

VLA News

February 2024

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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

From Your President...

by Oceana Wilson

A Warm Welcome to Our New Smaller Library Librarian Cohort!

Approximately 45% of public libraries in Vermont do not have any VLA members on their staff. These are predominantly smaller public libraries, which are the majority of public libraries in Vermont. In an effort to engage or reengage with our smaller public libraries, the VLA Executive Board has selected a cohort of remarkable librarians from smaller Vermont libraries who have made a significant impact within their local communities. This cohort has been offered a one-year complimentary membership, and the opportunity to attend our upcoming conference. We hope to continue this cohort model moving forward to ensure our VLA membership is representative of the larger landscape of Vermont public libraries, to celebrate the amazing work happening in smaller public libraries, and to expand the valuable connections between librarians and across libraries in our state. Many thanks to Erica Shott, VLA Membership & Outreach Committee Chair for her help in setting up these new members! Please see Erica's "Membership" update below for additional information.

Story Banking

This past December, on a chilly weekend, Vermont School Library Association President-elect, Susie Snow, and I traveled to Chicago to attend a chapter advocacy workshop sponsored by the American Library Association. The workshop covered a range of topics essential for effective library advocacy, ranging from establishing legislative priorities to intellectual freedom, navigating the legislature, media training, and ultimately, reinforcing the profound value that libraries bring to all of our communities. The opportunity to join together in person with librarians from across the U.S. was very powerful and especially meaningful at this time when so many libraries, librarians, and long-held values and rights, such as the freedom to read, are under attack.

One of the strategies proposed during the workshop to enhance the effectiveness of storytelling was the concept of story banking. A story bank functions as a repository of narratives that your library can readily tap into and use for various purposes, such as interviews, speeches, fundraising letters, meetings with elected officials, and more. The primary objective of a story bank is to curate a collection of compelling stories intentionally, enabling you to effectively convey messages, establish emotional connections, and further the goals of your library. Possible content to include in your library story bank could be anecdotes related to or feedback from library patrons; moments in which you were inspired; times when your library met an unexpected need in your community; how book challenges impact your community; collaborations and partnerships with other organizations; and how the library supports individuals and connects the community.

I believe that most librarians engage in the practice of story banking intuitively so the strategy is simply about being intentional in the act of quickly jotting down notes when these stories occur. Having your notes in one centralized place ensures quick accessibility and allows you to easily identify connections and themes over time. Sharing our stories more effectively helps not only our individual libraries, but also creates a broader understanding of the power and value of libraries in general. This message is of critical importance right now and it's one we can all help create and share.

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

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:
[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

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

Membership

by Erica Shott

The VLA Membership & Outreach Committee welcomes these new members, part of the new cohort from smaller public libraries in Vermont doing great things, to the Vermont Library Association: Sarah Spira, librarian at the Groton Free Public Library (<https://grotonlibraryvt.org>); Lauren Roppolo, librarian/director of the South Londonderry Free Library (<http://www.southlondonderryfreelibrary.org>); Gina Lewis, library director of Alburgh Public Library (<https://alburghpl.wordpress.com>); Jennifer Molinski, library director/librarian at the William H. & Lucy F. Rand Memorial Library (<https://www.randmemorial.com>) in Troy; Shana Hickman, library director at the Baxter Memorial Library (<https://sharonvtlibrary.com>) in Sharon; Lu Aubin, director of the Royalton Memorial Library (<https://royaltonlibrary.org>) in Royalton; Bridget Stone, director at the Georgia Public Library (<https://www.georgiapubliclibraryvt.org>); and Lyndsi Barnes of Pawlet, Vermont. We are very happy to have them as members in VLA.

Erica Shott
VLA Membership and Outreach Committee Chair
Director, [Dorset Village Library](#)
members@vermontlibraries.org
802-867-4085

From Your Vice President...

by Mary Danko

Just like many of you, I have been closely reviewing the Working Group's Report on the Status of Libraries in Vermont, focusing particularly on recommendations related to updating statutes and addressing the funding needs of Vermont libraries. I've also been working on soliciting input from the members so that we have shared target areas to focus on. We are all very busy, and we need to be strategic with our time and energy.

On Friday, January 26, a group of VLA members convened via Zoom to provide valuable input during an interactive discussion on the Working Group's recommendations. The insights gathered during this meeting were compiled into notes, which will soon be available to all members. Additionally, a spreadsheet outlining the recommendations will be available, allowing members to actively contribute their perspectives.

This interactive spreadsheet serves as a platform for members to prioritize recommendations, offer their thoughts, and propose additional priorities not explicitly highlighted in the report. Look out for these forthcoming emails, as your input is crucial in shaping VLA's stance on how we move forward, including key legislative recommendations.

Senate Bill 220 (<https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2024/S.220>) has already been proposed, and VLA is tracking its progress. We aim to effectively communicate VLA priorities to state legislators, leveraging the insights and feedback received from our members during the recent Zoom meeting and with the input on the spreadsheet. Your participation will significantly inform these ongoing discussions.

Furthermore, I am pleased to share that I am part of a committee, alongside VLA President Oceana Wilson and VTLIB staff member Joy Worland. Our committee is tasked with disbursing \$4,400 from the VLA Disaster Relief Fund to libraries that suffered flood damage during last summer. An application

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](#)

Oversees VLA awards and scholarships.

Vermont Library Conference Chair:

[Kevin Unrath](#)

Roundtables

Inclusion Co-Chairs:

[Bridget Stone-Allard](#)

[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:

[Sara Luttrell](#)

Organizes workshops & assists technical services librarians.

Youth Librarians

President:

VACANT

Organizes workshops and assists youth librarians.

VLA News Editor:

[Janet Clapp](#)

form for this fund will be released shortly and directed to libraries registered with the Vermont Department of Libraries as having experienced flood damage.

Your engagement on the Working Group's Report on the Status of Libraries in Vermont recommendations is very important. Together, we can actively shape the future of Vermont libraries and provide support where it is needed most. Stay tuned for the upcoming emails, and thank you for your membership to VLA!

Mary Danko

Vice President

Director, [Fletcher Free Library](#)

vicepresident@vermontlibraries.org

College & Special Libraries

by Sarah Scully

The Vermont Library Association College & Special Libraries Section is pleased to announce our professional development program for 2024:

Empowering Libraries and Students: Leveraging AI as a Transformative Tool

Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 1:00 - 2:00 pm

Presented by Miranda Axworthy, Reference and Teaching Resources Librarian and Susan M. Currier, Faculty Librarian, Vermont State Colleges

This online program is *free* for VLA College & Special Libraries Section members. Thanks to VCAL for sponsoring this event.

Register now (<https://vsc.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwpdu2vpj0sH9R-FaRvovT81hnTkhLhxnDA#/registration>) to receive the link, with access to a recording if you are not able to attend live.

Artificial Intelligence, with its evolving capabilities, significantly impacts library operations and can enhance the learning experience for students. Teaching students how to use AI ethically and effectively is crucial in today's educational landscape. By integrating AI as a supportive tool in libraries, we enhance learning experiences and prepare students for a world increasingly shaped by AI technologies.

In this context, Miranda and Susan will demonstrate how they have used crucial AI functions in their libraries:

- Aiding in social media content creation through platforms like Canva and ChatGPT.
- Streamlining academic title searches using tools such as Google Scholar and Bing Chat Copilot.
- Summarizing complex information efficiently with tools like [PI.AI](https://pi.ai/onboarding) (<https://pi.ai/onboarding>) and GPT-3.
- Facilitating the creation of outlines and lesson plans through platforms like ChatGPT.

Our presenters will also discuss the importance of emphasizing the need for transparency in AI usage, ensuring students are familiar with the mechanisms, biases, and limitations of AI. This knowledge equips students with essential skills for future careers in a world where AI integration is becoming increasingly prevalent.

Sarah Tischer Scully (she/her)

VLA College & Special Libraries Section President

Electronic Resources & Technology Librarian, [Cornell Library at Vermont Law and Graduate School](#)

sscully@vermontlaw.edu

802-831-1445

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

2024 VLA Conference

**Libraries Empowering Communities:
Standing Together in Uncertain Times**

Representatives

<https://vermontlibraries.org/conference>

ALA Councilor:
[Jessamyn West](#)
Represents Vermont
in the national
organization.

When: Monday, May 20, 2024
Where: Killington Grand Resort Hotel and Conference Center, Killington, VT

The deadline for proposals is Monday, March 4, 2024.

**NELA
Representative:**
[Amy McMullen](#)
Represents Vermont
in the New England
Library Assoc.

The Haston Library and St. Albans Free Library Co-Host Author Mercedes de Guardiola

by Josh Worman

**VT Dept. of Libraries
Representative to
the Board:**
[Catherine Delneo](#)

On Saturday, December 2nd, 2023, Mercedes de Guardiola, author of *Vermont for the Vermonters: The History of Eugenics in the Green Mountain State*, came up to St. Albans from her home base of New York City to give a talk about her new book. Soon after it was released, Director Josh Worman of the Haston Library reached out to de Guardiola and invited her to travel to northern Vermont to give a presentation and field questions about her work, and she was more than happy to oblige. Director Worman thought it would be a good opportunity to collaborate with another Franklin County library, so he reached out to Becky Manahan of the St. Albans Free Library to see if she might be interested in co-sponsoring and hosting the program, and Director Manahan agreed to the collaboration. De Guardiola's book was published in September of 2023 by the Vermont Historical Society, and it is a thoroughly researched and detailed yet accessible study of one deeply troubling aspect of Vermont's recent history. One of de Guardiola's main points is that there has been the perception that eugenical thinking and policies quickly faded away in the wake of the horrors of Nazi Germany and World War Two, but she makes the convincing case that they were instead "re-branded" and perhaps became more subtly intertwined with public policy, but never really went away. She also argues that the pseudoscience of eugenics was primarily used as a cover to deal with society's "undesirables," who were in desperate need of economic support and both mental and physical health care, rather than institutionalization and ostracization from society.

Jobs & Subs

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

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

The talk was well-attended, and there were lots of sensitive and thought-provoking questions from the crowd, and a lively discussion ensued.

Josh Worman
VLA Public Libraries Section Vice President
Director, [Haston Library](#)
librarian@franklinhastonlibraryvt.org
802-285-6505

ATTN: Gmail Users

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A new podcast about Vermont's Public Libraries - launching in March 2024!

by Nancy Tusinski

Where The Books Are Now (WTBANow) is a podcast featuring one Vermont public library each episode. During the show we'll talk with a library director or staff person from a VT public library and

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

find out what makes that library special, gather some book recommendations, and discover some not-so-well-known treasures, collections, and services available to library patrons. *WTBANow* will be available on all your favorite podcatchers, and the show notes, book recommendations, and more will live on this site <https://www.wherethebooksarenow.com/>

My name is Nancy Tusinski, and I'm your host. I'm a recently retired (not so retired) VT public library director. Some years ago, a colleague and I talked about writing a blog that would feature one Vermont public library at a time, because we both loved Patricia W. Belding's 1996 book, *Where the Books Are: History and Architecture of Vermont's Public Libraries with Photos and Anecdotes* and wanted to do an update to that work.

I would love to hear from all public library directors who might be interested in talking about their library on the podcast. The time commitment is minimal (a 40-minute Zoom video or phone call). It's a casual chat about your library, any interesting or unusual collections or features of your library, any services/programs you'd like to promote, and a few book recommendations. I want more people to discover all that Vermont's public libraries have to offer, and I hope you'll join me! For more information and/or to schedule your library, please email Nancy at WTBANow@gmail.com. Thank you.

Nancy Tusinski

Vermont Libraries in the News

compiled by Susan Ujka Larson

"Several Bills Target Book Bans in School and Public Libraries"

<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/news/several-bills-target-book-bans-in-school-and-public-libraries-40051088>

"Big group shows up to forum about Charlotte Library's future"

<https://www.charlottenewsvt.org/2024/01/25/big-group-shows-up-to-forum-about-libraris-future/>

"History Repeats as Library Supporters Return a 94-Year-Old Favor"

<https://www.waterburyroundabout.org/news-archive/88rqlcz7ka186lkpb7cf9slpdacuse?>

"Waterbury Public Library Returns a Favor, 96 Years Later"

<https://montpelierbridge.org/2024/01/community-and-business-news-in-brief-jan-24-2024/>

"Letter: Vermont Library Freedom Statement"

https://www.manchesterjournal.com/opinion/letters/letter-vermont-library-freedom-statement/article_26676b02-b582-11ee-8794-6fcf2d7693c4.html

"LETTER: Vermont library groups issue Freedom to Read statement"

<https://www.waterburyroundabout.org/opinion-archive/1uee57afd5v2yax6qu2e0qtokvz1gk>

"Dover Free Library Director Sues for Wrongful Termination"

https://www.benningtonbanner.com/local-news/dover-free-library-director-sues-for-wrongful-termination/article_3b8d4ca2-b962-11ee-b14c-97d792fdb41.html

"Engineers from Global Foundries in Essex Junction provided a STEM program at St. Albans Free Library."

<https://www.facebook.com/VTLibraryAssociation/posts/pfbid0gSNcUNkydP7xFKdK9eEwFVu65ppvoggpcpbX889cnqjN62KkkgSidQ4amB9dsKVgl>

"\$4K grant aims to expand Drag Story Hour at rural libraries" in Vermont

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

"Kristin Baumann is the new head librarian at Aldrich Public Library in Barre."

https://www.timesargus.com/news/local/baumann-takes-charge-of-aldrich/article_4f4a9e35-09e1-5acd-97d6-5f74b4a33be2.html

"The [Pawlet Public] Library board of trustees continues to be grilled by the public about the dismissal of the library's former director."

https://www.rutlandherald.com/news/local/pawlet-library-continues-to-be-questioned-over-directors-dismissal/article_8d033821-374b-5470-9161-61ae3a82197a.html

"The Chelsea Public Library has two new librarians. Kate MacLean began her role as library director in November [2023] and shortly after that, Maegan Winters began her role as assistant librarian."

<https://www.ourherald.com/articles/chelsea-welcomes-new-library-staff/>

Emily Gold is the new director of Solomon Wright Public Library in Pownal.

https://www.benningtonbanner.com/local-news/emily-gold-is-the-new-pownal-library-director/article_5940c24c-ab34-11ee-ab93-033752565bc0.html

"Johnson library survives, thrives in temporary home"

https://www.vtcng.com/news_and_citizen/news/local_news/johnson-library-survives-thrives-in-temporary-home/article_4c902202-a023-11ee-8f00-6fcd14884e12.html

"Lynne Fonteneau McCann, director of the Bennington Free Library since 2008, plans to retire" in early 2024, and a search is on to find a successor.

https://www.benningtonbanner.com/local-news/bennington-free-library-director-to-retire-search-on-for-successor-vermont/article_5cdaa132-99de-11ee-9ce1-f7722476d1fa.html

"The Castleton Free Library is undergoing a renovation project that will improve accessibility."

<https://nyvtmedia.com/2023/12/15/renovation-project-brings-improved-accessibility-to-castleton-library/>

Vermont Public's *Vermont Edition* interviewed Vermont Department of Libraries State Librarian Catherine Delneo and Working Group member Christopher Kaufman-Ilstrup, executive director of Vermont Humanities, about the Status of Libraries report.

<https://www.vermontpublic.org/show/vermont-edition/2023-11-08/vermonts-state-librarian-discusses-new-report-on-status-of-libraries-from-funding-to-technology>

"Burlington's Fletcher Free Library [was] open on Thanksgiving Day and hand[ed] out free, prepackaged roast turkey dinners made by local restaurant conglomerate The Farmhouse Group."

<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/news/burlingtons-fletcher-free-library-will-open-on-thanksgiving-and-serve-free-meals-39515144?media=AMP+HTML>

"Vermont's housing crisis is spilling into more public buildings, and the state's librarians say they need more support. That's one of the key takeaways in a new 1,000-page report to lawmakers outlining what is and isn't working."

<https://www.wcax.com/2023/11/13/vt-libraries-push-funding-they-find-themselves-front-lines-housing-crisis/>

"The St. Albans Free Library has a new director. Becky Manahan replaced Mary Pat Larabee as the library's executive director this October following Larabee's retirement after 30 years with the organization."

https://www.samesessenger.com/news/st-albans-free-library-gets-new-director-larabee-retires-manahan-steps-up/article_fdf36a80-6f4b-11ee-9be4-6f7766f6be4be.html

"Pompanoosuc resident Kenneth Cadow's debut novel, *Gather*, is a finalist in the Young People's Literature division for the 2023 National Book Award, one of the country's most prestigious book honors."

<https://www.vermontpublic.org/local-news/2023-10-11/vermont-author-and-educator-on-national-book-award-nom-its-a-lesson-of-persistence>

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.

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Vermont Library Association
PO Box 803, Burlington, VT 05402

