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## Letter to the Editor

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## *Letter to the* EDITOR

Dear Editor:

Thank you for your many years of hard work and for making sure our profession has a written voice in Georgia. I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion through such a professional journal. The 2009 Library Day at the state Capitol was a very productive one for my library, and I hope it was equally so for many others. I have attended so many Library Days that I may have a slight advantage over newer librarians in how to make the most of it. I always bring some of my library board trustees and, often, a few members from our Friends organization. I feel an obligation to make a strong showing at the Capitol, because we are geographically close, and many other library supporters are not. Our senators and representatives have come to expect us there, and they look for us.

The first Library Day at our state Capitol was held in the late 1970s, and it was sponsored by trustees from around the state. When the Georgia Council for Public Libraries was founded, it helped continue Library Day at the Capitol. For many years, Georgia Council sponsored and organized the event. Over the years, several different meeting and lunching places were used, and the day was structured a little differently from time to time. We even called it Library Legislative Day at one point. Around 1999, I recommended to the Georgia Council that the responsibility for Library Day be shifted to GLA, because I consider it a larger and perhaps more inclusive organization. My staff and I planned and implemented Library Day for a few years during this transition until GLA worked it into a rotating responsibility.

The purpose of Library Day, I believe, was — and is — to ADVOCATE to our state lawmakers for libraries across Georgia. For many years, it was just public libraries, but especially after the birth of GALILEO, we saw the value and strength of ALL libraries working together with and for each other. Media specialists and academic librarians and their legislative needs are now included among the day's topics and in the information that is distributed. But the purpose still is for ADVOCACY. Most of us know from the plethora of advocacy training lately that a VOLUNTEER trustee or Friend of the Library is worth five — maybe even 10 — paid librarians when it comes to advocating for our libraries. Unfortunately, academic libraries and media centers often do not have those same teams of unpaid advocates as public libraries, who promote and support libraries because they believe in them. The good news, however, is that public library advocates believe in academic libraries and media centers, too!

I want to encourage the leadership of the Georgia Library Association to reconsider the reason we have Library Day. Consider structuring the morning preparation so that our volunteers — our trustees and Friends — will feel like it is for THEM, to prepare and to help them to go across the street and tell every Georgia legislator how great and necessary our libraries are to their respective communities and institutions — and to Georgia as a whole. I believe this would be more effective than a morning filled with long speeches from professionals to professionals, only one or two of whom kept to their allotted five minutes this year! The printed flyers, bookmarks and pamphlets were OUTSTANDING this year; they are the perfect tools for the advocates to deliver. But please provide our valuable volunteers with written legislative priorities and a two- or three-sentence message, and I believe they will continue to come to Atlanta for this special day at the Capitol and to ADVOCATE to their legislators on behalf of ALL libraries. ►►

Sincerely,  
**Deborah S. Manget**  
*Library Director, Conyers-Rockdale Library System*