

President's Column

by Kevin Smith

I cannot believe that it is already fall and a new academic year is about to commence. As I said in my very first President's Column, time *does* seem to move faster while serving on the VLA Executive Committee. Over the last several months, I have been talking a lot with the editors of *Virginia Libraries*, and I am pleased to report that this year's fall issue will be a guest-edited, peer-reviewed quarterly dedicated to scholarly articles written by academic librarians. I hope we can continue to publish at least one peer-reviewed academic issue per year so that our academic colleagues will have another avenue for publication. In turn, this will enhance the variety of our journal contributions.

Planning for the academic edition of the VLA journal has served as a reminder that it's been five years since the VLA College and Research Libraries (VLACRL) Forum has hosted a "conference within a conference" during the annual VLA conference. I believe that incorporating the VLACRL conference within the annual VLA conference has allowed members to see the commonality in the work we do and a chance to learn from each other in order to better serve our patrons and students.

Since it is the beginning of a new academic year, my thoughts currently revolve around the teaching aspect of all librarianship. I have always said that librarians are teachers too. For both public and academic librarians, one of our paramount duties is the teaching of information literacy as new digi-

tal resources and gadgets emerge every day.

All libraries are part of the educational infrastructure of the communities and campuses they serve. Policymakers need to remember that provisions for the promotion of public libraries are included in the Code of Virginia, section 42.1-46, which states that "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Commonwealth, as part of

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its provision for public education, to promote the establishment and development of public library service throughout its various political subdivisions." As more and more colleges and universities offer online degrees, the lines between public and academic libraries appear to be blurring as students flock to the public library to use public computers or the Wi-Fi to attend their virtual classes. These same students use the public library for their research needs and require levels of service that are similar to those found on a campus. At my library we share commuter students from the local colleges and universities, who sometimes prefer the convenience of the public library over driving to campus.

Today the public library is still a center for adult education, as it

was in 1938 when Alvin Johnson published his study, *The Public Library—a People's University*. As they did back then, citizens come to public libraries to attend classes and borrow materials that prepare them for the information age. As always, academic librarians continue to do what they do best, and that is to teach students and faculty how to use informational resources and to assist them with their research. In addition, the research and writing of academic librarians continues to contribute to the knowledge base and development of the profession of library and information science.

In May I was delighted to give the opening remarks at the 2014 VLA Paraprofessional Forum conference. I give many thanks to co-chairs Therese Walters and Marion Eaton for making this event quite a success. One of the highlights for me was the very interesting keynote address given by Dr. Tyler Walters, Dean of University Libraries for Virginia Tech, who spoke about the future of libraries. However, I think the most exciting thing to come out of this year's conference was the change of the forum's name to the VLA Professional Associates Forum, denoting the fact that all library employees are engaged in the profession of accessing information and teaching patrons and students how to use it.

Congratulations to this year's scholarship winners! Tasha Birckhead from Jefferson-Madison Regional Library was awarded the Clara Stanley Scholarship, and Tova Johnson from Williamsburg Regional Library was awarded

the VLA Scholarship. Both scholarships were in the amount of \$2,500.

Time is flying, and it is now once again time for us to vote for the 2015 Executive Committee officers. The candidates for Vice President/President elect are Martha Hutzler from Central Rappahannock Regional Library and Susan Paddock from Virginia Beach Public Library. For VLA Secretary we have Cindy Church from the Library of Virginia and Kareemah Hamden from Chesterfield Public Library. Finally, for ALA Councilor we have Craig Amos from Thomas Nelson Community College and Rebecca Miller from Virginia Tech. With such talented and capable candidates, VLA will definitely be in good hands with whoever wins. Good luck to all of the candidates.

Soon we will all gather for our annual continuing educational and professional development event, the 2014 VLA Conference. There, many of you will have the opportunity to teach and we all will have the chance to learn from each other. I look forward to seeing all of you there. **VL**

**Mark Your Calendar:
October 22–24, 2014**

**VLA Annual Conference
Williamsburg, Virginia**

**Agents of Change:
The Library
Spy Conference**

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10. Email manuscripts and queries to both Beth DeFrancis Sun, defrancb@georgetown.edu, and John Connolly, jpcconnolly@crimson.ua.edu. Please be sure to include both editors.
11. *Virginia Libraries* is published quarterly. The deadlines for submission are November 1 for Number 1, January/February/March; February 1 for Number 2, April/May/June; May 1 for Number 3, July/August/September; and August 1 for Number 4, October/November/December. **VL**