

New book for local author to be released this April

By Heather Steliga

Standard Correspondent

HARTLAND—Hartland resident Jo Knowles has a new book coming out in April, her eighth in the category of young adult and middle grade fiction.

Knowles is an award-winning writer and teacher who often takes inspiration from her own experiences as a youth in rural New Hampshire to create her heart-warming characters and the circumstances in which they find themselves.

The new book, entitled “Where the Heart Is,” “is probably the most autobiographical of all my books, in that I drew directly from many memories of my childhood, including caring for an angry pig!” said Knowles. “But more importantly, it revisits some painful losses in my life.”

The book has been cited as one of the five best new middle grade books about LGBTQ issues as noted by Barnes & Noble:

“There should be a lot for Rachel to celebrate in this touching novel. She’s turning thirteen, there’s a whole summer of beach time ahead, and she has her best friend, Micah, at her side. But eventually, everyone expects her friendship with Micah to turn romantic, and Rachel just don’t feel like she wants to go there, with him or any other boy. As her parents’ financial issues worsen, Rachel needs her best friend more than ever, but when he discovers that her attractions indeed lie elsewhere, can and will he still be there like she needs him to be?”

Knowles is grateful for the success and popularity of her former book, “See You At Harry’s,” which she says has allowed her to talk with kids all over the country about issues that are important to her.

“I just did a Skype visit with a lively group of kids from Brooklyn, NY,” she said. “They had read ‘See You At Harry’s’, and we did a Q&A. I also recently spoke at Woodstock Union High School.”

Asked about favorite comments by students in the schools she has visited, Knowles said, “This is going to sound wrong, but my favorite comments from kids are that

my books made them cry. The books I loved as a kid, the

ones I remember most, are the ones that made me weep, that made me feel. I think books are such important empathy-builders, so when I hear from kids that my own stories have made them feel something in a powerful, thoughtful way, it’s the greatest

reward.”

Knowles studied English literature and writing at Simmons College (now called Simmons University) and stayed on at Simmons to earn her M.A. in children’s literature. She teaches writing in the Mountainview MFA program through Southern New Hampshire University.

She and her husband settled in Hartland about 15 years ago after her husband was offered a job as college archivist at Dartmouth College. They have one son, Eli, a graduate of The Sharon Academy and now a sophomore at American University.

“He’s always been very supportive of my career and often I run ideas and lines by him for feedback,”

Knowles said. “He’s quite proud of the fact that one of my books, ‘Lessons From A Dead Girl,’ is on the American Library Association’s ‘Most Banned Books’ list.”

“Where the Heart Is” is published by Candlewick

Press which is dedicated to

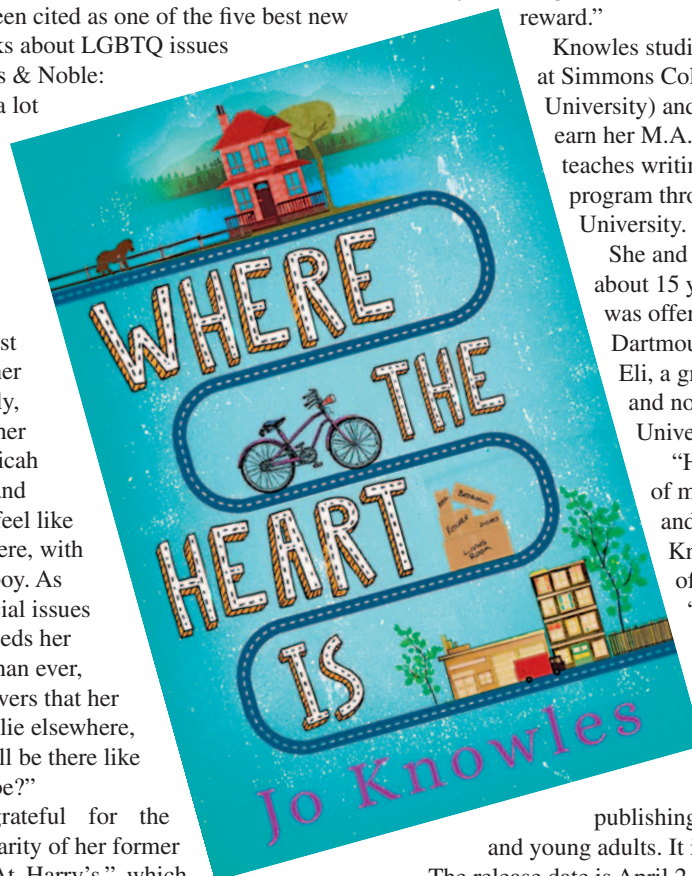
publishing high quality books for children

and young adults. It is located in the Boston area.

The release date is April 2. According to Knowles, it will be available locally at The Yankee Bookshop, the Norwich Bookstore, BAM and Barnes and Noble. The Yankee Bookshop is taking pre-orders for personalized and signed copies of the book.



Jo Knowles



Jennifer Falvey will be on vacation until April 1, 2019. Readers may contact her at jfalvey@aol.com until then.