



## LIBRARIAN OF VIRGINIA YELICH TO RETIRE

Librarian of Virginia Nolan T. Yelich is retiring on June 30 after nearly 39 years in state government. He began his state service in 1968 as director of public services for the Earl Gregg Swem Library at the College of William and Mary and joined the staff of the Virginia State Library (as it was then known) on June 1, 1973. In 1995 Yelich was appointed state librarian by Governor George Allen. In 1996 the *Code of Virginia* was changed to give the Library Board appointment authority for the state librarian. In 1998 the General Assembly enacted legislation changing the title of the state librarian to Librarian of Virginia.

Yelich served as director of administrative services and as deputy director of the Library of Virginia and twice served as acting state librarian. "One of the highlights of my career will always be the honor and privilege of being associated with the staff of the Library of Virginia," said Yelich. "A talented staff and world-renowned archival and printed collections have made my job a pleasure."

During his tenure, the Library has increased its support from both the public and private sectors.

Yelich oversaw the construction of the \$43 million Library of Virginia building at 800 East Broad Street and the move from the Library's former home in Capitol Square to the Broad Street location. The new Library of Virginia facility opened to the public in January 1997. In 1999 the Library also opened a new \$8 million State Records Center in Henrico County. Both buildings continue to attract attention from other states seeking to build similar well-designed facilities. On his watch the Library became one of metropolitan Richmond's ten most-visited attractions and an anchor for the revitalization of Broad Street.

He guided the expansion of the Library's outreach efforts, including the exhibitions and educational programs, and was an early advocate for

what has become the Library's signature event, the annual Literary Awards Celebration. The annual literary awards competition honors outstanding Virginia authors and books about Virginia in the areas of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. "Among his many strengths is the ability to put together a talented team and empower them to work together to anticipate and solve problems," said Dr. Charles W. Sydnor Jr., chairman of the Library Board.

"The Library of Virginia became an internationally recognized research library during his years at the Library," said Andrew H. McCutcheon, former member of the Library of Virginia Foundation and Library Board.

Yelich and the Library Board were the 2002 recipients of the Virginia Coalition for Open Government's Freedom of Information Award for ensuring public access to the papers of former Governor Jim Gilmore. He won the American Library Association's 2004 John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award for Intellectual Freedom in 2004, also for his stand in pursuing the records of the Gilmore administration for the state archives of Virginia. In 2006 Yelich was honored with a Centennial

Award from his alma mater, the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Centennial Awards recognize both national and local leaders in the library and information profession.

Yelich has served as president of the Virginia School Boards Association, chairman of the Williamsburg/James City County School Board, president of the Virginia Library Association, member of the American Library Association and the National School Board Association delegations to China, member of the Board of Trustees of the Art Museum of Western Virginia, and chairman of the Public Library Association's White House Conference Planning Committee.



THE LIBRARY  
OF VIRGINIA

800 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219-8000  
804-692-3592 • [www.lva.lib.va.us](http://www.lva.lib.va.us)

Janice M. Hathcock, *Editor*  
Ann Henderson, *Copy Editor*  
Amy C. Winegardner, *Graphic Designer*  
Charles W. Sydnor, Jr., *Board Chair*  
Nolan T. Yelich, *Librarian of Virginia*

## Library Unable to Renew SIRS Subscription

The Virginia Library Association was unsuccessful in its efforts to get a \$2 million budget amendment to support the Find It Virginia databases. VLA had made funding for these electronic resources its top priority for the 2007 General Assembly session. The Library of Virginia makes available the databases via the Internet to Virginia citizens across the commonwealth. An additional \$100,000 for the program was included in Governor

Kaine's budget. The amount, however, is not sufficient to cover the increasing costs of the online subscriptions

The Library has informed the superintendent of instruction, Dr. Billy K. Cannady Jr., and the chancellor of the Virginia Community College System, Dr. Glenn DuBois, that it will no longer be able to offer the online database resource SIRS for the 2007-2008 school year ...see **SIRS**, pg. 2

# LIBRARY ACQUIRES RARE CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER EXHIBITION SHOWCASES COPY OF THE MAGNA CARTA ACCOUNT BOOK

A rare volume offering insight into the business activities of one of the Virginia colony's most influential families and wealthy individuals of the first half of the 18th century is now part of the Library of Virginia's collections. An account book of the Allen family, one of the wealthiest in the Virginia colony, was recently purchased by the Library.

Seated in Surry County, first building and residing at "Bacon's Castle," then moving to "Claremont," the Allen family possessed substantial property throughout eastern Virginia—owning land in Brunswick, Southampton, Henrico, and James City Counties, as well as in Williamsburg, in addition to their main residence in Surry.

This particular account book belonged to John Allen (1684–1741/2), who was the son of Arthur Allen II of Bacon's Castle and his wife Katherine Baker. Arthur was the occupant of the house that gained fame when occupied by Bacon's rebels in 1676.

John Allen married Elizabeth Bassett, daughter of William Bassett of Eltham in New Kent County and his wife Joanna Burwell. This marriage allied him to several families with representatives on the Governor's Council.

The account book details Allen's dealings with a number of Surry County residents as well as with his relatives and marital connections. Among those mentioned in the book are William Gooch, royal governor of Virginia from 1726 through 1747; Nathaniel Harrison of Brandon Plantation; Nathaniel Burwell, whose plantation included what is now Carter's Grove; Kenneth McKenzie, a Williamsburg physician; and Philip Ludwell of Green Springs plantation. The accounts begin in 1721 and are carried on, irregularly, until 1756 by Allen's successor. There are references to both residents of and to his holdings in other counties and in Williamsburg. In addition to a wide variety of mercantile dealings, there is much information on occupations of the people with whom he dealt, as well as a detailed picture of how debts could be paid and how the overseers were paid—both in cash and in shares of crops. In addition there are references to the construction of various buildings—frequently mills or tobacco barns—that give dimensions and details on how the properties were to be finished. Also mentioned are repairs, such as work on chimneys, window construction, and replastering. The account book offers insight into the daily activities and business of the community and contains information of use to family historians—familial connections are mentioned in the accounts, as well as in identifying the debtors. Also noted are marriage license purchases and indication of marriages or remarriages of individuals who dealt with Allen.

John Allen acted as a factor for the sale of tobacco for himself and his neighbors. Several entries in the account book identify tobacco marks used to signify owners. Trade with other areas is mentioned in the accounts, as are issuing and the transfer and reissue of patents, surveys, and sales of rights.

The account book chronicles daily life in rural areas. A thorough study of the text will reward the scholar with a fascinating view of the lives of a wide spectrum of colonial Virginia's citizens. Allen maintained a staff of skilled builders that he rented to his neighbors for building tobacco houses, slave quarters, chicken coops, and other structures.

Any necessary conservation work will be performed on the account book and, due to the size and fragile nature of the volume, reformatting onto microfilm will take place. The reformatted volume is projected to be available for researchers in October 2007.

—submitted by Lyn Hart, Archival and Records Management Services

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**SIRS...** beginning this coming September. The SIRS databases have been a well-used and valuable resource for educators as well as for K-12 and community college students. The increased cost (now \$788,000) and the timing of the renewal payment for SIRS means that the Library will be unable to renew its subscription.

In the past the Library has used federal funding provided through the Library Services and Technology Act to cover the \$2.5 million cost of the databases in the Find It Virginia program. A recent ruling by the federal Institute of Museums and Library Services prohibits the Library from using end-of-the-year funds to pay for the subscription to SIRS.

## CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER EXHIBITION SHOWCASES COPY OF THE MAGNA CARTA

*Magna Carta & Four Foundations of Freedom*, an exhibition of revolutionary historical documents at the Contemporary Art Center in Virginia Beach, runs through June 18, 2007, and features several items on loan from the collections of the Library of Virginia. The exhibition coincides with the 400th anniversary commemorations of the founding of Jamestown.

The Magna Carta is considered one of the cornerstones of English democracy, establishing the rule of law and outlining the liberties granted by the king to his subjects. Joining one of only four surviving copies of the Magna Carta, signed June 15, 1215, are the first printed version of the Declaration of Independence; the earliest-known text of the Virginia Declaration of Rights from the 1776 *Proceedings of the Convention of Delegates* from the Library's collection; notes on the first draft of the Constitution; and a signed, printed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation.

The Virginia Declaration of Rights, unanimously adopted by the Virginia Convention on June 12, 1776, at the beginning of the American Revolution, was the first statement of individual rights to be adopted by a state government. It was one of the most influential documents that contributed to the evolution of what became the United States Bill of Rights.

Other items from the Library of Virginia included in *Magna Carta & Four Foundations of Freedom* are buttons, ribbons, posters, and materials from the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia; a 1691 edition of *The Seaman's Grammar and Dictionary* by Captain John Smith; and *Purchas his Pilgrimage* by Samuel Purchas, 1614.

The Contemporary Art Center of Virginia is located at 2200 Parks Avenue in Virginia Beach. The center is open from 9 AM to 5 PM Tuesday through Sunday and from 9 AM to 9 PM on Monday. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for students, seniors, and military personnel. Center members and children under age four are admitted free. For more information, call 757-425-0000 or visit [www.cacv.org](http://www.cacv.org).

# Library of Virginia to Serve as Site for SOLINET and CAPCON Workshops

Cindy S. Church, continuing education consultant, has been traveling the state getting input from library professionals about their most pressing needs for training. She has worked with SOLINET and CAPCON to provide these initial opportunities for librarian professional development.

## Succession Planning and the Management of Knowledge Transfer (SOLINET)

Your organization's workforce will change radically within the next five years. As baby boomers begin to retire, employers will realize a loss of more than people. Your workplace will experience a brain-drain loss—the loss of collective knowledge of how the organization works, behaves, and serves its customers. The organization will not be able to sustain its service culture or to develop its remaining and new employees if this corporate knowledge is not effectively transferred. Successfully transferring this knowledge and ensuring the continued effective performance of the organization, its divisions, departments, work groups, and individuals is referred to as succession planning and succession management.

Is your organization planning for the transition of senior employees leaving and newer employees taking their places? What key practices, processes, and “people knowledge” need to be identified that are critical for transitioning to the future? What plans need to be in place to ensure this transfer of knowledge?

This workshop helps you work through these questions and develop a process for managing this transition. Participants will learn the process for identifying key:

- Processes
- Practices
- People knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes
- Organizational values and service principles

Through assessments, applications, and small group work, participants will develop the framework for managing knowledge transfer.

Thursday, May 17, 9:00 AM–4:00 PM, Library of Virginia  
Contact SOLINET at 800-999-8558 to register.

## Budgeting for Non-Financial Managers (CAPCON)

This course transforms financial and accounting language and concepts into decision-making tools the non-financial manager can use successfully every day. Course participants will return to their jobs ready to apply the fundamentals of finance to sell new ideas, implement realistic budgets, and assess the financial viability of projects.

This workshop is perfect for those who do not have a strong background in accounting, budgeting, or other financial responsibilities, but must oversee financial information or interact with colleagues in the financial sectors.

Thursday, May 24, 9:00 AM–4:30 PM, Library of Virginia  
Call CAPCON at 800-543-4599 to register.

## Leading in the Middle (CAPCON)

This workshop highlights the unique perspective of middle leaders in the context of transforming library systems. Participants engage in self-assessment, creative activity, and small- and large-group discussions with an emphasis on a systems view of leadership and transformation. Real-time organizational issues become discussion threads, with participants analyzing and solving problems, articulating personal goals, and learning from peers and colleagues who are similarly situated.

This workshop is geared to middle managers and experienced professionals in a library setting.

Wednesday, June 13–Thursday, June 14, 9:00 AM–4:30 PM, Library of Virginia  
Call CAPCON at 800-543-4599 to register.

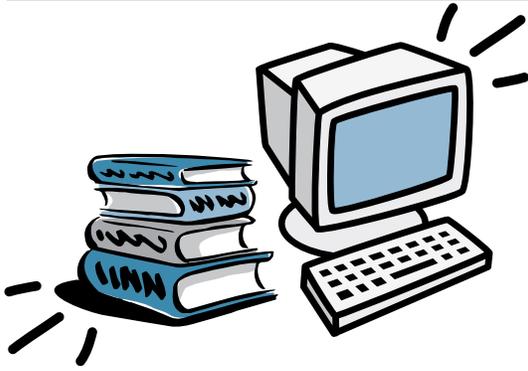
# Hampden-Sydney Honors Edwards

State Archivist Conley L. Edwards III has been selected as one of two recipients of the 2006–2007 Patrick Henry Public Service Awards given under the auspices of Hampden-Sydney College's Wilson Center for Leadership in the Public Interest. The award goes to Hampden-Sydney alumni for distinguished public service.

Edwards, who joined the staff of the Library as a reference archivist in 1974, was named State Archivist in 1996 and is also director of the Archival and Information Services Division at the Library. He currently serves as vice president/president-elect of the Council of State Archivists, state coordinator of the State Historical Records Advisory Board, and chairman of the Virginia Board for Geographic Names. He is active in numerous professional organizations, including the Society of American Archivists, the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators, and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, and is a sought-after speaker on archival and genealogical topics. In 1993 he traveled to Belgium to address a professional conference concerning the Library's digital program for historical records.

Articles on historical and genealogical subjects by Edwards have appeared in *Civil War Times Illustrated*, *Delaware Today Magazine*, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, *The Virginia Genealogist*, and the *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy*. He is the compiler of *A Guide to Business Records in the Archives* published by the Library in 1983.

The first Patrick Henry Public Service Awards were presented in 1996, and have been given annually since that time. Previous recipients of the award include: J. Robert Bray ('60), executive director of the Virginia Port Authority; William T. Wilson ('60), attorney and former member of the House of Delegates; Stewart Bell Jr. ('31), former Winchester mayor; Joseph A. Leafé ('58), former judge and former member of the House of Delegates; Thomas Jackson Jr. ('79), former member of the House of Delegates; George Heilig Jr. ('72), former member of the House of Delegates; Clarence A. Holland ('52), former member of the House of Delegates; Harvey B. Morgan ('52), member of the House of Delegates; W. Tayloe Murphy Jr. ...see **Edwards**, pg. 5



## Did you know...?

The last several years have seen a trend by many publishers to develop encyclopedias on specific subjects. The merit of such an encyclopedia lies in the organized coverage and review of issues provided on a specific topic in one place. Historic periods and social movements, in particular, benefit from such works. In the last year, the Library has acquired the following titles:

Encyclopedia of Appalachia	The Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine
The Grove Encyclopedia of Decorative Arts	Federalism in America
Colonial America	Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History
Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements	Encyclopedia of North Carolina
The South Carolina Encyclopedia	The Greenwood Encyclopedia of African American Folklore
Encyclopedia of the New American Nation	Encyclopedia of the Great Black Migration
Encyclopedia of African American History, 1619–1895	Encyclopedia of American Political Parties and Elections
American Conservatism	Encyclopedia of the American Revolution
Encyclopedia of American Business History	Biographical Encyclopedia of the Supreme Court
The Women's Movement Today	The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture
Encyclopedia of the Underground Railroad	
Reference Encyclopedia of the American Indian	

When in the Library, please ask the staff to show you these helpful resources.

### THEY SAID IT COULDN'T BE DONE The H. E. Howard Virginia Regimental Histories Series and the Battles and Leaders Series

While planning for guides and publications to stimulate interest in the Civil War in Virginia and educate the public concerning the campaigns and events that occurred within the state, the Virginia Civil War Centennial Commission considered publishing a series of regimental histories of Virginia units, but became convinced it couldn't be done (perhaps not in a timely enough fashion, or not with enough financial return, or not without funding from the General Assembly). Historians Dr. James I. "Bud" Robertson Jr. and Robert K. Krick, however, continued to see merit in such a series. Inspired by these men and, as he says, "bringing only ignorance to the table," Harold E. Howard, a former teacher, began the process of creating a unique island in the ocean of Civil War history books in 1978. In fact, he brought far more than ignorance to the table; the former sergeant in the 82nd Airborne Division brought single-minded, tenacious determination, which turned out to be, perhaps, the most

important ingredient. The obstacles met in organizing, editing, and personally publishing a series of more than one hundred books were many, but, one by one, they were overcome. Howard credits the authors for the success of the project. The authors deserve that praise, but they would agree that, without Harold E. Howard, the series would have succumbed to the obstacles and died.

The first volumes of the Regimental Histories Series were released in 1982 and production averaged six or seven volumes per year until the project ended in 2003. Authors vary from amateur historians to professionals, including National Park Service historians Edwin C. Bearss, Chris Calkins, Frank P. Cauble, Robert K. Krick, his son Robert E. L. Krick, and Donald C. Pfanz; academics Dr. James I. Robertson Jr. and Ervin L. Jordan; and Library of Virginia archivist Tom Crew. In spite of the variety of authors and differences in the amount of material available on the regiments, Howard set a standard for format and consistency that publishers in other states would do well to emulate. There is no other series like it—a monumental achievement comprising 135 volumes in the

Regimental Histories Series, covering virtually every infantry, artillery, and cavalry unit that Virginia contributed to the Confederate cause. The only similar set is the 15-volume *North Carolina Troops, 1861–1865: A Roster*, compiled by former Virginia State Archivist Louis H. Manarin and published by the North Carolina State Department of Archives and History.

In addition to the Regimental Histories Series, Howard began publishing a Battles and Leaders Series, comprising 65 volumes, in 1984. This series covers battlefields and engagements, biographies and memoirs, locality studies, and other topics.

The Library of Virginia has one of the few complete collections of the published works of H. E. Howard, Inc., of Appomattox, Virginia. The regimental series is among the most heavily used groups of books in the Library's collection. An annotated bibliography covering the complete works in both of the H. E. Howard series is planned by the Library's Reference Department.

Rumors of Howard's retirement have been greatly exaggerated. Although he is no longer actively publishing, the company

remains intact with many books to sell. For a more thorough rendering of the story of Harold E. Howard and the products of his vision, see John Coski's article in the Winter/Spring 2007 issue of *The Museum of the Confederacy Magazine*.

On March 24, 2007, Howard and the 102 authors of the series were honored with the Museum of the Confederacy's Virginius Dabney Award. Approximately 30 of the authors attended. The Dabney Award is presented annually to the creator of a work judged to have great popular impact on the interpretation and understanding of the Confederacy and the American Civil War.

They said it couldn't be done. H. E. Howard and his "family" of authors showed them it could.

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

### *United States Submarine Men Lost during World War II*

Paul W. Wittmer, editor and compiler, and a submarine veteran himself, has generously donated a set of his three-volume reference work to the Library of Virginia. This alphabetical compilation of information on all known men (more than 3,600) who died in the U.S. Submarine Service includes passengers lost on U.S. submarines and the stories of the lost boats. The most comprehensive publication of its kind anywhere, the revised third edition consists of more than 1,000 pages of new and updated data on many records. This source has already provided information about 17 previously unidentified Virginians to the Virginia Military Dead database.

### *Will the Circle Be Unbroken: Country Music in America*

In his foreword to *Will the Circle Be Unbroken: Country Music in America*, the country music performer Willie Nelson relates, "So I grew up loving country music. It was everywhere then, and it's everywhere now. It comes from the soul of America, but it has gone around the world." Country music might have had its origins in the folk culture of the American South, but over the last century its commercial popularity has spread around the globe, making this distinctive music style a recognizable American icon. *Will the Circle Be Unbroken* provides an engaging overview of the history of country music.

The book is edited by two writers known for their work on country music. Paul Kingsbury, the author of several books,

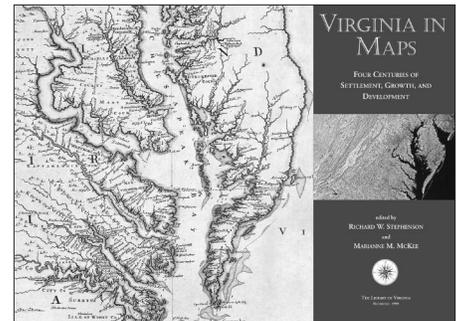
previously served as the editor of *The Journal of Country Music*. Alanna Nash has earned two awards for her music writing, which includes numerous books and articles on country entertainers. The text is divided into chapters contributed by different authors, some by noted historians of country music, including Bill C. Malone and Charles K. Wolfe. Chapters on more recent periods in the history of country music are covered by popular authors who balance historical work with writing on contemporary musicians. (Several of the authors in this volume can also be found in the recently published anthology *Country Music Reader 2007*.)

Throughout the text, the editors have added a wealth of features. Each chapter provides a timeline that lists important events in country music by year. The editors include biographical notes under the heading "Profiles in Country," music reviews entitled "Classic Country Recording," and short essays on specific topics in country music. The biographies, reviews, and essays are signed entries, enabling readers to locate more work on that topic by that author. The richly reproduced images that appear on virtually every page of the book are among the most compelling and entertaining aspects of this work. The publisher, Dorling Kindersley or DK Publishing, has earned its reputation for producing handsomely designed works that integrate well-selected graphics throughout the text. This work draws heavily upon the collections of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville, Tennessee, which was a partner in the production of the book. *Will the Circle Be Unbroken* concludes with additional helpful material: a listing of persons inducted to the Country Music Hall of Fame; author entries on each of the contributors; a glossary of terms; and an index that includes names, subjects, and titles of referenced works. A comprehensive listing of picture credits accompanies the considerable number of illustrations and images reproduced.

*Will the Circle Be Unbroken* is a welcome addition to the Library of Virginia's holdings that document the history and culture of the American South. This book will be a helpful resource for researchers interested in country music, or for any of the Library's visitors seeking an entertaining diversion.

## ATLAS AVAILABLE SUMMER OF 2007

The Library of Virginia is pleased to announce a second printing of *Virginia in Maps: Four Centuries of Settlement, Growth, and Development*. The popular atlas edited by Richard W. Stephenson and Marianne McKee will be available this summer.



## AUDIOCAST OF BRUNDAGE TALK ONLINE

The Library of Virginia is pleased to announce that its first experiment with audiocasting is available on the Library's Web site at [www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/lvacasts/brundage/index.htm](http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/lvacasts/brundage/index.htm). The presentation is also available as a text document on the same page.

The Library's inaugural audiocast is the January 25, 2007, talk by W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "Commemorating Jamestown: A Clash of Race and Memory." Brundage, the William B. Umstead Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, spoke on white and black historical memory using examples from the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition of 1907.

The Library hopes to publish other talks in this manner as time, resources, and

**Edwards...** ('53), former member of the House of Delegates and former Virginia secretary of natural resources; William B. Spong Jr. ('41), former U.S. senator; Paul S. Triple Jr. ('68), president of Christopher Newport University and former U.S. senator; and Eugene Hickok ('72), U.S. deputy secretary of education and former Pennsylvania secretary of education.

# Chancery Causes Shed Light on John Mitchell Jr.

While processing Nottoway County chancery causes, local records archivist Louise Jones came across a most unusual and rare item used to fasten several papers together: a campaign button advertising the bid of John Mitchell Jr. to become supreme chancellor of the Virginia branch of the Colored Knights of Pythias.

The Knights of Pythias was a fraternal benevolent association founded in 1864 by Justus H. Rathbone in Washington, D.C. It began as a secret society for government clerks, but soon expanded its membership. The order's founding occurred in part as an effort to shore up the government by healing the discord in society created by the Civil War and the enmity that existed between the northern and southern parts of the country.

The society took its inspiration from the Greek myth of Damon and Pythias. In the legend, Pythias is sentenced to death by King Dionysius. Damon offers himself as collateral so that Pythias can return home to say goodbye to his family. If Pythias does not return, Damon will be killed in his place. Pythias is delayed by robbers while returning and Damon is nearly executed, but Pythias arrives just in time to save him. The king is so impressed by the true friendship between the two men that he releases both and makes them his counselors. The Knights of Pythias thus took "Friendship, Charity, and Benevolence" as their motto and their mission. Philosophically, the organization promoted universal peace and harmony between men. Practically, it provided community services such as insurance, burial services, and other welfare activities. The Knights of Pythias organization spread and soon had lodges in many states across the U.S. In 1870, it became the first fraternal order to be chartered and incorporated by an act of Congress.

The Colored Pythians came into being several years later as a parallel organization after the original Knights refused to admit African American members. Beginning in 1870 in Philadelphia, black men began petitioning to join the Knights of Pythias but were always refused membership. Eventually several light-skinned men who could "pass" were admitted, including Dr. Thomas W. Stringer, of Mississippi, an African Methodist Episcopal minister and Reconstruction-era Mississippi

## STUDENT FROM ARLINGTON TO REPRESENT VIRGINIA AT THE POETRY OUT LOUD 2007 CONTEST FINALS

Alanna Rivera, a sophomore from Washington-Lee High School in Arlington, Virginia, won the 2007 Virginia State Finals of the Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest on March 8 at the Library of Virginia. More than 3,900 students participated in Virginia and 18 of those students competed at the 2007 state finals. The Library of Virginia and the Virginia Commission for the Arts cosponsored this event.

For her skill reciting "Walking Down Park" by Nikki Giovanni, "All This and More" by Mary Karr, and "A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General" by Jonathan Swift, Rivera will go on to the national competition in Washington, D.C., April 30 and May 1, 2007, along with students representing every state. Two other students also were recognized for their performances at the state finals. Johnny Coyle, a senior from St. Christopher's School in Richmond, was the runner-up and Neelma Qureshi, a junior from J. E. B. Stuart High School in Falls Church, took third place.

The judges for the 2007 Virginia State Finals were Dr. Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda, Virginia's current poet laureate; Dr. Robert Porter, actor, director, and theater professor from Blacksburg; d. l. Hopkins, actor and poet

from Richmond; Tracy F. Robertson, English coordinator for the Virginia Department of Education; and Lawrence M. Brown, managing director of SPARC, School of the Performing Arts.

This was the second year for this program created by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, in cooperation with the 50 state arts agencies, to encourage high school students to memorize and perform great poems. Each winner at the state level receives \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington to compete for the national championship. The state winner's school receives a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. A runner-up in each state receives \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library. The Poetry Foundation will be awarding \$50,000 total in scholarships and school stipends at the national finals, with at least a \$20,000 college scholarship for the Poetry Out Loud National Champion. More information about the national finals can be found at [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org).

—submitted by Peggy J. Baggett,  
Virginia Commission for the Arts



state senator. Dr. Stringer remained in the Knights long enough to learn their organization and their rituals. He then left to form what was officially named The Supreme Lodge of Knights of Pythias of North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceanica, but what was most commonly called the Colored Knights of Pythias. The purpose and function of the Colored Pythians were much the same as those of the white Knights of Pythias, but with one difference—the Colored Pythians offered membership and benefits without distinction of color. In reality, however, membership was composed only of African American and Asian members. Dr. Stringer was the first supreme chancellor, or leader, of the first lodge of the Colored Knights of Pythias and has been called "the father of Masonry in the

South" in one biography (E. A. Williams, S. W. Green, and Jos. L. Jones, *History and Manual of the Colored Knights of Pythias*, Fiche 88, No. 288, p. 946). A separate organization for ladies was formed, called the Independent Order of Calanthe. Women had to be related to one of the Colored Pythians to be admitted to membership.

In 1894, the white Knights of Pythias in Georgia filed suit against the Colored Knights of Pythias, alleging that the Colored Pythians were wrongfully using the name "Knights of Pythias" in their attempt to incorporate themselves in that state, as well as fraudulently using the titles, orders, insignias, emblems, and other paraphernalia of the white Knights of Pythias. The case was eventually heard by the Supreme Court of the United States...see **Mitchell**, pg. 7

**Mitchell...** States, which ruled in 1912 that the Colored Pythians were entitled to use the name and accoutrements of the Knights of Pythias (*Creswill v. Grand Lodge Knights of Pythias of Georgia*, 225 U.S. 246 (1912)). The white Pythians eventually dropped their racial membership requirements in the 1950s, but the Great Depression had done irreparable damage to the Pythian lodges of both colors. Both organizations exist today, though in extremely reduced numbers, with the Colored Pythians being the less numerous of the two. In some cities where the Knights of Pythias still exist, the two groups have combined in an effort to perpetuate the existence of the organization (“D.C. Knights of Pythias Hope to Eliminate Color Barrier,” *Washington Post*, February 22, 1990).



The first group of Colored Pythians in Virginia was formed by R. A. Paul in Richmond in 1882. By 1911, there were 144 courts or individual groups with 6,700 members in the state. John Mitchell Jr.

became supreme chancellor of the Virginia Colored Knights of Pythias in 1894. In the later years of its existence in Richmond, the Colored Pythians’ headquarters was in the same building as the Mechanics’ Savings Bank founded by Mitchell in Jackson Ward in 1902.

John Mitchell Jr. is best known today for his long tenure as the editor of *The Richmond Planet*, founded in 1883 by former slaves. Mitchell used his position and his paper to protest all forms of racial discrimination, prejudice, and hypocrisy (especially lynching), earning the title “the fighting editor.” He had a long friendship with internationally known anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells. By 1887, the paper was one of the largest-circulating black newspapers in the South. Mitchell was prominent in the Virginia Republican party and served as Jackson Ward’s delegate to Richmond City Council from 1888 to 1896. He ran for governor of Virginia on a controversial all-black ticket in 1921, commonly called the “Lily Black” ticket. He was president of the national Afro-American Press Association throughout the 1890s. Mitchell sustained a long relationship with Richmond schoolteacher Marietta Chiles, although the two never married. Chiles was also very involved in benevolent activities as the head of the Richmond branch of the Order of Calanthe and secretary of the Richmond Women’s League, founded to raise money to assist three African American women from Lunenburg County accused of murdering a white woman in 1895. The Mechanics’ Savings Bank failed in 1922 after accusations of mismanagement and a protracted and expensive lawsuit. Mitchell died a few years later, on December 3, 1929. He is buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Richmond, next to his mother.

—submitted by Sarah Nerney and originally published in *The Delimiter*

## RENOVATION WORK TO CLOSE NORTH CAROLINA STATE ARCHIVES THROUGH JULY 10

The Search Room of the North Carolina State Archives will be closed from May 1 through July 10, due to renovations at the Department of Cultural Resources building. The Archives preserve and make available historical materials relating to North Carolina.

“During this time, our staff will inventory all stacks materials, rather than waiting for January when the Archives has traditionally closed for inventory,” said Sarah Koonts, head of Collections Management for Archives and History. “We hope that the time gained then as a result of inventory already being completed will help mitigate the loss of Search Room access caused by renovation work.”

For more information go to the Archives’ blog at [www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/archives/default.htm](http://www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/archives/default.htm) or call 919-807-7310.

(photo, left to right) Cathy Brown, Hispanic services manager, United Way; Nancy Riddlemoser, ESL instructor, Richmond City Schools; and Tanya Gonzalez, City of Richmond Hispanic liaison, share practical suggestions for reaching out to the Hispanic community at the Spanish Language Outreach workshop at the Tuckahoe Public Library in Henrico County on March 2. The workshop is one of several offered by the Library of Virginia through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in partnership with WebJunction. The workshops were designed to increase the knowledge and skills of library staff to better serve the needs of Spanish speakers in their communities and to increase the number of Spanish speakers using public access computers and other library resources and services.

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[www.lva.lib.va.us](http://www.lva.lib.va.us)

## Gulf Coast Libraries Project Celebrates Reopening of First Libraries in Louisiana

On Monday, February 26, 2007, an emotional ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to celebrate the first reopening of library branches in Louisiana.

Two temporary facilities, Cameron and Grand Chenier, are the first of 21 facilities that will reopen as part of the Southeastern Library Network’s Gulf Coast Libraries Project. SOLINET administers the \$12.2 million grant-supported, three-year initiative, which is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support public libraries damaged by hurricanes in Louisiana and Mississippi in 2005.

The Cameron Parish libraries suffered extreme damage from Hurricane Rita. Cameron Parish Library was unable to salvage a stick from its building or a book from its collection. All that remained from the two library locations were a few bits of metal left in the trees behind the Grand Chenier branch.

Cameron Parish is one of nine library systems to receive funds from the Gulf Coast Libraries Project. It received two furnished temporary buildings with computers and Internet service, materials, and funding for staff to operate the facilities for 36 months. In addition, the parish will receive a high-tech mobile library later this year. The grant will cover the operating expenses in Cameron that will enable the community to use local funds to begin the process of planning and rebuilding a permanent public library as soon as possible.

—submitted by Jennifer Labant, SOLINET



# U P C O M I N G E V E N T S

Thursday, May 24, 2007

**What This Cruel War Was Over:  
Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War**

Time: Noon | Place: Conference Rooms

Chandra Manning, assistant professor of history at Georgetown University, will offer an unprecedented account of why Union and Confederate soldiers identified slavery as the root cause of the Civil War, how the conflict changed troops' ideas about slavery, and what those changing ideas meant for the war and the nation. Using soldiers' letters, diaries, and regimental newspapers, Manning's research permits a better understanding of the thinking of black and white, northern and southern soldiers. A book signing will follow this talk.

Wednesday, June 6, 2007

**The Jamestown Project**

Time: Noon | Place: Conference Rooms

Karen Ordahl Kupperman, professor of history at New York University, will place the Jamestown settlement into its proper context as one among many early English ventures. She makes a compelling case that early Virginia, despite its false starts and appalling

mortality, taught the English what successful colonization required. *The Jamestown Project* is a breathtaking study of the colony that would become a template for all subsequent English colonies, including Plymouth. A book signing follows the talk.

Thursday, June 14, 2007

**"May We Be Worthy of Our Birthright":  
Defining the Meaning of America at the  
Jamestown Commemorations, 1807–2007**

Time: 5:30 PM | Place: Lecture Hall

John d'Entremont, the Theodore H. Jack Professor of History at Randolph-Macon Woman's College, will explore the effort to define America at the Jamestown commemorations of 1807, 1857, 1907, 1957, and 2007. America has always been a set of hopes as well as a spot on a map. Because the founding of the United States was accompanied by a document proclaiming principles as the nation's reason for being, every generation of Americans has been consumed with interpreting those principles and arguing over their application. Americans, by definition, care—and often disagree—about what it

means and what it requires to be American. Civic commemorations are one venue at which that concern becomes vivid. This lecture complements the *Myth & Memory* exhibition on view at the Library of Virginia through December 15, 2007.

Thursday, June 28, 2007

**Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in  
Virginia, 1920–1945**

Time: Noon | Place: Conference Rooms

Pippa Holloway will discuss and sign *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia, 1920–1945*. Her book explores how the white elite who dominated politics in the first half of the 20th century sought to increase state control over African Americans and lower-class whites, whom they saw as oversexed and lacking sexual self-restraint. In order to reaffirm the existing political and social order, these politicians legalized eugenic sterilization, increased state efforts to control venereal disease and prostitution, cracked down on interracial marriage, and enacted statewide movie censorship.



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