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## The President's Column

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## The President's Column

As I realized today is my deadline, I thought about everything over the last week and how I'm feeling. How thankful I am that I'm able to write this short message to you, my colleagues. And I thought about the need to be vulnerable; that in our vulnerability we can encourage others. I considered the feelings of being overwhelmed; the busyness of life and work; and, as I've been preparing for the West Virginia Library Association conference, ruminating on the value of our library colleagues and the lives we touch. And then I focused on processing the tragedy of Hurricane Helene and its effects on our libraries and communities. The sheer loss being experienced by our fellow Americans. Having experienced Katrina's aftermath, this brings back memories. Memories of how Louisiana libraries stepped up, how communities came together, and how libraries hours and states away welcomed strangers and invited them in to become friends. It is my hope that we again come together. That we show our nation how we are stronger together.

I'm certain that our Southeastern Libraries and you will be shining examples of Southern hospitality and strength. For those affected, you remain in our thoughts. I'm sure that I'm not alone in saying, "when you're ready and able, call, email, or text me. Let me help. I'm here for you."

I urge you to exhibit kindness to those around you, to consider how to help one another, and to evaluate your library and its policies to ensure you are creating a welcoming environment to all who visit in search of information, a respite from heat, a place for children to play, or even a shoulder to cry on.

We can do this. Together.



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