



LAMS Letters

A Newsletter of NCLA's
Library Administration & Management (LAMS) Section



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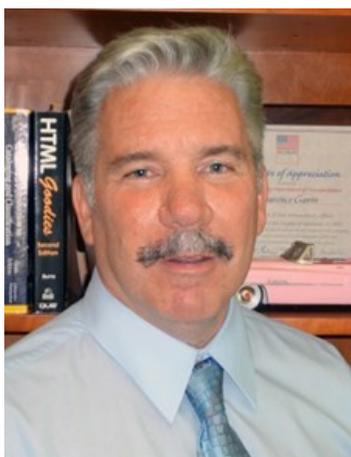
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FROM the CHAIR By Laurence Gavin

On a recent visit with family during the holidays one of my nieces was talking about her college experiences. She is in her third year at Wagner College on Staten Island, New York in the education program and was not sure if she wanted to continue in that direction with her graduate studies. I immediately asked if she had considered librarianship. Her confused look made it obvious the thought had not even occurred to her and before she could answer I began describing the many different types of careers in librarianship. One aspect I focused on was the many opportunities that librarianship offers to be a leader in the library community she was interested in serving. I explained that as a public librarian, I have had leadership roles in different levels of management and in various projects to improve library services and partnerships in the community.

Now I don't know what my niece's decision will be, but after an hour of answering her questions she is certainly better informed about the field of librarianship. Sharing my experiences as a librarian always makes me feel more invigorated and connected to the library community. To help you feel more connected to the NCLA Library Administration and Management Section community, please enjoy the experiences and leadership incites of Suzanne White, Library Director at Catawba County Library System and Katy Kavanagh-Webb, Instructional Design Librarian and Interim Head of the Research and Instructional Services Department at Eastern Carolina University, Joyner Library.

If you wish to share, please send your contribution to lgavin@cumberland.lib.nc.us





Experienced Leader

Old and new at once. I have been working in libraries for 23 years now in a variety of roles--as a processing assistant in Chapel Hill while in grad school and as a Reference Librarian at Neuse Regional Library for a year. I started managing library services at Rowan Public Library working as a supervisor of Reference Services, and then Technical Services, and then finishing up my 19 years there as Manager of Public Services. I am now a Director with Catawba County Library, and have just celebrated my first year anniversary here.

I have had the opportunity to work in several different types of public libraries – municipal, regional, and county, and have had the good fortune to experience such varied roles and work with strong staff, leaders, and community members. I truly know, from experience, that we make each other stronger as we work together.

What I'd share about what I've learned so far? I'd say the biggest thing is that we're in it together—from our library pages and assistants, to our supervisors and managers, to our county colleagues and our communities. It's really important to partner and collaborate at every level we can.

Over the years, I've learned those much needed skills in financial and project management, and human resources development. To enhance strategic vision by scanning the environment for innovation in the library profession and the world at large to see how change and innovation might improve library service in the community, and to spot opportunities to move the library forward.

Leadership, in my experience, has often worked out best for me, and for the library and the communities I've served, when I am doing a lot more listening, and then facilitating, than I am managing.

I'll say that it's about having those conversations to learn what our communities want, and then facilitating the environment, training, support, and funding for library staff to be engaged and take on the roles and projects that they have passion for and will be successful with. It's about opening doors and fostering relationships between the library and all kinds of community groups—and then having staff participation in collaborating with local partners. It's about brainstorming with teams to build stronger advocates for the library.

We, as leaders, share our vision, and make tough informed decisions--and when we are constantly exploring, communicating, and inviting involvement in those processes, the vision will be a stronger, more innovative, and truly shared one.

In my experience, too, I'd have to say that the best ideas aren't usually mine. They are the ideas of an engaged and motivated team for whom I can use my skills and position to empower!

--

Suzanne White





New and Future Leader * Katy Kavanagh-Webb



In my role as Instructional Design Librarian at East Carolina University, I found my voice in “leading from the side.” The position of instructional designer is not often one that is considered a leadership role, and at ECU, that was no different; the newly created job was one that was appropriate for a person who was not long out of library school and did not carry any managerial duties. The basics of the position included the creation of tutorials, curation of ECU’s vast listing of LibGuides, and working to get the library more integrated into Blackboard, the university’s course management system. Although these tasks seem like a job best done as a lone wolf working with only a computer as an aid, my experience has been purposefully just the opposite. I have been lucky to be able to work on cross-departmental technology and training projects that included many stakeholders throughout the library, and in so doing, I found my groove as a leader.

To me, leadership is learning to work with people. First, it is important to find out their expectations, hopes, and desires. As the ID Librarian, I was often called upon to create tutorials for people who had an idea of what they wanted for a finished product, but were not sure how to get there. I took this as my role to lead us as a team through determining the outcomes and landing at different stages of the project without inundating stakeholders with overwhelming technology jargon. A second leadership quality is that of being able to read the person in order to treat them in a way they wish to be treated, otherwise known as emotional intelligence. It is not simply enough to treat someone the way you want to be treated—rather, it is important to listen to the person and learn what makes them tick, then act accordingly. I like to use the same lingo that they do, find out some common interests, and call upon that shared understanding to make comparisons to the work we are doing. Lastly, it is important to make the work enjoyable, or it becomes drudgery. Foster a positive work environment. Market the work and yourself in a way that shows that it will be a success. This can do wonders for your outcome. Being the person who was able to organize a team, create new things, and deliver exciting projects on time was my key to leading from the side.

Another important step for a budding leader is to closely cultivate projects that align with the goals of the institution. Due to my interest and drive in getting Joyner Library more embedded in to the course management system, I worked on many projects that turned out to be important to the library and university as a whole. My success leading these projects led to me being named Interim Head of the Research and Instructional Services Department. I have carried my leadership skills honed in my position as the Instructional Design Librarian, as well as other key tools learned in committee work, to my new position.

From Larry: for me, reading biographies and autobiographies is a favorite pastime. I enjoy learning about the different, yet always somehow similar paths people take which shape who they are and their leadership decisions. In the 1950's, Jane Jacobs toured New York City and fell in love with the diversity of people and structures and what seemed to her like a beautifully choreographed interaction between the two that needed to be preserved. Thirty years earlier, Robert Moses witnessed the same diversity when he toured New York City but saw only filth and chaos in the streets and developed ideas on how to make improvements. In those 30 years Moses had made great changes around the city, but was just starting to focus on improving the very areas of the city Jacobs wanted to preserve.

Anthony Flint's *Wrestling with Moses: how Jane Jacobs took on New York's master builder and transformed the American city* (Random House 2009) details the life of Jane Jacobs, author of *The death and life of great American cities* (Random House 1961) and reluctant but effective community leader in 1960's New York, and her struggle with Robert Moses, considered by many to be a great manipulator of power and politics in New York in the 20th Century. Although not a biography, Flint's narrative about the conflict between these two leaders correlates facts about Jacobs' life and interviews she gave over her life that has not been previously done.

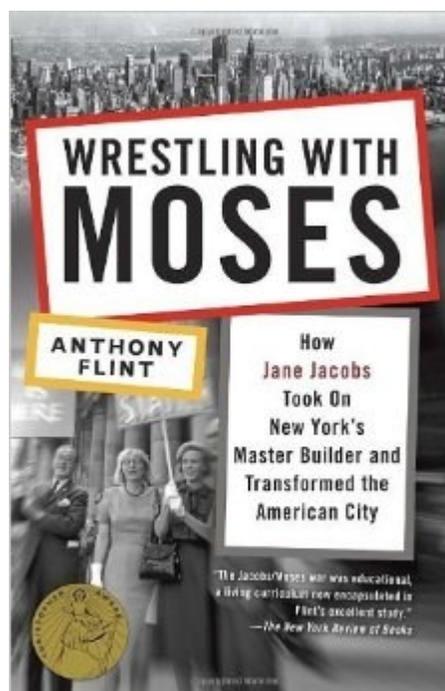
Wrestling with Moses will inspire you to learn more about both these leaders, their similarities and how each in their own way they leveraged the power of community, politics, and the media to lead change.

Flint, Anthony. 2009. *Wrestling with Moses: how Jane Jacobs took on New York's master builder and transformed the American city*. New York: Random House.

See also:

Caro, Robert A. 1975. *The power broker: Robert Moses and the fall of New York*. New York: Vintage Books.

Jacobs, Jane. 1961. *The death and life of great American cities*.





SAVE THE DATE!!!!

**The 2014 NCLA Leadership Institute is being planned.
The dates will be Oct 30th through Nov. 2nd, 2014.**

Save these dates if you are interested, more information to come shortly!