Change is a Good Thing

By Karen Urbec

Welcome to the Spring edition of Florida Libraries! This edition includes several significant changes that the editorial board and I are excited to share with you.

First, the journal is now open-access at publication! The work we are doing in Florida and the stories we have to share with each other are now able to be read and appreciated by a wider audience. Previously, the journal was a member-only benefit that became more widely-available about 6 months after publication. As librarians, we are advocates for free access to as much information as possible, so it made sense that our state-wide journal was available to all. I am thankful that Laura, Lisa, and the entire board supported this important change. We welcome our new readers and look forward to engaging with you in the future.

Second, we now have another way to engage with what we publish--Letters to the Editor is a traditional but new-to-us feature that I hope you will use to share your ideas about and responses to what you read in these pages. Letters are an opportunity to react and respond to what you read, and to further enrich our discussions and exchange of ideas. Letters is not the place for event announcements, and we reserve the right to edit for clarity and length. Anonymous letters also will not be published. Our hope is to include another opportunity for free exchange of ideas in the journal. Please send letters to journal@flalib.org and be sure to include "Letter to the Editor" in your subject line.

Third, this edition features our return to publishing peer-reviewed articles. This has been a goal for several years, and we are able to provide this level of scholarship thanks to the help of many librarians. It is not an exaggeration to say that this would be impossible without the talents and enthusiasm of the entire editorial board and the FLA staff. I cannot thank them enough for their hard work, encouraging attitudes, and innovative thinking as we have navigated this new undertaking.

Peer review can be an intimidating process for new writers, but our hope is that it will be approachable and attainable while still maintaining academic rigor and standards. If you would like to write an article for review, please reach out to us at any stage of the process--even if you are just at the idea stage--and we can help you through the process. We are here to help and encourage more of our readers to write and submit articles. Any topic you are researching for work could potentially be a peer-reviewed article. If you have done research and reached a conclusion, other librarians in similar situations will benefit from reading about your process, your goals, your decision-making, and your conclusions.

A non-peer reviewed article is a report on an event or a program, and is useful and informative to our readers. A peer-reviewed article is based in research and tries to answer a larger question or illuminate an area of practice. It may sound intimidating, but it need not be. We are here to help you through the process, and are eager for everyone to be successful.

Peer review can be closed or open, and we have opted for an open review procedure. This can have different meanings, but for us it means that reviewers and writers are not anonymized--they know each others' names. We also publish reviewers' names alongside the article they reviewed. Agreeing to review and edit an article requires significant skill, interest, and time; we want to recognize that voluntary contribution by including the reviewer's names in our publication.

The time needed for the review process is longer, so you will see two deadlines for each edition from now on; an earlier date for reviewed articles and a later one for non-reviewed articles. Peer reviewed articles for the fall edition are due June 15th, and the non-reviewed articles are due August 15th.

I look forward to engaging with you in these pages, and soon to have the chance to see each other in person, too.

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