

VLA News

November 2022

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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

President's Letter

by Kelly L. McCagg

Whether we like it or not, the world in which we are currently living—sore throat, mask, test, repeat—is not going to change in the foreseeable future. So, it is up to each one of us to make this “new normal” better than before. What does this mean in the library world?

Hopefully, COVID has taught us to be more accessible—or at the very least, loosen our requirements for access. Maybe your library initiated an online registration tool or simply mailed paper registration forms to patrons' homes. Is it feasible to keep these accommodations? Doubting Debbie (I mean no disrespect to anyone named Deborah) will say, “The library is back to its full schedule of hours. There is no reason why we need to keep offering this service.” But what if your pre-COVID hours didn't work for the person's schedule? They may work multiple jobs or lack reliable transportation. However, once they have their library card they can access all your online resources when their schedule allows. Do a cost vs. reward analysis to see if it is worth keeping. My guess is if you have chosen librarianship as a profession, you will find a way to efficiently offer this service to your community.

On the flip side, look for processes, programs, or policies that can be updated or weeded—“because we've always done it that way” no longer holds water. Are you still keeping paper copies of patron information already stored electronically? Does your program lineup look similar to that from the 1950s? Do you offer a virtual option for meetings and programs? Does your cell phone policy limit use to certain areas due to fear of disturbing other users? Are your bathrooms still gender specific? Be brave enough to be uncomfortable and your patrons will thank you!

Our communities, whether they are large universities, bucolic towns, or tiny hamlets, are all composed of smaller sections that need to work together in order to create a dynamic, cohesive unit. That means we all need to put our egos aside, and maybe even that argument that happened three town managers ago, to find a way to work together. Take the initiative and sit next to the person who rubs you the wrong way at the next meeting. You may discover some small similarity on which you can build a relationship that will benefit not just the library, but the community at large. Now can be a considerable time of growth. It will require very little, if any money, but a great deal of dedication and enthusiasm.

“The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and starting on the first one.”

--Mark Twain

Kelly L. McCagg
VLA President

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 be involved in VLA, too!

Executive Board

President:
[Kelly McCagg](#)

Vice President/President Elect:
[Bryn Geffert](#)

Past President:
[Michael D. Roy](#)

Secretary:
[Barbara Ball](#)

Treasurer:
[Lisa Milchman](#)

Section Representatives

College & Special Libraries

Director, [Burnham Memorial Library](#), Colchester
president@vermontlibraries.org
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Vermont Library Association
PO Box 803
Burlington, VT 05402

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

Public Libraries

by Catherine Goldsmith

Working through the pandemic, as everyone knows, has been quite an experience. Most of us are exhausted if not actually burned out.

These days, I am trying to think of more ways to make this small part-time library visible to everyone in town, whether they choose to have a library card or not. With that visibility, I hope that residents will remember that we are here to help, whatever challenges next year may bring.

Through the Vermont Department of Health and in partnership with Waterbury Ambulance, our library has hosted two vaccination clinics this year. The first one just happened to fall on the second day that the new bivalent vaccines were available. We had a line out the door for two solid hours and 81 COVID-19 vaccines were administered. Plenty of people from southern Chittenden County were thrilled to skip the rush at the mall and come to Starksboro. Three weeks later, the efficient ambulance crew were also dispensing flu vaccines to those under 65, and 95 total shots were put in arms. We even had some families with small children get their shots. Stickers came in handy a few times!

We have also decided to participate in the LAMP testing program through Color Health. The [Increased Community Access to Testing \(ICATT\)](#) program is a CDC-run program where eligible members of the public will come pick up a test, test themselves in their car, and drop off a sealed package for shipment to the lab. The library is responsible for shipment of the completed tests. Shipping is usually as easy as dropping into a local Federal Express drop box, but that isn't an option for us. We are waiting for a FedEx® shipping account so that the box will be picked up at our location. The library will receive 7.50 for every completed test plus a free year of Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) membership.

What new things are you trying at your library?

Catherine Goldsmith, MLS
VLA Public Libraries Section Vice President
Director, [Starksboro Public Library](#)
cl6585@yahoo.com
802-453-3732

Section

President:

[Laura Haines](#)

Organizes workshops and assists college and special librarians.

Membership & Outreach Chair:

[Erica Shott](#)

Maintains membership database and communications.

Public Libraries Section

President:

[Susan O'Connell](#)

Organizes workshops and assists public librarians.

Trustees & Friends

President:

VACANT

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 privacy.

Scholarship & Awards Chair:

[Pamela Cartier](#)

[Mary Danko](#)

Oversees VLA awards and

Web Team is now Digital Communications!

by Jessamyn West

The VLA Web Team is now called Digital Communications. We're still doing all the same things we've been doing.

- Posting your job announcements
- Social media updates about Vermont library topics
- Keeping the website updated and running
- Working with VLA members and leadership to post their content to the website
- Maintaining the VLA Slack

We also have advisory roles with the VLA Membership Committee and have been working with leadership on a VLA digital archive of graphics, reports, statements, and other VLA content.

If we can help you with the digital aspect of your VLA interactions, please let us know. Our social media accounts are:

@VLALib on Twitter

@VLALib on Instagram

VTLibraryAssociation on Facebook

See you online!

Digital Communications:

Tessa Johnson

Susan Larson

Sarah Scully

Jessamyn West

VLA Intellectual Freedom Committee

by Randal Smathers

For Banned Books Week in September, the VLA Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) sent out a press release and sample social media items to libraries via statewide listserv. Thanks to those libraries who were able to use the resources – we will try to get the release done earlier next year to supply more lead time.

Most of the response we got was positive; we did get one response from Chester that we had mischaracterized actions by the board of the Whiting Library there as a “challenge” instead of a “pause.” Most of you are likely familiar with the case. The pertinent part of the release read:

“Vermont has had relatively few attempts to curtail the freedom to read, but a challenge this year in Chester to hosting Drag Queen Story Hour at their local library reminds us that the threat is never far away.”

According to several published reports, the Whiting Library Board had intervened because some trustees viewed the event as controversial. The Story Hour was subsequently held at a nearby pizza restaurant, and Whiting Library Director Dierdre Doran resigned in the wake of the board's action.

After our press release went live, VLA President Kelly McCagg received a call from a former Whiting board member who said he was concerned about the language of the press release.

scholarships.

**Vermont Library
Conference
Chair:**

[Kevin Unrath](#)

Roundtables

Inclusion Chair:

[Bridget Stone-
Allard](#)

Supports
libraries in
providing better
service to
diverse
populations.

Personnel Chair:

VACANT
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:

VLA News

Editor:
[Janet Clapp](#)

**Digital
Communications**

:
[Tessa Johnson](#)
[Susan Larson](#)
[Sarah Scully](#)
[Jessamyn West](#)

**Representativ
es**

After consulting the IFC, Kelly informed the complainant that VLA stood behind the text of the press release. Subsequent communications led Kelly to ask for and receive counsel from the ALA Intellectual Freedom Office. We have not had further contact on the matter.

The IFC also heard from some folks at the Vermont School Library Association who are looking to establish a fairly formal set of statewide best practices if materials (or programming) are challenged, and we have begun to work using a sample document brought back from the recent NELA conference. That will move faster than some projects in hopes it will be in place before it might be needed next.

Finally, we continue to plug away at hosting the John Swann Lecture on intellectual freedom.

All are welcome to join the committee. If you have a particular interest in intellectual freedom or any of our work, please contact committee chair Randal Smathers randal@rutlandfree.org

Randal Smathers
VLA Intellectual Freedom Committee Chair
Director, [Rutland Free Library](#)
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802-683-9778

Vermont Libraries in the News

compiled by Susan Larson

"Our library would not be able to do all we do without the Friends," said **Springfield Town Library** Director Sue Dowdell. "The funds they raise definitely put the icing on the cake. I think most patrons would be surprised to learn how many of the services and programs they enjoy are supported by the Friends." Read in this article how Springfield Library honored its Friends of Springfield Town Library group during National Friends of Libraries Week, October 16 - 22, 2022.

<https://vermontjournal.com/news/springfield-library-recognizes-fostl/>

"The **Brandon Free Public Library** launched the Brandon Publishing Club (BPC), which will offer programming to help people create and self-publish their own books. In partnership with local artists and educators John Brodowski and Ethan Nelson, the library will offer a series of events to teach and guide people through the process of conceptualizing, creating, formatting, and self-publishing. The library is planning the creation of a self-publishing station and aims to include all the resources and technology one would need to create and complete a literary work."

<https://mountaintimes.info/the-brandon-free-public-library-launches-the-brandon-publishing-club/>

Brooks Memorial Library is hosting a monthly book group on "Parenting for Social Justice: Tips, Tools, and Inspiration for Conversations and Action with Kids." The book, published in 2021 by Green Writers Press, is by the late Angela Berkfield. "Each month is an opportunity to dive deep into one of the book chapters about parenting for social justice, with a highlight on race, class, gender, disability, and collective liberation. The goal of both the book and the group is to support parents and caregivers in raising kids who love themselves, others, and are compelled to show up for social justice."

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](#)

Jobs & Subs

For library jobs:

[VLA Job Postings](#)

For library subs:

[Vermont Library Substitute Pool](#)

Planning a purchase on Amazon.com? Consider using the Amazon Smile program and select the Vermont Library Association to receive 0.5% of eligible purchases. Visit [smile.amazon.com](#) for more details.

**ATTN:
Gmail
Users**

https://www.reformer.com/community-news/parenting-4-social-justice-book-group-at-brooks-library/article_eae289a8-4800-11ed-9985-6f79639789f1.html

"Public libraries play an enormously important role in our communities and we should all be proud that Vermont has 183 of them – more, per capita, than any other state in the country," said Senator Bernie Sanders. "As the world and technology changes, so does the role of Vermont libraries. As Youth Services Librarian Sam Maskell put it when speaking about the **Rockingham Free Public Library**, 'The library is the community's living room.' I couldn't agree more, and I believe we see that reality all across Vermont." Read more in this article with video:

<https://vermontbiz.com/news/2022/october/06/bernie-sanders-community%E2%80%99s-living-room>

<https://youtu.be/u9uYrUDlzl0>

"A major piece of the Senate appropriations bill for 2023 includes \$20 million in federal funding for library buildings. Many of Vermont's 185 library buildings require safety, structural and sustainability updates that this funding could support. The bill requires approval by the House this fall, and if passed it would be the first federal funding to modernize libraries in more than a quarter century." Read more in this editorial by Mary Danko, director of Burlington's **Fletcher Free Library**, and Molly Kennedy, director of **Brandon Free Public Library**.

<https://vtdigger.org/2022/10/10/mary-danko-and-molly-kennedy-lets-look-ahead-with-federal-library-funding-now/>

Bennington Free Library received funds to aid in creating a dementia-friendly book collection for families and groups that support memory-challenged adults.

https://www.benningtonbanner.com/local-news/arpa-funded-grants-for-older-vermonters-southwestern-vermont-council-on-aging-gives-66k/article_a0ffba68-2e1f-11ed-99f6-e7703f4fce76.html

"The Children's Literacy Foundation has selected 12 public libraries across Vermont and New Hampshire as recipients of its 2022-2023 Rural Libraries grant program. Each of the chosen sites will receive two storytelling performances hosted by CLiF's professional presenters, new books for the public library, new books for the local elementary school library, a mini-grant for library programming, and new books for children to choose and keep for themselves."

Congratulations to the Vermont library grant recipients:

Bethel Public Library

Coventry Village School

Leach Public Library

Whitingham Free Public Library

Salisbury Free Public Library

Waterville Town Library

https://www.reformer.com/community-news/children-s-literacy-foundation-awards-rural-libraries-grants/article_06c27bb4-1a4e-11ed-8065-9f6d8953499e.html

"**St. Albans Free Library** received a \$9,250 grant from the Vermont Children's Trust Foundation to bring their 'First Friday' program to life. The program invites high school teens to enjoy the library on the first Friday of each month. The goal of the night is to provide a safe, fun way for high school teens to hang out after school."

https://www.samesseenger.com/things_to_do/saint-albans-free-library-receives-grant-to-support-first-fridays-program-for-teens/article_15b3aafe-294d-11ed-aa40-63fc3172448e.html

and
https://www.samesseenger.com/news/st-albans-free-library-hosts-open-event-for-high-school-students-first-fridays-features-free/article_ed972c5c-48e7-11ed-bb23-bb7b73786745.html

"Representatives from state, local and corporate organizations as well as educators showed the Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC) plans for extended water and sewer, repurposing of the Stinehour Hotel, a brand new library and a longer runway at the Franklin

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County State Airport. The VEPC traveled to three main areas that have been identified for redevelopment in the town, including the potential new library space and current town library, **Highgate Library & Community Center**."

https://www.samesessenger.com/gallery-vermont-economic-progress-council-tours-projects-and-plans-in-highgate/article_427a1c22-23e3-11ed-ac7a-e3d56d21b4d5.html?fbclid=IwAR16XOIwQwHB9ixybiay1qNnggOTOI9CPZiqdv0Gu8B8Q2n-W4bs9-VY3Bk

Congratulations to Jennifer Clary of **Brooks Memorial Library** in Brattleboro, and to Hayley Coble and Laura Fetterolf of **Ilsley Public Library** in Middlebury, who were chosen for the New England Library Association's 2022 Emerging Leaders program. They are among 26 people chosen from a pool of over fifty applicants. The program is an introduction to library leadership for early to mid-career library workers who have demonstrated potential to become leaders in the field.

https://nela.memberclicks.net/index.php?option=com_dailyplanetblog&view=entry&year=2022&month=08&day=04&id=17:congratulations-2022-nells-emerging-leaders

"For Catharine Findiesen Hays, director of the **Bixby Memorial Free Library** in Vergennes, libraries across the state sit at the intersection of quality of life and economic development."

<https://vermontbiz.com/news/2022/august/07/addison-county-economic-report-region-sees-opportunities-obstacles>

"**Fletcher Free Library** celebrated the continuation of the new North End Branch Library at 1127 North Avenue in Burlington. 'We are pleased to be able to continue what began as a pilot project,' said Library Director Mary Danko. 'The community has been so excited about this new branch, and people are still discovering us. We've welcomed many new patrons.' The satellite library began as a pilot in December 2021 when Burlington Telecom donated its lease through May of 2022. In June 2022 the Burlington City Council voted to continue the branch library and support a part-time staff person at the site."

https://vtdigger.org/press_release/library-celebrates-new-north-end-branch-reopening/

"Vermont has had relatively few attempts to curtail the freedom to read, but a challenge this year in Chester to hosting Drag Queen Story Hour at their local library reminds us that the threat is never far away. Other Vermont librarians report receiving online abuse and threats, usually for providing a wide range of materials. Vermont Library Association president Kelly McCagg, director of the **Burnham Library** in Colchester, noted that in the past year the ALA saw 729 challenges nationwide, more than ever before. 'That is a lot of missed opportunities for caregivers to impart their values; and for communities to discover areas of mutual appreciation,' said McCagg. 'We must do better. Not only working to keep books on our shelves, but educating the public of their intrinsic value.'"

<https://www.valleyreporter.com/index.php/news/my-view/17279-vermont-library-association-marks-banned-books-week-september-18-24>

"Vermont has been largely immune from such efforts, aside from some isolated cases in recent months, such as one parent's push to ban several books in Canaan schools and a challenge in Chester to hosting Drag Queen Story Hour at the local library.

"However, as a statement from the Vermont Library Association this week noted, these instances remind us 'the threat is never far away,' adding that some Vermont librarians have reported 'receiving online abuse and threats, usually for providing a wide range of materials.'

"**Vermont Library Association President Kelly McCagg** also noted the record number of challenges to books in the past year nationally."

https://www.timesargus.com/opinion/editorial-an-open-book/article_06b95c2b-d8cd-5cc7-8ab7-f79cd6ef38d3.html

"The First-Ever Non-Fiction Comics Festival Debuts in Burlington This Weekend"
- Hosted by **Fletcher Free Library**

<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/the-first-ever-non-fiction-comics-festival-debuts-in-burlington-this-weekend/Content?oid=36680350>

"**Fletcher Free Library** Hosts Green Mountain Book Festival"

https://vtdigger.org/press_release/fletcher-free-library-hosts-green-mountain-book-festival/

"The **Vermont Department of Libraries**, in collaboration with the Department of Corrections, has provided over \$42,000 in books to the six state correctional facilities. The books will refresh the facilities' library collections available to incarcerated individuals. The funding was part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant provided to the Vermont Department of Libraries by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)."

<https://vermontbiz.com/news/2022/august/10/dept-libraries-provide-over-42000-books-state-correctional-facilities>

Susan Larson, MLIS
VLA Social Media Volunteer
susanularson@gmail.com

Trustees & Friends

by Howard Burrows

I was able to attend the New England Library Association (NELA, nelib.org) Conference in Manchester, NH last week. It is perhaps my favorite meeting. Trustees and Friends from all over New England share similar interests; it is amazing how different our roles are from library to library and state to state! I skipped the NELA Prom but did participate in the NELA Games where Vermont took home the annual trophy!

On the local front, Friends/Trustees are helping to organize the VLA Annual Conference. During the New England Conference, we learned many of the NELA vendors are flush with money and can help us with the VLA conference this year.

Friends and trustees have so much to offer Vermont libraries; let's try to get organized and do some joint programs and larger venue fundraising with national groups: Mozart, Taylor Swift, a jazz group, whatever... Libraries are trusted and needed now more than ever with many new challenges from Congress. Advocacy anyone? How do you feel about Friends/Trustees role in the VLA conference? Are there issues you'd like us to address -- ideas you'd like to contribute? Please contact me below if you want to join us!

Howard Burrows, Trustee
VLA Friends/Trustees, Past and Acting Chair
NELLS-2019
Trustee, [Brooks Memorial Library](#), Brattleboro
ghburrows@comcast.net
603-630-0012

Libraries in Vermont Working Group

The Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont will meet November 18, 2022. They last met September 23, 2022. In May 2021, the Vermont State Legislature passed S.115 (Act 66), an act that created the Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont and charges that group with submitting a report on their studies by November 1, 2023. Information about the

group, including testimony and recordings of past meetings, can be found at https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/projects/working_group

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<http://www.vermontlibraries.org>

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