# President's Column

Colby Mariva Riggs

It is with great pleasure that I bring you greetings as your LITA president. It is an honor to be the LITA president and to follow the very productive term of Tom Wilson. As you know, this column is an opportunity for the president to increase communication with the membership. As LITA president, I plan to concentrate my efforts on continuing to capitalize on the association's many strengths.

Last year at LITA's 2004 Town Meeting at ALA Midwinter Meeting in San Diego, we built on the planning efforts of Tom Wilson. To assist in the development of goals to support LITA's developing vision statement, I gathered additional information for the next planning phase. I asked the Town Meeting's more than eighty attendees to consider these three questions.

1. What do you like about LITA, its organizational structure, and its programs?
2. What services or products does LITA currently offer that you value?
3. What new services or products would increase LITA's value to you?

The attendees gathered at small tables and discussed the three questions. After the discussions, each table shared their answers. Here's what they thought:

1. What do you like about LITA, its organizational structure, and its programs?

   - Easy to become involved
   - Inviting
   - Great networking
   - Forward thinking
   - Lack of bureaucracy
   - Flexibility
   - Enthusiasm of members
   - Encourages discussion
   - Openness to new members
   - Open structure

2. What services or products does LITA currently offer that you value?

   - lita_l
   - Regional institutes
   - Top Tech Trends
   - TER
   - National Forum
   - *ITAL*
   - LITA publications
   - Interest groups
   - Programming
   - Networking with knowledgeable people

3. What new services or products would increase LITA's value to you?

   - Coordination with other divisions
   - Liaison at state levels
   - Mentoring (partnering with NMRT)
   - Leadership in advising libraries
   - Best practices and competencies
   - More standards involvement
   - More access of those not attending conference
   - Webcasts in one-to-two-hour sessions
   - Partnerships with vendors
   - More diversity in the organization
   - Conference reports
   - Use more leading-edge technology
   - More content on the Web site
   - More focus on technical issues
   - Blogging
   - Online newsletter
   - Announcement service
   - Mechanism for sharing information
   - Another electronic discussion list for tech how to's
   - Tech reviews and recommendations
   - Online community support
   - RSS feed on the Web site
   - Stronger voice on technology and policy
   - Semiannual e-mail messages to all LITA members

As you can tell from these comments, LITA provides many valuable services to our members, and to the association at large. However, there are many opportunities for us to do more. To accomplish the goal of expanding our services and setting priorities, we have continued our emphasis on strategic planning activities. Along with Mary Taylor, LITA's executive director, I attended several *ALAAhead* planning sessions last fall. Our participation in these meetings reinforced our commitment to the planning processes we used to draft LITA's goals and strategies for the next five years. This draft plan is scheduled for review by the LITA board during the 2005 ALA Midwinter Meeting. Additionally, LITA's strategic plan will be discussed at the 2005 LITA Town Meeting, also during Midwinter Meeting. We look forward to finalizing our strategic plan by the 2005 ALA Annual Conference. I believe this plan will help us achieve our goals and be used to gauge our successes.

In addition to our strategic planning process, LITA has made great strides in a number of significant areas. The LITA Web Advisory Task Force, chaired by Zoe Stewart Marshall, has been working to "establish policies governing the LITA Web site's content, responsibilities for its management, and an approval process for posting content

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**43.** Norm Parry, *Format Proliferation in Public Libraries,* 2002, ERIC, ED 470035,. Accessed Dec. 27, 2004, http://searcheric.org.

**44.** David M. Levy, *Scrolling Forward: Making Sense of Documents in the Digital Age* (New York: Arcade Pub., 2001).

**45.** About Alan Lomax. Accessed Dec. 27 2004, www.alan -lomax.com/about.html.

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online." They have implemented several process improvements already and will complete their work by the 2005 ALA Annual Conference. This past fall, Michelle Frisque, LITA Web Manager, conducted a survey of our members about the LITA Web site. Michelle and the Web Coordinating Committee are already working on a new look and feel for the LITA Web site based on the survey comments, and the result promises to be phenomenal.

On top of all of the current activities, new vision statement, strategic planning, and the LITA Web site redesign, Mary Taylor and the LITA board worked with a graphic designer to develop a new LITA logo. After much deliberation, the new logo debuted at the 2004 LITA National Forum with great enthusiasm. Many members commented that the new logo expresses the "energy" of LITA and felt the change was terrific.

With your help, LITA had a very successful conference in Orlando. Although there were weather and transportation difficulties, the LITA programs and discussions were of the highest quality, as always. The program and preconference offerings for the upcoming Annual Conference in Chicago promise to be as strong as ever. Don't forget, LITA also offers Regional Institutes throughout the year. Check the LITA Web site to see if there's a Regional Institute scheduled in your area.

LITA held another successful National Forum in fall 2004 in St. Louis, "Ten Years of Connectivity: Libraries, the World Wide Web, and the Next Decade." The three-day educational event included excellent preconferences, general sessions, and more than thirty concurrent sessions. I want to thank the wonderful 2004 LITA National Forum Planning Committee, chaired by Diane Bisom, the presenters, and the LITA office staff who all made this event a great experience. The next LITA National Forum will be held at the San Jose Marriott, San Jose, California, September 29–October 2, 2005. The theme will be "The Ubiquitous Web: Personalization, Portability, and Online Collaboration." Thomas Dowling, chair, and the 2005 LITA National Forum Planning Committee are preparing another "must attend" event.

Next year marks LITA's fortieth anniversary. 2006 will be a year for LITA to celebrate our history, future, and our many accomplishments. We are fortunate to have Lynne Lysiak leading the Fortieth Anniversary Task Force activities. I know we all will enjoy the festivities.

I look forward to working with many of you as we continue to make LITA a wonderful and vibrant association. I encourage you to send me your comments and suggestions to further the goals, services, and activities of LITA.

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