

**Virginia Library Association
VLA Council
Online (Zoom) and Libby Mill Library
September 17, 2021**

Attendees:

Executive Committee – Jennifer Resor-Whicker, K.T. Vaughan, Lisa Varga, Maryśka Connolly-Brown, Regina Carter, Lucinda R. Wittkower, Bill Edwards-Bodmer
VLA Council – Tracy McPeck, Alisha Barnes, Brian Manning, Jessica Meier, Liz Bass, Kerri Copus, Julia Feerrar, Megan Slingerland, Cammy Koch, Pearl Derlago, Isaak Hopson, Cindy Church, Oliva Hasan, Tom Shepley, Mary Guillory, Jennifer Brown

Call to Order

Jennifer called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

Jennifer asked that everyone list their name, position in VLA, and the library they belong to in the chat box in lieu of introductions.

Secretary's Report

Maryśka emailed the minutes of the Council meeting held June 4th prior to this meeting. Brian moved the minutes be approved. K.T. seconded. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Bill reported.

Overall doing really well. You can see with totally revenue vs total expenses so far, we have almost \$60,000 more in total revenue. All the conference expenditures haven't come in yet.

Affiliate Membership dues are much better than we were budgeting for. We were planning for about \$66,000 and we've made \$82,000. We also have double the revenue expected from Jobline. Same thing with Jobline. We've about doubled what we were budgeting for.

We made over \$48,000 in the Main Investment account. The Professional Development Endowment has increased over \$3,000 dollars. If something unexpected happens, we have an adequate safety net.

Executive Director's Report

Lisa reported.

2021 Membership

271 Individual members (128 unpaid 2021 renewal invoices)
43 Life Members
86 Affiliate Members (4408 members)

Institutional Dues invoices have been sent and \$41,314 of anticipated \$45,000 has been collected

Joblines for 2021:

110 (plus 24 posted for free for public libraries who paid Institutional Dues; 7 unpaid invoices as of 9/14)

Hired Amy Sanders as VLA's Administrative Assistant. Position was posted for 7 days online and we had 27 applications; 5 interviews (including two VLA members.)

2022 Elections

2021 VLA Conference

- Exhibit hall
- Scholarship & Awards Banquet
- Pheedloop
- COVID Protocols
- Registration
- Sessions/cancellations
- Working with hotel
- Interviewing photographers
- Hired DJ/Photo Booth
- Recruitment of Sponsorships
- Dine Arouds Update

2021 Jefferson Cup Winners Announced; Structure and Name Change Discussion

2021 Virginia Society of Association Executives Meeting Planner Summit

- Presented Panel Discussion on Events Post-Covid

2021 VLAPAF Mental Health Series/National recognition

Participation in Ebook legislation discussion with Fairfax County PL Board Subcommittee

Planning 2022 and 2023 VLA Conferences

- Potential change to days of the week for conferences

Working with ALA/advocacy on the Build America's Libraries Act

- <https://www.pilotonline.com/opinion/columns/vp-ed-column-varga-rudy-0418-20210417-ih3saokqzqhrlvar2bsn7zq6e-story.html>
- https://richmond.com/opinion/columnists/scott-firestine-column-let-s-write-richmond-s-next-chapter-by-investing-in-our-libraries/article_b515a1d3-a1f1-5523-9697-bf68df9a3656.html
- https://roanoke.com/opinion/columnists/henry-investing-in-americas-libraries-advances-opportunity-for-all/article_df339cbe-ea41-11eb-aed8-5f5f1eb8050d.html

Executive Committee

Jennifer reported.

The election for VLA Executive Committee has closed and we will be making an announcement of the new officers soon.

The Executive Committee has secured Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training to take place in November and December. The new and current officers will be in attendance. We have hired Dr. Sharon Blackwell Jones to conduct the training. Dr. Jones is a graduate of Penn State

University and has experience consulting, working, and teaching in the areas of cultural competence, clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, and counseling psychology. Her doctoral research focused on culturally competent experiential diversity training. Dr. Jones has designed and delivered hundreds of diversity related programs in academic, private sector, nonprofit, community, and volunteer settings. Our goal is to make this training a requirement for incoming Executive Committee officers going forward.

VLA Annual Conference

Tracy reported.

No plans to cancel in-person conference unless a mandate comes from the Governor. We will be requiring proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test administered within 72 hours of arrival. Masks will be strongly encouraged. An email to membership will be going out around Monday, September 20.

Additional safety measures include:

- The scholarship banquet will seat 4 people per 8-round table.
- In the conference center, airwalls will be used to expand every room to space people out. Session rooms seating will be different to allow greater physical distancing.
- Presenters will be spaced far enough away from the front that they may remove their mask while speaking. We are looking into disposable microphone covers.

Fewer exhibitors than usual will allow for extra space for Creative Solutions to set up their quiet/loud lounges. Registrations are at 154, considerably lower than normal, but will also enable physical distancing. We also have 6 signed up for virtual-only access and two bulk passes for virtual access.

The virtual option will be different from the in-person conference. In-person presenters that drop out will have the option to upload a recording. Two publishers will be offering virtual book buzzes (with ARCs to send to the in-person conference).

VIVA moving in-person the meeting to online format.

We will not be holding the Friday luncheon. Instead, we are renting parking lot space from Dominion Energy to have food trucks and library outreach vehicles available for a Friday lunchtime show-and-tell. So far, 4 library vehicles have signed up, and Cindy is reaching out to the Richmond Food Truck Association.

There will be unavoidable single-use waste this time, and therefore the program will not be printed, and attendees will be asked to bring reusable items where possible, such as metal drinking straws.

Beth Macy, our keynote speaker, will be focusing on her book *Dopesick*, which is premiering as a Hulu series two weeks before the conference.

Other ideas being considered are a mentoring forum at the conference and virtually, and a virtual resume review.

Conference Committee member updates Local arrangements: Decided not to do formal dine-arounds. Instead, a restaurant list created by the BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ forums will include information on which restaurants offer outside seating/takeout.

Presenter coordinator: All presenters have gotten information with their speaker portal and associated tasks.

Social committee: Boardwalk Entertainment photo booth and DJ, sponsored by University of Tennessee Knoxville, has been secured. Jenny is working on providing board games. There will be more individually wrapped food than buffet-style.

Publicity/social media committee: Amy put together a pre-sale page on VLA for scholarship raffle.

App coordinator: Pheedloop converts to an app when ready. You can view the conference Pheedloop site here: <https://pheedloop.com/2021VLA/site/home/>.

Volunteer coordinator: Alisha has created a Sign-Up Genius for session volunteers and will send out once rooms are added.

Lisa shared that we have also pulled air walls in the conference center to increase the size of rooms without increasing the number of people they will hold. With only 150 registered so far we are confident we will be able to provide distancing options for people. We are also going to be offering different seating arrangements including herringbone seating and table groupings with assorted numbers of seats. We will be making sure that there's at least 15 feet of space between the presenter and the first row so that if the presenter wants to take off their mask to speak, they will be able to safely. We also requested microphone covers that can be swapped out between sessions. Lisa is working with Harper Collins and Penguin Random House for them to prerecord book buzzes, then they will send us ARCs so we can distribute them in person.

Unit Reports

Awards and Recognition Committee

Pearl reported.

As of now we have notified all the 2021 (technically 2020) winners as well as recipients of the Honorary Life Memberships. Those were posted on the website at the end of June. We also spotlighted each winner on the VLA Facebook page in July. We will be honoring this year's winners and last year's winners at the Scholarship and Awards banquet this year.

Collections and Technical Services Forum (CaTS)

Mary reported.

The Collections and Technical Services (CaTS) Forum held a successful event in October. The MARC & Tell Social saw 11 out of 18 registered attendees from public, academic, and museum libraries around Virginia. CaTS has also welcomed two new leadership team members: Jackie DeLong of Shenandoah University as Education Coordinator and Mary Carrion an ODU student as Conference Coordinator.

Current CaTS activities include Vice-chair recruitment, VLA Conference planning, and professional development offering for February 2022.

College of Research Libraries Forum (VLACRL)

Not present.

Continuing Education Committee

Alisha reported.

Lisa, and Alisha have been meeting to work on the Virginia Library Leadership Academy. The theme for 2022 will be Breaking Down Barriers, Building Up Communities. Dr. Angela Spranger and Dr. Nan Carmack will be our presenters. The event will be held on Tuesday, April 5, 2022 - Wednesday, April 6, 2022 at the Hotel 24 South in Staunton, Virginia. There are 12 confirmed attendees from the 2020 cohort that will attend. This leaves about 12 openings for new applicants. The application will go out in October or November.

The Continuing Education Committee panel will meet on September 21 to prepare for the conference presentation.

Aryn Dagirmanjian will be taking over as the Chair of the Continuing Education Committee. Alisha Barnes will be leaving at the end of September.

Intellectual Freedom Committee

Brian reported.

The committee has a new member, Abby Davis, and still needs a member from region 1. They are trying to organize an online meeting since they haven't met since the spring.

Jefferson Cup Committee

Jessica reported.

The 2021 winners have been announced. The 2022 committee is filled. It's been opened to more at-large membership rather than sticking to just regional membership (3 and 4 were hard to fill). They will start contacting publishers next week.

They have been talking about logistics for the Jefferson Cup As of now they are giving out two awards – one for younger readers and YA award, but the logistics of two winners and the costs associated with inviting two to the conference has become difficult. The committee proposed giving just one award rather than two. Lisa shared that in the past this award was given to one winner along with a monetary prize of \$1000. Historically the luncheon with the invited winner

helped pay for the award as tickets were sold to this luncheon but having two award winners has watered down this event and decreased the income it brings it. It's also challenging to decide which winner to invite to the luncheon. The Virginia Association of School Librarians has also started an elementary grade level award.

There's also been a problem with lack of diversity on the Jefferson Cup committee, and it was suggested that this might be partly due to the person the award is named after who is problematic in many ways. This is something that we will want to discuss in the upcoming year. The meeting of past chairs agreed with this sentiment.

The reason for the switch to two winners is because submissions can be anything from board books up to teen readers. Jessica clarified that the winner is almost always clear if you consider the significance of the contribution outside of the age range.

Maryska made the motion to make the award winner just one instead of two. Cammy seconded. The motion carried. The Jefferson Cup will be changed to just one award instead of two.

K.T. suggested that while we are looking at the names of awards to evaluate if they are inclusive, equitable, and not exclusive, we should look at any other awards that are named after people. Ex: James Mason, Donna G. Cote Librarian of the Year Award, Clara Stanley Professional Associates Scholarship. The Alexander Varga Scholarship will be going away at the end of the year.

LGBTQIA+ Forum

Liz Bass reported.

As the LGBTQIA+ Forum continues to provide service and literary guidance to librarians and their constituents, we intend to gather for a quarterly meeting on Thursday, October 7th at 3pm. As we discuss the happenings in our libraries, we intend to encourage members to attend the conference and come to our Thursday session at the conference for informational tools, resources, and a chance to win a free book!

The forum is collaboratively working with the Librarians of Color forum to ensure we get diversification and representation across the many cultures and identities within the LGBTQIA+ community. By highlighting useful tools and providing a list of books linked to WorldCat, we want to expose our forum members and VLA to the vast range of stories that need to be shared; not just for librarians, but for the souls that will see themselves in those stories.

Legislative Committee

Tom reported.

Early voting started today in VA. This is a big thing for the Legislative Committee. We have sometimes polled candidates about how they feel about libraries and have gotten mixed responses. Obviously, their positions and responses are non-binding. They can say they support librarians but then not do so in practice. If this is something the VLA Council would like to

continue, however, the Legislative Committee can conduct these polls. Tom invited the Council to submit their thoughts later via email if they would prefer.

The committee will continue to try to help librarians responding to the pandemic and will continue asking for state aid.

Librarians of Color Forum

Olivia reported.

Olivia just returned from a seven-week library fellowship in Senegal and plans to write a piece for the Virginia Library Journal. The forum will be presenting at VLA jointly with the LGBTQIA+ in a joint presentation. They are also working on their RVA business list so they can highlight businesses with outdoor seating, and more spaced seating, etc, for the conference soon.

Following the conference, they are working on holding a virtual event for networking and conversation sometime in the winter. Details will be shared as soon as plans are confirmed for this event.

Library of VA Liaison

Cindy reported.

New Exhibit!

Columbia Pike: Through the Lens of Community

Tuesday, August 31, 2021–Saturday, January 8, 2022

Columbia Pike: Through the Lens of Community, a unique exhibition of photographs at the Library of Virginia, celebrates the extraordinary cultural diversity found within a single community in Northern Virginia. Columbia Pike originated in the 19th century as a toll road connecting rural Virginia with the nation's capital. Today, the Columbia Pike corridor is one of the most culturally diverse communities in the nation, and possibly in the world. More than 130 languages are spoken in Arlington County, with the densest concentration along the Pike. Unlike in many parts of the world, or even in our own country, however, the stunningly diverse group of people—representing every continent—who live and work there do so in relative harmony.

Columbia Pike Documentary Project photographers, whose personal connections to the community allowed them to capture the strength, pride, resilience, elegance, and beauty of so many overlapping cultures, created the works on view. More than 70 of the thousands of photographs transferred to the Library of Virginia's collections this spring will be highlighted in Columbia Pike: Through the Lens of Community. The exhibition will also include information about the neighborhood, the residents, and the photographers themselves. As the nation seems more divided than ever, this collection shows how one community is making diversity work.

Events and other news can be found here:

<https://www.lva.virginia.gov/news/>

Professional Associates Forum (VLAPAF)

Isaak reported.

Due to covid, we had to pivot from our yearly conference to something else. Ultimately, we decided that we wanted the focus to be on virtual mental health webinars.

- We wanted everything to be free
- We wanted everything to be accessible. Mental health is something that's important for everyone, regardless of the type of library, region or state you're from.
- We wanted to do something that could not only be useful in the future but could give registrants a chance to take an hour while on the job to get a chance to focus on their own mental health

We have completed 5 out of 6 planned sessions but have had 560 total registrations. Around 200+ people have actually come to the sessions, but our recorded sessions have received over 150 views so while all the registrants were not able to make it, we are still getting a lot of positive numbers and feedback

We've had people from every region in Virginia, people from 20 different states and a bonus surprise of someone from the Vinayaka mission medical library in India. So, while it's only a small technicality it's fun to say we've gone international!

While our yearly goals will always surround our conference and regional workshops, we feel like this has given us a good platform to build on and we plan on creating consistent yearly virtual workshops. We are fortunate to work in a field that is surrounded by subject matter experts that are willing to share their time and knowledge with us, so we want to utilize that opportunity. So, if you know someone, please pass along any topics, speakers or ideas our way.

Other side notes:

- We have our basket ready for the raffle
- We have a survey coming out for our knowledge management committee where we want anyone with past experiences with the Professional Associates Forum to answer a few questions so keep your eyes peeled for that!

Programming Forum

Jennifer B. reported.

The Forum has had a couple of meetings that are more support related. They are brainstorming and supporting each other around the state. They have some new members, but Jennifer is it for leadership right now. There are some good suggestions for the programming page coming in. It is available publicly online, and you don't have to be a VLA member to view.

Scholarship Committee

Kerri reported.

At the last Council meeting, the Scholarship Committee brought forward requests to change wording in the Scholarship application and it was passed as follows:

- A change in the reference requirement: Suggesting "One (1) of the two (2) references is strongly recommended to be a librarian or other information professional."
- A change in the financial status requirement: Suggesting removing: Gross Income, Monthly Expenses, and Proposed MLS college expenses. Replace with "Projected household income, how many people are supported by that income, other scholarships and aid received" Suggesting add to Financial Need section: (100 WORDS OR LESS) YOU MAY ADD ADDITIONAL CONTEXT FOR YOUR FINANCIAL NEED FOR A SCHOLARSHIP.

The Scholarship Committee met on September 15 and reviewed the Scholarship evaluation process. We will be investigating what other state library scholarship committees use as rubrics and evaluation methods and plan to meet again to revise and change the currently used rubric.

We currently have around 10 baskets that are committed for the VLA Basket raffle. Some members have expressed interest but are still uncertain of travel plans.

Reminder you can also pre-purchase tickets for the raffle. Sales have also been slim since attendance is low. But that makes your chances better of winning a basket!

Kerri is planning on sending an email to encourage those who cannot attend but normally contribute via the basket raffle to donate to the scholarship fund.

The Scholarship and Awards Banquet on Wednesday at the start of the Conference will honor the 2020 and 2021 Scholarship winners, at this time all six recent winners are planning on attending.

Virginia Libraries Journal

Julia reported.

There was a webinar for potential authors in early August. About 24 people logged in in real time and more watched it. There was lots of fruitful discussion and questions. As a result, there are two submissions in progress. One best practice article just finished peer review and a case study is going under review by a couple of members of the editorial board.

The Virginia Libraries Journal will be drafting a call for new editorial board members soon. Council members are encouraged to recommend people who would be interested in writing, editing, or being behind the scenes supporting writers in some form.

Website Content Committee

Meg reported.

Not much to report, but all the information for the VLA conference has been moved to the conference portal. Meet a Member and Happenings is being run by one of the website members,

Christine Woods. She's created and sourced some good content but is always looking for more. If you need website updates for your committee or forum page and don't know your chair, please email Meg. The next meeting is in November.

Youth Services Forum

Cammy reported.

The Youth Services Forum is working on summer reading wrap up prior to the conference. This will be a networking over zoom events to decompress from summer reading. The next chair will be Rachel Timm. There will be a call going out for new leadership members.

Other Business

- A. We have eliminated the stipend money for the conference. If people have experienced hardships such as a furlough or other financial hardships, we have a way for them to apply for the conference hardship registration rate.
- B. K.T. proved a 2022 update for conference – Vivian Washington is the conference chair. The theme is Recovery and Revival. This will hopefully be a good theme by then. We have secured two keynote speakers: Marcellus "MT" Turner of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library and Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lazada, who is the ALA president-elect and is the Adult Services Assistant Manager at Palos Verdes Library District. The committee will start forming in January, so contact Vivian or K.T. if you are interested in joining.
- C. Jennifer, 2021 conference info – Beth Macy will be the keynote speaker for this year's conference. A show is being developed about her book Dopesick one Hulu. If you haven't read it, I recommend doing so.
- D. Pearl shared that she will be stepping down as Chair of Awards and Recognition and is looking for a replacement since there is no current vice-chair to promote.
- E. Lisa shared that there has been some discussion on ways to use the virtual conference platform. One of the ideas that came up was having a mentoring forum at the conference available to the virtual attendees. Another idea was a virtual resume review. She may be reaching out to the Council to see if anyone can help with these efforts.

There being no further business, Cammy moved the meeting be adjourned. Meg seconded. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Maryśka Connolly-Brown, VLA Secretary