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Virginia Libraries is a quarterly journal published by the Virginia Library Association whose purpose is to develop, promote, and improve library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to advance literacy and learning and to ensure access to information in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The journal, distributed to the membership, is used as a vehicle for members to exchange information, ideas, and solutions to mutual problems in professional articles on current topics in the library and information field. Views expressed in Virginia Libraries are not necessarily endorsed by the editors or editorial board.

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The guidelines for submissions to Virginia Libraries are found on page 7.
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Are the rates of reading falling, or are the methods of reading changing? The jury’s still out. While the NEA’s *Reading at Risk* delineates a valid cause for alarm, some have criticized it for failing to make adequate allowance for the types of reading going on during Internet use, perusal of graphic novels, and even gaming. Then there’s the migration of fiction to other forms of media. Audiobooks may make “reading” easier by eliminating the need for literacy and providing additional color, with character voices and narrative inflections often adding to one’s enjoyment while enforcing the reader’s interpretation of the text; still, the imaginative act involved in absorbing and engaging with the story is quite similar to that required by the printed word. Many audiobook listeners still refer to this act as “reading”—should we? Learning is definitely going on, with nonfiction as well as fiction providing the benefits we traditionally expect of them; if there’s less exposure to spelling and punctuation, this is balanced by the benefit of improving one’s feel for the flow of narrative through the spoken word. There are similar non-verbal lessons to be learned from other “replacement” media: story is still at the heart of graphic novels, films, television, and the more elaborate role-playing computer games, all of which offer a more visual take on the construction of story, but still balance character development, plot, and theme while sometimes providing the profound personal insights we treasure in literature. Indeed, a startlingly high percentage of films are still being adapted from novels and short stories—frequently without viewers even realizing the source.

Since we have become aware of different learning styles, one might even applaud the greater wealth of learning available through this variety of media that provide auditory, visual, and even tactile means of absorbing knowledge. Yet while many are coming to recognize the cultural and educational value of media such as comics, games, and the Internet (none of which are actually “new” media at this point, though their growing, but still sometimes problematic, acceptance by those in education-related fields may make them seem so), do we really consider them to be a fair substitute for the sorts of “literary pleasure reading” that the NEA seeks to measure? And if not, should we? The novel in Western literature is a fairly recent development in the span of human history; and as technology fosters ever-faster changes in human society, one might expect our arts to fluctuate as well. The problem for libraries, of course, is that whether or not books should continue to be privileged over other sources of information and entertainment, the fact is that they’re slipping in the polls. No matter how much “new” media and technology we add to aid circulation and draw people to the library, it’s not going to alter the fact that the way people read—most notably in the younger generations—truly seems to be changing.

While it’s clear that the book is not going to disappear—not yet, at least—it’s just as clear that it no longer reigns supreme even among avid readers as a source for either entertainment or information. During the recent Writers Guild of America strike, I had hoped that the paucity of television offerings would inspire many to return to reading. But complaints of library staff over television boredom did not seem to lead to more time to read. The comments I heard seemed unfortunately typical, though perhaps understandable: after a long day of work often followed by housework or childcare, many didn’t have the energy to read very much. The anecdotal evidence suggested that even among library staff, reruns and reality shows were still often preferred over reading, providing light or background entertainment. (I challenge you to make a weekly log of your per-
sonal time that details hours spent watching TV, including movies and shows, and using the Internet, including email, versus time spent reading printed literary materials. You might be surprised at the results.)

There’s a lot of concern among writers as well as libraries about the falling numbers of fiction readers. It’s not just the increasingly high price of paper that has book sales and readership in a continuing downward spiral; the interests of the audience, even avid readers, have spread out, when they haven’t changed altogether. In the second introduction to Killer Year, M. J. Rose says, “With margins low, distribution costs rocketing, limited or no marketing budgets for all but the top 15 percent of titles, and little major media interest in all but the biggest authors, book sales drop a little more every year and fewer and fewer authors can live off their fiction efforts. [...] [I]f you look at the statistics, the average ‘avid’ reader only buys 2.5 books a year [...]. [Ours is] an industry losing readers to video games, movies, digital cable, blogs, and a creeping apathy about books.”¹ A recent interview of readers by the Mystery Writers of America for their “Murder Must Air” program revealed that reading one to four books a month was still considered a respectable number.² Perhaps so, what with work commitments and family responsibilities. But during that same month, how many television shows and movies have those readers consumed? Those who practice their art in the printed word are finding an ever-shrinking audience that not only denies them their purpose (communicating their art to others), but threatens to eliminate their very ability to pursue their calling. Fewer fiction writers than ever can support themselves solely through their craft in the United States; often, they rely on income from other full-time careers or part-time jobs, other types of professional writing and editing, or the earnings of other family members. Some may hold the belief that art should exist for its own sake; but if nothing else, payment is an indicator of the state of the audience in a free-market society, showing whether the author is still connecting with readers. The ability to live by one’s art also means that the artist has the best opportunity to focus intensely and delve deeply into that art. Without this ability, less fiction—and possibly fiction of lesser quality—will be produced for us to enjoy.

Story with a capital S has been with humanity from the beginning, and will doubtless survive in one form or another. But sometime in the coming decades, the novel might find itself relegated to academia and amateurs, much as poetry increasingly was by the final decades of the twentieth century. Indeed, the short story may have already moved a long way toward this state. In “What Ails the Short Story,” Stephen King reflects on his experiences as editor of the latest Best American Short Stories, pondering “What happens when [a writer] [...] realizes that his or her audience is shrinking almost daily? [...] [W]riters write for whatever audience is left. In too many cases, that audience happens to consist of other writers and would-be writers who are reading [...] not to be entertained but to get an idea of what sells [...]. Last year, I read scores of stories that felt ... not quite dead on the page, I won’t go that far, but airless, somehow, and self-referring[,] [...] written for editors and teachers rather than for readers. [...] It’s tough for writers to write (and editors to edit) when faced with a shrinking audience. [...] [Is the] American short story well? Sorry, no, can’t say so. Current condition stable, but apt to deteriorate in the years ahead.”³ King urges people to reinvigorate their love for the short story by reading some of the best and most passionate tales to be found in the field, collected in this anthology. I agree: yet our three copies, housed at separate branch libraries, have circulated a grand total of seventeen times since being added to the collection in August 2007.

Perhaps as both a writer and a librarian, I’m more depressed about this situation than I should be. But I have to wonder: as printed books diminish in importance, will libraries continue to be necessary? While studying for my MLIS online through Florida State University, I had remote access to the library’s ample collection of electronic journals, electronic books, and e-reserves. Though I occasionally had recourse to more local university libraries, for the most part, I could have completed my studies without ever setting foot in a physical library. For all I knew, FSU’s library could have been a single, part-time librarian in a closet with a server and a budget for electronic publications. If the library’s chief use in many communities is now to provide computer access and community space, the same purpose could be served by city-run Internet cafes and meeting rooms. Though we know how valuable a skilled reference librarian’s input can be, how many patrons are bothering to ask, what with the ready availability of information online? And how many librarians, faced with computer sign-ups and

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¹ [Ours is] an industry losing readers to video games, movies, digital cable, blogs, and a creeping apathy about books.

² Perhaps so, what with work commitments and family responsibilities.

³ King urges people to reinvigorate their love for the short story by reading some of the best and most passionate tales to be found in the field, collected in this anthology.
printer troubles, have the time to answer?

Leaving aside the questions of what constitutes “reading,” the comparative value of media types, and the changing definition of the library itself, I think we need to consider strongly whether “literary pleasure reading” is something that libraries should actively strive to save. I’m not advocating downplaying the importance or relevance of other media. Rather, I’m suggesting that by getting people excited about reading again, we’ll not only be helping the authors who create the content we exist to provide, but also directly increasing our relevance to our communities. Let’s face it: one of the reasons public library visitation is falling off is that when people want new entertainment—movies, TV shows, music, the Internet, video games, comics—the library is not the first place they think about as a source. Patrons who know do come around: but a lot of them found out because they came here for books in the first place. Sure, we can spread the word—and we have. The library is changing, there’s no doubt about that. But in this changing world, I still believe that a greater emphasis on reaching out with literary programs can help to bolster library visitation. Musicians have pointed the way: with falling record sales, many musicians these days rely on giving concerts as a means to survive. Even when people borrow more albums than they buy, the energy and wonder of a live performance continues to attract a paying audience. While authors might not be as flashy, the physical presence of a live author still has significant drawing power. Programs that involve authors reading and discussing their work, connecting with their audience, and personally signing books afterward can help both the author and the library that hosts them. If your library is interested in offering such a program, one source for contacting authors is the database hosted by the Virginia Commission for the Arts (http://www.arts.state.va.us/directories/writers/search.asp). You might attend local literary festivals to find potential authors; the Virginia Literary Awards Celebration at the Library of Virginia offers the opportunity to meet some of the finest (http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/awards/). The Library of Virginia also offers Researching Virginia Authors (www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwehave/notes/VaAuthorsBib).

... the physical presence of a live author still has significant drawing power.

pdf), which should prove useful not only for finding the names of current Virginia authors, but organizing activities that focus on Virginia writers both past and present. Another source for information about literary events and how to host them is the Virginia Center for the Book (http://www.virginiahumanities.org/bookcenter/).

The articles and conference sessions you’ll encounter in this issue of Virginia Libraries offer some food for thought. One way of increasing the library’s presence caters to the modern thirst for convenience, presence, and immediacy: take the library to the people. In “Las Vegas Lessons” (VLA conference session, page 36), Barbie Selby describes innovative marketing tools for capturing the fleeting attention of communities bobbled by options, as well as several ways in which libraries visit their patrons—joining classrooms to teach information literacy, bringing books to the lunchroom for students to check out, buying a hot dog cart and laptop and taking the library on the road to a student center across campus, and even taking the library to sea. In “Faculty-Librarian Collaborations Facilitate Information Literacy Competence in the Large Classroom Setting” (page 37), Michelle L. Young describes a means of improving both the library’s relevance and the students’ skills in using it. In “A Partnership between a Public High School’s Health Sciences Academy and an Academic Health Sciences Library” (page 40), Ruth Smith, Brittany Horn, and Shelley Chitwood document a means by which career-minded high school students became involved with a library highly relevant to their interests. These articles suggest that libraries can improve their visibility by finding places where people congregate and catering to their interests and location. I’d also recommend finding those who are passionate about fictional worlds and making use of their energy. Libraries could benefit by sponsoring appropriately themed booths at local conventions for mystery or science fiction fans or for enthusiasts of boating or history; in addition to spreading the word about the library, staff may find that attendees who are local residents will check material out on the spot. Further, libraries could agree to host or sponsor such conventions themselves. Then there are the perennial library favorites like reading groups and reader’s advisory programs; in “New Trends in Fiction” (VLA conference session, page 35), Neil Hollands, Penelope Hamblin, and Jessica Zellers offer several suggestions about exciting new genres that are drawing a lot of readers.

But promoting reading is also about literacy, not just attracting the literate. There’s another means by which to gain more readers: make sure more of the populace is equipped with the skills and inter-
est they need in order to engage with books. Literacy for all ages has long been a concern of libraries, who offer both children’s and adult learning and ESL programs. In “Changing Lives through Literature” (VLA conference session, page 27), Katherine Strotman shows us how to take this to a meaningful new level with a program that helps to rehabilitate frequent offenders by inspiring a love for reading. In both his keynote speech (“Opening Session,” VLA conference coverage, page 18) and his interview with VLA’s Lydia Williams (page 11), David Baldacci stresses the importance of helping our communities by increasing adult literacy, a cause he promotes through his Wish You Well Foundation (http://www.wishyouwellfoundation.org/). Baldacci’s position as a best-selling author gives him not only a stake but also a voice in combating a problem that affects us all. As described in the article “Illiteracy in the Workplace” in the Encyclopedia of Business, functional illiteracy—reading below the sixth-grade level—not only affects workplace safety and productivity but also eliminates many potential pleasure-readers. The article asserts that “According to a United Nations survey of worldwide adult literacy, of the 158 participating nations, the United States ranks 49th. […] Since a high school level of literacy is usually necessary in order to read newspapers and magazines frequently, some experts insist that anyone who reads and writes below secondary school level is functionally illiterate. … [A]s many as 72 million adults are affected […]. Perhaps most alarming is the fact that the highest levels of functional illiteracy can be found among the young, specifically in the eighteen- to thirty-year-old age bracket.” As David Baldacci says in his interview with Lydia Williams, “I think people who live in better areas of the country with a population of better-educated citizens would be stunned to learn that there are many states where about half of the population live in homes where there are no books. And there are not just a few states with this problem, but many.” If your library does not already have an adult literacy program in place, consider visiting the National Institute for Literacy (http://www.nifl.gov/) for more information about the problem and how to combat it.

In light of all this, we plan to devote a special issue of Virginia Libraries to the theme of literacy and pleasure reading. We want to get communities excited about libraries by reawakening the love of books of all types and genres. To that end, we’d love to see articles about some of the many literary events and programs being sponsored by libraries, as well as interviews with Virginia authors. The partnerships between authors and libraries continue to be fruitful, with benefits for libraries, the communities they serve, and the authors themselves. Please help us celebrate and encourage our literary heritage by sharing your experiences and ideas, and introducing us all to more Virginia authors through insightful interviews.

Articles and interviews are welcome at any time; however, the deadline for the themed issue is August 1 (for the October/November/December issue). As we hope this theme will generate a lot of interest, we are planning to publish a double issue to allow space for additional content. The themed issue will thus appear as Vol. 54, No. 3 & 4. We are still seeking general articles and interviews for Vol. 54, No. 2; the extended deadline is May 1.

Be sure to query first with your ideas or with the name of a prospective interview candidate. While we welcome all submissions, please remember that acceptance depends upon the full article and is not guaranteed. Full submission guidelines can be found on page 7. (Please note our new deadlines.) Thanks in advance for your interest and support.

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**Notes**


2. L. C. Hayden, interview with five readers, Murder Must Air, Mystery Writers of America, August 14, 2007.


For the Love of Reading: Call for Submissions to Virginia Libraries

Virginia Libraries is pleased to devote a special issue to the theme of literacy and reading for the fun of it. We want to help get communities excited about our libraries by reawakening the love of books of all types and genres. To that end, we’d love to see articles about some of the many literary events and programs being sponsored by libraries, as well as interviews with Virginia authors. The partnerships between authors and libraries continue to be fruitful, with benefits for libraries, the communities they serve, and the authors themselves. Please help us celebrate and encourage our literary heritage by sharing your experiences and ideas, and introducing us all to more Virginia authors through insightful interviews.

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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. Brief announcements and press releases should be directed to the VLA Newsletter.

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.

5. VLA holds the copyright on all articles published in Virginia Libraries. Contributors of articles receive two copies of the issue in which their work appears.

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.

7. 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 contributor’s copies.

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@ferrum.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.
The Freedom to Read Foundation is the only organization whose main purpose is to defend through the courts the right to access information in libraries. Whether you are a librarian or library supporter, and you value the access libraries provide for everyone in the community, you can't afford not to be a member of the Freedom to Read Foundation.

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Freedom to Read Foundation  www.ftrf.org
A new year offers a clean slate, and it's with great enthusiasm that I take up my pen (okay, my keyboard) and write about what the coming year holds for VLA. Below you’ll find the top issues that the Executive Committee and I considered at the January/February meeting of the VLA Council.

Advocacy
Advocacy for library support provides opportunities for all of us to get involved. We’re all citizens with elected officials who are potential library supporters; we shouldn’t simply assume that they understand what a priority we are for their constituents. We need to tell them that we speak on behalf of the 4.2 million Virginians who hold library cards.

VLA is committed to providing leadership for legislative and advocacy activities that support libraries and library staff in the commonwealth. To that end, we will support the work of the Legislative Committee, the 2008 Legislative Agenda, and National Legislative Day. (Find details at the VLA website: www.vla.org.) These efforts are especially important in a year when state government is feeling the effects of a downturn in the economy.

Online Presence
The VLA website is an invaluable resource for the membership. In the coming year we plan to make the site even more convenient by implementing online voting, posting our membership directory, and implementing online membership renewal. Past President Pat Howe will serve as the content manager for the website this year and has kindly agreed to chair an ad hoc committee that will address these enhancements.

As we look at ways to promote the interactivity of the site, we welcome your suggestions.

Succession and Mentoring
We must encourage and develop the next generation of librarians in our libraries, as well as provide meaningful opportunities for continuing education and leadership within our state association. We applaud the wonderful initiative shown by those who have established VLA’s Virginia Leadership Development Forum for middle managers.

In addition, Virginia has been honored to have three very capable young professionals chosen for ALA’s Emerging Leaders program: Renée Di Pilato, Alexandria Public Library; Mary Hanlin, Tidewater Community College; and Sally Ma, Jefferson-Madison Regional Library. The Emerging Leaders program enables newer librarians from across the country to participate in problem-solving workgroups, network with peers, gain an inside look into ALA structure, and have an opportunity to serve the profession in a leadership capacity.

We want very much to include young people in the activities of our association through mentoring and appointment to committees. If you’re new to the profession and want to be involved in VLA, we’ll find a place for you. Let us hear from you about what you want to see VLA offer for your growth.

Those of us who have been around for a while have much to offer and should make the opportunity to use these talents to help develop the young people in our libraries and in our association.

Archives
As we dedicate our energies to present and future challenges, we have also pledged to honor our past. I will be appointing an ad hoc committee this year to develop guidelines and procedures for identifying and preserving the association’s history.

In addition to documents such as minutes, publications, and press releases, our history has been

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS
recorded for many years by photographer Pierre Courtois from the Library of Virginia. Many of us remember enjoying the VLA slide show at the association’s hundredth anniversary in 2005 that included some of these photos. Making them digitally accessible to our members will not just preserve our heritage, but also build community.

As I look to the coming year, I’m reminded that it is through sustained hard work in the present that we make the future happen. We are energized by our belief that libraries make a difference in people’s lives. Daily, we witness outcomes and hear stories about the impact that libraries have. We are in a position to realize what a difference we make. We must tell these stories to those who fund us. We must utilize energy, creativity, and intellect to insure that we are provided the support to fulfill our vital mission. 

At most living memory endures for a hundred years or so. Thereafter even the barest outline of the past is forgotten, unless it is recorded in writing.

JOHN MORRIS, LONDINIUM: LONDON IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Never, never, never give up.

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

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Serving libraries since 1993
An Interview with Virginia Author Extraordinaire David Baldacci

by Lydia Williams

David Baldacci is a Virginia author who possesses a talent for writing and an enthusiasm for the written word that make him extraordinary in his field. His love for writing, his passion for creating the ultimate in characters and plots, and his desire to give his readers more than they bargained for have made him an international best-selling author with fourteen novels and two children's books to his credit. His most recent publication, *Stone Cold*, is the third book in the Camel Club series. His other publications include *Absolute Power*, *Total Control*, *The Winner*, *The Simple Truth*, *Saving Faith*, *Wish You Well*, *Last Man Standing*, *The Christmas Train*, *Split Second*, *Hour Game*, *The Camel Club*, *The Collectors*, and *Simple Genius*. 

*Titles in his young readers series are Freddy and the French Fries: Fries Alive! and Freddy and the French Fries: The Adventures of Silas Finklebean. Baldacci recently hosted an episode of *Murder by the Book* that aired on Court TV in November. He and his wife are cofounders of the Wish You Well Foundation, a non-profit organization with a mission to support literacy across America.*

Virginia has been home to so many wonderful writers, including yesterday’s Thomas Nelson Page, Ellen Glasgow, and James Branch Cabell, and today’s Rita Mae Dove, Patricia Cornwell, and Sharyn McCrumb. How does it feel to be a part of Virginia’s rich heritage of talented writers?

It is a great feeling. I first thought about this when I visited the Virginia Authors Room at the Library of Virginia. And obviously, I have read a lot of the Virginia writers’ works.

When you see their works collected in one place, you realize what a legacy and heritage Virginia has and how many wonderful writers are included in this heritage. It is a humbling feeling, and it is just nice to be mentioned in the same breath with writers like these.

Would you please talk about what influenced you to begin writing?

I am a writer because I began as a reader. My parents took us to the public library. It was a ritual for my brother, my sister, and me to visit the library every weekend. We had a secret arrangement with the librarian, who would let us check out as many books as we wanted because we read so much and so quickly. We would take stacks of books home, read them, and come back the next weekend for more. It was just the feeling of seeing a brand new world without having to leave Richmond that kept me going back for more. I could open a book and be transported to another time and place. The power of the words would mesmerize me. I wanted to write books that would impact other people in this same way. I would read a book and think how much I would like to write a book that would capture my readers’ imaginations and draw them into a different world. I set

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Sharyn McCrumb. How does it feel to be a part of Virginia’s rich heritage of talented writers?

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Lydia Williams is the archives and records manager at Greenwood Library at Longwood University.
out to learn all the things you need to know as a writer—whether it is about narrative, character development, dialogue, or just putting words together. I didn’t start out by writing stories. I began by writing thousands of pages of material—pages of dialogue, descriptions of things I would see out in the world, attempts to create characters in a way that captured one’s attention and seemed interesting—just working to build a craft. Because that’s what it really is—writing is a craft.

**VL** Don’t you think that successful writers possess the gift of telling stories that people love to read?

**DB** My mom will tell you that I was pretty good at telling yarns. I usually told a lot of tall tales, mostly to get myself out of trouble. It’s great to have ideas, and you do need a vivid imagination; but to execute upon all that involves a lot of sweat equity. And you have to really love doing it, because it is a very frustrating profession.

**VL** I know that submitting the very first manuscript to a publisher can be an agonizing experience. Would you share what you experienced with your first submission?

**DB** The first short stories that I sent out were not published. Unfortunately, there isn’t much of a market for short stories. There are very few places you can send them for publication. I sent my first stories to *Story Magazine* and some regional publications. I even sent them to *Playboy Magazine* because they do publish good fiction. I received rejections from all of them. I would receive printed cards that read, “We hope your work will find a place somewhere, but rest assured it will never be here,” and “We are sorry we can’t take this, but we only represent talent.” Sometimes I got cards back from editors saying that what I had submitted was not right for their publication, but they liked my writing and asked that I send them something else. I love writing so much that this was all the encouragement I needed: just a little line here or there. So for people who get frustrated when their work is rejected, I tell them that it is not going to happen fast, and it shouldn’t. Part of learning how to become a writer is learning how to live and experience life. The things I wrote when I was seventeen weren’t very good; the things I wrote when I was twenty-seven were better, and the things I am writing now are, hopefully, better than that. It is all part of knowing how to put words together and how to take readers on an adventure, knowing they are going to follow you all the way through the story.

**VL** I realize that writing is something you love to do, but we all know it takes a great deal of hard work, time, and patience. So, considering the task before you, what motivates you to take on the next project?

**DB** That is a great question. I have to really be interested in the subject matter before I begin a new project. My mind has to really want to tell the story; otherwise, I don’t want to devote my time to it. Life is just too short. So I will look at an idea or question out in the real world that intrigues me—one that I may not know a lot about—and then I begin the research process. So the old adage to write what you know is not always true. I say write what you are interested in knowing about, and then go and learn a lot about it. That is what I tend to do, and that is what motivates me. It has to be more than just trying to sell books. I have sold enough books; now it has to be about what sort of mark I want to leave behind and what I want my books to accomplish.

**VL** You are a master at taking words and crafting them into stories that we all love to read. How do you begin the process of writing a story that evolves into a novel?

**DB** Every writer approaches the writing process in a different way. When I get an idea I let it germinate for a while. When I was younger I would have an idea for a story and then rush to turn it into a novel or screenplay. But then I would realize halfway down the road that it didn’t fit that genre at all. So I would have to throw the pages away and start all over again. Now when I think I have an idea that might make a good novel, I let the idea germinate in my mind for a while to see if it really has the substance it needs to justify writing a four-hundred-page book about it. After a month I might decide that the idea is much better suited to a screenplay, novella, or short story. So I let the idea ruminate in my head, and I think about it, allowing the idea to develop. I go through the process of thinking of the potential for the story—who the main characters will be, how many subplots can be spun off from the main plot, who the main characters will be, how many subplots can be spun off from the main plot, what characters will inhabit the periphery of the story, who will carry the narrative drive of the story, where do I want to set it, what is the battle plan for the research I will need to do—so there will be a real veneer of authority to the novel and readers will think, “This guy knows what he’s talking about.” If you do the research, people will trust you. Readers will trust you if the
information sounds right and it sounds like you know what you’re talking about. Then the reader will be much more apt to say, “I am going to put myself in this person’s hands for the whole story.” Readers can tell when writers haven’t done their research and when they have fudged the stuff. To me this is a real turnoff, because I know that research makes a story better.

**VL** The novels you write are filled not only with lots of action, but also with complex characters who each have their own unique thoughts, motives, emotions, and reactions to all they encounter throughout the story. How are you able to bring each one of your characters to life so that they are both unique and believable? How do you create a character?

**DB** If you look at novels, a character is a million little details cobbled together, and the quality of your character depends on how good your glue is or on how well you put these details together. I like to build a character slowly and not reveal everything at once. My sister was a journalist for years and began writing novels later in her career. She said that the hardest task for her was to overcome her training to get all the facts out as quickly as possible. As a fiction writer, this is the last thing you want to do. You want to entice, you want to seduce, and you want to tempt. Then you turn the tap off and let the reader think about it for a little while. You go along with the story for a while before you turn the tap back on and let them have a few more drops of the character’s blood. I like to begin by providing a little of the character’s physical description to give the reader a tag to attach to the character—is the character young, old, strong, brilliant, short, tall, whatever—and then begin to reveal the character through some interactions with other characters. I don’t want to tell my reader what the character is supposed to be like. I prefer to let the readers see or imagine this for themselves. I could say, “This Jackson is an evil mastermind who thinks he’s ahead of everyone,” but I would prefer to show you how he’s a mastermind, how the character is smarter than everyone else and can keep a step ahead of everyone else; and I do that through interactions with other characters within the plot. I prefer to build the character through interactions and dialogue with other characters. If you want people to appear smart, you show them doing smart things and saying smart things or outwitting other characters in the novel. That’s the best way to develop a character, because then the reader will come to know the character by using his or her own powers of reasoning.

**VL** Do you get emotionally involved with your characters, or are you able to get the characters out of your thoughts when you take a break from writing?

**DB** I really do inhabit the characters. Particularly in reoccurring characters such as the ones in the Camel Club series. I like to think that I grow with these characters as they are evolving. As they evolve from book to book, I like to think that I am evolving as a writer. It is a joy to have the luxury of writing character arcs in a series of books. It gives the writer a lot of space and latitude to build those characters, which allows them to evolve into ones that are more complex and interesting. In writing a book like *Wish You Well*, the characters stay with you. I lived with the souls of those characters long after the book was completed. It was just one of those things for me where they seemed so real that I wanted to talk with them. They represented a lot of my heart and soul. The characters I create do stay with me.

**VL** Of all the characters you have created for all of your novels, which one is your favorite?

**DB** I guess I would have to split them out between the thrillers and non-thrillers. On the thriller side, I would have to choose Oliver Stone, who heads up the Camel Club. He is such an interesting character. I have never been able to develop a character like him before, nor had the luxury of developing a character through a series of three books. I can tell you—from A to Z—what makes this man tick. On the non-thriller side, Diamond Skinner from *Wish You Well* is my favorite. He represented wonderful things, and he has always stuck with me. I am not sure I could ever do a Diamond Skinner again.

**VL** *The Christmas Train* is so different from your other novels, because you leave the world of bad guy versus good guy and create a totally different type of story. What inspired you to write this story?

**DB** It was happenstance, really. I was finishing the book *Last Man Standing*, which was a testosterone-driven, high-powered, gadget- and hardware-filled novel about the FBI’s hostage rescue team. I needed three days by myself with no interruptions to finish this novel. I was scheduled to give a speech for the California State Bar in just a few days. Normally I would just fly to L.A., give the speech, and fly back home, but train travel seemed like a better option. I knew that Amtrak
had two trains that went across the county. You can travel from Washington, D.C., to Chicago on the Capitol Limited, and then you can take the Southwest Chief from Chicago to Los Angeles, which is a three-day trip. This was perfect. So I get on the train, enter my little compartment, and begin hammering out the end of Last Man Standing. But you can't write twenty-four hours a day, so you get up, go eat meals, and visit the observation car. People on trains will talk to you all the time. It is not like being on a plane where people have their iPods or their headphones on and look at you as if they dare you to speak to them. So you don't talk to people on planes. That is just the way travel on a plane is, but on a train it is a whole different world. People want to talk. Most of what they say is all lies, tall tales, or yarns, but it is fascinating stuff. So, by the time I got to Los Angeles, I had about fifty pages of notes I had taken during the three-day train trip. When I was flying back home, I was thinking about what I wanted to do for my next novel. I knew I wanted to write a book that centered around characters traveling across country on a train. I decided to set it during the Christmas season—the season of redemption, of a second chance, the beginning of a new year—and to make it sort of a romantic, screwball comedy with some heart and soul added in. I thought this would be a great story, and so this is how the idea for The Christmas Train developed.

In the information on the dust jacket of Wish You Well, you refer to this as being the story of your maternal grandmother's experiences. What was the most interesting thing you learned about your family while working on this project?

My mother had a rough time in the mountains. She was the youngest of ten children. Her oldest sister was twenty-three years old when she was born. My grandmother had my mother later in life—particularly for that era, when children were not born in hospitals, but were delivered by a midwife in one's home. My grandmother was forty-three when she had my mom. My mother and her next-youngest sister were often left alone in the mountains (they were only six and seven years of age) because of issues my grandparents had to deal with. My mom didn't talk about this much, nor did my grandmother, who lived with us the last ten years of her life. But there was a lot of emotional difficulty for them. If my mom had to be candid about it, she would probably say the tougher memories outweigh the more pleasant memories, and this was a revelation for me. I know it was a hard life. I went back to the homepage for the first time when I was seven or eight. Just getting there is a demanding process—it's a long drive through the mountains, and then you have to stop the car and walk in the rest of the way because there were no roads into the farm. I know how difficult it must have been for her, especially being left alone in such a harsh and lonely environment. This wasn't what I was expecting to learn about my mother's childhood. But I can also see how my mother survived this, because she is a very strong woman. Her spirit is indomitable, and now I can see why she is such a strong person.
You have written two books for young readers. What motivated you to begin writing books for children?

When my children were younger, I started telling them bedtime stories about Freddy the French Fry. It just popped into my head one night, and every night after that I would tell them more stories about Freddy. I even recorded a story for them when I needed to be away. It was a funny Freddy story that they could listen to while I was gone. When my son was in the first grade, my wife had the idea of doing an auction book to raise money for the school. I read the Freddy story to a group of first graders; they each received a page from the manuscript, and they each did an illustration based on their reading of that page and what they thought the illustration should look like. We had the book published, just like a real book, and auctioned it off. This is how the Freddy and the French Fries series began. Subsequently, it was published for real by Little, Brown. I did a couple of those, and it was a lot of fun. It’s all about making children readers at an early age. If they don’t read books in these early years, they probably won’t read books when they become adults, so this is important.

We get stars in our eyes when we think about Hollywood and rubbing elbows with movie stars. What were your first thoughts when you received word that Absolute Power was to become a major motion picture?

I was on a train coming back from New York City when I received the phone call. I spent about $500 on the rail phoning everyone I had ever met in my life. On the same day that I received word that Absolute Power would become a motion picture, I also learned that Clint Eastwood would star in the movie. I wanted to let everyone in my life know this wonderful news. It was stunning, but at the same time I also felt some trepidation. I wondered how they would revise the story and how well the story would evolve into a film. At some point, you just have to let it go and realize they know what they’re doing. You just need to come to the realization that filmmaking is just a different way of telling a story.

Your latest book, Stone Cold, will be released November 6, 2007. Can you share some details about this novel?

My last book, The Collectors, ended with a big cliff-hanger. In my newest book, Stone Cold, the mystery is resolved. The main plot revolves around Oliver Stone—his past, present, and future. His past has finally come back to haunt him, and maybe to destroy him. I like taking on challenges. I don’t like writing books in the same way everyone else writes them. If you look at most books that deal with the CIA, the thriller books are all written one way—the good guys are all good, and the bad guys are all bad. There is no complexity in these characters. Their motives are crystal clear. The outcome is always the same—the good guys vanquish the bad guys. Usually they are just mowed down in a Hollywood type of scene. Lots of people can write that, but for me it’s all about the nuances of the characters and what makes the good guys also bad guys. Is there a glimmer of the positive in the bad guys? The greatest screen villains have these nuances. What makes you want to keep watching Hannibal Lecter, who eats people? Well, there is more to it than that. We want to know what has caused him to become this kind of a character. This desire to know is what draws you to them. I like creating characters that have complexity. In my world, everyone is gray; no one is black and white. You can find evil where you didn’t think you would find evil, and you can find good where you were absolutely certain you would find no good at all. For me, that is what makes a good character, and that is the kind of character you will find in Stone Cold.

I read on your website that you are now involved in a project for television. Could you share details about this project and what role you will play?

Court TV has a second season of a series called “Murder by the Book,” and they have asked best-selling, mystery/thriller/crime writers to host episodes. You can pick what you want the episode you will be hosting to be about. I picked the Georgetown Starbucks Murders, which took place about ten years ago in Washington, D.C. Georgetown is a posh area in D.C. where crime is a rarity. It is where Supreme Court justices and owners of the Washington Post live. But three people were slain in this area, and it didn’t appear that these incidents involved robbery. What makes this interesting is that the woman who was gunned down had just taken a job at the White House as an intern with Monica Lewinsky. Because it was during the Monica Lewinsky scandal, all the conspiracy theorists thought the murder might be tied to the White House. But it turned out to be more than that. The producers went back and interviewed everybody involved in the investigation: the FBI, the homicide detectives,
family members. During the show, they take you to the scene of the crime. It’s an hour-long show, and throughout the episode I make twelve appearances. I come on periodically and give my take on what is going on with the case: my feel for what the city was going through, my opinion on how the police were handling the case, my thoughts on how the crime might be solved, and my take on the criminal behind it all. My office was turned into a movie studio for a day. A big white wall was built to enclose one room, and they put in railroad tracks with a dolly for moving the camera up and down the room. It was just a lot of fun. You hit your marks, say your lines, and ad-lib a little. You write different dialogue on the fly because you think something sounds better. It was a nice collaborative process, and I enjoyed it. My episode will be aired on November 12 at 10:00 p.m.

Thank you for all that you do to help others. Could you please talk about the foundation that you and your wife founded—the Wish You Well Foundation?

Throughout the years we have given a lot of support to many different charities. But obviously I am very interested in literacy, because that is what I do—I write books and people read them. When you travel across the country and are involved in lots of events, you begin to realize what a significant need there is in our country for people who can’t read. We founded the Wish You Well Foundation to help alleviate the problem of illiteracy in the United States. There are a lot of great programs out there to help people learn how to read, but they are woefully underfunded and understaffed for a variety of reasons. So what we do with the Wish You Well Foundation is to fund programs with a focus on literacy. We have a board of directors; we meet quarterly; we get hundreds of applications in every quarter; we go through them methodically; and we fund the ones that really fit our mission. We have funded literacy programs in twenty-one states to help adults, teens, and children of all ages, but the bulk of what we do is for adults. There are a lot of programs out there for K-12, but there are virtually none for adult literacy. So we focus on the programs that help adults learn to read. We also have the Feeding the Body & Mind Program, where we partner with America’s Second Harvest and many of our nation’s food banks. We collect new and used books during book signings, pay to have them shipped to food banks, and people who come in for food can also pick up books. We have gotten lots of other writers, publishers, and corporate sponsors involved. We hope ALA will get involved and provide collection centers for books. Our goal is to prevent books from being thrown away or destroyed. The food banks’ response to us has been overwhelming. Nothing bad ever happens from having a book in a home. I think people who live in better areas of the country with a population of better-educated citizens would be stunned to learn that there are many states where about half of the population live in homes where there are no books. And there are not just a few states with this problem, but many. What we are trying to do with these programs is wipe out illiteracy. VL

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**WISH YOU WELL**

Foundation

Supporting family literacy in the United States by fostering and promoting the development and expansion of new and existing literacy and educational programs.

[www.wishyouwellfoundation.org](http://www.wishyouwellfoundation.org)
2007 VLA Annual Conference

Reflect, Retool, Recharge:
Virginia Library Association &
Virginia Association of Law Libraries
Joint Conference,
October 31–November 2, 2007

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31
1:00–4:00 p.m.
Celebrate the Silver Anniversary of the Jefferson Cup Award (Preconference)

Presenters: Authors Jim Murphy and Patricia Reilly Giff; Donna Hughes and the Jefferson Cup Committee

In 1983, members of VLA’s Children’s and Young Adult Round Table (CYART) decided to honor authors of exceptional historical children’s literature with the Jefferson Cup Award—so named for the existing cup chosen for the first winner. CYART felt that the award would be an important way for a state rich in history to encourage historical children’s literature, as well as providing a chance for librarians to meet authors at the annual conference. As CYART designed the award, the original focus on history and biography was soon expanded to include historical fiction to ensure ample choices. Twenty-five years later, over two hundred specialists in youth and children’s literature have contributed their talents to the selection process, and the committee reviews well over two hundred books a year.

Two past winners of the award, Patricia Reilly Giff and Jim Murphy, attended the celebration to discuss their experiences as writers of historical literature. Giff spoke about the background of such books as Nory Ryan’s Song, Maggie’s Door, and Water Street, which chronicle the generational story of an Irish family who end up in Brooklyn while...
the bridge to Manhattan is under construction. The books provide great scope both in history and culture while drawing upon Giff’s memories of her own family. Giff won the Jefferson Cup Award in 2005 for *A House of Tailors*, which portrays the life of a thirteen-year-old girl who emigrates from Germany to Brooklyn to escape the war with France.

Jim Murphy described the many years of patient and painstaking research and revision that go into his writing, such as the four years he put into creating *The Boys’ War: Confederate and Union Soldiers Talk about the Civil War* after encountering a primary source, *Private Elisha Stockwell Jr. Sees the Civil War*, at the Newark Public Library purely through serendipity. The vicissitudes of this writer’s career have included books that were orphaned or nearly lost within the publishing machine when Murphy’s publishers changed owners or editorial staff unexpectedly, sometimes several times for the same book. Murphy won the Jefferson Cup in 1994 for *Across America on an Emigrant Train*, in 1996 for *The Great Fire*, and again in 2001 for *Blizzard: The Storm That Changed America*.

Concluding the session, Donna Hughes, who organized the celebration, spoke about the history of the award and invited past and present committee members to share their memories and experiences from the award’s inception to the present day. Handouts included a history of the award; a list of the 2007 committee members and past chairs; and an invitation to obtain the new book, *The Jefferson Cup Turns 25* by Donna J. Hughes (Glen Allen: Foxhound Publishing, 2007), which chronicles the award’s history, complete with descriptions of award-winning titles, authors, honor books, and other noteworthy works.

—Lyn C. A. Gardner, Hampton Public Library

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**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1**

10:00–11:30 a.m.

**Opening Session**

Presidents Pat Howe and Kevin Butterfield opened the joint Virginia Library Association and Virginia Association of Law Libraries Conference at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, November 1, 2007. After the call to order and greeting, Kevin recognized the members of the Conference Committee.

Deputy Librarian Kip Campbell of the Library of Virginia brought greetings from Librarian of Virginia Sandra G. Treadway, who was unable to attend because of her role in a regional historians’ conference. Her statement, read by Campbell, concluded with the reassurance that VLA members are encouraged to “Count on us, please. Call on us.”

Libby Gleem and Lisa Broughman, Conference Committee cochairs, introduced all the members of their committee. The audience was generous with applause for the work required to bring us all to the Homestead in such delightful autumn weather.

Lisa Broughman also served as chair of the VLA Awards Committee in 2007, and she stayed at the podium to announce this year’s recipients.

The George Mason Award went to Richard F. Andersen, who, in his position as vice president for information systems at Tidewater Community College, proved himself to be an advocate for excellent libraries through improved staffing and increased resources. Andersen advanced a unified library organization, promoted professional development for all levels of staff, and increased awareness of library and information services at the executive level of the college.

The Trustee Award went to Patricia Atherholt, whose involvement at the Goochland Branch
Library began in 1990 when she became a library volunteer. Just one year later, she became the president of the Friends of the Goochland Branch Library, a position she still holds today. Atherholt was appointed to the Pamunkey Regional Library Board of Trustees in 1998, where she served as secretary, vice president, and president of the board. She holds memberships to state and national library associations and was named the Outstanding Trustee of 2003 by the Virginia Public Library Director’s Association. Atherholt is an advocate for library funding on the local, state, and national levels; and it was through her leadership and efforts that the first public building to be built in Goochland County in decades (excepting schools) was constructed. Thanks to Atherholt’s tireless work with the Goochland Board of Supervisors and state legislators, the new Goochland Branch Library was built and fully staffed. The library has become one of the focal points of life in Goochland, thanks to Atherholt’s vision and commitment.

The Friends of the Farmville-Prince Edward Community Library were chosen for the 2007 Friends Award. In the early 1980s, after decades of segregated services in Prince Edward County, two librarians at two separate libraries (the Farmville Reading Room and the Farmville Public Library) concluded that a single library would best serve all of the county’s citizens. After this announcement, a group of local citizens formed a friends group and incorporated in March 1984 as the Friends of the Farmville-Prince Edward Community Library. This group lobbied the local government to support the creation of a public library, and through these efforts the library was dedicated in September 1987. In the twenty-three years since this friends group was formed, they have not faltered in their dedication and service to the library.
proving that it does “take a village” to come together under strong leadership to make things happen.

Finally, former Librarian of Virginia Nolan Yelich was named a VLA Life Member. He began his Virginia library career in August 1968 as the director of public services at the College of William and Mary. In June 1973, he came to what was then the Virginia State Library serving in positions that included director of administrative services and deputy state librarian. In March 1995, Yelich was named state librarian in time to direct the once-in-a-lifetime move to the new Library of Virginia. Yelich retired in June 2007, having faithfully served libraries throughout the commonwealth for thirty-nine years. Yelich also served as president of the Virginia Library Association in 1978.

After these recognitions, Past President Ruth Arnold presented Pat Howe and Kevin Butterfield with gifts in appreciation of the work they did in preparation for our joint conference.

Keynote speaker David Baldacci is an advocate for literacy and philanthropist as well as a best-selling author. At top, he connects with VLA members. Above, he stands with VLA President Pat Howe and Lydia Williams (left), who interviewed him for Virginia Libraries. (See page 9.)
Gloria Reisinger then announced that Lisa Carbone had won the 2007 Jefferson Cup for her book *Blood on the River: James Town 1607*. Carbone’s many awards include the 2002 Jefferson Cup for *Storm Warriors*. *Blood on the River* was also named the *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year for 2006.

Reisinger read a passage from the book that clearly indicated the quality of Carbone’s writing.

Our keynote speaker for the opening session was novelist David Baldacci, who has produced thirteen consecutive *New York Times* best sellers and has over fifty million copies of his books in print. We were especially fortunate that his new novel, *Stone Cold*, was available to VLA members after the session five days ahead of its official publication date.

Baldacci’s talk began with his declaration that he has been proud to have been closely associated with the libraries of Virginia; and it is certain that he has been most supportive and generous as a speaker, advocate, and donor. As always, his presentation was insightful and laced with good humor as he discussed his experiences related to becoming a successful writer “overnight” after years of work and numerous rejections. He also discussed the research he undertakes to be sure his novels are accurate, and recounted some amusing incidents that occurred during his travels.

The author’s description of his work promoting literacy with the Wish You Well Foundation and his support of Feed a Body and Mind—the program that gives books to children of low-income families—convinced the attendees of his passion for using his success to help society. Then Baldacci concluded with more humor and a description of how he was drawn to write the adventures of Freddy and the French Fries to please his own children. The author was rewarded with sincere applause as well as a long line at the table where he later signed copies of his new book.

Pat Howe ended the session with announcements and an invitation to attend the VLA/VALL Conference Social.

— Cy Dillon, Ferrum College

1:15–2:00 p.m.

**Bridging the Gap: Serving Reentry Students in Public and Academic Libraries**

Presenters: Jessica Schwab, Prince William County Public Library; Heather Groves Hannan, George Mason University; and Bill Fleming, Northern Virginia Community College

Students reentering the university after a prolonged absence often face a complex set of challenges. Libraries can help facilitate their information seeking and can make a lasting impact by becoming more aware of their needs. Presenters Jessica Schwab of Prince William County Public Library and Heather Groves Hannan of George Mason University...
University collaborated with Bill Fleming of Northern Virginia Community College in a study of adult learners. To get a better picture of the issues, they combined a literature review with a survey of public librarians; they also interviewed public library directors and students.

Librarians report that each year, they serve an average of forty-five adult students each. The students use public libraries because of convenience, because they have prior experience with them, or to supplement their institutional libraries. Students are not always aware of the resources offered: 55 percent of librarians surveyed said many do not know that public libraries offer electronic databases similar to those of their universities. Public libraries could do more to market resources, such as creating handouts specifically for adult students.

Interviews also revealed student characteristics: they are engaged and motivated, yet also very busy with jobs and lives. They often enjoy working in self-directed environments and prefer assignments based on real-life situations. From the instructors’ perspective, adult students tend to be focused and attentive, and better at separating personal difficulties and studies. But there can be a significant technology threshold for those who have not encountered new technologies in the workplace.

Institutional and public libraries have an opportunity to create partnerships. Online universities should work with local institutions to arrange for services; public libraries will also benefit from liaisons at nearby universities. For their part, universities can assist public libraries with reference or offer workshops such as evening sessions on database research. There is also the possibility of collaborating with community groups.

Some raise questions about whether this falls within the public library’s mission. There are also concerns about staffing and resources. Services for adult learners do not fit the profile of traditional library services, which may make fundraising difficult. Overall, however, those surveyed and interviewed seemed to agree that more should be done to address the needs of this little-known and growing population.

—Maryke Barber, Wyndham Robertson Library at Hollins University

**Encyclopedia Virginia:**
**Bridging Digital Libraries and Public History**

Presenter: Karen Wikander

In the absence of Matthew Gibson, Karen Wikander undertook the introduction of a new web-based resource funded by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. *Encyclopedia Virginia* is not yet launched, but according to the information currently available in its website (http://www.virginiafoundation.org/encyclopedia/encyclopedia.html), “The purpose of EV is to become the first point of reference for all users interested in Virginia and to provide authoritative and accessible information for students, teachers, scholars, and business, industry, and government when they have a question about Virginia’s history and culture.” Another goal of the project is to become an online textbook for Virginia geography.

*EV* was begun in response to a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to start state encyclopedias in fifteen states. So far, Georgia and Texas have online encyclopedias up and running. If all goes well—and there is some question—*EV* will go online live in the fall of 2008.

According to Wikander, *EV* is being developed using carefully structured metadata and indexing with an eye to making the user’s experience with the site positive. Proven software such as Chronilist for creating timelines and Google Maps for designing travel plans will be incorporated in the design.

As opposed to Wikipedia, *EV* contributors are selected by the staff, though there is not yet a plan for soliciting additional contributors as the project grows.

While this session created more questions than it answered, it is clear that VFH has an excellent track record. Librarians should monitor the progress of *EV* and be ready to introduce our readers to it when it becomes available.

—Cy Dillon, Ferrum College
M-Learning: What Is Driving Mobility and How Does It Impact Our Libraries?

Presenter: W. Gardner Campbell, University of Mary Washington

Mobile devices are transforming our culture. The session looked at demand and explored how libraries might tap into the intimacy and ubiquity of these devices. W. Gardner Campbell pointed out that mobility means the individual moves and connects; the device should be considered secondary to the mobile user. Mobility enhances work, political, and social processes and has the potential to enhance learning experiences in and out of the library. Within two years, activities such as two- to ten-minute downloads (“snack TV”) will allow use where and when the user desires. Signaling and streaming video will be improved, and the higher speeds will be transformative. Library roles might include podcasting; online reading, writing, and reflection; and improved portals to physical content. Two downsides to mobility are oversharing and citizen journalism. The speaker observed that library vendors continue to focus on a stable and secure mode that does not take advantage of mobility. He pointed out that mobility is considered by some to
be disruptive to the learning environment, as it is not formal and not located in one place. For the future, the speaker offered some thoughts centered on the aspects of intimacy, extension of self, relationship between microcosms and macrocosm, the transformative synergy created by mobility, and the unpredictability of technology.

—Karen Dillon, Carilion Health System

2:15–3:00 p.m.

Faculty Perception of Electronic Books for Their Use and Curriculum Support

Presenters: Barbara Siller and Marcia Dursi, Marymount University

Barbara Siller and Marcia Dursi of Marymount University reported on a faculty survey and a resulting library action plan to foster the use of electronic titles in the Marymount University collection. After asking attendees for definitions of electronic books, they reported that theirs for the project in question was simply digitized content that was cataloged and available for users to read.

Siller and Dursi explained that before the project, they assumed that electronic books were underused, and that their survey revealed this to be the case. Responses from 31 of 144 faculty members indicated that there was some confusion about the availability of the texts and a general lack of understanding of how these items could be used to support class work, though new faculty seemed more comfortable with e-books than veteran teachers.

Based on these outcomes, the library developed a plan to inform faculty about what was available, concentrating on reference titles. Increased emphasis on electronic titles was added to bibliographic instruction sessions, and library communications focused on e-books—including a new “Virtual Reading Room” added to the library webpages. Finally, the plan called for gathering statistics on electronic book use.

The presenters then solicited comments and suggestions from the audience, leading to an interesting discussion of e-book use at a variety of colleges and universities. The topic was clearly timely and of interest to VLA members.

—Cy Dillon, Ferrum College

IM Reference: Fast, Cheap, and in Control

Presenters: Candice Benjes-Small, Radford University; and Olivia Reinauer, University of Richmond

Instant messaging has become extremely popular. Over 90 percent of teenagers use IM. Statistics like these have made academic libraries take notice of a simple and virtually free way to deliver reference services. Candice Benjes-Small of Radford University and Olivia Reinauer of the University of Richmond gave a presentation that covered planning, implementation, marketing, and assessment of RULibSpot (Radford’s IM service since spring 2007) and boatwrightinfo (Richmond’s since spring 2005).

Benjes-Small and Reinauer shared experiences with commercial products, including the downsides: firewall issues, high costs, and insufficient vendor support. Some required users to fill in a form, which led to low use. Freely available IM, already used by many patrons, offered fewer technical and usability issues.

While most users are on AIM, the recent availability of aggregators (Trillian, Meebo) allows one to get messages from multiple services. The presenters noted that scripts for standard responses are useful, although they are used less once staff develop their own short-hand. Transcripts saved by the IM software can be valuable tools for evaluation, but be aware that using and archiving them creates the need for privacy policies.

Both institutions offer IM services at the same hours as reference desk service—the later the better, according to user feedback. The same reference librarians and paraprofessionals that work the desk also handle IM queries. These are usually point-of-need: reference questions, citation problems. If a staff member needs a moment to step away, a customizable “away” message notifies users. Both institutions have worked hard on creating staff buy-in: setting a workable schedule, providing training and practice time, and alleviating common concerns. Staff need to know, for example, that students are multitasking and do not mind if response is not immediate.

The new services have been announced in instruction sessions and campus messages; they’ve been featured on stickers on library computers, handouts, home pages, and blogs. The number of IM questions received has surpassed email reference at both institutions, and the University of Richmond receives more IM than telephone questions. Both institutions plan on using MeeboMe to embed chat windows directly into their websites.

—Maryke Barber, Wyndham Robertson Library at Hollins University

To 2.0 or Not to 2.0: That Is the Question

Presenters: Dora Rowe, James L. Hamner Public Library; and Rebecca A. Russell, Association for Healthcare Philanthropy

Small libraries face obstacles connecting with their patrons. This session showed how small libraries with limited time, small budgets, and few staff can implement aspects of Web 2.0 technology. Web
2.0 allows users to consume and also create. Web 2.0 is user-centered and socially rich, and no one is in charge. The infrastructure is cheap, devices are ubiquitous, and interactive behavior is the norm. Applications such as iGoogle, AIM, PeanutButterWiki (PBwiki), Meebo, MySpace, Flickr, Glogger, YouTube, Wordpress, and phpBB allow the user to make changes or comments on websites. Some applications are free, while others require a higher level of technical expertise. A demonstration of how very small libraries are using Web 2.0 applications showed how blogs, instant messaging, forums, photos, social bookmarking, and social calendars have been creatively incorporated into library websites; some good examples are the sites of the James L. Hamner Public Library in Amelia, Virginia (http://www.hamnerlibrary.org/); the Tonganoxie Public Library in Kansas (http://www.tonganoxieliibrary.org/); the Waterboro Public Library in Maine (http://www.waterborolibrary.org/oldsite/index.html); the Osage City Public Library in Kansas (http://skyways.lib.ks.us/library/osagecity/); the Caestecker Public Library of Green Lake and the Town of Brooklyn, Wisconsin (http://www.greenlakelibrary.org/); the Dolores Public Library of Colorado (http://www.doloreslibrary.org/); the Haines Borough Public Library of Alaska (http://www.haineslibrary.org/default.htm); and the Richmond Public Library of Kansas (http://richmond.mykansaslibrary.org/).

—Karen Dillon, Carilion Health System

You Can Run But You Can’t Hide

Presenter: Evelyn M. Campbell, Hunton & Williams LLP

Evelyn M. Campbell presented attendees with a wide array of resources that librarians and the public can use to track down individuals, whether for legal or genealogical research. Armed with a handout of free sites and fee-based services, Campbell guided the audience through ways to discover information such as the value and layout of homes, the standing of medical professionals, the location of sex offenders (including where they work and what the offense was), court records, death records, and military records. While some sources are available only to legal and law-enforcement personnel, an amazing amount of information about individuals is accessible to the public. In addition to various Internet phone/address directories, some key sites include the Virginia Department of Health Professions (http://www.dhp.state.va.us/), the Virginia State Bar (http://www.vsb.org), the Virginia State Police Sex Offender Registry Search (http://sex-offender.vsp.virginia.gov/sor/html/search.htm), Virginia’s Judicial System Case Information (http://www.courts.state.va.us/caseinfo/home.html), the Social Security Death Index (http://ssdi.rootsweb.com/), the Library of Virginia (http://
Denise Morgan and Irene Osterman looked at bringing humor to the library.

The crowned heads of VLA in the humor session.
thought of the story, what the reading experience was like, why characters made certain choices in the book, whether it’s possible for a person to change, and why it’s so difficult to discuss one’s feelings. All students were required to participate actively, and while they were allowed to disagree, none could disrespect another’s opinion: each voice was important. After twelve weeks, students had learned to listen differently and to feel that their opinions mattered. Many began to read to their children and reconnect with family members, and some even started college classes. In 1992, a women’s group began. By the summer of 1993, forty men had been through the program, providing a basis for a statistical evaluation, which showed that 45 percent of the control group had been reconvicted, while only 18.75 percent of those who’d gone CLTL had been—with crimes that tended to be against property rather than people.

Since then, the program has been replicated in eleven states and England. Strotman provided a number of motivating statistics: in 2006, there were 36,000 men and women imprisoned in Virginia, at a cost of $22,000 per prisoner, with a recidivism rate of 29 to 51 percent. Strotman described practical ways to implement the program in your own community. The participation of allies is essential. Partners need to include members of the justice system (at least a judge and probation officer) as well as a facilitator or librarian with a love of literature who’s willing to let the text speak directly to the students and is good at extemporaneous thought. Location is important: it brings the same offenders back to court again and again. Probation Officer Wayne St. Pierre, who loves books and literature, assisted them in developing guidelines and screening for potential students among those convicted. Students would attend a mandatory twelve-week literature course on the Dartmouth campus in exchange for a reduced sentence. The first group of eight men had 148 convictions among them; many had never graduated from high school. The only crimes not represented were murder and rape; the students suffered from low self-esteem, poverty, drug abuse, and family problems. Wexler selected works such as James Baldwin’s “Sonny’s Blues,” James Dickey’s Deliverance, and Jack London’s The Sea Wolf that he felt would speak to their experiences, including issues of male identity, authority, violence, power, and family problems. Discussion questions included what participants

www.lva.lib.va.us/), the Genealogists/Family Historians page of the National Archives (http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/), and the National WWII Memorial (http://www.wwiimemorial.com/).

—Lyn C. A. Gardner, Hampton Public Library

4:00–4:45 p.m.

Changing Lives through Literature

Presenter: Katherine (Katie) Strotman, Fairfax County Public Library

In this inspirational session, Katie Strotman described a program implemented by Fairfax County that truly reaffirms the social value of literature. In 1991, Robert Waxler, a Massachusetts English professor, and his friend, Judge Robert Kane, created a pioneering program, Changing Lives through Literature (CLTL), which they hoped would help alter the prevalence of “turnstile justice” that brings the same offenders back to court again and again. Probation Officer Wayne St. Pierre, who loves books and literature, assisted them in developing guidelines and screening for potential students among those convicted. Students would attend a mandatory twelve-week literature course on the Dartmouth campus in exchange for a reduced sentence. The first group of eight men had 148 convictions among them; many had never graduated from high school. The only crimes not represented were murder and rape; the students suffered from low self-esteem, poverty, drug abuse, and family problems. Waxler selected works such as James Baldwin’s “Sonny’s Blues,” James Dickey’s Deliverance, and Jack London’s The Sea Wolf that he felt would speak to their experiences, including issues of male identity, authority, violence, power, and family problems. Discussion questions included what participants

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mobile devices on! Sharing current usage and trend statistics, she explained how beta experiments become success stories within the Fairfax County Public Library System (FCPL). A crowd of interested librarians listened as the presenters gave an overview of FCPL efforts to keep up with their mobile customers. In particular, Patrick called attention to her observations of human behavior. When she finds herself stuck in Northern Virginia traffic, she watches people and observes what those in the next car are doing with their cell phones, MP3 players, PDAs, etc. In 2006, there were 2.6 billion cell phone subscribers worldwide, and nearly 20 percent owned more than one phone. Though most of the audience might refer to their cell phones as mobile phones, Patrick reminded everyone that “mobile refers to the user, not the device,” as pointed out by Barbara Ballard in Designing the Mobile User Experience (Chichester: Wiley, 2007).

Bowie shared his current challenge: “How do you shrink a webpage to be useful on a mobile device?” In an attempt to meet this challenge, he asked himself, “What do they want from me?” Bowie has come up with six basic answers that FCPL mobile patrons want: contact information and phone numbers, directions to FCPL locations, item availability, renewal access and information, program registration, and access to what is available to hear or watch. Of course, mobile patrons don’t just want to find the contact information and phone number; they want to be able to highlight the number and instantly have their devices call it. However, that requires special coding that may or may not work with each device’s browser.

In trying to keep life simple, Bowie’s work focuses on three key points: ensure speedy response, use CSS & XHTML, and go vertical with composition whenever possible. He suggested staying away from ILS, database searching, lengthy forms, and social networking—unless you have a lot of time on your hands. For instance, database searching on a mobile device would require at least three steps: first an authentication process, then keying in the search terms, and finally retrieving the results on a screen about a tenth the monitor size of a personal computer. Some things are better left to the desktop, in Bowie’s opinion.

Patrick and Bowie embrace what they see FCPL’s mobile patrons doing. Their task has been to bring what is outside of the library into the library in a useful way, so library services are integrated with mobile device functionality.

—Heather Groves Hannan, Mercer Library @ George Mason University’s Prince William Campus

Researching Virginia Laws and Public Records on the Internet

Presenters: Rae Ellen Best and Femi Cadmus, George Mason University Law Library

So much information was packed into this presentation that I believe it could have easily been two sepa-
rate sessions. Rae Best gave a good overview of Virginia legislative and administrative law online resources. Working from the Virginia Legislative Information System website (http://leg1.state.va.us/), Best demonstrated searches for current legislation and the variety of other information available.

Cadmus discussed the difference between “publicly available information” (provided voluntarily) and “public records” (filed with the government and available for inspection). She then reviewed a number of sites providing both kinds of information: www.brpub.com, http://www.indorgs.virginia.edu/portico/, www.zillow.com, and more.

—Barbie Selby, University of Virginia

The Oral History Initiative: A Community Project

Presenters: Alicia Sell and Carla Lewis, Roanoke Public Libraries

Alicia Sell and Carla Lewis presented the Oral History Initiative, a project of the Roanoke Public Libraries (RPL). This project aims to record the stories and memories of Roanoke’s neighborhoods as recounted by ordinary citizens, and make them available for research, education, and preservation. The project initially focused on the historic African-American neighborhood of Gainsboro, then expanded when it became clear that many were enthusiastic about the prospect of preserving local history in this way. RPL also joined the Library of Congress’s Veterans History Project to preserve the recollections of wartime veterans. With the help of community volunteers, the project has recorded more than seventy interviews since its inception in 2006.

Community organizations are natural partners in this venture: RPL has worked with nursing homes, schools, churches, and neighborhood associations to find subjects and volunteers. Grant funding for equipment was obtained from the city; to convince library administration of your needs, Sell noted that it helps to provide information about how equipment may be used in the future. RPL purchased a laptop, software, external microphone, scanner, and CD-ROMs; in addition, several portable digital recorders were purchased for homebound interviews.

The recorders, bagged with instructions and transcription equipment, can be checked out with a library card. After a fifteen-
minute training session, a volunteer interviewer is ready to go. Those who are uncomfortable with interviews can still help by transcribing or creating finding aids. While perfect for this work, volunteers also provide some challenges; providing adequate training and guidelines is crucial.

The Oral History Initiative also includes images: photographs taken at the time of the interview and scans of materials lent by interviewees. Sell recommended storing files in multiple formats—for example, RPL is keeping sound files in WAV and MP3—and planning for format migration.

Current access to the collection is by a visit to RPL’s Virginia Room. Eventually materials will be made available to schools, along with standards-based lesson plans. Finding aids will be accessible via the Virginia Heritage database, and project plans include a website with images and digital samples.

—Maryke Barber, Wyndham Robertson Library at Hollins University

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2

9:30–10:15 a.m.

Lost That Whistle-While-You-Work Feeling? Staff Meeting Management Strategies for Library Directors and Managers

Presenter: Jean M. Holcomb, retired director of the King County Law Library (Westfield, North Carolina)

At the beginning of the presentation, Holcomb polled the audience of librarians and found the following: a third of the attendees worked in public libraries, a third worked in academic libraries, a handful worked in law libraries, and three worked in special libraries. Holcomb then had the capacity crowd stand up. She asked attendees to sit down if one of the following had not occurred at a recent meeting: you received an agenda in advance of the meeting, the meeting started on time, the right people/decision-makers were in the room, and the right tools were available. By the end of Holcomb’s questions all but one attendee were seated.

Holcomb encouraged the audience to consider using meeting opportunities to make “meeting magic.” In her opinion, to create meeting magic, one must create a commonsense approach to meeting management to keep the project process moving forward, provide staff with training to ensure successful meetings, and monitor meeting effectiveness. A lack of participation from each meeting attendee or no follow-up on action items at the end of a meeting can undo the “spell” of a productive meeting.

It’s also a good idea for the library manager or director to assess the library’s meeting IQ, according to Holcomb. Steps to assess a meeting’s IQ include identifying who owns the decision-making process in your library, determining what role meetings play as part of the library’s decision-making process, conducting a meeting “audit” to determine the effectiveness of the meeting process, and developing a plan to implement a meeting culture for your library based on the findings of your audit. Holcomb reminded the audience that every meeting has a cost. Calculating the cost of a one-hour meeting in her former library (King County Law Library in Westfield, North Carolina), Holcomb was surprised to realize an hour meeting cost $16,000. She considered what she would have told her Library Board of Trustees if they had ever asked what they got for their money.

Holcomb closed by highlighting helpful resources for meeting management information. One resource, www.effective-meetings.com, includes the option to subscribe to an electronic newsletter. Two books, Sharon Lippincott’s Meetings: Do’s, Don’ts, and Donuts: The Complete Handbook for Successful Meetings, 2nd ed. (Pittsburgh: Lighthouse Point Press, 1999), and Grace McGartland’s Thunderbolt Thinking: Transform Your Insights and Options into Powerful Business Results (Austin: Bard, 1994), were highlighted for future reading.

—Heather Groves Hannan, Mercer Library @ George Mason University’s Prince William Campus

Our Jefferson Cup Overfloweth

Presenters: 2007 Jefferson Cup Committee

Members of the 2007 Jefferson Cup Committee took turns presenting some of their favorite books of the 2006 publishing year. This year’s committee gave the award to Blood on the River: James Town 1607 by Elisa Carbone; recognized Dark Water Rising by Marian Hale and 5,000 Miles to Freedom: Ellen and William Craft’s Flight from Slavery by Judith Bloom Fradin and Dennis Brindell Fradin as honor books; and highlighted The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation by Sid Jacobson and Ernie Colon and the National Geographic Photobiography Series as a book and a series worthy of note (for more information about these works, visit http://www.vla.org/cyart/jefferson_cup/2007.htm).

However, with over two hundred and fifty books to consider for only one winner, there were also many other worthy titles that the committee would like to bring to our attention. Attendees enjoyed learning about the following notable books of 2006 via booktalks and handouts: The Adventurous Life of Myles Standish and the Amazing but True Survival Story of Plymouth Colony by Cheryl Harness; The Aliens Are Coming by Meghan McCarthy; Ask Me No Questions by Marina Budhos; The Astonish-
ing Adventures of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation. Volume I, The Pox Party by M. T. Anderson; Black Duck by Janet Taylor Lisle; Blue by Joyce Moyer Hostetter; Bread and Roses, Too by Katherine Paterson; Children of Alcatraz: Growing Up on the Rock by Claire Rudolf Murphy; Copper Sun by Sharon Draper; Crossing Box Chitto: A Choctaw Tale of Friendship and Freedom by Tim Tingle; The Deep Cut by Susan Rosson Spain; Dinosaur Bone War: Cope and Marsh’s Fossil Feud by Elizabeth Cody Kimmel; Dizzy by Jonah Winter; Escape! The Story of the Great Houdini by Sid Fleischman; Everybody’s Revolution by Thomas Fleming; Finding Day’s Bottom by Candice Ransom; Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement by Ann Bausum; Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott by Russell Freedman; Georgie’s Moon by Chris Woodworth; Geronimo by Joseph Bruchac; Good Fortune: My Journey to Gold Mountain by Li Keng Wong; The Green Glass Sea: A Novel by Ellen Klages; Hattie Big Sky by Kirby Larson; Here Lies the Librarian by Richard Peck; Heroes of Baseball: The Men Who Made It America’s Favorite Game by Robert Lipsyte; House of the Red Fish by Graham Salisbury; John, Paul, George & Ben by Lane Smith; The Loud Silence of Francine Green by Karen Cushman; Marvelous Mattie: How Margaret E. Knight Became an Inventor by Emily Arnold McCully; Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom by Carole Boston Weatherford; Night Boat to Freedom by Margot Theis Raven; Now & Ben: The Modern Inventions of Benjamin Franklin by Gene Barretta; A Pickpocket’s Tale by Karen Schwabach; Saving the Buffalo by Albert Marrin; Search and Destroy by Dean Hughes; Tales of Young Americans Series (Sleeping Bear Press/Gale); Team Moon: How 4,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon by Catherine Thimmesh; Tour America: A Journey through Poems and Art by Diane Siebert; The Unresolved by T. K. Welsh; Up Before Daybreak: Cotton and People in America by Deborah Hopkinson; Water Street by Patricia Reilly Giff; and Wild Lives: A History of the People and Animals of the Bronx Zoo by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld.

—Lyn C. A. Gardner, Hampton Public Library

PennTags—When Card Catalogs Meet Tags in Libraries

Presenter: Melanie E. Cedrone, University of Pennsylvania

The libraries at the University of Pennsylvania have developed a new and innovative tool for students, faculty, and librarians: PennTags (http://tags.library.upenn.edu/) applies the power of social tagging to library resources. Based on the Web 2.0 principle of collaboration, PennTags is similar to free online resources such as Del.icio.us, but offers features specifically for the university environment. Users can discover, organize, and share online content, and do it all in one place.

Presenter Melanie Cedrone gave the following example: a professor might create a bibliography of resources for her class and invite students and librarians to add postings to her project. Postings may be websites, catalog records, journal articles, or entire databases. PennTags pulls all the resources together and allows the user to annotate them with tags and longer text. The projects and postings can be shared or kept private. This flexibility has faculty using PennTags to create assignments and collaborate with colleagues, while students create projects of their own. PennTags currently contains over 13,000 postings with some 11,000 unique tags.

Creating a posting is a flexible process accomplished in a few clicks. PennTags users (posting is restricted to the Penn Community) can post items while browsing the online catalog, or they may use a browser toolbar. RSS capability allows users to subscribe to a feed that will notify them of new postings added to any project, tag, or user account. Technical advantages include a stable URL structure, which allows easy sharing. PennTags also adds value to the library catalog. Tags and annotations from PennTags are displayed in the OPAC, giving searchers access to the metadata created by fellow patrons.

Behind all this capacity are an Oracle database, PERL script, and AJAX. Cedrone noted that the system is lightweight and has plenty of room for future functionality. Currently the database only searches the title and tags of each posting, but future plans include searchable annotations. Developers also plan to make PennTags accounts exportable to such applications as Microsoft Word and RefWorks. Finally, they are looking at the issue of inheritance, which would allow for user accounts to be taken over when the original creator leaves the university.

—Maryke Barber, Wyndham Robertson Library at Hollins University

Where’s the Nonfiction Section? Transitioning Freshmen from a High School to an Academic Library

Presenters: Carolyn Meier and Connie Stovall, Virginia Tech

Carolyn Meier and Connie Stoval presented this informative and detailed program on Virginia Tech’s efforts to create instruction sessions and learning objects to help their 5,100 freshmen learn to assess information in a large academic library. They began
by explaining that Tech’s bibliographic instruction efforts traditionally reached about 65 percent of freshmen through sessions for composition and communications classes, but that there was little documentation for this approach.

In order to determine the starting point for frosh, the Tech library staff used the campus course management system to deliver a survey on information literacy as well as an assessment instrument for the traditional library introduction program. In spite of a response rate of 8 percent, the results clearly indicated a low level of freshman understanding of how to use the library and a severe lack of experience with writing research papers in high school. In fact, 23 percent of the freshmen surveyed indicated that they had never written a research paper, and 48 percent had fewer than two experiences with using research databases.

The Tech staff responded by using the Association of College and Research Libraries’ information literacy standards to construct improvements in their transitional program. They identified gaps in their instruction and responded with tactics such as designing posters to identify areas of the library with the resources available there and creating a Blackboard site that combined all information for freshmen in one place and included announcements and promotions as well as a staff directory. New evening tours geared to subject areas were offered, and a target group of frosh was identified for pretesting, instruction, and assessment.

Left, Past President Ruth Arnold announced the 2008 officers.

Below, Alex Reczkowski is one of three scholarship winners.
The library also began more active participation in summer orientation sessions, using them to make one-on-one contact with incoming students.

There are a variety of additional efforts such as web tutorials, virtual tours, and a posttest in the planning stage.

The presenters offered to provide interested attendees with copies of the pre- and posttests, and concluded with a lively question-and-answer session that drew participation from library staff from a wide variety of institutions.

— Cy Dillon, Ferrum College

10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Second General Session and Business Meeting
Speaker: Roy Tennant

This session combined the VLA Annual Business Meeting with the presentation of VLA Scholarships, recognition of some award-winners who were not present for the opening session, and a dynamic talk by Roy Tennant, senior program manager for OCLC Programs and Research.

After approval of last year’s minutes, Pat Howe began the meeting with a state of the association address in which she declared the VLA Agenda for 2007 had been met. Howe reported that the Legislative Committee, under Jerry McKenna, has been as effective as possible, given the momentum for a filtering bill going into the 2007 General Assembly session. She also recounted that American Library Association Legislative Day had been a success, with all the region chairs attending. In addition, the VLA website was redesigned; a blog for the VLA Council was added; and the various VLA listservs were quite active. Last year’s Membership Committee fulfilled its charge; VLA had good representation at ALA events; and University of Richmond librarian Jim Rettig was elected ALA President.

2007 also saw an increase in the activity of the Leadership Development Forum; and, as always, the VLA Paraprofessional Forum held a very successful conference. Howe thanked the VLA Executive Committee and Council for their work during the year, and pronounced the finances of our association in good order.

Upon the conclusion of Howe’s remarks, Ruth Arnold, past president and chair of the Nominations Committee, announced the election of the following officers for 2008: Matt Todd, treasurer; Caryl Gray, second vice president; and Robin Benke, vice president/president-elect.

The Scholarship Committee then presented three scholarships to outstanding VLA members pursuing graduate degrees in library and information science.

Alex Reczkowski is employed in the technical services department at Hampden-Sydney College, and is earning his MLIS from the University of Illinois. He is active in local civic groups, including being a board member of the R. R. Moton Museum in Farmville and participating in community live arts in Charlottesville. He has been a member of VLA since 2006. Reczkowski is also active in the VLAPF, and became a member of the board in June 2006, serving as the recording secretary. Winner of the 2007 Clara Stanley VLAPF Scholarship, he says: “With knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm, I will continue to make a difference for Virginia, its libraries, and its communities.”

Lee Criscuolo of Spotsylvania is employed as a reference assistant at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library in Fredericksburg. A member of VLA since 2006, she is earning her MLIS from the Texas Woman’s University. In addition to working at the library and pursuing her degree, Criscuolo has been active in several community orga-
nizations. About completing her degree, Criscuolo says, “I believe gaining experience in different departments of the library will enhance my abilities as a librarian and my ability to benefit the library in the future.”

Cheryl Duncan of Dayton is employed as head of acquisitions at the James Madison University Libraries. She is earning her MLIS from Texas Woman’s University. A member of VLA since early 2007, Duncan is excited about the future of libraries and states, “This is an exciting time to work in libraries. I look forward to collaborating with my colleagues throughout academia to create innovative solutions to answer the challenges of libraries.”

Morel Frye, from the VLA Foundation Board, then announced that the foundation’s fundraising would focus on scholarships. The foundation has raised over forty thousand dollars, and continues to seek donations from VLA members and friends.

Pat Howe then introduced Roy Tennant, who delivered a wide-ranging and quite engaging discussion of the roles of librarians and libraries in an age more and more dominated by rapid technological change. He described the characteristics of library users, urging us to focus on their needs and expectations rather than our own; reminded us that we are in a time of transition, when our systems do not exactly match user needs; and dispensed some advice on dealing with the situation. Tennant suggested that we try to understand and serve our clientele, learn new technologies ahead of the curve, connect our users to that technology, make access as easy and convenient as possible, constantly market our resources, and be resolved to never stop changing.

After describing some of the current problems with library technology, Tennant emphasized that we have to learn to cultivate the good librarians and weed out the poor performers. He summed up the traits of a good librarian: a desire to learn, the ability to work independently, flexibility, a willingness to take risks, a public service perspective, eagerness to work in groups, and skill at fostering change.

Our speaker closed with an appeal that we always keep in mind “what will be best for library users.”

Pat Howe then returned to the lectern to thank the Conference Committee and the 2007 officers before passing the gavel to Donna Cote, president for 2008. Cote thanked Howe for her service and called on VLA members to “speak up” on key legislative issues this year. She announced that the 2008 Annual Conference will be held from October 23–24, 2008, at the Williamsburg Marriott in beautiful Williamsburg.

After closing remarks from VALL President Kevin Butterfield, the session ended, to be followed by a full afternoon of concurrent sessions.

—Cy Dillon, Ferrum College

1:45–2:30 p.m.

Fishing for the Right Attitude: Don’t Miss the Boat!

Presenters: Amy W. Boykin and Alicia Willson-Metzer, Christopher Newport University

Did you know that peppermint candy increases alertness, energy, and a positive attitude? This light-hearted session began with a bowl of candy, a discussion about problem attitudes in the workplace, and a list of web-based tools to help assess your attitude (www.humanmetrics.com). The session provided an excellent bibliography (a slideshow is also available at http://library.cnu.edu/vla2007/Fishing.ppt). Speakers highly recommended Generations at Work: Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace by Ron Zemke, Claire Raines, and Bob Filipczak (New York: AMACOM, 2000) as an overview of core values and generational personalities (the original source cited, “Generations at Work: A Candid Snapshot of the Generations ... and Their Differences,” 2007, http://www.amanet.org, is no longer available). Another title, Getting Things Done When You Are Not in Charge by Geoffrey M. Bellman (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2001), focuses on how to successfully interact with diverse styles. The speakers referenced www.mycvbuilder.com for a list of negative attitudes and fixes, such as the suggestion to organize low-energy tasks for times when work energy is low. The session concluded with a reminder from Fish! Tales: Real-Life Stories to Help You Transform Your Workplace and Your Life by Stephen C. Lundin, John Christensen, Harry Paul, and Philip Strand: “People who take themselves less seriously are far more pleasant to associate with.” Go fish!

—Karen Dillon, Carilion Health System

New Trends in Fiction

Presenters: Neil Hollands, Penelope Hamblin, and Jessica Zellers, Williamsburg Regional Library

Williamsburg Regional Library presented another engaging session on genre—this time on a number of new trends that are drawing a lot of readers, but may not be on the map yet for some reader’s advisory programs. The handouts alone provided a wealth of information, giving an overview of each genre, its audience, trendsetters, recommended authors and titles, and summaries of some representative books. The handouts included “International Literary Fiction”,


“Romance: The Morphing of the Genre”; “Nonfiction Graphic Novels”; “Back to Basics Science Fiction”; “Literary Historical Fiction Set in the Twentieth Century”; “Slipstream, aka Literary Fantastic, aka New Weird”; “Fiction Graphic Novels”; “Not the Usual Suspects: Recommended Recent Thrillers”; and “Complex and Gritty Fantasy.”

Presenters highlighted six of these nine genres, providing further insight into what defines them and makes them appealing and describing what types of readers might be interested in trying them out. For example, people who like historical novels, travel, and exploring other cultures might enjoy international literary fiction, which includes such acclaimed titles as The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini and Snow Flower and the Secret Fan by Lisa See. With so many global events in the news, many readers want to find ways to make them personal; further, globalization has been making more of these works available in translation. Many deal with important world issues, couched in terms of the everyday lives of individuals surviving contemporary or historic events; the human story makes these works sympathetic across cultures. Some of the titles highlighted in this genre include A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers by Xiaolu Guo, Beasts of No Nation by Uzodinma Iweala, The Bastard of Istanbul by Elif Shafak, and The Septembers of Shiraz by Dalia Sofer.

Other genres are facing some exciting changes as well. Romance has been revitalized through mixing with other genres, such as the new emphasis on tropes of the fantastic and science fiction and the revival of gothic romance as a part of the paranormal romance genre (one example is Eve Silver’s gothic romance, Dark Prince), and the mainstreaming of erotica. There’s even some crossover with manga, with Harlequin Pink reissuing old titles as manga, and some print books such as Liz Maverick’s Wired (a blend of romance, science fiction, and cyberpunk) taking advantage of the appeal of manga in the cover art and the fast-paced narrative structure. Dark Hunger by Christine Feehan (a vampire romance) is an original romance issued in manga format.

Science fiction, in an effort to regain falling readership, has returned to some of the basics that originally helped the genre take off, with a greater emphasis on action and adventure; social commentary and satire are as much in force as they were during science fiction’s golden age. In addition, today’s science fiction heroes appeal to a wider variety of readers, with more women and older protagonists. Some recommended titles include Rollback by Robert J. Sawyer, The Skinner by Neal Asher, In War Times by Kathleen Ann Goonan, and Old Man’s War by John Scalzi.

Nonfiction graphic novels are applying literary and artistic sensibilities to stories of high interest, many of them in the form of memoirs, such as Alison Bechdel’s Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic, about her father’s death and issues of sexual identity; Mom’s Cancer by Brian Fies, which originated as a web comic and won an Eisner; and Joe Kubert’s Fax from Sarajevo: A Story of Survival, based on his correspondence with people in Sarajevo during the Bosnian war.

In addition to the current popularity of Tudor fiction and Jane Austen “sequels,” historical fiction has recently seen a number of great novels set in the twentieth
century, focusing either on fictionalized versions of real people or fictional characters set in real, tragic situations. Some of these noteworthy titles include Loving Frank by Nancy Horan (about Frank Lloyd Wright); The Last Summer of the World by Emily Mitchell (about photographer Edward Steichen); Signed, Mata Hari by Yannick Murphy; Dreamers of the Day by Mary Doria Russell (about T. E. Lawrence, Winston Churchill, and Gertrude Bell); and The Pirate’s Daughter by Margaret Cezair-Thompson (about Errol Flynn).

Finally, slipstream, also known as the “New Weird” or the literary fantastic, is “science fiction and fantasy gone respectable.” These stories use the fantastic to shed light on the human condition in a manner sometimes compared to magical realism. Neither straight science fiction or fantasy, nor straight literature, these books consider real-life situations through the lens of wonder, appealing to literary as well as genre readers. One excellent example is The Double, written by José Saramago, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Another recommended title is Kelly Link’s Magic for Beginners, with magical stories that frequently take experimental narrative risks that have previously been more at home in literature, particularly the avant-garde.

—Lyn C. A. Gardner, Hampton Public Library

2:45–3:30 p.m.

Las Vegas Lessons

Presenter: Barbie Selby, University of Virginia

The session’s subtitle says it all: “What Libraries Can Learn from Vegas, Disney, ABBA, Cirque du Soleil, and the Stones.” As one who works to promote the presence and visibility of government documents in libraries, Selby looked to some of her recent experiences with popular culture to discover lessons that may help libraries of all types improve their PR with the communities they serve. The presentation was illustrated with striking pictures of the venues and artists from whom Selby took inspiration.

Do what you’re good at. Be involved in new technology, but remember also what we do well. Use new technology and ways of communicating to improve traditional library services. One of the things libraries do well is communicating face to face, a value which is often overlooked. Libraries can also be very good at offering nice community spaces in the Internet age.

Reinvent yourself. Exploit various media to reach out; be available in all kinds of formats. There are many creative ways to engage the community, such as putting local people on READ posters, creating YouTube videos, or providing a book blog. Provide different and interesting giveaways and handouts, such as temporary tattoos with the Chinese symbol for “answer” and the reference department email address, or chocolate bars with library information on the wrapper.

Go on the road. Beyond the bookmobile, libraries can also bring programs to the community. UVA Special Collections visits classrooms to teach; the library brings books to the lunchroom for manual checkout. Selby even ran a shipboard library for the Semester at Sea program.

Get a good slogan. But also make sure it truly represents you. Stick around. Remember that Infrastructural is critical, whether it be human or architectural. With changing times, some libraries may find it difficult to repurpose space to accommodate electronic needs; for instance, UVA discovered that a library building’s 1930s wiring scheme couldn’t support students plugging in laptops.

Know your audience. We may think we know our audience, but we may not be as good at sharing knowledge of our new systems or getting community input. It’s important to be where people are; public libraries in shopping centers are often successful at this.

Get to know famous people. (And get your picture taken with them.) This helps both with fundraising and publicity. And be sure to stay abreast of hot topics and financial issues—Timing is critical in making an impact.

Be flexible. In times of change, be sure you know who your users are—and who they might be. What might libraries offer to get people in the door that we don’t think of as traditional library programs? Consider ways to creatively reuse space or offer new programs. Some libraries have shown movies to attract patrons. George Mason’s library bought a hot dog cart and a laptop with wireless and provided reference services from the cart at the Student Center across campus. When a big flood destroyed the University of Hawaii regional federal depository library, they replaced their collections with microfilm and digital copies.

You can’t always get what you want. But, as the Rolling Stones say, trying may bring what you need. While you may not find the answers in one place, libraries can cobble together support from several places; through cultivating donors and canny public relations, UVA was able to construct a new library building to better serve the needs of modern patrons.

—Lyn C. A. Gardner, Hampton Public Library
Faculty-Librarian Collaborations Facilitate Information Literacy Competence in the Large Classroom Setting

by Michelle L. Young

Abstract

The Information Literacy Collaboration Grants initiative at Virginia Tech offered to assist faculty in integrating information literacy skills into their courses while working in collaboration with a college librarian. Utilizing a pre- and post-survey method and integrated class instruction with a traditionally large class size and less than ideal teaching conditions, the author and her collaborator were nonetheless able to promote and measure intellectual growth in the classroom. This article will discuss the project, the process, and the outcomes.

Introduction

Introduction to Human Development is a course offered yearly to 150 undergraduate students at Virginia Tech. Nearly 55 percent of enrolled students are human development or psychology majors. The primary goal of the course is to examine major theories and empirical research in biological, social, and personality development from infancy through adolescence.

One challenge faced by faculty teaching introductory psychology or human development courses is that students come to class with a general knowledge of a variety of topics that will be covered in the courses. The knowledge is obtained through popular literature and mass media rather than research-based evidentiary materials. Students seem to have a problem distinguishing the difference between popular literature, trade publications, and peer-reviewed research literature. In addition, this disconnect often reinforces false information or public myths rather than leading to scientifically proven evidence in the field. Alison Hine and her colleagues explain that “information literacy is essential to the study of any discipline.”

Teaching faculty alone cannot easily cover both course topics and information literacy due to time constraints, resources, and a traditionally large class size. This has been a recognized and growing concern among faculty and librarians. Librarians and faculty tend to see unresponsiveness and indifference in their students.

In response to the need for improving students’ literacy skills in this course, along with comprehension of the course content, the author and Dr. Kee Jeong Kim, assistant professor in the Department of Human Development at Virginia Tech, developed a collaborative information literacy grant project to determine if a collaborative effort and new course content would impact the information literacy of her students in this large classroom setting.

The Project

In an attempt to address student and faculty needs, the Information Literacy Collaboration Grants initiative, a joint pilot project sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and the Virginia Tech University Libraries, offered $5,000 to assist faculty in integrating information literacy skills into their courses. The goal was to enhance an existing course by integrating information literacy concepts into the curriculum while...
working in collaboration with a college librarian.

After being awarded the grant, the collaborative work began with a class of 144 undergraduate students (104 females and 40 males). Working in a traditional, auditorium-style classroom setting rather than the library, the team utilized a pre- and post-information literacy survey to assess the initial competencies of the group and the final competency outcomes of the class. Throughout the semester, three class sessions were presented by the librarian (author) to complement the instructor’s course. The topics covered at the library sessions were concept mapping (focusing on the need for more terminology and succinct structure of thought), citation style (focusing on American Psychological Association [APA] citation style), plagiarism, copyright, a discussion of literature types, and advanced database searching focusing on peer-reviewed literature (using EBSCO Publishing’s Psych Info database). It is also noteworthy that the students were not moved to a computer-filled classroom while being instructed by the librarian and that the size was considerably larger than that of a traditional library research class setting, which tends to be under thirty students per session.

The Assessment Survey

The pre- and post-information literacy survey consisted of ten multiple choice questions. These questions were designed to measure the students’ ability to identify and evaluate appropriate resources. The goal of the pre-survey was to obtain a baseline and then be able to respond to the students’ literacy needs throughout the semester. The post-survey was used to gauge the overall success of the information literacy component of the course. It is important to note that the two surveys were identical. Students were not graded on these surveys, but given attendance credit for being present in class and taking the assessments. They were not informed of the surveys as part of the curriculum so as to keep any additional stress or formal preparation related to the surveys out of the purview of this research.

Assignments

Several assignments were distributed throughout the semester to increase the students’ engagement with the course content. Those related to information literacy competencies were a concept table exercise, a citation quiz, and an annotated bibliography assignment.

The concept table exercise was created to assist the students in understanding the relationship between terms and to help them expand their thought processes when thinking about a research topic. The instruction on how to achieve success in this assignment used an innocuous research term outside of the area of human development so as to not lead students on the absolute path for topics in their field (which was their job).

When students read citations, they are often confused at the individual components throughout. Therefore, a session was done on APA citation format. Then a quiz was administered as a take-home assignment to help form a better concrete understanding of citation components and the need for succinct formatting in a research paper.

Finally, with such a large class number, Kim felt that having students write a research paper would be prohibitive in that grading all of the assignments would be almost impossible. Therefore, students were required to submit an annotated bibliography based on articles they found using EBSCOhost’s Psych Info. This would allow Kim to see their skills with relation to the search, citations, and finally, the choices they would make relative to their research.

Each assignment builds on the other, making learning possible. There was interconnection and fluidity throughout the course’s information literacy component. Thus, the hope is to measure growth in the student’s skill set by using an identical post-survey instrument at the end of the semester.

Findings

By the close of the semester, the collaborators were able to show a clear indication of growth in the students’ information literacy competence based on a comparison of the pre- and post-survey results as well as the overall quality of library-related assignments and course work submitted. These standards were measuring one’s ability to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information,” as defined in the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education by the Association of College and Research Libraries in 2000.1

When comparing pre- and post-survey scores, we found that there were areas where a significant literacy growth was demonstrated. More than half of the class during the pre-survey indicated a clear dis-
connect between the differences of literature types. The same question, when asked on the post-survey, showed that 93 percent of the students clearly understood the differences. Another interesting point to note is the open-ended question about copyright and plagiarism. In the post-survey, students were more likely to use the words, “plagiarism, copyright, and reference list.” The connection seems to be made through the coursework and discussions about these issues and the related research project. When asked about which thesis statement was best out of a selection of four, the students clearly showed that they did not fully understand the question or how to deal with its topic. It is interesting to note that this area of work was not covered in the course content. This suggests that the learning piece in this research was the necessity of exposure to content within the classroom setting. It is an indicator that students are teachable. Kim reported a significant change in the quality of the overall coursework by this class of students as compared to previous years’ classes. She noted that the collaborative instruction was useful and that it would be appropriate for future classes to continue a trend of higher information literacy competencies in the student body.

Conclusion

When utilizing the standards of information literacy as a guide, the students have shown, through the use of a pre- and post-survey assessment tool, the potential to accelerate when these concepts are introduced and integrated within the course. The collaboration between teaching faculty and librarian was a success and offered students a robust foundation in information literacy competencies. The author submits the notion that if students carry forward these skills to the next level of coursework, similar collaborations between teaching faculty and librarians would help students attain a fluent level of information literacy skills no matter the class size. As Christine S. Bruce asserts, information literacy is essential for twenty-first century living. The need for collaborative work to achieve lifelong skills is clearly evident when such a dramatic change in students’ proficiency is shown.

Notes

A Partnership between a Public High School’s Health Sciences Academy and an Academic Health Sciences Library

by Ruth Smith, Brittany Horn, and Shelley Chitwood

The medical librarians have developed and implemented a comprehensive clinical rotation experience for the juniors and seniors of our academy program. Their enthusiasm for their job and for the medical library has instilled a new appreciation and respect for library science.

—Bayside High School Health Sciences Academy Coordinator

Bayside High School’s Health Sciences Academy (BHSHSA) in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and the Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) Edward E. Brickell Medical Sciences Library in Norfolk, Virginia, have been partners in a clinical rotation program since 2005. BHSHSA public school students have expressed an interest in pursuing careers in the health field. Their curriculum includes a clinical rotation component in which they learn on site about potential career paths. At the EVMS Library, groups of students spend an afternoon observing what librarians do, improving their health literacy, and exploring the option of a career in librarianship. Shadowing an EVMS librarian heightens students’ awareness of what services medical librarians provide. The students learn about the graduate level educational requirements and diverse aspects of the job, such as literature searches, information management, teaching, and cataloging. This article will discuss the partnership with BHSHSA, the development of the Clinical Rotation Program (CRP) at the EVMS Library, challenges encountered, long-term goals, and the benefits and outcomes of this unique program.

The Partnership

Established in 2001, BHSHSA is a learning environment that offers an experience-rich curriculum to 386 Virginia Beach students considering future careers in the medical sciences. According to the program website, “[a] major learning component of the program is the opportunity for students to attain practical experience in the worksite as well as in academic settings.” The academy coordinator assigns the juniors and seniors three clinical rotations at various regional businesses, offices, hospitals, and academic institutions, including the EVMS Brickell Library. “The goals for the clinical rotations are for the students to see firsthand what a particular practice of interest involves.” Recruiting to a given profession is not a stated goal of the clinical rotation program. In 1973, EVMS was established in Norfolk, Virginia. The mission statement for the school is “improv[ing] the health of the community through education, research, and patient care.” EVMS defines the community as the eastern region of Virginia known as Hampton Roads that includes the cities of Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Hampton, Newport News, and Suffolk. EVMS remains an integral part of Hampton Roads with a deep dedication to the health of the community. Through the library’s Outreach Initiative, EVMS librarians have provided the region’s public librarians and the public with free training on how to access health information. In the past five years, 3,000 people have attended EVMS classes at Hampton Roads public libraries, senior centers, and health fairs on how to find health information.

Ruth Smith is the outreach services coordinator at Eastern Virginia Medical School’s Edward E. Brickell Medical Sciences Library, Norfolk, Virginia. She can be reached at smithrm@evms.edu. The authors wish to thank their colleagues at the EVMS Library, Bayside Health Sciences Academy students, and Luisa Zirkle, coordinator of the Health Sciences Academy.

Brittany Horn participated in this project while working as a reference and clinical librarian at EVMS. She can be reached at britta03@msn.com.

Shelley Chitwood participated in this project while working as a reference and clinical librarian at EVMS. She can be reached at schitwoo66@msn.com.
Since 2005, 101 students have participated in a clinical rotation at the EVMS Library. This rotation, a first for the majority of students, is assigned based on academic standing, teacher recommendations, and a record of positive behavior with no discipline issues. A clinical rotation at the EVMS Library allows students to familiarize themselves with library research and apply new skills immediately to their school work. Students are exposed to medical librarianship as a potential career choice and gain an understanding of how librarians are a part of the health care team.

Development of the Program

The BHSHSA Coordinator contacted the EVMS Library Outreach Coordinator in 2005 to invite librarians to host clinical rotations. The Library Management team viewed rotations as an opportunity both to further the mission of EVMS by partnering with a community institution and to impact the students’ health literacy, influence preconceived ideas of what being a librarian is and what a librarian’s job duties and educational background are, impact the long-term use of libraries, and recruit future librarians.

There were no official guidelines in the beginning of the library’s participation in the CRP. The EVMS Library Outreach Coordinator met with students for a tour of the library, discussion of librarianship, and brief instruction session on health information resources. After a year of working with the students, the outreach coordinator saw the opportunity to formalize the program and expand it to include other librarians. Two reference librarians along with the outreach coordinator began meeting with the goal of creating a structured and inclusive two-hour program covering many complex topics. The librarians’ first objective was to develop an agenda to guide the content of the sessions. The librarians discussed their unique interests. The goal of this planning phase was to give the students a comparable experience, regardless of the librarian leading the CRP. The librarians also devised a survey and a standard set of handouts, including brochures on becoming medical librarians and guides for evaluating online information resources.

Throughout the development phase of the project, the outreach coordinator maintained an open dialogue with the academy coordinator to answer any questions that came up during the development meetings. Face-to-face meetings and a partnership agreement fostered the relationship between the two institutions. The partnership agreement clarified each institution’s role and provided a method for accountability. Issues addressed included coordinating schedules and providing prompt responses to questions. The Brickell Library and BHSHSA had to determine procedures to handle unexpected absences and tardiness. Open communication between the librarians and BHSHSA remains the key to success for the program.

The clinical rotation involved each librarian meeting with two to six students at a time. The session usually began with a tour of the library, during which the librarian discussed facts about the medical school and the library’s purpose in serving the faculty, staff, students, and community. Following the tour, the students received hands-on training in the use of the library’s databases and online resources. At the request of the BHSHSA Coordinator, the librarians developed scenarios that demonstrated the types of questions received at the reference desk and allowed the students to solve hypothetical cases. The skills required for these exercises included identifying the information need, selecting an appropriate resource, and using the resource to answer the question. The librarians used the exercises to address plagiarism and copyright issues.

At the end of the session students and librarians exchanged surveys. At the request of BHSHSA, librarians surveyed each student regarding promptness, appropriateness of attire, and participation in discussions. The librarians sent completed surveys to the BHSHSA Coordinator. The students completed an anonymous survey developed by EVMS librarians. Students were surveyed about their perception of the CRP, including how the experience impacted their perception of the field of librarianship, whether they would consider librarianship as a potential career choice, and the impact of the CRP on their ability to find health-related information.

Benefits and Outcomes

The purpose of the project was to further the mission of EVMS by partnering with a community institution, improving health literacy and student use of libraries, influencing preconceived notions of librarians and libraries, and recruiting future librarians. Student survey responses indicate that their perception of librarianship changed for the positive (97%). When asked in the survey, “After today’s experience, do you consider the field of librarianship as a
potential career choice?,” 53.125% said maybe, a substantial increase from 3.125% before the experience. When asked about the most important thing learned during the library rotation, the students were struck by the ubiquity of information, the significant role librarians play in providing medical information to health care professionals, and the new knowledge of the educational requirements and range of job duties required in librarianship. One student responded, “Though I had my doubts about going to the library, it was the total opposite of what I expected. I learned so much about [the librarian’s] job and about helpful ways to research health topics and how to access/use the library from home as well as when I’m there. I now have a different look on librarians…. This was a unique experience and I really appreciate [being given] the opportunity.”

All students expressed the feeling that their ability to find health information had improved and their perceptions of librarianship had changed for the better. The students learned how working with librarians could benefit them. While 34% of the students rated as excellent their ability to find information to meet school and personal needs, a resounding majority, 97%, felt their ability to find health-related information increased after the training they received from the librarians. Of the 101 students who have experienced a clinical rotation at the EVMS Library, two are considering careers in librarianship. BHSHSA will conduct a long-term follow-up and will report the students’ career choices and the impact of the CRP experience on their future library and information resource use. The successful partnership between Bayside High School Health Sciences Academy and the EVMS Library serves as an example for others wishing to develop a similar program to increase health literacy among high school students and bolster the relationship between the library and the community.

Notes


In 1913, Charles Beard published *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*, which contended that the federal constitutional convention was not an experiment in forming a republican government but rather that the Founding Fathers intended to design a government that would protect their economic interests. Over the subsequent ninety years, Beard’s thesis has often been disputed. Consensus and republican-school historians have presented a portrait of the Founders as men motivated by an altruistic desire to form a good government. In *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (a finalist for the National Book Award in nonfiction), Woody Holton revisits and revises Beard’s theory and adds the twist that the Founders hoped to reverse what they perceived as a dangerous slide into democracy.

To oversimplify and understate Holton’s thesis is a necessary evil in a short review. After the Revolution, the American economy was in a mess. Many states and the national government had issued bonds to raise money to pay for the war. Bondholders, creditors, and those people considered the elite (including most of the Founders) wanted debts paid, and this desire often resulted in the raising of taxes. Small farmers and debtors preferred debt relief in the form of lower taxes and paper money. These people demonstrated (at times violently) in order to force state legislatures to adopt measures to provide relief. Elites feared that if unchecked, these democratic movements would damage the economic growth of the nation.

Therefore the men who met in Philadelphia in 1787 designed a federal government that would provide a measure of protection against vacillating state legislatures and ultimately the people of the United States. In a gesture of conciliation, the new Constitution provided some debt and tax relief for the common man; however, it limited the ability of the common man to influence the federal government. When the document was presented to the democratic masses, they exerted their influence one more time to pressure the newly created United States government to include a bill of rights that would protect the rights of individuals from federal interference.

In *Unruly Americans*, Holton again demonstrates (as he did in his previous work, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* [1999]) that history is not merely the great deeds of great men. Men and women, often lumped under the term of “the masses” or “middling and lower classes,” could and did have a great effect on events, in this case the formation of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

—reviewed by Trenton E. Hizer, senior finding aids archivist


The volumes dedicated to the life of Thomas Jefferson fill libraries around the world. Yet little has been written about the man who wrote “all men are created equal” and his attitudes about women. In

Sara B. Bearss is senior editor of the Dictionary of Virginia Biography, published by the Library of Virginia.
Mr. Jefferson’s Women, Jon Kukla, former director of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation, examines the Founding Father’s conceptions of women and their place in society by exploring significant relationships Jefferson had throughout his life. Kukla concludes that Jefferson mistrusted and feared women but could also be predatory toward them. He maintained a patriarchal belief system in which women, as well as children and slaves, were inferior beings. Confining their roles to motherhood and domesticity, Jefferson saw no place for women in the public sphere and did not seek to expand their educational opportunities or legal rights.

Kukla divides the book into chapters concerning important women in Jefferson’s life. Rebecca Lewis Burwell was his first love, but she declined the nineteen-year-old Jefferson’s marriage proposal. This rejection began years of crippling headaches and, Kukla contends, hardened in Jefferson a misogynistic and predatory attitude toward women. This predatory nature manifested itself in Jefferson’s attempted seduction of Elizabeth Moore Walker, the wife of a lifelong friend. Jefferson’s marriage in 1772 to the widowed Martha Wayles Skelton began the happiest years of his life. She fulfilled the duties of motherhood, domesticity, and subordination, but her death in 1782 left Jefferson grief-stricken for weeks. He lamented this loss of self-control, which demonstrated that even married women could be dangerous.

Independent women were especially hazardous, however, as evidenced by his relationship with Maria Hadfield Cosway, a married Englishwoman sixteen years his junior. Traveling about Paris for a brief time in 1786, they enjoyed what Kukla surmises was a flirtatious friendship rather than a romantic affair. Even in platonic situations, women of autonomy made Jefferson uncomfortable. Abigail Adams challenged Jefferson concerning women’s roles in the new American government, and the French noblewomen’s involvement in revolutionary politics reinforced his view that women should not insert themselves in the public sphere.

In sharp contrast, Sally Hemings did not possess autonomy. Kukla concludes that Jefferson did, in fact, father Hemings’s six children, based on DNA evidence, the occasions Jefferson resided at Monticello related to the conception of her children, the material privileges the Hemings family enjoyed, and the fact that all of her children attained their freedom. Because Hemings was by definition under Jefferson’s control, fulfilling domestic duties and his sexual needs, this exploitative relationship was the most extreme example of Jefferson’s attitude toward women.

Incorporating extensive primary sources such as diaries, correspondence, and account books, Kukla makes his research accessible to a wide audience by balancing historical analysis and storytelling. He provides a short biographical sketch of each woman and details the trajectory of her involvement with Jefferson. Perceptively, Kukla also places these relationships in the cultural contexts of patriarchy, honor, self-control, and masculinity, all of which are critically important in understanding Jefferson’s thoughts about women and their roles in society.

—reviewed by John G. Deal, editor, Dictionary of Virginia Biography


Students of the Civil War in Virginia know that Winchester, strategically situated in the lower Shenandoah Valley, was regarded as a prize by both sides and fought over many times. It was won and lost and won again by contesting armies perhaps more than any other Southern community. Usually the story is told within the context of the larger struggle for dominance in the Valley of Virginia, and as the narrative unfolds we track the armies to and from Winchester. We learn something of the inhabitants along the way, but mostly focus on the fighting men, following them to their fate on a hillside or by some stream. In Richard R. Duncan’s account, however, this Valley town is center stage, and rightly so. Through four years of war, townspeople endured some seventy skirmishes and three major battles. The town was occupied dozens of times by alternating Union and Confederate forces. Each newly established military regime appealed to or traumatized a portion of the populace, depending on their politics.

Initially reluctant to leave the Union, most white townspeople later embraced Southern nationalism, but a small minority of conditional Unionists rejected radical secession. As elsewhere, the crisis divided friends and families. Thus the instability created by frequent occupation and reoccupation constituted over time a peculiar problem for the 4,400 souls who
lived in Winchester, of whom about 1,400 were free and enslaved African-Americans. A guarded tolerance developed among the white people, especially among the men, including a disinclination to parade one’s loyalties in public and a discreet reserve about boasting of victory or bewailing defeat, for who knew whether the next commanding officer would be wearing blue or gray? Such public displays could fuel hostility and lead to arrest and imprisonment. White women, on the other hand, were provocative and quick to show their disdain for everything “Yankee.”

During the first year the glamour of war faded as Winchester’s facilities were overwhelmed, first by the sick and dying from the First Battle of Manassas and later by the casualties from Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson’s operations during the winter of 1861–1862, which ended with Jackson’s evacuation of the town. The stage was then set for humiliation. Federals descended on Winchester, creating anxiety among secessionists, who would soon have their first taste of martial law, but delighting white loyalists and blacks who welcomed the Union flag flying once again above the courthouse. Angry outbursts erupted between a divided citizenry and between residents and the occupying army. The streets were filled with soldiers crowding local folk off the pathways, and a wave of pillaging further inflamed townspeople against their conquerors. Business slowed as townspeople stayed away. Slave owners deeply resented the protective attitude of the army toward blacks; little or no effort was made to prevent slaves from escaping or to return them to their masters. Most revolting for some was the arrival of a regiment of black troops, an event that produced “inexpressible horror” in one lady of the town.

Jackson’s Shenandoah Valley campaign relieved Winchester for a time, but the Confederacy’s grip on the area did not last. Beginning in January 1863, Winchester came under the control of Major General Robert H. Milroy, whose attitude toward townspeople was revealed in a letter to his wife in which he stated, “I feel a strong disposition to play the tyrant [sic] among these traitors.” His regime, harsh and confrontational, lasted five months, during which time he earned the undying animosity of many townspeople.

To the very end, the town was a microcosm of the national clash of ideas and arms.

DUNCAN REVIEW

Beginning in 1864, as the war in Virginia concentrated along the Rapidan-Rappahannock line, military operations in the Valley were reduced to cavalry raids and guerilla activities. Brief occupations of Winchester by both sides became more frequent. As elsewhere, scarcity, inflation, and devalued Confederate currency increased the burden everyone felt. By spring the Shenandoah Valley was once again a focal point of Federal strategist. On May 1, Major General Franz Sigel arrived in Winchester at the head of his army. Unionists exulted; secessionists despaired. Their unhappiness deepened when Major General David Hunter replaced Sigel. Labeling civilians as spies, Hunter punished them for the actions of Southern partisans and made no distinction between regular Confederate partisans, irregular units, and outlaws. Conditions worsened when Major General Phil Sheridan took over and embarked on a war of devastation. He enjoyed a series of victories over his Confederate opponents, beginning with the Third Battle of Winchester in September, which effectively ended Confederate presence in the Valley.

Duncan’s study relates an intriguing story of growing Federal repression and intimidation toward ordinary citizens while at the same time describing the arrogant pride exhibited by secessionists that, in the end, aided and abetted the harsh measures taken against them. It is a portrait of terrible destruction: at war’s end, an estimated two hundred homes in and around the town had been demolished or burned, and along Main Street another one hundred were uninhabitable, having been used as stables or slaughterhouses. It is also a portrait of the town’s lively Unionist faction, which survived to celebrate the surrender at Appomattox Court House and mourn the death of Abraham Lincoln. To the very end, the town was a microcosm of the national clash of ideas and arms. It is a remarkable story well told, admirably researched, and deserving of a wide readership.

reviewed by Donald W. Gunter, editor, Dictionary of Virginia Biography


After the Confederates’ devastating loss at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in July 1863, General Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia retreated to Virginia in order for Lee to “nourish his army back to strength.” At the same
time, Union Major General George G. Meade did not follow up his victory at Gettysburg by destroying Lee’s army and capturing Richmond. With the war in the western part of the Confederacy moving toward a United States victory, President Abraham Lincoln decided to bring the successful western theater commander Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant to the east to command all the Union armies and “work his magic” there. What followed was the Overland campaign between the Wilderness in Orange County and Cold Harbor in Hanover County, which ultimately led to Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Court House.

Author Gordon C. Rhea has made a careful, well-researched study of the Overland campaign and published four well-received monographs on each succeeding battle of the campaign, with a fifth and final volume to follow. His *In the Footsteps of Grant and Lee* distills the various battles fought during the campaign into a highly readable narrative illustrated with contemporaneous drawings and images, battle maps, and beautiful modern photographs of the sites of battle as they appear today. Rhea explains that Grant and Lee were very well matched in planning for battle and in compensating with new tactics when their plans went awry, and describes how each man maneuvered throughout the campaign to thwart the other’s goals. On the one hand, Lee can be said to have won the Overland campaign in terms of defeating Grant’s immediate aim of destroying Lee’s army and capturing Richmond. On the other hand, Grant never stopped fighting as all of his predecessors had done after each battle to regroup and resupply. He pushed on instead from loss to loss without ceasing and ultimately succeeded in driving Lee from Orange and Spotsylvania Counties past Richmond and into siege lines around Petersburg. While Grant failed to end the war in May 1864, he finally won it after he broke through Lee’s lines on April 2, 1865, and accepted Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Court House seven days later.

—reviewed by Emily J. Salmon, senior copy editor


Margaret Junkin Preston was overwhelmed. The Pennsylvania native was living in Lexington, Virginia, as the Civil War raged around her. Her husband, Major John Preston, a Latin professor at Virginia Military Institute, was a staunch Confederate. Her sister, Eleanor, had married a mathematics professor there, Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson, and died following childbirth. Margaret’s life seemed at once to reflect the nation’s Civil War and the tremendous loss that accompanied it. One of her stepsons lost an arm in battle and another died at Second Manassas. Meanwhile, Margaret’s father, the Presbyterian minister George Junkin, and her sister, Julia, fled Virginia for Philadelphia.

Margaret had married a widower with seven children in 1857. Their son, George, was born in 1858, and Herbert followed in 1861. She was pained to see the younger boys treating the war as a game. In January 1863 she wrote in her diary that young George was playing war every day. He conducted battles with Herbert in which he beat the Yankees and captured prisoners, pretended his rag dolls were wounded soldiers, and hobbled around pretending that he had lost a leg.

Margaret had enjoyed a career as a published author in magazines and newspapers before her marriage, but her husband disapproved of her literary pursuits. When John Preston urged her to pick up her pen in the service of the Confederacy, Margaret was willing to do so not only because Virginia was her adopted home, but also because it gave her an opportunity to resume her dormant writing career. This book skillfully argues that Confederate nationalism unintentionally allowed such women as Margaret Preston to expand their roles in the public sphere, because the needs of the new nation outweighed societal’s concerns about proper and appropriate gender roles.

Despite her fame as the poet of the Confederacy, Margaret was ambivalent about the war. She feared the violence that came with it; she worried about her relatives in the North; and she felt incapable of shielding her children from want. One night, she could feed the boys only crackers for dinner, and she had to make them clothes out of her old aprons. The one positive change the war brought into her life was professional success. *Beechenbrook: A Rhyme of the War,* published in 1865 and successfully reprinted after the war, depicted the heroism of a Southern woman whose husband dies fighting for the Confederacy. While Preston was devoted to the war effort in public, in private she suffered torn
loyalties and conflict about the struggle.

This slim book reminds the reader just how hard it was for Margaret Junkin Preston to write: struggling with failing eyesight, she often dictated her poetry to her stepdaughter, Elizabeth. She faced the disapproval of her husband, as well as his expectations that she run a large house, fulfill her duties as a mother, and do a considerable amount of housework. Among the “thousand petty housewifely distractions” Margaret listed in her diary were cooking and cleaning, varnishing furniture, sewing, mending the carpets, making pickles and preserves, and entertaining guests. Despite these domestic cares, Margaret Junkin Preston successfully challenged the barriers against female authorship in the South by redefining womanhood and the purpose of her writing. She made a calculated compromise, perpetuating a housewifely image while pursuing a publishing career.

Preston’s letters, diaries, notebooks, scrapbooks, and sketchbooks tell the story of her life. Stacey Jean Klein has done an admirable job of mining the sources, bringing the poet to life, and placing her in the context of recent scholarship in women’s history. Margaret Junkin Preston (1820–1897) was more than Stonewall Jackson’s sister-in-law. Her poetry reflects her response to the violently changing South, while her career as an author paved the way for Southern women who followed. Libraries with collections in Southern literature, women’s history, and Civil War history will find this illustrated volume to be a useful and interesting addition to their collections.

—reviewed by Jennifer Davis McDaid, deputy coordinator, State Historical Records Advisory Board


After the little farming town of Big Lick, Virginia, became a bustling railroad center, its population grew from about 1,000 people in 1882 to about 35,000 in 1910 and about 50,000 in 1920. The city’s people struggled with unplanned development of streets, inadequate city services, a rising population of poor black and white people looking for work, the immigration of Northern business and industrial men looking for opportunities, and the domination of the economy by a small number of large manufacturing and railroad-related companies. Together with Birmingham, a contemporary industrial boomtown, Roanoke appeared to signal the arrival of the New South that leading Southern boosters believed would supplant the Old South.

Much like the explosively growing mining and cattle towns of the West, Roanoke had to deal with an unstable economy—filthy streets and streams; crime; brothels; saloons; underpaid, hardworking laborers; and an ambitious, upwardly mobile middle class and social elite. Add volatile relations between the races, and it is not surprising that the new city, characterized as magic because of its speedy development, had lynchings and race riots, labor unrest, severe unemployment during the depression of the 1890s, and a civic politics deeply divided by earnings disparities and between working-class people and those with bourgeois values.

This fine study of Roanoke highlights the effects on urban Virginians of changing economic and social conditions during the final years of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth. Elite white urban reformers, like their counterparts elsewhere in the country during the Progressive Era, attempted to ameliorate the problems of rapid urbanization—sometimes successfully, sometimes not. If the dramatic experience of Roanoke was unique among Virginia cities as a consequence of its remarkably rapid growth, the opportunities that the residents of Roanoke exploited and the problems that they faced were the same that residents of other Virginia cities experienced in less dramatic or in less immediately conspicuous ways.

—reviewed by Brent Tarter, editor, Dictionary of Virginia Biography
VLA Newsletter

Have some news you’d like to share? Please remember to pass it on to Editor Kevin Tapp (ktapp@radford.edu) for the VLA Newsletter. The newsletter is just the place for information about what’s happening in the library community in Virginia and the Southeast. Announcements of VLA events, news concerning VLA and its units, and VLA business are all great material to share through the newsletter. Be sure you get the word out to all who might be interested! Send your submissions to ktapp@radford.edu by the 15th of the month preceding the month of the desired issue.

To sample past issues of the VLA Newsletter online, visit http://www.vla.org/pubs.html#newsletter. Remember that the editor reserves the right to edit all material submitted except official statements initiated and approved by the association and its units. Signed articles do not necessarily reflect approval of the association. Ultimate responsibility for the contents of the VLA Newsletter rests with the editor.

LIJobs.com Launches Online Community

LIJobs.com, the largest free library career portal on the Internet, is pleased to announce the launch of its new online community for librarians. Devoted entirely to career development and job hunting, these forums provide a space for librarians, LIS students, library workers, and information professionals to discuss professional development issues: http://lijobs.com/forum/

“I’m excited to be able to offer this space for collaboration and discussion,” says Rachel Singer Gordon, webmaster, LIJobs.com. “As librarians, we know that we work and learn best in community—I look forward to watching the forums grow.” Current forum moderators include:

- Michael Stephens, LIS schools
- Jess Bruckner, Jumpstart your career
- Meredith Farkas, Professional development and participation
- Susanne Markgren, Talking tenure
- Kim Dority, Professional writing
- Sophie Brookover, Work/life balance

In recent related developments, Info Career Trends, LIJobs.com’s professional development newsletter, has moved to the Wordpress platform to better serve its subscribers. Its long-time career Q&A columnists, Tiffany Allen and Susanne Markgren, have moved to their own blog, and author/entrepreneur Kim Dority joins in with her new monthly column on “Rethinking Information Careers.” Info Career Trends continues to fill an underserved niche, devoted entirely to career and professional development issues for librarians and information professionals. The newsletter and column content are accessible at: http://www.lijobs.com/career_trends/

Rachel Singer Gordon shares: “I’m so pleased to bring Kim on board, and to watch the Library Career People column evolve in its new blog format. I look forward to hearing others’ opinions across the LIJobs.com online community.”

LIJobs.com, launched in 1996, provides free library-related job listings to both employers and job seekers, as well as related services from resume postings to career development blogs. LIJobs.com: http://www.lijobs.com

Online community: http://www.lijobs.com/career_trends/

Contact: Rachel Singer Gordon, rachel@lijobs.com

Library of Virginia Board Meeting

The quarterly meeting of the Library of Virginia Board meeting was held on Monday, 5 November at the Library. Following preliminary agenda items by Board Chair Mary G. Haviland, Bette Dillehay, Chair of VLA’s Legislative Committee briefed Library of Virginia Board members on VLA’s legislative agenda for 2008 and discussed the DVD provided by Gale, the partnership group, the grass “tops” initiative, and

Tidewater area librarians pose with Ella Jenkins, the First Lady of Children’s Music and Grammy-winning artist, at the Norfolk Marriott.