

President's Column

by Matt Todd

It is with considerable enthusiasm and some trepidation that I address myself to my first column as your president of the Virginia Library Association. In the short time that I hold this office, I hope to use these columns to keep you informed about the health and direction of our association, to meditate upon some issues of concern to the commonwealth's library community, and hopefully to open a dialogue about the future and direction of the profession and how VLA can lead us into that future.

In December, the VLA Executive Committee met in Williamsburg and agreed on several initiatives and goals to guide the work of the association in the upcoming year. I share some of the top issues below:

Finances

In these parlous economic times, finances are on everyone's mind. The association is committed to prudent fiscal management and proactive financial planning to ensure the solvency and stability of the organization. We continue to rely on the institutional memberships of Virginia's public libraries to fund our legislative activities. We also welcome support from Friends of the Library organizations, encourage membership renewals and especially new members (invite a friend to join VLA!), and of course hope for strong conference attendance to support the ongoing work and financial health of the association.



Advocacy

Some of the most important work VLA does is to provide leadership in legislative and advocacy activities in the commonwealth, to speak to our elected officials and tell our story. We need to continue to remind our elected representatives that we speak for more than 4 million Virginians who hold library cards and over 470,000 students studying and conducting research in Virginia's colleges and universities. Be sure to check the VLA website (www.vla.org) for updates on legislative activities and advocacy opportunities and the Legislative Action Center for news of interest to the library community. Contact the appropriate elected officials to make *your* voice heard.

Communications

Do you have an email address? Does VLA know what it is? A key

priority this year will be rationalizing and streamlining association communications with members. The Executive Committee is mindful that as well as maintaining our commitment to providing library services to the citizens of the commonwealth, we must also *be* responsible citizens and caretakers of natural resources. VLA is committed to "going green" as much as possible and reducing waste wherever practicable. Also taking into account the ever-rising costs of printing and postage, this means VLA will rely even more heavily on electronic communication—including our webpage and email. While *Virginia Libraries* will continue to be produced in print (as well as online!), all other association news, announcements, and publications will transition to electronic formats *only*. As information professionals, we should all have the aptitude and, indeed, the eagerness to follow the wider cultural transition to more sustainable and cost-effective communication. Visit the VLA webpage for more information (and let us know your email address, if you have not already).

Conferences

The VLA Annual Conference and the VLA Paraprofessional Conference are the highlight of the year for many of us (or the twin highlights for those of us who attend them both). The association is committed to promoting conference attendance as vital professional development, career development, personal renewal,

networking, and continuing education. We will continue to assess the structure, content, and logistics of our conferences to promote professional growth and meet the continuing education and lifelong learning needs of our members. If we did not see you at Portsmouth in 2010, we hope to see you there in 2011—for what we project will be the Best Conference Ever.

Membership

The Virginia Library Association relies on its membership to continue doing the good work we are given to do. In lean economic times, it is not surprising that our membership has declined somewhat in the last year. If you have renewed your membership—*thank you!* Please also encourage a friend or colleague to join—you don't have to be an MLS-holding librarian to be a member—you don't even have to be a Virginian! Members benefit from increased professional visibility; idea-sharing; opportunities to meet and collaborate with librarians and library staff throughout the commonwealth and across the spectrum of different kinds and sizes of libraries; support for the needs of libraries and their users; and, of course, sitting down to a copy of *Virginia Libraries* and poring over such scintillating columns as this one!

Feedback

Even if you did not think this column was scintillating, I would like to hear from *you*. Our membership is our greatest resource, and I am eager to hear your ideas for the future of our association and profession. Visit www.vla.org to find out how to contact us, or feel free to email me at mtodd@nvcc.edu. I look forward to hearing from you, and to walking with you into an exciting year ahead for the commonwealth's libraries. **VI**

Guidelines for Submissions to *Virginia Libraries*

1. *Virginia Libraries* seeks to publish articles and reviews of interest to the library community in Virginia. Articles reporting research, library programs and events, and opinion pieces are all considered for publication. Queries are encouraged.
2. Please submit manuscripts via email as attachments in Microsoft Word, rich text, or plain text format. Articles should be double-spaced with any bibliographic notes occurring at the end of the article. Please avoid using the automatic note creation function provided by some word processing programs.
3. Articles in *Virginia Libraries* conform to the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* and *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*. Accepted articles are subject to editing for style and clarity. Authors will be consulted on points of fact.
4. All articles submitted for consideration are reviewed by the editors and may be refereed by the editorial board. Articles that are not selected for publication will be returned within three months.
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6. Illustrations are encouraged and should be submitted whenever appropriate to accompany a manuscript. Hard copy illustrations will be returned if requested in advance. Digital images should have a resolution of at least 300 dpi. Authors are responsible for securing legal permission to publish photographs and other illustrations.
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8. Articles should generally fall within the range of 750–3,000 words. Please query the editors before submitting any work of greater length.
9. Email manuscripts and queries to Cy Dillon, cdillon@hsc.edu, and Lyn C. A. Gardner, cgardner@hampton.gov. Please be sure to copy both editors.
10. *Virginia Libraries* is published quarterly. The deadlines for submission are: November 1 for Number 1, January/February/March; February 1 for Number 2, April/May/June; May 1 for Number 3, July/August/September; and August 1 for Number 4, October/November/December. **VI**