



THE NEWSLETTER

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Vermont Department of Libraries Staff News



Lara Keenan

The Department of Libraries is pleased to welcome **Lara Keenan**, who will begin on May 30 as the new Library Consultant for Governance and Management. A lifelong Vermonter, Lara earned her MLIS from Syracuse University in 2011 and has worked in public and special libraries since 2004, including the Essex Free Library, Burnham Memorial Library in Colchester, Brownell Library in Essex Junction, and most recently as the director of the Pierson Library in Shelburne. Prior to her library work, Lara was a high school English teacher, a faculty member at the Community College of Vermont, a statewide career planning & events coordinator/consultant, and a bookseller. Outside of library-land, Lara is a member of the international organization the 501st, in which she dresses as a Stormtrooper (and soon a Jedi!) to spread the love of *Star Wars* to children of all ages through charity work. Currently she is reading several *Star Wars* books (no surprise!) and *Behind the Throne* by K. B. Wagers.



Jennifer Hart

After 28 years with the State of Vermont, **Jennifer Hart** will be retiring on June 10. Jennifer has spent all but four months of those 28 years with the Department of Libraries: first as a clerk in the now-defunct Audio-Visual Unit, and for the past 27 years in the Special Services Unit (SSU) at Midstate Regional Library in Berlin. She has twice served as Interim Director of the SSU, as well as on the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired and on the Vermont Unified English Braille Transition Committee. Jennifer's plans after retirement include volunteering for the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Trinity United Methodist Church, and spending time with her grandchildren. Jennifer's contributions to the Department of Libraries have been invaluable, and she will be sorely missed. We wish her all the best in this new chapter of her life!

Vermont Librarians in the Nation's Capital



Five Vermont librarians traveled to Washington, D.C. for **National Library Legislative Day**, held this year on May 1-2. This annual event is organized by the American Library Association with the purpose of connecting librarians with legislators and giving a voice to important library issues and policies.

The following librarians met with the staff of Vermont legislators Senator Patrick Leahy, Senator Bernie Sanders, and Congressman Peter Welch to advocate for Vermont libraries:

- **Scott Murphy**, Acting State Librarian- *Vermont Department of Libraries, Montpelier, VT*
- **Martine Gulick**, Director of Library Services & VSLA Governing Board Member for Legislative Concerns- *Essex High School, Essex Junction, VT*

- **Joy Worland**, Programming and Community Engagement Librarian & VLA Vice-President- *Joslin Memorial Library, Waitsfield, VT*
- **Peter Langella**, Librarian- *Champlain Valley Union High School, Hinesburg, VT*

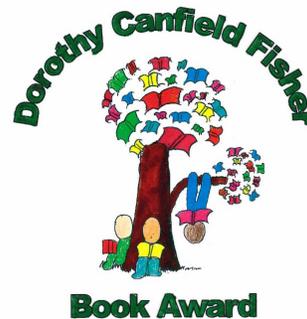
Second Year of VELI-STEM Kicks Off



Round 2 of the Vermont Department of Libraries' collaboration with the Vermont Center for the Book began in late April.

[Read the full article](#)

2017 Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Award Conference



Librarians and educators gathered in Stowe for a conference focused on diversity and change.

[Read the full article](#)

ONLY COMPLETE ARTICLES BEYOND THIS POINT

VELI-STEM Begins Its Second Year



Vermont librarians use Keva planks and straws and connectors to practice STEM concepts.

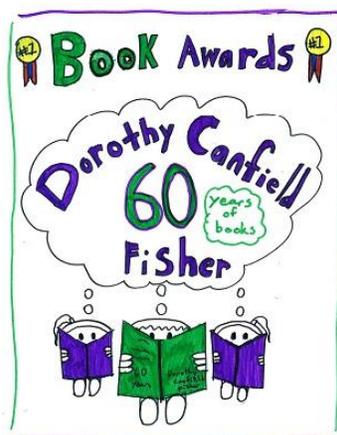
VELI-STEM, or the Vermont Early Literacy Initiative for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, began its second year with a training in Fairlee at the end of April. This three-year pilot program is funded by a grant by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and is a collaboration between the Vermont Department of Libraries and the Vermont Center for the Book.

VELI-STEM works to expose young children to STEM topics through books, hands-on play, and other media at the public library, with opportunities to expand that learning to daycare and home settings. Year One focused on the topics of force and motion, and Year Two will be devoted to building and engineering. VELI-STEM coordinators from the twenty-five participating Vermont public libraries will use the training they received in Fairlee to implement STEM programming in their libraries throughout the year. In addition to hearing informational presentations by Karen Worth of Wheelock College and Greg DeFrancis of the Montshire Museum of Science, librarians practiced the curriculum they will be using with children by building with Keva planks (shown in photo on left) and straws and connectors (shown in photo on right.)

Each participating library received eight building-themed books for their collection, as well as a set of straws and connectors and Keva planks. VELI-STEM librarians have already started using these sets in their libraries, so it appears that Year Two is already off to a great start!

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A Dynamic Conference in Central Vermont



*60th Anniversary Art Contest
winning entry by Dothan Brook
School 5th grader Harper Robinson.*

Over 100 librarians and educators met in Stowe on Friday, May 5, for the **2017 Dorothy Canfield Fisher**

Book Award Conference, sponsored by the Friends of Dorothy Canfield Fisher and the Department of Libraries. This annual conference celebrates the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Award, Vermont's middle-grade book award whose winner is chosen by Vermont students in grades 4-8. Celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, the book award aims to highlight the best in current middle-grade literature and to encourage Vermont youth to enjoy reading and engage with their teachers and librarians.



Authors Kekla Magoon (left) and Dana Alison Levy (right), the speakers at this year's conference.

The conference, now in its 14th year, provides professional development, inspiration, and networking opportunities to Vermont librarians and educators using the award curriculum with middle-grade youth. This year's conference provided these same opportunities, but with a focus on issues of diversity and change.

The day started off with a keynote address by **Kekla Magoon**, a Montpelier-based author and instructor at the Vermont College of Fine Arts. One of Magoon's books, *Shadows of Sherwood*, was nominated for the

Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Award this past year. Magoon spoke about the importance of featuring characters of color in books for youth and the necessity of addressing tough social justice issues through literature.



The 2016-2017 reading committee, which selected this year's thirty nominated books.

Attendees were invited to attend morning and afternoon workshops, which ranged from hearing about books on the 2017-2018 nominated list (and books that almost made the list) to learning how to make podcasts, websites, and presentations with students about books. The conference finished with an endnote address by middle-grade author **Dana Alison Levy**, whose book *The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher* was on the 2015-2016 list of nominees. Levy's address also highlighted the importance of representation of characters of diverse background in literature, as well as making sure those representations are accurate and nuanced.

The conference was a great success, and we look forward to seeing how librarians and educators use what they learned with their students!

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