



President's Report 2020-2021

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair." – Charles Dickens

Having tried to write this report over a dozen times during the pandemic, I always failed to find a truly upbeat introduction to our ongoing efforts at VAAS to support and honor the Arts and Sciences in Vermont. The quote from Charles Dickens is apt for so many periods of history, including our own, and so it must suffice again. These have been hard times for the artists and scientists who make Vermont their home. For VAAS, whose existence is predicated on bringing people together to support and celebrate artists and scientists, the pandemic has shut down our Fellows Luncheons, our Student Symposia, and our Special Events. Seemingly so long ago, in 2019, we celebrated new Fellows at *Fire and Ice* in Middlebury, we held our Intercollegiate Student Symposium at Castleton University, and we held a wonderful Fall Conference Event at Norwich University with Lisa Brooks tracing the history of the Abenaki. We had many plans for 2020 and 2021, not the least of which would have featured a series of speakers from among our Fellows to share their ideas and crafts at the *Vermont Granite Museum*. Even though we cancelled these events, we have not given up. We have forged ahead in other ways to keep engaged. In my report that follows, I want to emphasize our return to physical events and celebrations again in the coming year, but I also want to highlight many things we have been doing behind the scenes. We have not been idle.

First, let's celebrate the arts and sciences again! We will be hosting the Fellows Luncheon on September 24, 2022. Please make room in your calendars as long as you are willing to join in public celebration again. This event will begin at noon on that Saturday and we have reserved the *Silver Pavilion at UVM* for the event. Some of you may be familiar with this venue but it is a departure for us from our more intimate settings. We have been active selecting highly accomplished new Fellows to join the Academy during both 2020 and 2021, but we were not able to host a celebration for their formal induction. Our new Fellows for 2020 include Michael Sherman, Giovanna Peebles, Mary Cushman, Gregory Sanford, and Madeleine Kunin. We are grateful that they all accepted our nominations. To this illustrious list, we added three new Fellows in 2021, including Chard deNiord, Emily Bernard, and Mark Levine. We are again pleased that they all accepted our nominations. Biographies of the new Fellows are included in

this report. Stay tuned for a more formal invitation to this celebration. New Fellows are invited to bring a guest, or more, free of charge.

Second, speaking of charges, we discontinued dues and donations during the pandemic. This is why you may not have seen our annual solicitations in 2020 and 2021. Our reasoning was that we would not incur expenses for public events that we were forced to cancel, and more importantly, we also felt that our members could use their funds to support the arts in other ways during the pandemic. We will be resuming our fund-raising in the future, but it may be different. All Fellows have membership for life with no obligation to pay dues. All members who have paid annual dues in the past have been beyond generous by giving additional donations for which we have been very grateful. We may be moving away from annual dues and simply asking for donations as we move forward. We may earmark the funds to support our events such as the Fellows Luncheon, the Intercollegiate Student Symposium, and the Fall Conferences. We may also earmark funds for various awards and prizes for students who give outstanding presentations at the Vermont History Day or the Vermont Math and Science Fair. No final decisions have been made, but we will be considering the Vermont Community Foundation as a point of contact for our fund-raising and investing.

Third, we spent considerable time during the pandemic developing our electronic footprint. We are traditionally an organization that loves paper and mail. We still do! But the times are changing and we need to reach out to the public in new ways. Our Vice President, Claire Veach, has developed and launched our website at vaas.us. Please check out our website as soon as you can. Claire reports that we have had over 990 visits to our website since January 2022. We have posted some articles by Board Members, David Tomasi, Thomas Leddy-Cecere, and Noah Coburn. We have also posted news of Fellows, past Events, and Future Activities. Sadly, we also update the passing of Fellows and pay tribute to their immense contribution to the arts and sciences in Vermont. We are a small state but we possess a wealth of talent. We have noted the passing of three vital members including Art Westing, Nick Muller, and Bill Metcalfe. As we move tentatively into the electronic age, we will be sending out information via email as well as regular mail. Our email addresses for all Trustees can be found on the website as well. Please do not hesitate to drop a message, whether it is a comment, some praise, or vital news to share.

Fourth, and this is big news! If you have had a chance to visit the *Vermont Granite Museum* in Barre over the past two years (yes they are open to visitors), you will have noticed something big taking shape. Vermont sculptor and Governor's Award winner, Chris Miller, has been carving a monument in honor of our VAAS Fellows, and more generally, the spirit of Art and Science in the State of Vermont. Please go see the monument as it is being carved. Chris is often present sharing his craft with the public. The columns have been finished and the entablatures are taking shape. This project is intended to give substance to our efforts to honor and support artists and scientists throughout Vermont. We have tended to be an organization based on paper, and now perhaps electronic media, but a granite monument will give us substance that will last generations. VAAS has partnered with Scott McLaughlin and the VGM over the past few years despite the restrictions of the pandemic. Stop in to see Scott and Chris.

There have been major changes at the Museum, including an auditorium and new classrooms for the re-birth of the Stone Arts School. So many changes. If you cannot go in person, then you are encouraged to visit our website for updates on the monument and even a clever YouTube video created by David Tomasi, our VAAS Secretary, who has been nudging us into social media. We have not been idle.

Finally, I wanted to thank all of our Trustees and Members who have worked hard and patiently, often silently, as we pushed forward. In spite of the global pandemic and other serious upheavals, they have kept the momentum churning ahead. We know that the Arts and the Sciences have suffered in ways unseen, but we also know that the future success of our State and its people rest upon the efforts of each generation of new Artists and Scientists. I started with the quote from Charles Dickens because there is still much hope to spread.

Sincerely,

Kevin Fleming

Kevin Fleming, VAAS President

VAAS 2020 FELLOWS

**Michael Sherman
Historian and Editor
Montpelier**

Michael Sherman, historian, editor, and former director of the Vermont Historical Society, is one of the leading scholars of Vermont, its history, and its people. New to Vermont, Michael faced the challenge of leading an organization with a heavy commitment to public engagement and scholarly initiatives, while teaching himself about the peculiar ways of Vermonters.

In 1995 Michael transitioned from his role as director of the VHS to become editor of its scholarly journal, *Vermont History*, a role in which he has continued to this day. The job of editor requires enormous intellectual energy, patience, and tact—all qualities Michael possesses in abundance. He brought to the job an understanding of the balance the journal needs to achieve between high-quality scholarship and appeal to an audience of wide interests within the study of Vermont. Subjects of articles published ranged from the exploits of Vermont's early European settlers to the Green Mountain Parkway controversy; from early industrial enterprises to tourism and the back-to-the-land movement. There were special issues compiling papers presented at VHS conferences on antebellum Vermont, the future of Vermont history, and Champlain quadracentennial.

Over the last 25 years Michael has edited an average of about seven scholarly articles per year for *Vermont History*, or some 175 pieces. This does not include such features such as "Archives and Manuscripts," describing significant new collections at the VHS and UVM Special Collections, or "In Their Words," historical accounts drawn from eyewitness manuscripts. Nor does it include the hundreds of manuscripts not accepted for publication, most of which elicited advice and suggestions from the editor.

Having to edit other historians' work did not prevent Michael from producing his own scholarly articles. In 2001 he and Nancy Boone published a study of Vermont's Civil War hospitals, and in 2013 he published a fine article on Vermont's conscientious objectors, both in *Vermont History*. As important as the *Vermont History* editing and writing have been, Michael's greatest achievements may be the series of books he has edited, co-edited, and authored that address the enduring questions of what it means to be a Vermonter. These begin with the 1991 book *A More perfect union : Vermont becomes a state, 1777-1816*, the statehood bicentennial volume with numerous contributors, and continue with *We Vermonters: Reflections on the Past*, co-edited with Jennie Versteeg in 1992; *The character of Vermont : twentieth-anniversary reflections*, co-edited with three others in 1996; and *Imagining Vermont : values and vision for the future : final report of the Council on the Future of Vermont*, produced by Vermont Council on Rural Development in 2009. Perhaps his single most important contribution to understanding Vermont's past is the brilliant history he co-authored with Gene Sessions and P. Jeffrey Potash, *Freedom and Unity: A History of Vermont*. In acknowledging but not falling prey to the tradition of Vermont exceptionalism, Michael and his co-authors produced the most professional and readable history of Vermont in its more than 225-year history.

All of this work notwithstanding, Michael added on a second career several years ago: baker in a long-established Montpelier bakery. As one newspaper wryly announced in its headline, Michael's "second career takes flour."

Giovanna Peebles Archeologist

Giovanna Peebles is an archeologist who devoted her long professional career in Vermont to public education and engagement, while establishing a solid foundation for archeological research. As the first Vermont State Archeologist, Giovanna built a program to identify, investigate, and document archeological sites throughout the state. She helped establish the Vermont Archeology Museum, which serves not only as a storage center for artifacts but an educational center for school children and the curious of all ages.

Giovanna grew up in South Burlington and earned a bachelor's degree in archeology at Cornell, followed by a master's degree from the University of Idaho. She returned to Vermont in 1976 to fill the newly created position of State Archeologist. With grant money available from the federal government and with her own infectious enthusiasm, she built a program that enabled teams of trained archeologists, students, and volunteers to systematically survey and conduct digs at identified sites. New laws requiring archeological surveys at certain construction sites uncovered thousands of prehistoric and historic finds, some of which led to significant changes to our understanding of Vermont's past. Early in her career, Giovanna confronted the claims of pseudo-scientists that a number of stone chambers, mostly abandoned in Vermont's hilly backwoods, were built by ancient Celtic settlers. She pulled together a number of experts to examine the evidence and present their findings at a conference. The experts concluded decisively that the stone chambers were mostly nineteenth-century root cellars and provided no evidence of Celtic habitation. These results were documented in Giovanna's 1980 monograph, *Vermont's stone chambers: an inquiry into their past*.

Always aware of the need for public support and engagement, Giovanna spent much time speaking to school groups, historical societies, legislators, and any others who would listen to the stories that archeological artifacts tell. Journalists quickly learned to get in touch with Giovanna when ordinary citizens stumbled upon possibly significant finds, and Giovanna learned to get in touch with journalists when field work commissioned by her department turned up something interesting. Her devotion to making archeology relevant to everyone was a key part of her ongoing success. This devotion culminated in the establishment of the Vermont Archeology Museum at the Barre History Center in 2006. In the old Spaulding School, sharing space with the VHS and more recently the State Library, Giovanna resolved two longstanding problems: the need for space to store items retrieved from archeological digs and for the public to interact with these materials in a meaningful way/.

Throughout this busy career Giovanna continued to publish, as well as to mentor a new generation of archeologists.

Dr. Mary Cushman
Professor of Medicine and of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

Dr. Cushman has earned a B.S. in Biology from the University of Vermont (UVM), a M.D. from UVM and a M.Sc. in Epidemiology from the Harvard University School of Public Health.

Dr. Cushman is an international expert on the epidemiology of coagulation, inflammation, and other vascular-related domains in relation to the etiology and pathogenesis of stroke, cognitive impairment, cardiovascular diseases, and other diseases of aging. Mary conducts research and publishes as a key investigator on a number of longitudinal health studies, including the Reasons for Geographic and Racial Differences in Stroke ([REGARDS](#)), Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis ([MESA](#)), and [Cardiovascular Health Study](#), among others. She has been a recipient of continuous National Institutes of Health research funding for more than 20 years

Dr. Cushman is the medical director of the thrombosis and hemostasis program at the UVM Medical Center, is editor-in-chief of the newest journal of the International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis – *Research and Practice in Thrombosis and Haemostasis* – and is on the board of directors of UVM’s Cardiovascular Research Institute (CVRI).

In 2018 Mary was awarded the prestigious American Heart Association’s Population Research Prize. Also, in 2018 Mary was named to a list of the world’s most impactful researchers, based on the number of times her published studies have been cited by other researchers over the past decade. Researchers on the list are in the top one percent of all scholars whose work has been cited by others. The prestigious Highly Cited Researchers list is compiled and published annually by Clarivate Analytics which uses Essential Science Indicators, a unique compilation of science performance metrics and trend data based on scholarly paper publication counts and citation data from the *Web of Science*, the premier web-based environment of scientific and scholarly research literature totaling over 33,000 journals. Dr. Cushman was named a UVM University Scholar in 2019.

Further details on Mary’s remarkable scholarly accomplishments can be found by accessing her bio at <https://contentmanager.med.uvm.edu/medicine/hemonc/bio?BioID=22609>

Dr. Mary Cushman is most deserving of being recognized for her many accomplishments by being selected as a Fellow in the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Madeleine May Kunin
Stateswoman, Writer, and Poet
Burlington

We are fortunate, indeed, that Madeleine May Kunin, born and raised in Switzerland, emigrated to the United States in 1940, and then in 1957 made Vermont her permanent home. Renowned and revered author, poet, scholar, legislator, and diplomat, Madeleine Kunin has additionally been in the forefront of fostering the role of women in government service. Four of her major goals in public life for Vermont and beyond have long been: (1) to achieve male/female equality in both the workplace and politics; (2) to provide a safe social milieu for children; (3) to improve educational opportunities at the primary and secondary levels; and most presciently (4) to foster environmentally sustainable development.

Madeleine Kunin has at one time or another been an Adjunct or Visiting Professor at Harvard University and Dartmouth College; and here within Vermont at Trinity, Middlebury, and Saint Michaels Colleges. Moreover, since 2014 Madeleine Kunin has been on the faculty of the University of Vermont as its James Marsh Professor at Large. Turning now to the world of politics and diplomacy, Madeleine Kunin has served us here in Vermont as a

Representative to the General Assembly (1972–1978), as the Lieutenant Governor (1978–1982), and more importantly as our Governor (1985–1991), being the first and still the only woman to hold that office. One of her perhaps less well known actions as Governor was in 1989 to establish a supportive sisterhood relationship between Vermont and the Karelian Autonomous Republic of Russia (that region torn away from Finland during the Winter War of 1939–1940 and poorly treated by Russia ever since). Federally, Madeleine Kunin has been a Deputy Secretary of Education (1993–1996), and then our Ambassador to two sovereign states, to both the Swiss Confederation (1996–1999) and the Principality of Liechtenstein (1997–1999).

Madeleine Kunin is the author or co-author of seven important books, four non-fiction, two memoirs in prose and poetry, and a recently released volume of poetry. Moreover, she has been responsible for the founding of two influential non-governmental organizations: the *Institute for Sustainable Communities* (1991) and *EmergeVermont* (2013), the latter supportive of women going into politics. The number of honorary degrees (seven from Vermont institutions alone) and distinguished awards that have been bestowed upon Madeleine Kunin, both here and abroad, are beyond counting (the most recent one, locally in 2019, from the Vermont Natural Resources Council).

It is perhaps fitting to close this encomium with an excerpt from Madeleine Kunin's proclamation at the 2018 *Women's March on Montpelier*: "Why do we march? We march for *respect*. We march for equal pay. We march for the right to control our bodies. We march for a livable planet. We march for the end of violence against women. We march for health care for all. We march for public education. [And] We march for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights."

D. Gregory Sanford
Historian and Former Vermont State Archivist
Plainfield

D. Gregory Sanford came to Vermont from Connecticut in the mid-1970s to work on a master's degree in American history at UVM. He arrived shortly after the George D. Aiken Papers arrived, and his future advisor, Prof. Samuel B. Hand, was anxious to find a student to work in these papers. Greg fit the bill, and after a few years he produced a master's thesis "The Presidential Boomlet for Governor George D. Aiken, 1937-1939, or you can't get there from here" (1977). After graduation he served as the Coordinator for the new UVM Center for Research on Vermont for a year, and would later become Chair of the Center's Board of Directors. Next he was hired on a Mellon grant to coordinate the MIT Oral History Program in 1978 at the Institute Archives. He returned a year later as the assistant director of the George D. Aiken Oral History Project under the distinguished oral historian, Charles T. Morrissey and produced the fine "George D. Aiken Oral History Memoir" in 1981. A year later he was hired by Vermont Secretary of State James Douglas to be the Editor of State Papers. The office functioned as a kind of state archives. Over a period of years, Sanford raised the level of the program by combining Public Records with the State Archives and fought for a new building to house the combined programs as a new agency in 2008. Under his leadership, the archives staff embraced technology and created a rich website teeming with information to bring the archives closer to legislators, the press and the public. The Society of American Archivists honored the Vermont State Archives for these efforts with the prestigious Philip M. Hamer and Elizabeth Hamer Kegan Award in 2002. Sanford created a newsletter, "Voices from the Vault" to educate state government employees about the archives and their custodial responsibilities. He was active on the Vermont Public Records Advisory Board and brought in other archivists from around the state to contribute their expertise, and he led the Vermont State Board of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and encouraged large and small institutions to apply for records grants.

Singlehandedly, Sanford rescued a collection of some 60,000 documents relating to the founding of Vermont which had been scorched in a fire and lay languishing in a vault at the New York State Library, and he won NEH funding to process and microfilm this collection. Greg has served on many boards and commissions in the state, region and nationally and was President of the New England Archivists in 1988, and received their Distinguished Service Award in 2002. He has written dozens of articles in local, regional and national publications, edited volumes of state records and has given numerous talks and lectures on Vermont history and archival theory, and

on the model program he created at the Vermont State Archives. Greg Sanford received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Center for Research on Vermont for all of his contributions to Vermont history. He retains the informal title of the “Dean” of the History of State Government in Vermont.

Chard deNiord Poet Laureate

Chard deNiord is an American author, poet and teacher who lives in Westminster West, Vermont with his wife Liz. He is the author of six books of poetry, including *Asleep in the Fire* (University of Alabama, 1990), *Sharp Golden Thorn* (2003), *Night Mowing* (2005), *The Double Truth* (2011), *Interstate* (2015), and *In My Unknowing* (2020), all published by the University of Pittsburgh. He has also published two books of interviews with American poets, *Sad Friends, Drowned Lovers, Stapled Songs: Conversations and Reflections on 20th Century American Poets* (2011) which includes interviews with Robert Bly, Lucile Clifton, Donald Hall, Galway Kinnell, Maxine Kumin and Ruth Stone among others and *I Would Lie to You if I Could: Interviews with Ten American Poets* (2018).

In 2017 deNiord co-edited an anthology of Vermont poetry with Sidney Lea, *Roads Taken: Contemporary Vermont Poetry* (Green Writers Press). He has published over 30 essays on poetry and writing in a number of journals and newspapers, including *The Harvard Review*, *The New England Review*, *Poetry International*, *The Green Mountain Review* and *The Cortland Review* among others. He was Vermont’s most recent Poet Laureate, serving from 2015-2019.

DeNiord was born in New Haven, CT in 1952, and raised in Virginia. He earned a B.A. in religious studies at Lynchburg College, a Master of Divinity from Yale, and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Iowa Writer’s Workshop. He taught comparative religion and philosophy at a number of private schools, including the Putney School before moving to Providence College.

DeNiord is currently teaches English and Creative Writing at Providence College where he is a Professor of English. He has been a Poetry Fellow at the Swanee Writer’s Conference and the Allan Collins Scholar in Poetry at the Bread Loaf Writer’s Conference in Middlebury. He co-founded the New England College Master of Fine Arts program in poetry. He is a frequent reader in Vermont and New England.

Emily Bernard Writer South Burlington

Emily Bernard is the Julian Lindsay Green and Gold Professor of English at the University of Vermont and the author of numerous books, articles, and essays. The winner of many distinguished awards for her writing, Professor Bernard received her bachelor and doctoral degrees from Yale University. She began teaching at the University of Vermont in 2004(?) and since that time has inspired, challenged, and befriended thousands of students, colleagues, and readers through her teaching and writing.

The New York Times selected her first book, *Remember Me to Harlem: The Letters of Langston Hughes and Carl Van Vechten*, as a Notable Book of the Year. Her recent memoir, *Black is the Body: Stories from my Grandmother’s Time, My Mother’s Time, and Mine*, won the Isherwood Prize for Autobiographical Prose from the Los Angeles Times. In addition, she has written *Some of My Best Friends: Writings on Interracial Friendships*, and *Carl Van Vechten and the Harlem Renaissance*. As noted in her website biography, Professor Bernard “has received fellowships and grants from Yale University, Harvard University, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Vermont Arts Council, the Vermont Studio Center, and The MacDowell Colony.”

In *Black is the Body*, Professor Bernard personalizes the themes that dominate her scholarly work: the quest for interracial understanding, the struggles around defining Blackness as personal and cultural identity, and the powerful examples of the great ones, writers and artists as well as family matriarchs, who came before.

Over the course of twenty years Emily Bernard has emerged as a leading scholar of Black literature, and as a beloved teacher and colleague at the University of Vermont.

Mark Levine, MD **Vermont Commissioner of Health**

“Right Man, Right Place, Right Time: Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD” (vermontbiz 3/14/2021)

Dr. Mark Levine is the Vermont Commissioner of Health. He was appointed to this position by Vermont Governor Phil Scott in March 2017. The following background information was taken from <https://www.healthvermont.gov/about-us/organization-locations/our-leaders>

“Prior to his appointment, Dr. Levine was a professor of medicine at the University of Vermont, associate dean for graduate medical education, and designated institutional official at the College of Medicine and UVM Medical Center. He also served as vice chair for education in the Department of Medicine.

Dr. Levine received his B.A. in biology from the University of Connecticut and M.D. from the University of Rochester. He completed his internal medicine residency and chief resident year at the University of Vermont, and a fellowship in general internal medicine at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Levine’s general internal medicine practice focused on health promotion and disease prevention, preventative health screening and clinical nutrition, chronic disease management, and solving complex diagnostic dilemmas.

With this experience, Dr. Levine understands the challenges our health care system holds for both patients and physicians. This informs his interest in improving public health through policies that foster a culture of health.

Dr. Levine has served on the American College of Physicians Board of Regents, and as governor of its Vermont chapter; as vice president and president-elect of the Vermont Medical Society; and was a longstanding member of the Vermont Department of Health’s Primary Care-Public Health Integration Workgroup. He successfully directed large NIH and HRSA educational grants related to nutrition-preventive medicine competencies for general physicians.”

Dr. Mark Levine has led the Vermont Health Department’s response to the Coronavirus pandemic. There have been many news stories regarding Dr. Levine’s exemplary leadership during this unprecedented time. The following is taken from <https://vermontbiz.com/news/2021/march/14/right-man-right-place-right-time-health-commissioner-mark-levine-md>.

“In September 2020, Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, video-visited a Vermont press conference with Governor Scott and Commissioner of Public Health and Dr. Mark Levine. He called Vermont “a model for the rest of the nation” and said he wished he “could bottle (the state’s response) and take it with me when I go around talking to other parts of the country.”

People believe that Dr Levine — a very tall man at 6' 5", sort of wonky, smart, accessible, calm, earnest and a surprisingly witty man — has been the right man in the right place at the right time. Scott certainly believes it. He calls Dr Levine, whom he appointed to be health commissioner in 2017, “Vermont’s own Dr Fauci.”

“Dr Levine’s expertise and talent were clear from the start, that’s why we wanted him on our team,” Scott said. “But I think what makes him so well suited to help us navigate this once-in-a-century health crisis is his even-

keeled style and his ability to explain and offer solutions to complex problems in a way that the everyday Vermonter understands. His counsel has had a huge impact on Vermont's nation-leading response. I think Vermonters have been able to see for themselves, in the nearly 240 hours' worth of media briefings we've had since March, why his thoughtful and compassionate demeanor makes him the right person for the job."

Dr. Mark Levine is most deserving of being recognized for his many accomplishments by being selected as a Fellow in the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences.