



# Law Library Lights

## From The Editor

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Happy New Year to you, dear reader! The theme of this issue is Management, Leadership, and Career Development.

Whenever I think on this topic, I always think of how, while some of us are of course very interested in the traditional librarianship career development trajectory which ideally culminates in directorship (or the equivalent), there are also many of us who are interested

in developing ourselves professionally without desiring a formal management or leadership role. We might prefer to focus on developing our own expertise without being interested in being promoted to a manager, or we might rather manage projects than people, and, of course, one can certainly be a leader amongst one's peers without necessarily being their boss. I am always interested in learning about the myriad professional interests of my colleagues, the different and often creative directions in which they want to expand their skillsets.

For example, while many (if not most) of my colleagues regularly attend staple conferences like the AALL Annual Meeting, others

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# From the Editor, Continued

recommend branching out a bit to non-law-library-specific conferences or trainings, such as those offered by the Special Libraries Association (SLA), the Association of American Law Schools (AALS), the American Bar Association (ABA), or the American Library Association<sup>1</sup> (ALA). Further off the beaten path, I have heard co-workers rave about opportunities like conferences focused on women in leadership, or workshops addressing implicit bias in the workplace, or certificate programs on facilitation or social media management. They regularly set my mind spinning on all the different directions in which I could take my career and on the many ways I could potentially contribute to my library, institution, and profession, regardless of whether I ever took on a formal managerial role.

In this issue, we have several exciting offerings for our readers. In the President's Column, Emily Florio reminds us of the various ways that we as LLSDC members can take advantage of the opportunities offered by our organization to develop ourselves professionally, including honing our management and leadership skills. Our book reviewer, Savanna Nolan, has brought us a great review of *Ask a Manager: How to Navigate Clueless Colleagues, Lunch-Stealing Bosses, and the Rest of Your Life at Work* by Alison Green, who has been called "the Dear Abby of the work world." In Tech Talk, Jeff Gerhard gives us some outside-the-box ideas on developing our technical credentials when we're not sure where to start. And in our Member Poll<sup>2</sup> for this issue, our friends and colleagues share how they celebrate the New Year (I especially relate to one of our anonymous commenters who added: "Champagne with NYE-themed pajamas and then straight to bed."<sup>3</sup>)

Finally, in this issue we have reprised<sup>4</sup> the Proust Questionnaire originally featured in *Law Library Lights* in [Volume 55, Issue 3](#) (2012).<sup>5</sup> As then-editor Jill Smith explained in her column, "This issue solicited some special perspectives from senior leaders in our profession via a 'Proust questionnaire' (fans of the television show *Inside the Actors Studio* will recognize the format). These questions were designed to showcase both their professional and personal perspectives and give us the opportunity of seeing at least a corner of law librarianship through their eyes." In 2012, the responses of Rick McKinney, Abigail F.E. Ross, Kate Martin, Judy Gaskell, Billie Jo Kaufman, and Leslie Lee were published. This year, we have invited Steve Anderson, Kristina J. Alayan, Emily R. Florio, Pamela Lipscomb, and Joseph W. Thomas to share their answers with us. As I was reading through them, I found that they were not only delightful reads, but also provided valuable insights and inspiration. I hope you will agree! ■

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Hot Tip: If you, like myself, have always wanted to attend the ALA Annual Conference, with its A-list speakers, book signings, widely diverse programming, and gigantic exhibit hall (last year's had a Graphic Novel/Gaming Stage!), then you're in luck! This conference will be held right here in D.C. this June.

<sup>2</sup>Check out our Fall Issue's Editor's Column for some background on this new feature.

<sup>3</sup>Remember, to have your comments published alongside the Member Poll, please provide your name and institution in the optional box on our form.

<sup>4</sup>Rebooted?

<sup>5</sup>That issue won the AALL Excellence in Marketing award for Best Newsletter that year, and I would encourage anyone who is interested to check it out!



# Proust Questionnaire

In this issue we solicited some special perspectives from senior leaders in our profession via a “Proust questionnaire.” These questions were designed to showcase both their professional and personal perspectives and give us the opportunity of seeing at least a corner of law librarianship through their eyes.

## Steve Anderson

Director, Maryland State Law Library & Former AALL President  
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**1** What did you think you wanted to do when you were in college/ what did you major in?

*I really had no solid idea. If you were to have asked me 30 years ago, I probably would have said, “Working in government,” or something like that. I double majored in political science and ethnic studies.*

**2** Which of your talents has helped you the most to succeed in librarianship?

*Tenacity<sup>3</sup> (Yes, that’s cubed.)*

**3** What aspect of librarianship has changed the most since you entered the profession?

*Nearly everything is just a few keystrokes away now.*

**4** Who is your personal hero (in fact or fiction)?

*Anyone who ever spoke up on behalf of their civil rights. I have the utmost respect for them.*

**5** What is your idea of happiness?

*Sipping a good piña colada in a pool near a beach in the Caribbean, with a warm sun and blue skies. And for kicks, making sure that shelved books are in proper LC call number order.*

**6** What is your idea of misery?

*Being narrow-minded, hurtful, and hateful, or having to contend with such.*

**7** What is your favorite virtue?

*Contentment. As a virtue? Yep. I had a high school teacher who often asked, “How do you measure success?” To me that always meant finding contentment—to be at peace with yourself.*

**8** If you were not a law librarian, what profession do you think you would have undertaken?

*Long distance trucker. I would have loved to see more of this country.*

**9** Who is/are your favorite author(s)?

*As a big non-fiction fan, I’m often more interested in the topic, rather than the messenger. That said, I think Laura Hillenbrand did an excellent job covering the life of Louis Zamperini in *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption*. And for fiction, I’ve always admired Alan Paton’s imagery in *Cry, the Beloved Country* and *Too Late the Phalarope*.*

**10** What natural talent do you wish you had?

*Speed reading.*

**11** What is a favorite motto of yours?

*Love without sacrifice is cheap and not worthy of the name.*



# President's Column

## LLSDC & Limitless Opportunities

**Emily Florio**

*Director of Research & Information Services,  
Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP,  
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I am writing this Lights column on another rainy DC day (I'm sensing a theme for when I write my columns), which has made this the rainiest November on record. As we begin to bundle up and hunker down for the winter, consider what you would like from LLSDC in 2019 and if you or someone you know might be a good fit for the Executive Board. The call for nominations will be here before we know it, so it is never too early to begin the thought process. Speaking of leadership...

I have really been looking forward to this issue of Lights since the issue themes were announced. I did not have a career plan (or even a 5-year plan) when I started out in law firms in 2005. Up until that point, I had not even considered a career in law librarianship. All these years later, I'm in my second firm and my second city and find it hard to imagine doing anything else. I have probably experienced similar highs and lows to many of you, from having a wonderfully supportive, engaging, and educational supervisor, to an absent, lackadaisical, and helpless manager. Usually in the less than ideal situations, I must remind myself that this will help me learn how not to lead.



### Submission Information

*If you would like to write for Law Library Lights, contact Anne M. Guha at [amg300@georgetown.edu](mailto:amg300@georgetown.edu). For information regarding submission deadlines and issue themes, visit the LLSDC website at [www.llsdc.org](http://www.llsdc.org).*



# President's Column, Continued

One constant support mechanism through all the good and bad has been a reliance on my peers and professional associations. I am very lucky to have friends that I can lean on for advice, whether it is about looking for a new position, how to handle a management problem, or for help with a research question outside of my wheelhouse.

If you are interested in management, leadership and/or career development, then volunteering with LLSDC or attending a program can serve as an introduction, a resume booster, and/or a chance to practice or hone your skills. Serving within an SIS or on a

**“If you are interested in management, leadership and/or career development, then volunteering with LLSDC or attending a program can serve as an introduction, a resume booster, and/or a chance to practice or hone your skills.”**

committee are especially great options if you are curious about management and leadership, since these are relatively informal ways to lead a special initiative or small team. Or perhaps you are trying to get published or perfect your writing skills; in this case, consider submitting an article to Lights.

Lastly, maybe you are trying to expand your research skills and your institution does not offer what you need; here, you might consider asking the LLSDC Education Committee to put together a program on the topic. Alternatively, if you are the expert on a subject, maybe volunteer to present at a brown bag lunch. Regardless of what you need, LLSDC is here to assist!

As we close out 2018, I wanted to personally thank you all for your contributions to LLSDC over the last year. We had a productive beginning to our 2018-2019 year that featured great discussions and improvements to our website, membership database and listserv. I look forward to what next year has in store for us!

Cheers to a great 2018 and an even better 2019! ■



# Proust Questionnaire

## Kristina J. Alayan

Director & Assistant Professor of Law, Howard University Law Library

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**1** What did you think you wanted to do when you were in college/ what did you major in?

*I had no idea! Everyone thought I would be an interpreter because I had studied seven languages before starting college (French, German, Biblical Greek, Latin, Farsi, Japanese, and Spanish). I ended up pursuing a liberal arts education, which emphasized critical thinking skills over technical ones. While there, I pursued a degree that combined my love of languages and literature and I have found my undergraduate education continues to enrich the work I do today.*

**2** Which of your talents has helped you the most to succeed in librarianship?

*I'm often described as approachable, optimistic, and authentic. These qualities have all served me well, but I think it's my ability to put projects, people, and my own personal goals into perspective that has fostered the most growth and built the most sustaining and valuable relationships and opportunities for me.*

**3** What aspect of librarianship has changed the most since you entered the profession?

*The impending wave of retirements that folks have been predicting for decades is now underway. This is taking place at all levels – not just the administrative positions. Change facilitates exciting opportunities, as well as uncertainty while teams wrestle with the loss of expertise and familiarity. As someone who expects to be in this profession for many years, I'm looking forward to what the future has in store for all of us.*

**4** Who is your personal hero (in fact or fiction)?

*My parents. Everything I have accomplished has been made possible by their generosity, perseverance, and support. They immigrated to the United States when they were only 18 – my dad as a refugee. There is no one on the planet more courageous than my father, and no one stronger than my mother #sorrynotsorry. They trusted me and my judgment even when they didn't understand what I was doing – including pursuing law librarianship!*



# Proust Questionnaire, Continued

## Kristina J. Alayan

Director & Assistant Professor of Law, Howard University Law Library

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**5** What is your idea of happiness?

*Being free of student loan debt. The last time I checked, I had 34 payments left.*

**6** What is your idea of misery?

*Lack of autonomy.*

**7** What is your favorite virtue?

*Humility.*

**8** If you were not a law librarian, what profession do you think you would have undertaken?

*Diplomat, architect, or urban planner.*

**9** Who is/are your favorite author(s)?

*It changes all the time – and I’ve been reading more non-fiction lately – but Isabel Allende and Franz Kafka probably blew my mind as a young reader more than others.*

**10** What natural talent do you wish you had?

*The ability to answer emails faster than they come in.*

**11** What is a favorite motto of yours?

*Find out who you are and do it on purpose.*



# Member Spotlight

*Have you recently changed positions? Received a promotion? Participated in any professional events, conferences, or symposiums? Retired? Published? Been elected to serve in a professional organization? Anything else? Let LLSDC know by submitting your news and announcements to our editorial team. Photos are always welcome!*

## Law Library Lights congratulates our president, Emily Florio!

### Emily Florio

Emily Florio, Director of Research & Information Services at Finnegan and current LLSDC President, has been elected as Vice President/President Elect of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL). AALL is the only national professional association for legal information professionals, and its 4,400 members come from all library types, including law firms, academic law libraries, and government law libraries.

Emily's tenure as President-Elect begins in July 2019 and her term as President will commence in July 2020. She will be responsible for providing overall leadership and direction in the development and implementation of association policies and priorities, as well as being the chief administrator and legal head of AALL.

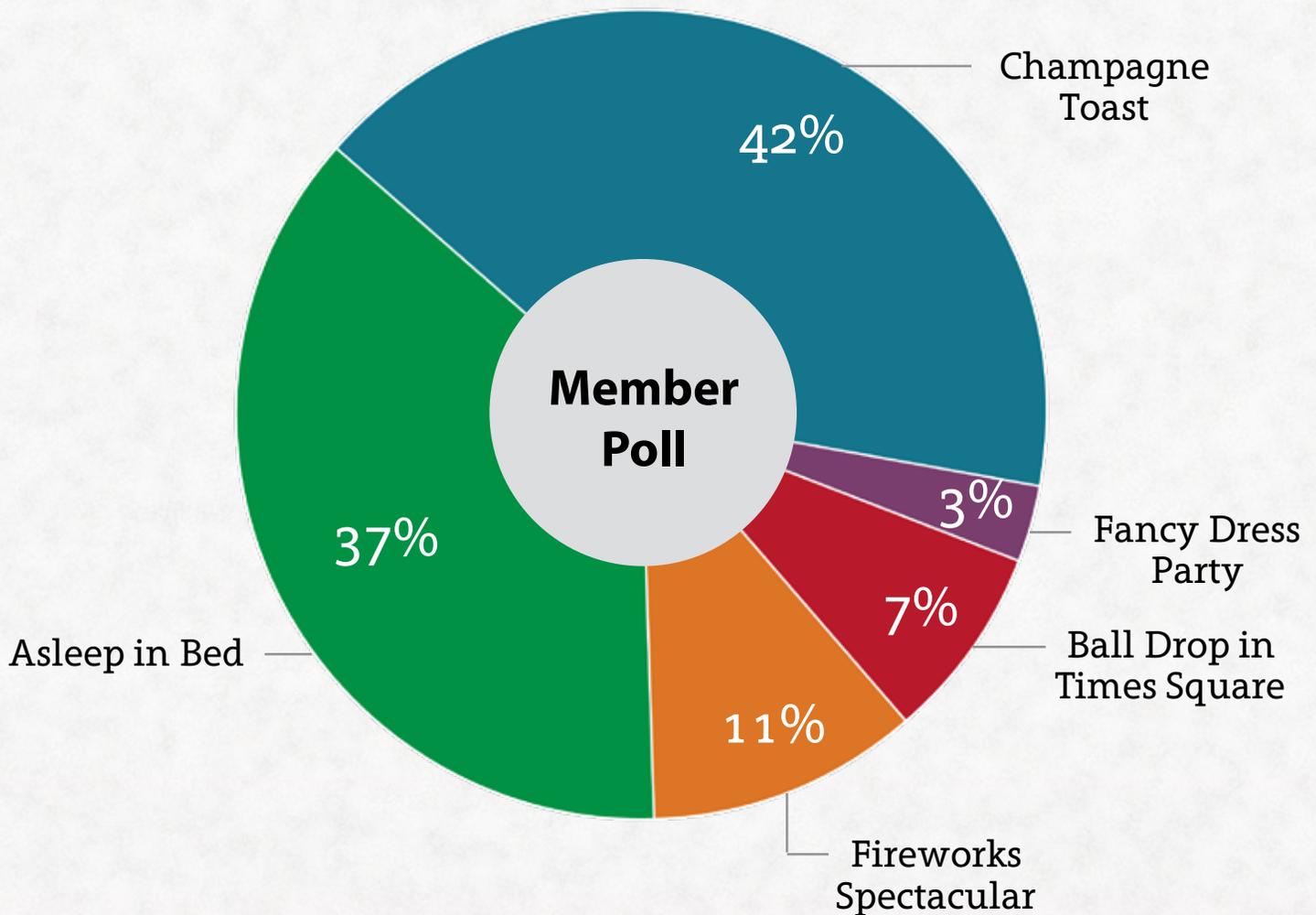
### Itunu Sofidiya

In January, Itunu Sofidiya started a new position as Reference Librarian at Georgetown University Law Library.



# Member Spotlight, Continued

What's your favorite way to ring in the New Year?



## LLSDC Scholarships and Grants

LLSDC members are encouraged to keep an eye out for announcements about our scholarships and grants. You can find information about these opportunities – including application forms and guidelines — at: <https://www.llsdc.org/scholarships-grants>



# Proust Questionnaire

## Emily R. Florio

Director of Research & Information Services, Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP  
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**1** What did you think you wanted to do when you were in college/ what did you major in?

*It took me a couple of years to find a major. I started in geography, then tried to design my own internationally-focused major, then ended up in English. I didn't want to write or teach, so I only really ended up with that degree since I didn't know what else to do.*

**2** Which of your talents has helped you the most to succeed in librarianship? *Being inquisitive and willing to learn and tackle anything.*

**3** What aspect of librarianship has changed the most since you entered the profession?

*I'd say the overall scope of our roles has expanded so much since I started out as a baby librarian. As a profession, we handle so many additional responsibilities – and we do it very well! We've taken on BI/CI, KM, analytics, project management, and I don't see us slowing down anytime soon.*

**4** Who is your personal hero (in fact or fiction)?

*My Mom. I followed in her footsteps and became a librarian, even though I pushed back against that idea for a long time. She retired as a children's librarian, but in retirement works as a public librarian at the library where I came into my own and realized I wanted to be a librarian. She is truly a lifelong learner and continues to give back to the profession (and offer me guidance along the way).*

**5** What is your idea of happiness?  
*Horseback riding with friends on a beautiful fall day.*

**6** What is your idea of misery?  
*Feeling undervalued or underappreciated (especially at work).*

**7** What is your favorite virtue?  
*Charity. So much about our profession is in helping others and giving back, which is one of the many reasons I love being a law librarian!*

**8** If you were not a law librarian, what profession do you think you would have undertaken?

*Something with animals, I'd imagine. When I was a kid I wanted to be, at various times, a zoologist, a vet, or a marine biologist, but I didn't want to take all the science courses required to make that happen.*

**9** Who is/are your favorite author(s)?

*At various points in my life, I've loved James Joyce, David Schickler, & Celeste Ng.*

**10** What natural talent do you wish you had?

*I wish I had a bit more patience at times.*

**11** What is a favorite motto of yours?

*Tomorrow is a new day! I remind myself of this if I'm having a rough day or if things aren't going quite as planned.*



## So You Want to be a Law Library Technologist? How to Fake It and Make It With GitHub

**Jeff Gerhard**

*Digital Initiatives Librarian, Georgetown Law Library*  
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In law libraries, keeping up with new tech is not optional. Whether we find it exhausting or exciting, law librarians face the Sisyphean task of constantly learning new platforms, software, databases, and devices. It takes a lot of tech savvy to work in the nexus of two fields as buffeted by technological change as law and librarianship are.

One reason to consider diving still deeper into tech — to aim for the level where you get to use words like “technologist” or “hacker” in your professional bio — is out of a desire to change career focus, but you might have other motivations for wanting to seriously boost your technology chops. Maybe you have the goal of becoming a high-level manager, overseeing tech-centered projects and employees, and negotiating with your institution’s IT department. Or you could be interested in learning an emerging technology in order to better understand the laws and policies that surround it. In any case, gaining advanced tech skills is a noble professional development ambition.

The trouble is, technology isn’t learned in the abstract. You can’t just “dive deeper into tech,” you have to learn and practice discrete and specific skills and you may not know where to start. What’s more, an attempt to study, say, a programming language merely for learning’s sake can be difficult or even self-defeating. I’m embarrassed to recall the times when I dutifully attended Excel trainings, took a few notes, but learned absolutely nothing because I didn’t have any particular use for Excel. We are all too busy to waste time learning esoteric technologies that aren’t immediately relevant to our work. I’m still pretty bad at Excel (but improving!).

I don’t think you need to go to any bootcamps or take coding courses in order to become a technologist. Instead, I suggest that you continue with the work you already do, but reframe it by

# Tech Talk, Continued

learning the same tool that coders use. I'm not referring to software or laptops here. I am talking about the world's largest repository of code, the confusing but fascinating GitHub.

You've probably come across this site before, and maybe you found it to be as inscrutable as I once did. Briefly, GitHub is a place where millions of users store repositories of code; they use a program named Git to keep local copies of that code in sync with a master copy. Multiple users can contribute to a single repository, and everyone's work is credited and tracked. Git technology includes version control, so anyone can examine all the changes that have been made to files over time.

So what does this have to do with you and your work? Well, for one thing, GitHub functions as a specialized professional social network. Having and using an account signals that you are serious about tech and have the skills to use the site. As a law librarian, you definitely have the capacity to pick up this informal credential. I recommend opening an account and going through some tutorials to get a sense of how GitHub works. And the great thing is, GitHub isn't just for code: you can use the site to host almost any kind of file. It can display image files. It can serve web pages. It's useful for many types of writing, and some of the most popular repositories on GitHub are straightforward lists of resources.

GitHub makes it possible to become a technologist simply by acting like one. Take polished segments of the work that you already

do and share them on the site, showcasing both your professional ideas and your tech smarts at the same time. (If you're not at liberty to share any of your work publicly, you can create private repositories on a similar site like BitBucket, or set up a paid GitHub account.) Contribute workplace policies, project documentation, compiled lists of links, white papers, tutorials, and of course anything technology-related. Show off your strengths — if you're better at Excel than I am, post useful Excel formulas that I might someday stumble across in desperation. You'll be able to build up a public portfolio while also keeping tabs on the current tech trends that show up all over the site. And then, if you want to dig deeper into something like a programming language, you'll have a solid base of operations and a fantastic resource for guidance and inspiration.

I'll be honest: the underlying Git program can be a drag. It presents a stumbling block to wider adoption of GitHub, but you don't need to become an expert in Git in order to use the site. It's still worth practicing; because Git-like technology is leading to innovations in publishing, editing, and archiving, learning to use it will position you to visualize and shape the future of legal information. Once you become accustomed to GitHub, you'll find that it's familiar: a constantly-changing information repository whose users do cutting-edge work individually or collaboratively, learn by carefully studying each other's work, share useful documents, and conduct exhaustive research. Sounds a lot like a law library. ■



# Proust Questionnaire

## Pamela Lipscomb

Director of Library & Research Services, Arent Fox LLP  
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**1** What did you think you wanted to do when you were in college/ what did you major in?

*I thought I wanted to be an accountant, but then I got a C+ in accounting and realized I needed to do something else. I majored in Communications & English and worked in the library as a student and discovered what I really loved.*

**2** Which of your talents has helped you the most to succeed in librarianship?

*My old boss used to tell me that my creativity makes me a great librarian.*

**3** What aspect of librarianship has changed the most since you entered the profession?

*I'm really glad we don't have to do physical book case pulls anymore!*

**4** Who is your personal hero (in fact or fiction)?

*I love Audrey Hepburn both as an actress and humanitarian.*

**5** What is your idea of happiness?

*Being surrounded by friends and family with everyone in good places in their lives.*

**6** What is your idea of misery?

*Not having a good book to read.*

**7** What is your favorite virtue?

*Patience. There isn't enough of it in the world.*

**8** If you were not a law librarian, what profession do you think you would have undertaken?

*Book/copy editor.*

**9** Who is/are your favorite author(s)?

*That is an unfair question! Probably Jane Austen. She is definitely my most re-read. Langston Hughes is my favorite poet.*

**10** What natural talent do you wish you had?

*I wish I was a baller. I spend much of my free time around sporting events (by choice) and am as uncoordinated as they come.*

**11** What is a favorite motto of yours?

*A creative man is motivated by the desire to achieve, not by the desire to beat others.*

— Ayn Rand

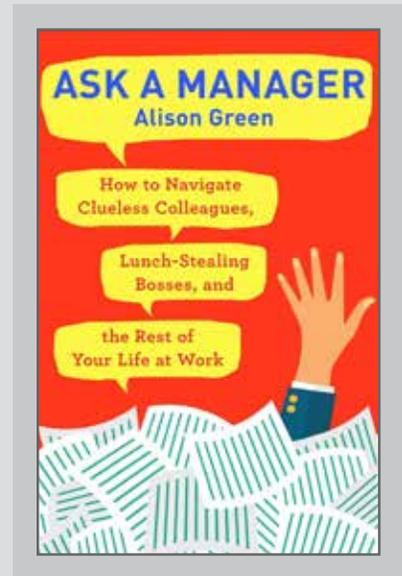


# Book Review

## **Alison Green, *Ask a Manager: How to Navigate Clueless Colleagues, Lunch-Stealing Bosses, and the Rest of Your Life at Work* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2018)**

**Savanna Nolan**

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For this issue, I decided to review Alison Green's *Ask a Manager: How to Navigate Clueless Colleagues, Lunch-Stealing Bosses, and the Rest of Your Life at Work*. I was already familiar with Green's fantastic blog – also called [Ask a Manager](#) – which covers work basics like [when it's okay to call in sick](#), current-events-based questions like the ethics of [firing Charlottesville protesters](#), and a [wide variety of work horror stories](#) that will (hopefully) leave you feeling pretty good about your own working environment.

Besides already respecting Green's advice and writing style, my other reason for choosing this book for this issue was the simplicity of matching it to the theme. After all, one of the first things we think about when we talk about management, leadership, and development is the "traditional" model of working up the chain, eventually becoming a library director. While I haven't believed in chaining myself to goals like "become a department head within five years," etc., it was when I read a [#aall18 tweet from Alyson Drake](#) that I began to realize that loosening your definition of advancement allows for the potential of loosening your definition of professional development as well. As I read the first few chapters of this book, I realized that it would actually be beneficial for the development of everyone, personal or professional, and regardless of intended career trajectory.

In the introduction, Green outlines the core principle of her whole philosophy: "Speak up" (p. 3). Too often, she says, we want our problems to just go away. We want whatever is bothering us in



# Book Review, Continued

the workplace to stop, but we also don't want to actually say anything about it. Alas, down that road lie passive-aggressive notes on work fridges and the like. In the first substantive chapter, "Conversations with Your Boss," Green outlines the basics of how she structures work conversations, including core ideas like "Keep your ego at bay" and "Think like a consultant" (p. 9). As Green says, "This doesn't mean you can't have emotions; it just means that you can't let them drive the conversation" (p. 9). Similarly, if you think of yourself as a consultant and your boss like a client, then you can avoid falling into a parent/child dynamic with your boss.

After outlining the basics of each chapter – like general principles about how to talk to your boss or subordinate – Green then has numbered sub-chapters about specific situations, like "18: Your manager yells at you"

**"As I read the first few chapters of this book, I realized that it would actually be beneficial for the development of everyone, personal or professional, and regardless of intended career trajectory."**

(p. 38). Here, after explicitly assuring the reader that "[y]elling is unprofessional and abusive, and good managers don't do it," Green also reminds the reader that "[y]elling is about the yeller, not about you" (p. 38).

After some of these numbered sub-topics, Green includes a related letter from her blog. For example, after "20: Addressing sexist or racist comments," Green includes a letter from a newly-hired manager who is roughly twenty years younger than one of her direct reports. This wouldn't be an issue for the letter writer, except that the employee "keeps making comments like 'Gosh it's crazy to have a supervisor who is the same age as my daughter' or 'This structure will be an adjustment for me, I am used to being in the driver's seat. Good for you for advancing in your career so quickly'" (p. 198).

Green initially suggests subtle humor, but cautions that "if the message doesn't seem to land, then you need to move on to a more direct conversation" (p.198). Green advises that the next time the employee makes a comment, the writer should address it in the moment with a phrase like "'Jane, you've mentioned our relative ages several times. I'm assuming it won't be an issue for you.' And then just stop and see what she says. [...] If she [continues], then you should say, 'It doesn't strike me as odd, and I'd rather we not get sidetracked by



# Book Review, Continued

it” (pp.198-99). Green closes out her response warning the letter writer that these comments may be indicative of larger problems, like the employee resenting the letter writer or not respecting her ability to manage, and Green provides additional sample language that will help “nip it in the bud by addressing it just as you would any other performance issue” (p. 199).

**“While *Ask a Manager* is, on its surface, a book about professional development, I think it is really better described as a book about respectful and effective communication.”**

The final structural element that I think makes the book really work is the conversational suggestions. In the numbered sub-topics, after explaining her broad thoughts on an appropriate approach, Green will provide sample example conversations. For example, in “27: Telling an employee to stop going over your head” Green offers:

You can say it like this:

“I’ve noticed that you’ve been taking issues like X and Y to Maria. Part of my job

is to handle those issues so that Maria doesn’t have to—and frankly, I need to be in the loop earlier because I sometimes have info that Maria doesn’t have. Going forward, please come talk to me about those things. If we’re not able to resolve something ourselves, I may loop her in—but I need you to start with me.”

Depending on how your boss has been handling it when your employee goes to her, you might also ask her to direct the person back to you (pp. 207-08).

While *Ask a Manager* is, on its surface, a book about professional development, I think it is really better described as a book about respectful and effective communication. Even if you are not a manager or feel that you’re a great employee, I think everyone can benefit from brushing up on their communication skills from time to time. As Green says in the conclusion:

What I hope you’ll take away from this book is that you can and should speak up when something is bothering you or you’re hoping something can be handled differently. Speaking up doesn’t have to mean alienating people or causing tension in your relationships; you can be direct without being rude, and you can be assertive without being disagreeable (p. 285). ■



# Proust Questionnaire

## Joseph W. Thomas

Deputy Director, Georgetown Law Library

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**1** What did you think you wanted to do when you were in college/ what did you major in?

*In college, I was planning on writing the Great American Novel, so I majored in English, but just to make sure I was as unemployable as possible, I also majored in history.*

**2** Which of your talents has helped you the most to succeed in librarianship?

*It's not really a talent, but I tend to remain pretty calm when things are going wrong. Being even-keeled is not always the best approach in every individual circumstance, but it is a pretty good long-term strategy.*

**3** What aspect of librarianship has changed the most since you entered the profession?

*The whole change from paper-based sources to electronic sources is the obvious answer. The thing that illustrates that most clearly to me is the disappearance of card catalogs. In library school, one*

*of my jobs was to file a hundred or so cards every day into the card catalog. The filing instructions were more than 100 pages and we were tested for a couple of months before they let us loose. Pieces of information are easier to find now in electronic catalogs and other finding aids, but I have a great nostalgia for the beautiful structure of the card catalog.*

**4** Who is your personal hero (in fact or fiction)?

*As I get older, I admire the people who persevere and get things done more than the flashier heroes, and also people who are capable of changing for the better. Plus anyone who is courageous: most of Jane Austen's main characters, Sydney Carton in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Saint Paul, Martin Luther King, Jr., Harry Truman, Abraham Lincoln, Eleanor Roosevelt.*

**5** What is your idea of happiness?

*Having happy children. Also, sitting on a deck in Maine with a view of the ocean, a good, thick book, and a hot cup of coffee isn't too bad.*



# Proust Questionnaire, Continued

## Joseph W. Thomas

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**6** What is your idea of misery?

*Having unhappy children. Also, spending most of life worrying about things that don't really matter.*

**7** What is your favorite virtue?

*Courage, because it is the necessary virtue for the exercise of all the others. I mean courage not necessarily in the rushing-into-battle way, but in the day-to-day need to rouse yourself up to do what you'd rather not but which you need to. "Guts" is maybe the better word.*

**8** If you were not a law librarian, what profession do you think you would have undertaken?

*Probably some sort of writing career – journalism, Great American Novel writing, etc.*

**9** Who is/are your favorite author(s)?

*I am a sucker for 19th Century fiction in English – all the usual suspects: Dickens, Trollope, Austen, Scott, Twain, William Dean Howells, etc.*

**10** What natural talent do you wish you had?

*I wish I were dexterous and able to do useful work with my hands – one of the many reasons I'm a librarian rather than a brain surgeon.*

**11** What is a favorite motto of yours?

*One of my favorite quotes is from Jane Austen's Emma from the redoubtable Mr. Knightley and is a motto for me. He and Emma have been arguing about whether a callow young man could have done something he should have but which went against the will of his parents. Mr. Knightly says: "There is one thing, Emma, which a man can always do, if he chooses, and that is, his duty; not by maneuvering and finessing, but by vigor and resolution."*



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