



Book Review Editor: Theodore J. Weidner, Ph.D., P.E., CEFP, AIA

## Disasters and the unexpected

should be expected just like change is expected. This month we look at two books, one focused on general disaster planning issues, and the other on how great teams can work together to address the unexpected. In both cases, they identify important elements of success, careful thought, good planning, and teamwork.

### BEFORE AND AFTER DISASTER STRIKES: DEVELOPING AN EMERGENCY PROCEDURES MANUAL, 4TH ED

Institute of Real Estate Management,  
2012, 300 pages, softcover \$49.95.

Emergency planning and recovery have been important topics of discussion since 2001—and before. Remember back to 1999 when we were all concerned about computer systems and clocks failing at the start of the millennium? It was all about trying to manage what were rather well-known software capabilities, and ensuring all possible contingencies were identified and addressed. Still, many of us spent time on campus watching the clocks tick rather than celebrating the new millennium with family and friends.

### PROTECTING THE STUDENT BODY IS THE FIRST PRIORITY.

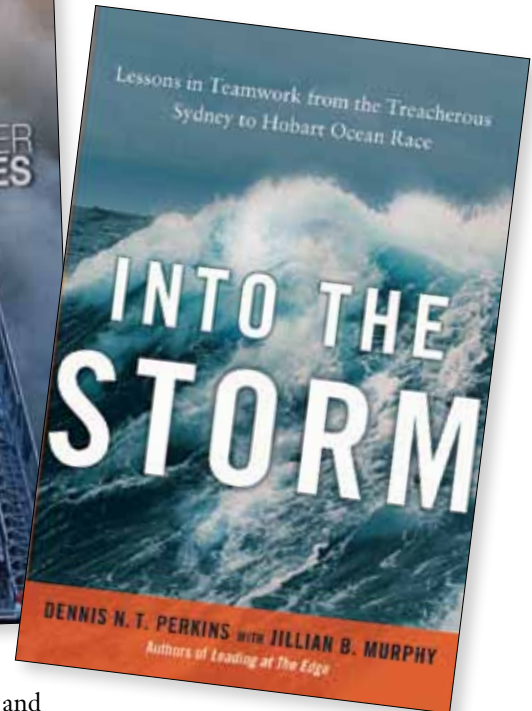
Then we experienced the September 11, 2001 attacks, and the focus turned to unknown threats. What kind of damage could be done by a terrorist? How could we prevent it and how would we recover? We subsequently learned that threats can also come from our students, staff, or community. Educational facility officers have responded to these



and many other threats to facilities and those we serve by coordinating response plans, taking FEMA courses, and making physical improvements to our facilities.

Other threats from nature and people drive how we need to prepare and respond if we're to succeed, and provide facilities that will serve our customers. Limiting the damage done by a disaster and protecting the student body is the first priority. Then there's the general expectation that any disruption will be temporary and everything will return to normal—or near-normal services—with in a day or two, so business continuity planning is essential.

While many of the subjects addressed in *Before and After Disaster Strikes* have been addressed by long-time facility officers, those new to the position (or those who haven't taken the time to develop or update their emergency planning manual) will find significant value in this book. It also has several chapters on non-education facilities that may be relevant for any facility officer.



### INTO THE STORM: LESSONS IN TEAMWORK FROM THE TREACHEROUS SYDNEY TO HOBART OCEAN RACE

Dennis Perkins and Jillian Murphy,  
AMACOM, New York, 255 pages,  
hardcover \$24.95.

The typical team-building book is written with the principles of team building with examples of each principle, from various teams, presented to emphasize the principle. This columnist has reviewed a dozen or more books that follow this tried-and-true format. Needless to say, one might call it a truly tired format. Fortunately, Dennis Perkins and Jillian Murphy take a different approach with *Into the Storm*.

I was gripped by the story of an ill-fated race, the Sydney to Hobart race from Australia's largest city to the remote, state capital of Hobart on Tasmania. In 1998, the 630-mile race in the Tasman Sea was


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ENJOYABLE TEAM-BUILDING  
BOOKS I'VE READ IN A WHILE.

harrowing and hero-making. Normally, a difficult race, it was made deadly by hurricane force winds and 60 to 100 foot high waves. Ultimately, six people died, dozens of boats gave up or sank, and only 40 percent of the entrants completed the race. It was the greatest loss of life in the history of the race (there were only two prior deaths in over 50 years). Despite the

difficulties, a 35-foot boat with a crew of seven survived and completed the race fast enough to win a trophy. While it wasn't the fastest or largest boat in the race, and didn't have the "star power" of some of the other racing teams, it had a tenacious and well-tuned team of sailors who knew how to work together as a team and win.

The race story covers the first 60 percent of the book. Then one of the authors, in an attempt to "test" the mettle of the subject team, joins the crew of a subsequent Sydney-Hobart racing team to experience what the race is usually like. The final 25 percent of the book reviews ten strategies of successful teams, looks back at the race story, and reinforces the team-building and success references if the reader didn't notice them while reading the story. It's unconventional and effective.

While not a sailor, I found the story compelling and puts the reader into the moment. Rough seas, sea sickness, foul weather, punishing physical conditions, and stamina-sapping struggles are presented in an effective way. Simultaneously, the writers do an effective job of foreshadowing the ten principles of effective teams; one can almost read the story and forget the last 40 percent of the book—but don't.

This is one of the most enjoyable team-building books I've read in a while. It had a great story, led with it, and then built on the story to make important points. I appreciate the daring move by the author to lead with the story rather than the subject. It's effective, compelling, and enjoyable. If you have difficulty putting the book down until the race end, I won't be surprised. 

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