About the cover:
The numbers are startling but true: today in Virginia, more than 2 million adults possess basic or below basic literacy skills, meaning that they struggle with such tasks as reading medicine labels or balancing checkbooks. And it is not always easy to pinpoint someone who is illiterate—53 percent of these adults are employed, although, on average, they earn far less than their literate counterparts, just one of many problems that they face in daily life. Unless solutions can be found to help these adults raise their literacy levels, a majority will spend their lives mired in economic uncertainty, with a disproportionate number living below the poverty level, incarcerated, or unable to access vital health care and community services. The feature article, “Virginia’s not-so-hidden secret: The adult literacy crisis,” beginning on page 14, explores the complexities of this often-ignored and unresolved issue. (Cover photo by Michael Kiernan.)