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## President's Column

Tim Dodge  
*Auburn University*

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## President's Column

To quote the great jazz and blues singer, Dinah Washington, in her great 1959 recording of the same title, "What a difference a day makes. Twenty-four little hours." When I wrote my last President's Column, I had never even heard of the coronavirus or COVID-19. Since mid-March we all have been consumed by bad news as the virus continues to wreak havoc as the number of confirmed cases continue to skyrocket and, sadly, also the number of deaths. The economic toll has yet to be assessed but, literally, millions of our fellow citizens are suddenly out of work. We all in our professional and our personal lives have had to deal with "social distancing," "stay at home" orders, etc., encountering bare supermarket shelves as hoarders have swept up everything from hand sanitizers to bread to canned goods to, yes, toilet paper.

All of us in the library world now have had to adjust to everything from working remotely from home to working as one of a very few still physically coming in to work (like me) but in an almost empty building as we provide services to our patrons via electronic means to, perhaps, having to close down entirely as the pandemic rages on. Certainly, our personal lives are inconvenienced if not menaced by COVID-19. I sincerely hope nobody reading this has contracted the virus or has a family member or friend in that predicament.

Despite all of this, I am proud to be a member of a profession that is still largely functional and doing its best to meet the information needs of our various patrons in public, school, academic, and special libraries. At times like this, we can and do rise to the occasion. Thanks to modern technology, it really is pretty incredible what we can do to serve our patrons. Even in times past, though, libraries and librarians were there: think of World War II, the Great Depression, or more recently, 9/11. Libraries and librarians were there during the influenza pandemic of 1918. As of this writing, the bad news appears to have no end in sight but think, if we could make it through the horrors of the 1918 pandemic, we can and will make it through the trials and tribulations of the current pandemic. To quote Vera Lynn, who recorded the original version to lift British morale during the dark days of World War II in 1942, "There'll be bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover." For a truly upbeat version of this inspiring song, check out the Checkers' 1953 rhythm and blues interpretation on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oDcJBHwlqs>.

Putting things into historical perspective, let's look forward to SELA's Centennial. Plans are underway for some special observations of this Association milestone at the forthcoming joint conference with the Georgia Library Association in Macon October 7-9. In recognition that things are still uncertain due to the virus crisis, some programming may be of a hybrid nature thus allowing for remote participation if necessary or desirable. Either way, there will still be ways of celebrating one hundred years of the Southeastern Library Association this Fall.

Tim Dodge  
Auburn University