

VLA News

May 2024

Table of Contents

Articles

[President's Letter](#)
[Vice President's Letter](#)
[VLA Conference](#)
[Public Libraries](#)
[EDI](#)
[Vermont Libraries](#)
[Working Group](#)
[Newsletter Editor](#)

Sidebar

[Back Issues](#)
[Meet Your Leaders](#)
[Library Jobs & Subs](#)
[ATTN: Gmail Users](#)

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

From Your President...

by Oceana Wilson

Legislative Advocacy

We are all aware of the unprecedented increase in anti-library legislation nationally (<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/adverse-legislation-states>) and record-breaking number of book title challenges (<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/book-ban-data>). In contrast to these national trends, Vermont is poised to potentially pass legislation that will allow Vermont's public and school libraries to remain centers of inquiry and discovery through equitable access to information for all Vermonters and will safeguard each individual Vermonter's constitutionally protected freedom to read, while also protecting librarians' important work in building collections with a diversity of voices for our public and school libraries.

The Vermont Library Association has been actively advocating Vermont bill S.220. VLA Vice President/President-elect Mary Danko and I provided testimony in support of the bill on January 31 to the Senate Committee on Education. The Senate voted in favor of the bill on March 27. Mary and I returned to the statehouse on April 24 to provide testimony to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs. The bill was voted favorably with amendment by the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs on May 3.

In other advocacy news, I would like to thank all the librarians who attended Library Legislative Day on April 9 and especially thank Margaret Woodruff and Barbara Ball for planning the very successful day, in coordination with our colleagues at the Vermont School Library Association, Vermont Humanities, and the Vermont Department of Libraries. It was an impactful event, generating both support for S.220 and awareness of the amazing work of Vermont librarians!

Conference

The 2024 Vermont Library Conference "Libraries Empowering Communities: Standing Together in Uncertain Times" is going to be an amazing day of sharing, learning, and connecting with librarians across Vermont. The list of conference sessions is available (<https://vermontlibraries.org/2024-vermont-library-conference-sessions>), and there is still time to register (<https://vermontlibraries.wildapricot.org/event-5572682>). The terrific artwork for the conference (<https://vermontlibraries.org/conference>), created by The Center for Cartoon Studies student O.K. Stevens, perfectly captures the themes of this year's conference. Many thanks to VLA Conference Co-Chairs Maria Avery and Dena Marger and the VLA Conference Committee for all their work and creativity.

Annual Business Meeting

The Vermont Library Association Annual Business Meeting will be held on June 6 from 2:00-3:30 pm over Zoom.

We have several open positions that we will be voting on for the upcoming year.

We have candidate(s) for the following open positions:

be involved in VLA, too!

Executive Board

President:

[Oceana Wilson](#)

Vice

President/President-elect:

[Mary Danko](#)

Past President:

[Kelly McCagg](#)

Secretary:

[Loren Polk](#)

Treasurer:

[Barbara Ball](#)

Section Representatives

College & Special Libraries Section President:

[Sarah Scully](#)

Organizes workshops and assists college and special librarians.

Membership & Outreach Chair:

[Erica Shott](#)

Maintains membership database and communications.

Public Libraries Section

President:

[Catherine Goldsmith](#)

Organizes workshops and assists public librarians.

Trustees & Friends

President:

[Howard Burrows](#)

Organizes workshops and assists library trustees.

Committees

Government Relations Chair:

[Margaret Woodruff](#)

Assists libraries with connections to legislators.

Intellectual Freedom Chair:

[Randal Smathers](#)

Assists librarians with challenges to library materials and issues related to patron

- Vice President/President-elect (three years total)

We have no candidate(s) (yet!) for the following open positions:

- Public Libraries Section Vice President (President-elect) (two years total)
- College and Special Libraries Section Vice President (President-elect) (two years total)
- Friends & Trustees Section Vice President (President-elect) (two years total)
- New England Library Association (NELA), Vermont Representative (two years)

If you would like to be a candidate for any of these open positions, please email president@vermontlibraries.org to let us know! If you would like additional information about any of these positions, please refer to <https://vermontlibraries.org/board-position-descriptions> and/or reach out to the current section president.

It has been a really wonderful and eventful year serving as president. I am indebted to many of you for your support and work.

With gratitude,
Oceana

Oceana Wilson
VLA President
Dean of the Library, [Bennington College](#)
president@vermontlibraries.org

Vermont Library Association
PO Box 803
Burlington, VT 05402

Connect With Us:

Website: www.vermontlibraries.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/VTLibraryAssociation

X (formerly 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

From Your Vice President...

by Mary Danko

I was very happy to be a part of the ad hoc committee that was able to provide VLA grants to two libraries that suffered damage due to last July's flooding. Ainsworth Public Library in Williamstown and the Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Montpelier were each awarded a grant of \$2,200.

The American Library Association (ALA) promoted the need and managed the many generous donations that came from all over the country through the ALA Disaster Relief Fund. VLA managed the administration of the grants and is hopeful that these monies will help each library to continue to rebuild after the devastation that was caused to their buildings and collections.

Donations are still being accepted. Please go to <https://ec.ala.org/donate/projects> and be sure to designate funds for Vermont by including "Vermont libraries" in the tribute line. Thank you to Oceana Wilson and Joy Worland who also served on the committee.

This has been a busy legislative season for libraries. Senate Bill 220 has gone through many edits and as of this writing has passed both the Vermont Senate and the House. It has been a learning process for me, and I'm already thinking about how we can do better as an association to be more prepared for next time. S.220 addresses many of the issues that were part of the *Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont Final Report* (<https://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/InitiativesProjects/LibraryWorkingGroup/Report/>)

privacy.

Scholarship & Awards

Chair:

[Pamela Cartier](#)

Oversees VLA awards and scholarships.

Vermont Library Conference Co-Chairs:

[Dena Marger](#)

Maria Avery

Roundtables

Inclusion Co-Chairs:

[Bridget Stone](#)

[Amy Olsen](#)

Supports libraries in providing better service to diverse populations.

Personnel Chair:

VACANT

Assists librarians with questions related to personnel issues.

Technical Services

Chair:

VACANT

Organizes workshops & assists technical services librarians.

Youth Services Chair:

[Erin Davison](#)

Organizes workshops and assists youth librarians.

VLA News Editor:

[Janet Clapp](#)

Digital

Communications:

[Tessa Johnson](#)

[Susan Larson](#)

[Sarah Scully](#)

[Jessamyn West](#)

Representatives

ALA Councilor:

[Jessamyn West](#)

Represents Vermont in the national organization.

NELA Representative:

[Amy McMullen](#)

Represents Vermont in the New England Library Assoc.

VT Dept. of Libraries Representative to the Board:

[Catherine Delneo](#)

[WG Libraries Report Nov23 MainReport.pdf](#)), but there is more to do. We have a program session set aside at this year's conference to get more feedback from our members on the report and possible legislation VLA should consider in the future. If you're interested in this kind of association work, I hope you can come to that session.

There are still many VLA positions open for volunteers to participate in. If you aren't involved in VLA in a volunteer capacity, I hope you will consider it. If you are a leader at your library, I hope you will encourage your staff to participate. It is a wonderful way to help support Vermont librarians throughout the state and you also get to know many fantastic librarians through the amazing work we do.

Mary Danko
VLA Vice President
Director, [Fletcher Free Library](#)
vicepresident@vermontlibraries.org

2024 VLA Conference

by Dena Marger and Maria Avery

Greetings, Vermont Library Association community! As co-chairs of the VLA Conference Committee, we are thrilled to update you on our progress. We have been working diligently to bring you a conference that will address the issues that are most on our minds at this historic moment. Libraries and library workers are under threat from book challenges and other censorship efforts, challenges to our programming and our policies, as well as threats posed by climate change. Our conference, therefore, is organized under the theme of "Libraries Empowering Communities: Standing Together in Uncertain Times," and is dedicated to the ways we stand together for ourselves, our profession, and the communities we serve.

At the time of this writing, our schedule for the day-long conference, happening at the Killington Grand Resort on May 20th, is nearly finalized (<https://vermontlibraries.org/2024-vermont-library-conference-sessions>). We have planned a full day of speakers, presentations, workshops, and discussions on topics ranging from climate action to grant writing, from creating effective policy to handling book or program challenges. Our focus was on the provision of practical information that library workers can bring back to our communities.

We are truly excited for the perspectives of American Library Association President Emily Drabinski, who will be our keynote speaker as well as for a special lunchtime presentation from performer and co-founder of the Vermont chapter of Drag Story Hour, Emoji Nightmare. We are planning a day that will be interesting, provocative, instructive, and if we've done our jobs well, fun!

Following the conference will be a small reception at the Sherburne Library in Killington, to which everyone is welcome. Thank you to Sherburne folks for welcoming us and hosting! We will certainly need volunteers on the day of the event to help welcome people at the registration desk and other similar tasks. Calls for day-of volunteer help will go out soon, so stay tuned for those.

We're grateful for all the work and experience of our fabulous VLA Conference Committee members in pulling this conference together, and to all the library workers who submitted proposals for the program. Speaking for the committee, we can't wait to see you at the Killington Grand Resort this May!

For updated conference program information and to register, please visit <https://vermontlibraries.org/conference>

Dena Marger (she/her)
VLA Conference Committee Co-Chair
Director, [Lydia Taft Pratt Library](#)
dummerstonvlibrary@gmail.com

Maria Avery (she/her)
VLA Conference Committee Co-Chair
Community Outreach Manager, [University of Vermont Libraries](#)

Jobs & Subs

For library jobs:
[VLA Job Postings](#)

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

ATTN: Gmail Users

If you are viewing this using Google Mail, please note your *VLA News* may have been clipped by the mail service.

To finish reading the issue, scroll to the bottom of the message and click the link:

[Message Clipped]
[View Entire Message](#)

Other mail clients should receive *VLA News* in its entirety, but if not, please [let us know](#).

Public Libraries

by Catherine Goldsmith

Dear public library friends!

I'm excited to see many of you at the state library conference on Monday, May 20, put on by our very own Vermont Library Association. I hope the "one-day" format will allow more library staff from more libraries to attend this year. Encourage your friends! It's possible that some librarians, especially at smaller libraries, have never attended a professional conference and may not realize the value it has. Many of us can feel isolated in our work, at times. Not alone (!) but without professional peers with whom to share ideas and empathize. I have found it inspiring and rejuvenating to be surrounded by others who care so much about public libraries. (Psssst. Fun fact: I'm hosting a panel discussion this year.)

On an adjacent topic, I had always assumed that American Library Association (ALA) membership cost too much for me, holding a part-time position at one of Vermont's small and rural libraries. Recently, I did join when I found this information on the ALA site (<https://www.ala.org/membership/ala-personal-membership-benefits-types>) about a discounted rate: "Non-Salaried/ in transition - \$58 - Includes librarians earning less than \$45,000 per year or not currently employed. In a difficult economy this category can be helpful to those in career transition or those just beginning their careers." I'm not sure I'll renew, but I wanted to give it a try.

And, last in my series of news items: the national conference of the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) is in SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS this fall. If you've never attended an ARSL conference, I highly recommend it, especially for new directors of small libraries. #ARSL2024 "Libraries are (r)Evolutionary." (<https://www.arsl.org/2024-conference>)

And finally, during my research on the Grange chapters that once met in Starksboro's Town Hall (now housing the library), I ran across this resource: <https://www.ruralminds.org/resilience>. Perhaps some of their materials will be useful for mental health awareness in your community.

Happy spring!
Catherine Goldsmith
VLA Public Libraries Section President
cl6585@yahoo.com

Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Roundtable

by Amy Olsen

The Vermont Library Association EDI Roundtable was presented with an opportunity to sponsor the documentary *Are You a Librarian? The Untold Story of Black Librarians* by Rodney Freeman, an independent filmmaker and librarian.

We are proud to help sponsor the film that "highlights numerous Black Librarians across America and their professional experiences. Shedding light on the history of Black Librarianship, its trials, and tribulations while celebrating their accomplishments and innovative approaches. Black Librarians have a story to tell that's ready to be shared with everyone."

The film will be released in 2025, and the Vermont Library Association's EDI Roundtable will be included in the closing credits. To learn more, visit the documentary website <https://reminiscepreservation.com/about-2/> and an interview with the film's production team and EveryLibrary <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsbAeH78Mu0>

Amy Olsen
VLA Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Roundtable Co-chair
Library Director, Lanpher Memorial Library hydeparklibrary@yahoo.com

Vermont Libraries in the News

compiled by Susan Larson

"In her latest episode of 'Stuck in Vermont,' Seven Days senior multimedia producer Eva Sollberger visited the Capital City in early April to get her poetry fix. She got a tour of PoemCity from Michelle Singer, the adult programs and outreach coordinator at the **Kellogg-Hubbard Library**."

<https://youtu.be/IQalEJ6wddw?feature=shared>

"April is National Poetry Month, and it is the perfect time to visit Montpelier, which transforms into PoemCity for the entire month. Organized by the **Kellogg-Hubbard Library**, this year the event displays 450 poems in the windows of 50 downtown businesses. The poets range in age from 3 to 94, include 200 students and represent 75 towns. There are also 35 community events and poetry readings scheduled."

<https://www.wcax.com/2024/04/19/stuck-vt-visiting-kellogg-hubbard-librarys-poemcity/>

The **Friends of the Fletcher Free Library** received a Cultural Facilities Grant from the Vermont Arts Council to improve arts experiences at the library. A newly installed screen, sound bar, stage, and sound-proofing panels will improve the free programs and discussions, according to Library Director Mary Danko.

<https://vermontbiz.com/news/2024/april/21/ffl-upgrades-equipment-vermont-arts-council-grant>

Brooks Memorial Library hosted "two panel discussions to observe Earth Day and spotlight sustainability efforts statewide and on a local level."

https://www.reformer.com/community-news/earth-day-and-beyond-at-brooks-memorial-library/article_2c21c988-f908-11ee-8b58-23966bf9ad39.html

Whiting Library in Chester received a \$1,000 grant from the Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission and the Vermont Historical Society "to help support activities in planning and preparation for the U.S. Semiquincentennial (250th) in 2026."

<https://vermontbiz.com/news/2024/april/15/vermont-250th-community-planning-grants-awarded-support-activities-america>

Cutler Memorial Library in Plainfield received a \$20,000 Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC) grant from the American Library Association. "This grant will be used to replace the existing fluorescent lights with LEDs," according to Library Director Angela Ogle. In collaboration with the Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL), LTC offers grants to qualifying libraries across the country with a population under 25,000 and located at least five miles from an urbanized area, for improving the accessibility of facilities, services, and programs to better serve people with disabilities.

<https://www.facebook.com/CutlerMemorialLibrary/posts/pfbid0BjQQQD9n849jTkLhheqKxB6YrngXQwQaZFctYuRMzz4cvNngEyp8zWQHv6USYSI>

"Richard Bowen, attorney for dismissed **[Pawlet Public] Library** Director Lyndsi Barnes, stated Thursday that he will be filing a wrongful termination lawsuit on her behalf against the Pawlet Library Board and chair Harley Cudney and the town of Pawlet... 'The board was not interested in mediation or arbitration,' he said."

https://www.manchesterjournal.com/local-news/former-pawlet-librarian-plans-to-file-wrongful-termination-suit-against-library-board-town/article_6c63cbca-f72f-11ee-b0ca-bba55df61518.html

Arvin A. Brown Public Library in Richford received a \$15,000 Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL) grant, which Library Director Christy Liddy says will be used to install energy-efficient windows.

https://www.samesseenger.com/news/arvin-a-brown-library-in-richford-receives-15-000-grant-to-replace-windows/article_1bd603de-f820-11ee-b0ea-efc1d4bc58bc.html

The City of Winooski received \$1 million "to expand and revitalize the community health center, **[Winooski Memorial] Library**, and dental care center to improve services for low-income residents."

<https://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/local/vermont/2024/03/20/vermont-federal-earmark-funds-bernie-sanders-peter-welch-becca-balint->

[burlington/73019790007/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR06796DZbk3DDXuJn28DpbBMsZFEeMxD-WyBjNtO5tFq7gze-J4HxDKDsM_aem_AR46UMXdq2ca1Xjnel21-4Ny2Wylsd4EShkaQz0KqWgVsl0qpnAMiAWzFGsytmr6gRzJLo25Uvw4fupoNaF9Hbz](https://www.burlington.com/story/news/local/2024/03/17/burlington-73019790007/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR06796DZbk3DDXuJn28DpbBMsZFEeMxD-WyBjNtO5tFq7gze-J4HxDKDsM_aem_AR46UMXdq2ca1Xjnel21-4Ny2Wylsd4EShkaQz0KqWgVsl0qpnAMiAWzFGsytmr6gRzJLo25Uvw4fupoNaF9Hbz)

Where the Books Are Now podcast:

Episode 1: **Westford Public Library**

Episode 2: **Rockingham Free Public Library**

Episode 3: **John G. McCullough Library**

Episode 4: **Mary L. Blood Memorial Library** in West Windsor

<https://wherethebooksarenow.buzzsprout.com/2292143>

In celebration of National Poetry Month, **Brooks Memorial Library** and the Brattleboro Literary Festival filled downtown with poems.

https://www.reformer.com/arts_and_culture/poems-go-up-around-town/article_acddc55e-f5f7-11ee-bcb8-b76f600f1bdd.html

"The Preservation Trust of Vermont [awarded] a Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grant of \$50,000 to the **Kimball Public Library** in Randolph for the restoration of the library's domed cupola."

<https://ptvermont.org/kimball-library2024/>

Exploring the impact of Vermont's public libraries with *Brave Little State*.

<https://www.vermontpublic.org/show/vermont-edition/2024-03-28/exploring-the-impact-of-vermonts-public-libraries-with-brave-little-state>

In mid-June, Phyllis Skidmore, **Martha Canfield Library's** executive director and head librarian, will retire after 44 years on the job.

https://www.benningtonbanner.com/local-news/the-keeper-of-the-books-skidmore-to-leave-arlington-library-after-44-years/article_2d1d832a-ed43-11ee-94ac-ff4c2bdac93c.html

Rockingham Free Public Library received a \$15,000 Sustainable and Resilient New England Libraries Grant from the Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL), which will support "From Seed to Spoon: Cultivating Community."

<https://vermontjournal.com/news/rockingham-library-receives-grant-for-seed-to-spoon/>

"Jolivette Anderson-Douning, a history instructor at St. Michael's College, shared her poem, 'Five Black Birds in an Ivorian Sky,' and stories about her family's trip to the West African Ivory Coast cities" at **South Burlington Public Library**.

<https://www.wcax.com/2024/03/17/poetry-change-honoring-migration-south-burlington/>

"State librarians say that with more tech needs than ever, and an increased value for cultural programs, many libraries are looking to see how they can best meet the needs of their areas."

<https://www.wcax.com/2024/02/20/federal-funding-opportunities-vermont-library-upgrades/>

"George Thomson, president of the Fletcher Farm Foundation, was pleased to present Amy McMullen, the library director of the **Cavendish Fletcher Community Library**, and Dave Gallagher, treasurer, with a check in the amount of \$10,000 to support ongoing programs for both the community and the Cavendish Town Elementary School."

<https://vermontjournal.com/news/cavendish-fletcher-community-library-receives-donation/>

Eighteen (18) Vermont libraries were awarded funding in this year's Sustainable & Resilient New England Libraries Grant initiative. This competitive grant is made possible through an anonymous private foundation and is facilitated by the Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL). Individual awards will pay for projects such as weatherizing libraries, sustainability initiatives that may lead to Sustainable Library Certification, technology infrastructure, and others. Congratulations to the following Vermont libraries: **Arvin A. Brown Public Library, Baldwin Memorial Library, Bennington Free Library, Blake Memorial Library, Charlotte Library, Craftsbury Public Library, Cutler Memorial Library, Greensboro Free Library, Kimball Public Library, Norman Williams Public Library, Orwell Free Library, Peacham Library, Rockingham Free Public Library, Russell Memorial Library, Warren Public Library, Westford Public Library, Westminster West Public Library, and Whiting Library.**

"Named last August as the new director of Shelburne's **Pierson Library**, Michael Hibben has quickly inserted himself into the town's leadership with his enthusiastic and energetic embrace of programs and projects."

<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/guides/apoc-eclipse-now-scenes-from-an-eclipse-planning-meeting-in-shelburne-40134076>

"How do our public libraries manage to stay alive and vibrant in this age of technology?" *Brave Little State* answered this listener's question by visiting **Waterbury Public Library** and **Varnum Memorial Library** in Jeffersonville and producing the episode "Not just 'academics and diversions': How libraries remain at the heart of Vermont towns."

<https://www.vermontpublic.org/podcast/brave-little-state/2024-02-08/not-just-academics-and-diversions-how-libraries-remain-at-the-heart-of-vermont-towns>

"The queens of the Vermont chapter of Drag Story Hour say their library readings of kids' books provide representation and education for queer youth. However, the popular national storytelling movement continues to face a backlash in some conservative communities. Now, a new funding opportunity could bring Drag Story Hour to more communities."

<https://www.wcax.com/2024/01/02/4k-grant-aims-expand-drag-story-hour-rural-libraries>

Letter: Reaffirming Our Freedom to Read

A letter from the **Vermont Library Association** and the **Vermont School Library Association**

https://www.willistonobserver.com/forum/letters_to_the_editor/letter-reaffirming-our-freedom-to-read/article_2ccc1b5c-c089-11ee-86cc-a3e0af158080.html

Do you have news to share? Email me!

Susan Ujka Larson, she/they
VLA Digital Communications Team
susanularson@gmail.com

Libraries in Vermont Working Group

The Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont worked diligently for three years. The resulting report was submitted November 1, 2023. Check it out!

View the report, recordings and minutes of past meetings, and more at

https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/projects/working_group

Interested in editing?

Try your hand at newsletter design or editing! If you would like to help with the *VLA News*, please contact newsletter@vermontlibraries.org.

Visit Us on the Web!

<http://www.vermontlibraries.org>

Vermont Library Association
PO Box 803, Burlington, VT 05402

