. I have been working with that group to identify new modes of delivering our programs and to ensure that they maintain their relevancy to LITA members. LITA continues to implement new communication technologies to reach out to its members. The LITA Blog has now been up for over a year and the new LITA Wiki is available for use by Interest Groups and others to allow experts to collaborate in the building of topic-specific resources.

Sir John Harvey-Jones framed the question thusly: "How do you know you have won? When the energy is coming the other way and when your people are visibly growing individually and as a group."

I see this happening in LITA. What an energizing and fulfilling sight it is!

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