

SOLIS Newsletter

Student Organization
of Library
& Information
Science



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VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Congratulations to Our Graduates!



SOLIS Website: <https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/master-of-library-and-information-science/solis/>

SOLIS Book Talk Q&A With Lauren Hallstrom

On November 13, 2022, SOLIS presented its first virtual event of the fall semester via Collaborate Ultra with one of our very own, Lauren Hallstrom. Lauren is a Valdosta State MLIS student and an award winning author. Lauren talked about her writing journey, her novels, how libraries can partner with local authors, and answered the following questions:

Q: How did you begin writing?

A: I always loved writing, even in elementary school, but it wasn't until my family started homeschooling that I began honing in on my writing. I began taking unique creative writing courses such as script, musical, and fiction writing. In high school, I heard of NaNoWriMo through my library; I tried it and enjoyed it! A librarian convinced me to try it through the promise of pizza, actually!

Q: What is NaNoWriMo?

A: NaNoWriMo stands for National Novel Writing Month, which is a fun large-scale challenge to write a novel (usually 50,000 words) in 30 days. The goal is to ignore the "inner editor" in your head that wants to make every sentence perfect and instead focus on getting the words on the page one day at a time!

Q: Both of your novels have been written in thirty days for NaNoWriMo, what advice can you offer others who are thinking about doing the same?

A: I link my writing time with some activity I always do—after lunch or after work—and write for "word sprints," or periods of twenty minutes when I'm not feeling particularly inspired. I have a specific chair and only use it to write, so associating a certain spot with writing is a good way to put yourself in the right mindset and avoid getting distracted. Also, a lot of people think that writing is a solitary experience, but it's often not. NaNoWriMo is a collaborative experience; there are events that happen all over the country, and you can connect with writers all over the world to keep you motivated and inspired.

Q: Describe both of your novels:

A: *Dreamweaver* is a middle grade fantasy novel I wrote at age 15. It began as a short story, and I got the inspiration for it from the coin-operated horse ride machines at supermarkets. In the town of Fortune, superstitions are strangely coming true. When main character and skeptic Audrey picks up an unlucky tails-up penny, she accidentally unleashes a series of nightmares and misfortunes upon her town.

I know authors are not supposed to have favorites, but *One Hundred Words* is my favorite of the two. I was able to combine two of my passions into this book: unusual words and the Salem Witch Trials. In this book, Tess is a teen writer who loves to "collect" words. When her latest story somehow comes to life and sends her back to her version of the Salem Witch Trials, she must put her life on the line to save her protagonist from the fate she wrote for her.



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Q: Can you tell us more about the publishing process for your books?

A: I entered a publishing contest through my library and my novels won two years in a row, and that is how my local library connected me to an indie publisher, an editor, and graphic designer. When my editor returned the initial edit of my first book, almost all the sentences had red marks. It was overwhelming, but I took a step back and reworked it. The editing process took under six months, and then I worked closely with my graphic designer on the cover and my publishers on the interior layout. I was lucky to have a much more collaborative publishing experience than the typical traditional publishing one. The moment I had the first proof copy of my book in my hands was not how I expected, either. The printing was done incorrectly, but it was fixed, I had a launch party! The second time I won the contest, I knew what to expect and it was great working with some of the same people from the publisher. With their support, I later won the Colorado Independent Publishers' Association EVVY Award for my books.

Q: How have your librarianship career and writing career intersected?

A: Working in a library has allowed me to recognize trends. I can see what kind of books are being checked out, what different audiences need, and how my books fit in a bookstore or library shelves. I also use writing to connect with teen library users and I am looking forward to starting a young adult guild at my library.

Q: What are some ways that libraries and local authors can collaborate?

A: First, identify local authors and create partnerships. Local authors need promotion, and a local authors showcase is a way to highlight their works. Libraries can also host writing events/write-ins and invite local authors to help them.

Q: How do you get your creative juices flowing?

A: Freewriting helps. I create a non-judgmental zone for myself and write about anything—it can be completely unrelated to my current project, or I might put my main characters in a different situation as an exercise to get to know them better. Another way to get new ideas is by changing your environment and taking a break to reset. I also talk through my stories with trusted friends when I'm feeling stuck.

Q: How can people find your books or connect with you?

A: My books are available through most major online retailers. You can find links to them and learn more about me at my website, <https://laurenhallstrom.com/>. I am also on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/laurenhallstromauthor/>), Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/AuthorLaurenHallstrom>), and the Procrastriwrimo blog I run on my website.



Congratulations!!

Congratulations to three MLIS graduates Melissa E. Johnson, Thomas Weeks, and Jennifer Putnam Davis who edited a book titled: **Integrating Pop Culture into the Academic Library**. The book is listed on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and other publisher websites: <https://tinyurl.com/2nxfx9e2>.

Melissa E. Johnson is the Assistant Director of Reference and Education Services at Reese Library, Augusta University. Melissa earned both her MLIS degree as well as her Master of Arts in English degree from Valdosta State University. She is currently pursuing an EdD from the University of North Georgia.

Thomas Weeks is a reference and instruction librarian at Reese Library, University Libraries, Augusta University. He is a 2016 graduate of ACRL's Immersion program. Thomas earned his MLIS from Valdosta State University and an MS in Instructional Design and Technology from Georgia State University. He is currently pursuing an EdD in curriculum studies from Georgia Southern University.

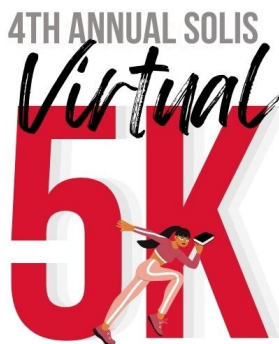
Jennifer Putnam Davis is the Scholarship and Data Librarian at the Robert B. Greenblatt, MD Library, University Libraries, Augusta University. Jennifer earned her MA in Medieval Literature from the University of York (York, UK) and her MLIS from Valdosta State University.

SOLIS 4th Annual Virtual 5K

Are you up for a challenge while giving back? SOLIS invites you to run, walk, bike, or complete any activity that racks up a total of 3.1 miles by the end of the year and donate to a charity of your choice. Any charity, any amount! All participants will be entered into a drawing for a \$20 gift card and SOLIS T-shirt! Register by December 15th!

Share your progress by using the hashtag: #VSUSOLIS5K22

Register at: <https://forms.gle/pnXYdwzXpHcTsTkYA>



RUN, WALK, OR JOG 3.1 MILES
and donate to the charity of your choice!

ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ENTERED INTO A DRAWING
TO WIN A \$20 GIFT CARD OR A SOLIS T-SHIRT!

FOLLOW THIS LINK TO REGISTER: [HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/PNXYDWZXPHTCTSKYA](https://forms.gle/pnXYdwzXpHcTsTkYA)
REGISTER BY DECEMBER 15

SHARE YOUR PROGRESS: #VSUSOLIS5K22



VSU Scholarship Opportunities

Dorothy Dewar Service Scholarship (up to 5 awards) are available for all graduate & undergraduate students in VSU College of Education & Human Services. Applications for the Fall 2023 –Spring 2024 academic year are currently open and will close at 11:59pm on Wednesday, February 1, 2023 (<https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/deans-office/coehs-scholarships/>).

Criteria for application:

- Recipient must be pursuing a graduate or undergraduate degree within the COEHS
- Recipient must demonstrate a record of exemplary service
- Recipient must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher

The [Dorothy Dewar Service Scholarship Rubric](#) will be used by the review board to review applications and make decisions regarding this scholarship.

VSU Alumni Association Scholarship Information (<https://www.valdostastate.org/alumni-association/scholarship-info.php>)

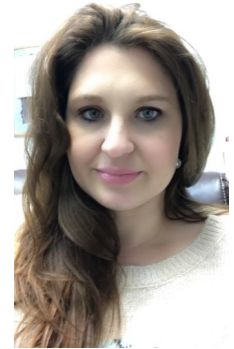
- The VSU Alumni Chapter of South Georgia Scholarship
- The VSU Alumni Chapter of Atlanta Scholarship
- The VSU Alumni Association Endowment Scholarship

Deadline to apply is March 15th.

SOLIS Virtual 5k Registration: <https://forms.gle/pnXYdwzXpHcTsTkYA>

Alumni Spotlight: Laurel A. Sphar (Seymour)

Laurel A. Sphar graduated with a BA in Criminal Justice from Valdosta State University in 2008, and shortly afterwards began working for the city of St. Marys, GA as a part-time court technician. After a few months Laurel found a full-time position at the St. Marys public library working as a library technician. Laurel soon got the opportunity to focus and assist in the children's department. After a few years of working for the library and after a promotion to the position of youth services coordinator, Laurel returned to Valdosta State University and obtained the Master of Library and Information Sciences (MLIS) degree in 2018 with a focus on youth services. In late 2019 Laurel took a library manager position in Nassau County, FL and gained managerial experience. After two and a half years there, Laurel returned to St. Marys when the Library Director position became available and has served as the Library Director for the past 3 months.



1. What were your favorite classes while in the MLIS program?

I enjoyed all of the youth services classes with Dr. Drouillard.

2. What was your favorite course project while receiving your MLIS degree?

I have to say the book trailer project with Dr. Drouillard, we got to create a trailer for a YA book of our choice and upload to YouTube. I chose '*Bone Gap*' by Laura Ruby set to the song Time in a Bottle by Jim Croce. Check it out on YouTube.

3. How has what you learned while getting your MLIS degree directly affect or been applied to your work?

I was working full time as the youth services coordinator for the St. Marys Public Library and was able to take a lot of the ideas and book suggestions and apply them in real time. The coursework taught me children want to see themselves in literature and that is why it is so important to have a variety of topics.

4. Do you have any advice for upcoming graduates on how to navigate the job search and/or for the field as a new graduate?

My advice would be to network with your fellow classmates and help each other. Libraries should be fun, and the more you network the more opportunities and possibilities become available to you. With a little luck, you may have an opportunity to find your dream position.

Support the Student Organization of Library and Information Science (SOLIS) by ordering your own T-shirt with the VSU and MLIS insignias!

Proceeds of sales in years have funded ALA conference registrations for students, travel reimbursements for SOLIS officers representing SOLIS at GLA conferences, a reception for the travelling rare books exhibit on loan from the Remnant Trust, a 15th anniversary celebration in downtown Valdosta, and many SOLIS activities such as virtual 5k, and t-shirt design contest. The proceeds of sales will be the main funding source for a newly created SOLIS scholarship starting from Fall 2021.

Shirts are sold at \$10 each at face-to-face events such as GLA conferences and previous New Student Orientations.

SOLIS T-Shirt Order Form

Yes, I want to support SOLIS! Please send me _____ (number) of shirts.

Please fill in the oval next to your preferred t-shirt design:



Please indicate the quantity for each size:

Small_____ Medium_____ Large_____ X-Large_____ 2X-Large* _____ 3X-Large* _____

*sizes not available for white t-shirt

Order of one (1) shirt is \$20 (includes processing and shipping via USPS). Order of 2 or more shirts is \$15 per shirt (processing and shipping included)

Total enclosed: _____

Check payment only. Make check payable to MLIS Foundation. Allow two to four weeks to receive your t-shirt(s).

Your shipping address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Please mail this form with your check to:

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