

# Openers

by *Beth DeFrancis Sun*

**A**lthough I'm aware of the mental health benefits that a bit of "thankfulness" can provide, it's easy to slip into the habit of negative thinking. Recently, however, I attended a mind/body wellness session called "Attitude of Gratitude," where I was reminded of the beauty in things like changing cloud formations, smiling faces, and flushing toilets. The instructor described gratefulness as a "practice" that we can learn and polish over time. We can *choose* to be grateful for what we have, rather than bemoan what's missing or wrong. And after we do this several thousand times, it will reshape our brains and make us happier (or so the research suggests). Easier said than done, but definitely worth a try at the start of a new year.

So with gratitude in mind, I would like to thank all of the writers who have contributed such rich content to *Virginia Libraries* during my first year as editor! Some of the articles arrived camera-ready (polished and ready to publish), while others were what might be called diamonds in the making. Some required little more than a "setting" in which they could glisten, while others called for some chiseling and reshaping—an added paragraph or transitional phrase, a change of tone, or the removal of grammatical imperfections. I am grateful that all of the journal's contributors accepted (with grace,

humility, and good humor) most of the changes that John Connolly and I recommended. John is a skilled wordsmith who has taken numerous articles and crafted them into finer gems (and when a

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submission hasn't been quite right, or ready, for the journal, John has taken the time to offer words of explanation and encouragement by phone or email). For this, I'm most grateful.

I'm also grateful to work with Jon Marken, our graphic designer from Lamp-post Publicity who has made it so easy for me to transition into my role as editor. Not only has Jon transformed the copy we've sent his way into attractive and engaging pages, but he's helped to ensure accuracy and consistency. He's also very accommodating (and forgiving) when it comes to correcting errors that aren't his doing. And speaking of "errors," I am also very grateful for the

proofreading and copyediting services provided by Jim, Molly, and Joan at Cameron Editorial Services in Falls Church. Were it not for their volunteer contributions, the journal would no doubt contain many more typos, style inconsistencies, and awkward wording. Thank you!

As with previous issues of *Virginia Libraries*, this first quarterly of the new year is full of feature articles that reflect the wonderful variety of libraries, special collections, and services that our libraries have to offer. I am grateful to live in a state that gives home to (1) the Fredericksburg Subregional Library for the Blind, which helps to make books accessible to those who don't have sight but who can still "read" using their gifts of touch and sound; (2) the Saul Building Archives Museum, which collects, preserves, and showcases archival materials from St. Paul's College; and (3) the Free Little Libraries in southside Virginia—a partnership between the Library of Danville and the Parks and Recreation Department.

There's much more in this issue to be thankful for, but I don't want to give away all of the surprises! Open the pages and you'll see for yourself how lucky we are to be a part of the special library systems and services that weave their way across Virginia's landscape. **VI**