

Openers

by Lyn C. A. Gardner

As announced in Vol. 57, No. 2, *Virginia Libraries* looks forward to a new theme: electronic collections and digital developments in the library world. With a deadline of November 1, the special issue has already received a couple of exciting queries, and we'd love to have your input as well.

Speaking of electronic developments, the U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee has announced that the implementation of RDA, the proposed replacement to AACR2, will not occur prior to January 1, 2013 (<http://www.loc.gov/biblio-graphic-future/rda/>). Meanwhile, the Library of Congress is investigating a successor to the MARC framework, with an eye to better utilizing and interacting with today's information environment (<http://www.loc.gov/marc/transition/news/framework-051311.html>). The ideal would be to have both new standards—in whatever form they ultimately take—ready at the same time to make the fullest use of the enhancements and potential of both. If these goals are achieved, it's possible that our catalogs will look very different in the next five to ten years.

When I look back on the ten years I've already spent in technical services at Hampton Public Library, the number of changes we've seen are amazing. In acquisitions alone, only six years ago we were still using printed on-order cards and calculators to tabulate the budget reports. Catalog records had to be retrieved through OCLC Passport via specific and rigid search patterns, and orders were painstakingly compiled

from printed catalogs and sent by phone or fax. Prior to taking a job here eleven years ago, my colleague completed a university cataloging correspondence course that required typed cards for her final.

Likewise, fifteen years ago at The Mariners' Museum Library, we were just getting the Internet and receiving our first research requests via email, and had hired a keyboardist to input all our local in-analytics from the card catalog to the new museum-wide electronic catalog. Today, the entire museum and library catalog is available online, along with over 70,000 scanned photographs (leaving over a million still slowly undergoing digitization).

While some changes are more than we might have dreamed (or, possibly, wanted), others are disappointingly slow—such as the length of time and money required for digitization and upkeep, the conversion of some legacy archival catalogs, or the errors that still exist in catalogs following not only long-ago retrospective conversions, but also ILS upgrades.

What will the library universe look like in the next ten to fifteen years? Will patrons be able to find our books as easily as any other products on the web, perhaps even with reverse-referral clicks from bookstores to libraries? Will our ability to assess and serve our patrons' needs improve to an almost telepathic level? Will the promise of WorldCat, and the as-yet unrealized dream of Google Books, one day truly transform us into one worldwide library? Join us in exploring this new universe by sharing the challenges and tri-

umphs of today, while we speculate about the wonders that await us tomorrow.

Finally, as you will have noticed, issue two did not contain a reviews column. While we firmly believe in the importance of this column as a selection tool for Virginia libraries and as a means for librarians to keep abreast of the intellectual and artistic achievements of Virginians, we did not receive enough reviews. Part of this is due to a lack of review copies being sent by publishers. However, we're really hoping that we can put the power and passion of the library community to work to continue the column. With statewide collections at our disposal, many of us have access to these titles already, and might have donated review copies in the end anyway.

If you'd like to write a review and need some ideas, see "Virginia Publications" on page 16. If you encounter a work by a Virginia creator or about Virginia subjects, and it's one you feel other libraries would benefit from, please drop us a line so we can add it to the column—or consider writing a review. Particularly if you enjoy the work of a Virginia creator—be it a writer, musician, poet, or filmmaker—consider writing a review or querying about a potential interview. If you work in collection development and you order or obtain material for your library by a Virginia creator, let us know—or encourage a staff member to write a review. You'll be helping libraries and patrons across the state, as well as those creators who help to fill our shelves. **VL**