

VLA News

November 2020

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Back Issues

Did you miss previous issues of the *VLA News*? Don't despair! You can read them on the VLA website!

[VLA News back issues](#)

Meet Your Leaders

VLA is here to help you. The people who make up the Executive Board, Section & Committee leaders and Representatives volunteer their time for VLA because they feel that it is important to be involved in an organization that benefits Vermont librarians and their profession as a whole. Below is a list of your VLA leaders (for more contact

President's Letter

by Kevin Unrath

Heading back into fall, much is up in the air for Vermont's libraries right now. What will COVID-19 look like over the cold months? What will our funding look like next year? These are challenging times, and no one can predict what 2021 will look like right now any more than we might have predicted 2020. It's important to realize that we have more uncertainty now than in the past, and that uncertainty is stressful. I've been telling my staff to make sure they engage in the self-care they deserve right now, and if they're feeling overwhelmed, have someone to reach out to for help.

In order to alleviate the uncertainty of next year's conference, the VLA board has decided to hold an all virtual conference in 2021. Perhaps some in-person gathering will be possible, but planning all virtual will allow for us to get together, learn, and grow regardless of what's happening. We hope this encourages more attendance statewide, lowering the barrier for participation.

We're currently recruiting a virtual conference chair to help facilitate the conference. This position comes with a \$1000 stipend, and is a good opportunity for someone who enjoys bringing people together online to share their skills! Please send me an email by November 9th if you'd be interested in this role:

kunrath@shelburnevt.org.

Very best,

Kevin Unrath
VLA President
Director, [Pierson Library](#)
kunrath@shelburnevt.org
vermontlibrariespresident@gmail.com
802-264-5017

Vermont Library Association
PO Box 803
Burlington, VT 05402

Connect With Us:

information, see the [VLA Leadership Directory](#). Let them know if you would like to be involved in VLA, too!

Executive Board

President:
[Kevin Unrath](#)

Vice President/President Elect:
[Michael D. Roy](#)

Past President:
[Amy Olsen](#)

Secretary:
[Marie Schmukal](#)

Treasurer:
[Susan Smolinsky](#)

Section Representatives

College & Special Libraries Section President:
[Chenfang Yang](#)
Organizes workshops and assists college and special librarians.

Membership & Outreach Chair:
[Loona Brogan](#)
Maintains membership roster.

Public Libraries Section President:
[Barbara Ball](#)
Organizes workshops and assists public librarians.

Trustees & Friends President:
[Adriene Katz](#)
Organizes workshops and assists library trustees.

Committees

Government Relations Chair:
[Margaret Woodruff](#)
Assists libraries with connections to legislators.

Intellectual Freedom Chair:
[Mary Danko](#)
Assists librarians with challenges to library materials and issues related to patron privacy.

Scholarship & Awards Chair:
[Lisa Milchman](#)

Website: www.vermontlibraries.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/VTLibraryAssociation
Twitter: [twitter.com/@VLAlib](https://twitter.com/VLAlib)
Instagram: [instagram.com/vlalib](https://www.instagram.com/vlalib)
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/groups/Vermont-Library-Association

Public Libraries

by Barbara Ball

The VLA Public Libraries Section has been busy drafting a public relations campaign. This campaign is aimed at raising awareness around what Vermont's public libraries achieve collectively, and highlighting local libraries' contributions and successes. The end result will be printable posters that individual libraries can alter to highlight their particular situations and the value they provide to their communities. A huge thanks to Dana Hart, Ilsley Public Library Director, for envisioning and spearheading this project, and to Margaret Woodruff, Charlotte Public Library Director, for helping out. Text from a sample poster from this project follows.

"Vermont Public Libraries find you the answer. There is a lot of information out there, and navigating it can be overwhelming. Librarians are specially trained to help locate, access, and evaluate up-to-date information. Last year _____ Library answered ___ reference questions. Keep 'em coming!"

Thanks for all you do for Vermont's libraries!

Barbara Ball, MLIS
Director, [Windsor Public Library](#)
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Friends & Trustees

by Adriene Katz

Happy autumn! Hope you have been enjoying the fall colors as much as I have as I travel through the colorful hills and valleys to the Northeast Kingdom, to the town of St. Johnsbury.

Recently, the VLA Friends and Trustees Section was actively planning a conference for Friend groups, boards of trustees, library directors, and anyone else who was interested to learn more about the issues, expectations, and challenges facing this indispensable sector of public libraries. This year, it would be entirely virtual and available free of charge. Held the week of September 21st through the 25th, Lara Keenan, Joy Worland, and other staff from the [Vermont Department of Libraries](#) primarily organized the event, along with suggestions, input, and feedback from the VLA section leaders Past President Dana Rozycki and myself, current President Adriene Katz. Online -- created in response to the concerns about safety of meeting "in person" with the ongoing

Oversees VLA awards and scholarships.

Vermont Library Conference

Chair:
VACANT

Roundtables

Inclusion Chair:

[Bridget Stone-Allard](#)

Supports libraries in providing better service to diverse populations.

Personnel Chair:

[Sarah Snow](#)

Assists librarians with questions related to personnel issues.

Technical Services Chair:

(inactive)

Organizes workshops & assists technical services librarians.

Youth Librarians President:

VACANT

Organizes workshops and assists youth librarians.

Archivist:

[Paul Carnahan](#)

VLA News Editor:

[Janet Clapp](#)

Webmasters:

[Tessa Johnson](#)

[Jessamyn West](#)

Representatives

ALA Councilor:

[Jessamyn West](#)

Represents Vermont in the national organization.

NELA Representative:

[Amy Williams](#)

Represents Vermont in the New England Library Assoc.

VT Dept. of Libraries

Representative to the Board:

[Jason Broughton](#)

Jobs & Subs

For library jobs:

[VLA Job Postings](#)

pandemic (as this sector usually offers a day-long affair somewhere in the state) -- it was a delight to prepare for this version virtually, which allowed for different possibilities.

Last year, 120 people attended the annual conference. This year, online, there were 232 registrants. This included some participants, who, unexpectedly, joined us from outside of Vermont!

The conference topics encompassed a broad spectrum of interest to both trustees and Friends: strategic planning, fundraising ideas, human resources, even what librarians do (a session of which included comments from my own director at the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, Bob Joly!). If you were not able to participate when the conference was "live" in the last week of September, you can still view a number of the video recordings, slideshows, and handouts online, as well as more information about the conference as a whole, on the Vermont Department of Libraries website: libraries.vermont.gov/2020TFC. Please check it out!

Of these sessions during the conference, the keynote "Slow Democracy and Power of Community" with speaker Susan Clark was the most viewed, followed by the Town Hall with State Librarian and Commissioner of Libraries, Jason Broughton, also known as "Librarian Extraordinaire."

Sadly, only thirteen people turned out for the library-based trivia night! It was unfortunate turnout for a well-organized, enjoyable, knowledge-packed event, hosted by Amanda Gustin of Vermont Historical Society (with a lot of trivia fame and following of her own!). The trivia was composed of histories of Vermont libraries, the current state of libraries, as well as library practices. Perhaps if we marketed it more broadly to all in Vermont's library land, or to the general public, it might have had a different result. Trivia is more fun with a crowd! If you have feedback on this, or about any element of the conference, please submit your comments to Lara and Joy at the Department of Libraries. With these reflections and ideas, it will help with planning for future conferences for the sector, whether we are able to do in-person, online, or possibly, a hybrid of the two, to reach as many people as possible.

Thank you again for "coming" (or, perhaps, "joining" in the future!). I hope you all got a lot out of the week!

Have a lovely November,

Adriene Katz

VLA Friends & Trustees Section President

Librarian, [St. Johnsbury Athenaeum](#)

Friend of the [St. Johnsbury Athenaeum](#)

Friend of the [Dorothy Alling Memorial Library](#)

Board Member, [State of Vermont Board of Libraries](#)

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802-748-8291

For library subs:
[Vermont Library Substitute Pool](#)

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Scholarship & Awards

by Lisa Milchman

In my book group this month, on Zoom of course, one of our members said, after the word “weird” came up for the umpteenth time in referring to our new reality, “weird is the new normal.” Our club members may not always share an opinion of the book, but we could all agree that this really is the case (and also that it would make a great bumper sticker!). Weird IS the new normal. And in this new Weird, I will readily admit that I am struggling a little to find the “right” words to write for this, my submission to our quarterly newsletter.

As always, some of the “right” words are the reminders. VLA is here for you and because of you, and I am always happy to remind you that one of the perks of membership is the opportunity to apply for funds for continuing education. Online educational opportunities abound, and this fall there is a chance to apply for either a \$1500 graduate school (MLS or MLIS) scholarship for the spring semester or a \$250 grant for a class or workshop. Applications for either opportunity are due November 15. You can find more information about these at Graduate Student Scholarship (www.vermontlibraries.org/vla-graduate-student-scholarship) or Professional Development Grant (www.vermontlibraries.org/scholarship-committee/vla-professional-development-grant).

And while it is very satisfying to award funding to worthy recipients, it has been equally, if not more gratifying to chair the awards side of this committee. One of the things I have truly loved is having the chance on a regular basis to write words of acknowledgement and thanks, and to encourage you all to value and thank each other, whether in your everyday work or in our annual celebration of libraries and librarianship known as the Vermont Library Conference. It has been this celebratory side of things which has been more greatly altered by the new Weird – and sadly, more difficult to move into an online space.

While we are halfway in the yearly cycle to a new Vermont Library Conference, I do not want to let this crazy 2020 slip by without giving a shot to some kind of celebration of our individual and collective excellence and resilience. The new Weird gives us an opportunity to think outside the box and be appropriately, well - weird. Would you like to have funny awards? Parades? Zoom cocktail or mocktail party? No idea is too weird, and I would love to hear the thoughts that anyone has for what/how/when/where this might be able to happen.

Until then and as always, take good care and my many thanks to all of you for the work you do each day.

Lisa Milchman
VLA Scholarship & Awards Committee Chair
Assistant Director, [Norwich Public Library](#)
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Inclusion

by Bridget Stone-Allard

SAVE THE DATE!

Understanding racism's influence on Vermont, our libraries, and our library associations.

The first step in developing an anti-racist agenda is to understand systemic racism's deep influence on our culture and institutions. In this session, we'll take an unflinching look at how racism is part of our state and the profession of librarianship, including our associations. Building on this understanding, we'll discuss what we can do to undo the harm caused by this history, and ask how we can reframe our efforts in the language of anti-racism.

Date: Thursday, December 3rd

Time: 2:30-3:45

Location: virtual. Check the VLA website (www.vermontlibraries.org) for access details TBA.

Presenters:

Bridget Stone-Allard

Jessamyn West

Mike Roy

Jessamyn is preparing a brief history of state library associations, particularly segregated state library associations before the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Mike will offer a lit review and a reflection on librarianship/professional efforts to fight racism.

Bridget will discuss an initiative underway among Catamount and potentially other Koha users in Vermont to help patrons find materials without using outdated terms.

Please join the conversation!

Bridget Stone-Allard, M.A. Ed.
VLA Inclusion Roundtable Chair
Director, Georgia Public Library
directorqplvt@gmail.com

Government Relations & Advocacy

by Margaret Woodruff

Greetings! I'm looking forward to getting the committee up and running and invite you to join me. Current plans include more direct contact and connection with VLA members through the membership platform. As we move into the winter season with

continued concern about everyone's health and well-being, I hope this network can provide the means to share information and ideas as well as stay in touch.

In addition to these more general notions, there are the formal library advocacy events to prepare for. Remote or not, library legislative day and associated activities can raise our spirits along with our profiles as the community connectors that we are.

Please contact me with any interest, ideas, or inspirations!

Margaret Woodruff
VLA Government Relations & Advocacy Committee Chair
Director, [Charlotte Library](#)
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(802) 425-3864

New England Library Association

by Amy Williams

News from NELA

Some good news from other New England area libraries:

-The Maine Library Association (and individual members!) have been lobbying state senators to cosponsor and pass a Library Stabilization Fund Act of 2020 prior to the November election. Similar moves are being made in other New England states.

-Rhode Island Library Association received a \$20,000 grant from EBSCO which will fund statewide training for library staff. The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee is currently deciding how best to spend the money.

-New NELA website in the works! The site will be switching to MemberClicks software.

-NELLS I has been set for an in-person session in August 2022.

And finally, don't forget the NELA Virtual 2020 Conference (conference2020.nelib.org/nela-2020-virtual-conference-series)!

There are only two sessions remaining:

Session #7 is Nov 12, 1:00-5:15 PM featuring comedian Juston McKinney. Session #8 is still to be decided.

Amy Williams, MLS
VLA Representative to NELA
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802-773-1860

People of Vermont Libraries

St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, St. Johnsbury, Vermont:

by Adriene Katz

Following the retirement of librarian Frank Moulton, Amy Petersen started at the Athenaeum in August. Amy does circulation and supports the interlibrary loan program. Next time you are visiting our National Historic Landmark (perhaps viewing our collection of paintings and rare books), please say hello!

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