

Editor's Note



irginia, our featured state for this issue, has been my home for nearly 15 years. Before moving to Virginia, I lived in Washington, D.C., just across the Potomac River. Despite its proximity to the U.S. capital, the neighborhood I live in views itself as distinctly Virginian, set apart from, although not oblivious to, the important city on the other side of the river. From the balcony of my apartment, I can see that city and its gleaming monuments. One structure that stands out is the white-domed memorial that honors Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson, most commonly known for writing the Declaration of Independence and serving as the third president of the United States, made other noteworthy contributions to his country and to the state of Virginia. Born in Virginia in 1743, Jefferson lived there most of his life. His home, Monticello, now a popular tourist destination, gives visitors an introduction to the life of this remarkable Virginian. Besides his political activities, Jefferson occupied himself with various intellectual interests, inventions, architecture, and gardening.

Naturally, because FORUM is an academic journal, we are particularly interested in Jefferson's educational pursuits. He collected and shared information about many different subjects, including science, math, and horticulture, writing nearly 20,000 letters in his lifetime. Some of those letters were written to his grandchildren, who were encouraged to write replies; Jefferson often included stories or riddles to educate the children. Besides being a prolific letter-writer, Jefferson was also a great collector of books. In 1815 he sold 6,487 of his books to the U.S. government, and those books became the core collection of the Library of Congress.

One of Jefferson's lasting contributions to education was his founding of the University of Virginia. Jefferson led legislative efforts that resulted in the charter for the university in 1819, and he acquired the land to build it. He drew up architectural plans for the campus—an “academical village” centered around a library—and its buildings. (The photo on the cover of this issue shows the Rotunda, one of the buildings Jefferson designed, which housed classrooms and the university library.) In addition, Jefferson planned the university's curriculum, recruited its faculty, and served as the first head of the university, which opened in 1825. Jefferson's intention had been to create a university that would educate not just the elite but anyone who wished to enroll. This institution emerged from his belief that education was the key to freedom.



I am pleased to announce that an assistant editor recently joined the staff of *English Teaching Forum*. His name is Tom Glass. After earning degrees in English and Fiction Writing, Tom went to Thailand, where for 15 years he taught university level English and conducted teacher training. After returning to the United States, he received a PhD in ESL from Purdue University in 2008. His particular interests are second language writing and World Englishes. And now he, too, is a resident of Virginia.

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