

Openers

by Cy Dillon and Lyn C. A. Gardner

Cy Dillon

It is pleasing, and in this case a bit surprising, to find that something one wrote at the beginning of a worthwhile undertaking still rings true as that effort draws to a close nearly sixteen years later. This pleasant surprise was made easily accessible by Anne Lawrence, Gail McMillan, and the rest of the staff at Virginia Tech's Digital Library and Archives, who host the archive of *Virginia Libraries* and over thirty other professional and academic journals. There I found the first "Openers" column I wrote in 1996, and discovered this passage:

Those of us who make Virginia's libraries work are often so focused on problems of the day that little is said of the overall success of our institutions. Virginia's libraries are notable for their diversity, for the quality of their collections and services, for the dedication of all categories of staff, for the collective vitality of institutions and individuals, and for the ability with which we have faced the incredible changes in technology and expectations that have descended upon us in the past decade.

It seems to me that this optimistic take is just as valid now as then, even if the technological snowball has rolled much faster than I could have predicted at that point. The column goes on to ask the com-

monwealth's library workers to use our journal to tell the story of this success, a request that has been fulfilled beyond my expectations.

Since 1996, I have had two stints as editor, separated by the years 2000 to 2004 when Andrea Kross, Barbie Selby, and Earlene Viano filled the role ably. This second term has been shared with an exceptionally talented and dedicated coeditor who has made the pub-

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lication more professional at the same time she has encouraged and mentored new writers who contributed their first articles. This means that I have worked on something like fifty issues of *Virginia Libraries*, always learning from our writers, and always being challenged to keep up with the waves of change that wash over us, leaving no time for satisfaction with what we have mastered. It has been a particularly good learning environment for me, and I hope our readers have also found value in the product.

My experience with the journal has been enriched by far too many colleagues and friends to name, but I do want to take this opportunity to thank Jon Marken, the gifted and endlessly patient designer of our magazine; Pierre Courtois, our exceptional photographer; and

Linda Hahne and Lisa Varga, who have been extraordinary executive directors. It has been an honor to participate in VLA, and I hope to serve the association in other capacities in the future.

Lyn C. A. Gardner

Working with Cy Dillon on *Virginia Libraries* these past eight and a half years has been wonderful. I love the work and could not have asked for a better partner. His experience with *Virginia Libraries*, as well as his talents as both a writer and an editor, his many creative insights, his knowledge and contacts in the field, and his calm and tact, always made it such a pleasure to work on the journal. It was a great feeling knowing that whatever happened, he had my back. Throughout, I've also been impressed by our hardworking and amenable contributors, whose energy and passion for their subjects made this an exciting enterprise.

When Cy let me know that he would resign at the end of the year, I thought long and hard about whether to continue. I've really appreciated the encouragement I received in that regard. But in the end, I felt it was more appropriate to do what I'd always intended: step down when Cy did. As some of you know, I've faced a number of personal losses and changes over the last several years that have taken their toll and sometimes made it difficult to keep up with the work. Having this professional outlet really got me through some tough times and provided a

source of pride and joy, regardless of what else I had to confront. But time to do the work properly has gotten harder and harder to come by. I'm also anxious to give others the chance to enjoy this rewarding role. As I rebuild my life and explore new frontiers in the library world, I will be keeping a fond eye on *Virginia Libraries*.

Thanks so much to all of you for your kind words and support over the years. I've been very grateful for this opportunity to participate so intimately in the life and work of the association. I've learned so much about the profession and gotten an inside look at VLA and, vicariously, at many libraries around the state. I've met and worked with a lot of wonderful people. I'll always treasure the chance I had to contribute to VLA and give something back to the organization that granted me the scholarship that got me started on my MLIS. And it's given me great satisfaction to put my talents to good use.

Cy and I look forward to one last issue together: *Virginia Libraries* 58.1, January/February/March 2012, our special issue on the theme of electronic collections and digital developments in the library world. We've got some exciting articles and queries lined up, and we can't wait to see you there.

Starting with the second issue of 2012, Beth DeFrancis Sun and John Connolly will take the helm as editor and assistant editor, respectively. Beth is librarian at the Maternal & Child Health Library, Georgetown University, while John is a software trainer for the Library Corporation and an MLIS distance education student at the University of Alabama. We look forward to learning more about them in *Virginia Libraries* 58.2! **VL**

Guidelines for Submissions to *Virginia Libraries*

1. *Virginia Libraries* seeks to publish articles and reviews of interest to the library community in Virginia. Articles and interviews reporting research, library programs and events, information of particular interest to libraries in Virginia, and opinion pieces are all considered for publication. Queries are encouraged. Brief announcements and press releases should be distributed via the VLA listservs and blog (www.vla.org).
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. Work published in *Virginia Libraries* conforms to the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* and *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*. Accepted pieces are subject to editing for style and clarity. Authors will be consulted on points of fact.
4. Articles should generally fall within the range of 750–3,000 words. Please query the editors before submitting any work of greater length.
5. Reviews should consider works produced by Virginia creators or concerning Virginia subjects that have been published within the last two years. The reviewed works can appeal to any age or audience or appear in any format or area of the arts, sciences, and humanities. Reviews generally fall within the range of 500–1,500 words and must include a bibliographic citation in *Chicago* style and an evaluative statement supported by evidence from the text. Please query the editors before writing or submitting a review.
6. All work submitted for consideration will be reviewed by the editors and may be refereed by the editorial board. Material not selected for publication will be returned within three months.
7. VLA holds the copyright on all material published in *Virginia Libraries*. Contributors receive one copy of the issue in which their work appears.
8. 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.
9. Each contributor should provide a brief sketch of professional accomplishments of no more than fifty words that includes current title, affiliation, and email address. Unless specified otherwise, this information will be shared with readers of *Virginia Libraries*. Physical addresses should also be provided for the mailing of contributors' copies.
10. Email manuscripts and queries to both Cy Dillon, cdillon@hsc.edu, and Lyn C. A. Gardner, cgardner@hampton.gov. Please be sure to include both editors.
11. *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. **VL**