

VAAS Newsletter

WINTER 2015

VOLUME 30, NUMBER 1

VAAS Officers as of February 2016

- Connell Gallagher, President
- James Conley, Vice President
- William Brown, Secretary
- Lauren Howard, Treasurer



**VERMONT ACADEMY
OF ARTS & SCIENCES**
SINCE 1965

Join us in the celebration of student research! The VAAS 2016 Student Research Symposium is scheduled for April 9. More information on p. 4.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2015 was a busy year. We celebrated our 50th Anniversary at a conference in October entitled “The Future of Vermont”, held at Bennington College. We had a great event and a great day. Driving down on Route 30 from Middlebury through Poultney and Dorset to Manchester and then on to Bennington was spectacular. The fall foliage was at peak in southern Vermont that weekend. Nancy and I had never experienced such sustained and beautiful color in our 45 years in Vermont. Over 50 persons turned out for the conference, including a number of Bennington College students – even though this was the weekend of their fall break. We received a warm welcome from Dr. Isabel Roche, Provost and Dean of Bennington College before hearing from VAAS Fellow Bill McKibben, who gave the keynote address, “On Understanding Vermont in a Warming World: Science, Social Science and the Humanities in Collaboration.” This was followed by The Essex Children’s Choir recital on the preservation of Vermont folksong, conducted by

Director and VAAS Fellow Constance Price during lunch. The afternoon speakers included Ellen McCulloch Lovell, VAAS Fellow and former president of Marlboro College, on “Vermont’s Cultural Development: Continuity and Change,” Middlebury College biology professor and Vermont Academy of Sciences Fellow Grace A. Spatafora on “Promoting Science Literacy in Vermont through an Integrated Science Curriculum,” and VAAS Fellow Tom Slayton, editor emeritus of Vermont Life Magazine, who spoke on “The Humanities in Vermont: Work, Words and the Land.”

Earlier in the year we were treated to a very exciting day at Green Mountain College for our VAAS 49th Annual Intercollegiate Student Symposium, which was held on Saturday, April 18th, 2015. Over 30 students from Norwich University, Marlboro College and Castleton University presented papers on a variety of topics. On September 19th we held our annual Fellows Luncheon at the Windjammer Restaurant in Burlington. Nearly 50

persons including 20 VAAS Fellows were present to help induct five new Fellows into the Academy: Dr. H. Nicholas Muller III, a historian from Essex, New York; Kate Pond, a sculptor from South Burlington; Robert Buckeye, a librarian from Middlebury; Luis Batlle, a pianist from Marlboro; and Karen Hesse, an author from Brattleboro. Fellow and former VAAS president and executive director Dan Bean presented a brief history of the Academy at the luncheon in honor of our 50th anniversary.

Former VAAS president and Fellow Bob Buckeye and I have been conversing about putting together a publication to celebrate the 50th anniversary. Ideas that have come up include a publication focusing on the Bennington conference and/or updating the 2000 *A Short History of the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences* booklet. Fellow Paul Krapcho has identified all of the deceased fellows and has produced a list of living and deceased fellows, which will be available on our website. He is also helping me to publish an updated Fellows Handbook

cont. on p. 5

2015 VAAS FALL CONFERENCE by Flo Keyes

On October 17, 2015, the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences held its Fall Conference in Bennington to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the organization where it all began. The events were hosted by Bennington College in its lovely Carriage Barn. After registration, accompanied by coffee and pastries, Bennington College Provost Isabel Roche welcomed the attendees to her college and VAAS President Connell Gallagher spoke on the history of VAAS and the day's events.

The first speaker of the day was Fellow Bill McKibben of Middlebury College, whose talk was entitled "On Understanding Vermont in a Warming World: Science, Social Science, and the Humanities in Collaboration." Before a full house of about fifty people, McKibben presented his understanding of the problems that lie ahead in Vermont due to climate change and our current forms of energy usage. The potential problems include lifestyle shifts as our climate becomes warmer and the population can no longer base its economy on the cold winters, which drive the recreation industry and the sugaring business. Repeatedly, McKibben emphasized the need for social responsibility, stating, "Our aesthetic can't be bought at the price of the sheer existence of people in the world." The solutions he proposed revolved around the increased use of wind and solar power to an extent that nears self-sufficiency for the state.

McKibben admitted that differing views on this issue could divide the state's people, but underscored that the worst possible choice was to do nothing at all to alleviate the problem. Since many of the audience members were academics, he called on them to help solve the attendant problems arising from moving forward with the increased use of alternative energy. He envisioned people from many disciplines working together: Engineers and psychologists; historians and theologians; economists and artists.

After a brief break, the audience moved upstairs to enjoy a choral performance by the Essex Children's Choir under the direction of Constance Price. Their

recital was entitled "Preservation of Vermont Folksong" and in addition to beautiful music soaring from the well-trained young people who comprise the choir, the audience learned a bit about the folksongs and even got to sing along with a few. The level of excellence of these young singers was impressive, as was, as ever, the rich background of musical knowledge shared by their director and Fellow of the Academy, Constance Price.

Luncheon followed the performance. It was excellent, though the line to get it was quite long, and included a new (to this writer) and uniquely Vermont beverage—Maple Soda.

In the afternoon, the group reconvened to hear three speakers on "The Arts, Sciences and Humanities in Vermont". Former President of Marlboro College and VAAS Fellow, Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, spoke first and at some length on "The Cultural Development of Vermont." By directing the audience's attention to the oldest art object in Vermont, the "Colchester Jar", made by the Iroquois in the 15th or 16th century, Lovell raised the question of why Vermont is so supportive of the arts. She traced this interest to a number of causes including the diversity of the original settlers, the accessibility to the state provided by the railroad, the development of photography, Vermont's natural beauty, the distribution of colleges around the state, the youth talent of the 1960's and 70's, and the artists themselves. Basically, it could be summed up by the interplay between the "dramatic beauty" of the state, the imagination of the people drawn to the state, and support of the government and higher education.

Grace Spatafora, a professor of biology and pre-medical science from Middlebury College, spoke on "Science Literacy". Spatafora focused on the need for science literacy even among those not involved in the sciences. She tried to dispel some misconceptions people often hold about what science is. Through her words and her PowerPoint presentation, she explained that science is a body of knowledge, not just fixed facts people need to learn. Because science is *cont. on next page*

2015 Conference, continued

evidence-based, and new evidence is being discovered or derived all the time, science is always moving forward and self-corrects when it has previously explained something incorrectly due to limited or inaccurate prior knowledge. She encouraged people to support individuals, especially young people, as they ask questions, search for evidence, and test hypotheses. She wanted inventors and other scientists returned to the ranks of heroes and role models. Most importantly, perhaps, Spatafora wanted science to be merged into the other disciplines so people can see its interconnectedness to all aspects of life.

The final speaker was Fellow Tom Slayton, former *Vermont Life* editor and current VAAS Fellow. His presentation was entitled “Words, Work, and the Land” and addressed the question of what makes us thoroughly human, and in this case, thoroughly Vermonters. Since rural culture defines Vermont, Vermonters have had to survive by honing their wits. The Vermonter is often independent, committed to his or her community, resilient, in love with the land, skeptical, and adept at seeing wry humor in the world. These qualities have allowed people to survive over the centuries, and at times thrive. Writers such as David Buddbill and Howard Mosher turn the struggle and the people into stories, poems and plays which capture the spirit of Vermont. Slayton quoted Walter Hard who once wrote, “Vermont can be transformative.” To keep the state’s unique culture alive, Slayton advocated participating in choices and actions that keep local industry alive: Local brew pubs; keeping farmland green through the Land Trust; shopping at farmer’s markets; and purchasing local crafts.

With heads abuzz from all these excellent presentations, the VAAS Board held its annual membership meeting and then disbanded for the evening. It was a fine way to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the VAAS. Thanks and congratulations are due to all the members who worked together to make this special day a success.

VAAS Fellow in the News

VAAS Fellow Robert Buckeye published his 25th book, *Living In*, this January. It is a selection of his reviews, articles, introductions, and news columns, and includes catalog essays on literature, film, art, and current events published over the last 40 years. It is available from The Vermont Book Shop in Middlebury. The volume is autobiographical since the essays are arranged chronologically from 1972, and because it documents the changes in his impressions of the culture as he sees it over time. Most of the essays relate to his specialty, avant-garde writers and filmmakers. “I see my writing to reclaim what is at the point of disappearance, less a digging down, the work of archeologists or historians, than a series of collisions—people, places, encounters.” Bob’s earlier books include six works of fiction and 18 chapbooks highlighting the lives of important but largely forgotten Vermonters. He served as Curator of the Abernathy Collection of American Writers at the Middlebury College Library for 32 years.

Castleton to host VAAS 2016 Intercollegiate Symposium

by Sanjukta Ghosh

Castleton, January 28 – Castleton University will host this year's Intercollegiate Student Symposium on 9th April, 2016.

The half-day event, sponsored by the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences (VAAS), showcases undergraduate student scholarship in a wide variety of disciplines including linguistics, education, psychology, history and media studies. In addition to traditional research papers, the symposium also features student-authored musical scores, creative writings, program plans, and installation and sculptural art. All student-participants are required to have a faculty recommendation along with their submissions. The deadline for submissions this year is 25th March, 2016.

The statewide symposium usually draws almost 40-50 students and faculty sponsors. This year, the symposium will begin at 9:30 a.m. and end at 1 p.m. VAAS will provide both breakfast and lunch for all attendees. Each student presenter will also be awarded a VAAS certification for participation.

For more information, please contact Dr. Sanjukta Ghosh at ghoshs@castleton.edu OR at 802-468-1445.

Fellow Jane Ambrose Dies at 76

by **Connell Gallagher**

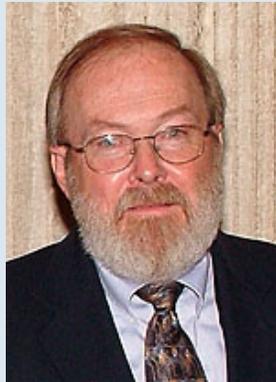
Jane Perlis Ambrose, of Jericho, Vermont passed away just before Thanksgiving. She was Professor Emerita of Music at UVM, having served ten years as Chair of the UVM Department of Music, and 23 years as Director of the UVM George Bishop Lane Series. Jane's research and published articles centered on early music, J.S. Bach, and Renaissance performance practice, and on women composers. Her interest in music was informed and complemented by regular performances on modern flute, recorders, and the Baroque transverse flute, in which she was something of a pioneer. She helped to found the UVM Baroque Ensemble and performed with the group for 25 years. She was an excellent teacher, and became the first recipient of the College of Arts & Sciences Dean's Lecture Series Outstanding Scholar and Teacher Award in 1990. In 2010 the Vermont Council on the Arts awarded her the Walter Cerf Medal for Outstanding Achievement in the Arts for her work as Director of the Lane Series. Jane was elected as a Fellow of the Vermont Academy of Arts & Sciences in 1999. A link to her obituary is www.legacy.com/obituaries/burlingtonfreepress/obituary.aspx?pid=176339866.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT, *cont. from p. 1*

The first and only edition was published in 1988.

A few years ago, the board decided to change the frequency of our conferences from annual to biennial, and we schedule these in the odd-numbered years now. One idea that has been suggested for a 2017 conference is the role and influence of Franco-Americans in Vermont. We'll keep you posted on this. We continue to have annual student symposiums and the annual election of fellows. Our spring 2016 Intercollegiate Student Symposium will be held at Castleton University on April 9th. There is more information about this event in this newsletter. We wish you all a Happy 2016.

Connell B. Gallagher,
President

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

On September 25, 2015, VAAS member Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux was named Fellow of the Vermont Academy of Science and Engineering (VASE). Dr. Dupigny-Giroux is the current chair of the University of Vermont Geography Department and is also the Vermont State Climatologist.

This honor is in acknowledgement of Dr. Dupigny-Giroux's accomplishments in her field.

VAAS ELECTION RESULTS IN!

by Christina Chant

Elections for the officers of the VAAS Board of Trustees were held at the last Board meeting on Saturday, February 6, 2016. James Conley, Professor of Classics at St. Michael's College in Colchester, stepped up from his position as Vice President to President, replacing Connell Gallagher, who is stepping down this year. Kevin Fleming, Professor of Psychology at Norwich University, was elected Vice President. All other positions remained the same.

The Board is indebted to Connell for all of the hard work and dedication he has put into the VAAS as president. As retired VAAS member Dan Bean states, "... Connie is the backbone of the Fellows searches, write-ups, decisions, and presentations. He has kept our little group organized and on track for more years than I care to count... Connie has also been the driving force behind the VAAS as director since I left. We owe him a big debt of gratitude for his efforts."

We wish to thank Connell for all of his hard work, and welcome the Board officers who are new or who are taking on a new position. Over the next few Newsletters, we will be publishing short bios to introduce (or re-introduce) all of the officers to our members.

ATTENTION CURRENT AND FORMER BOARD MEMBERS!

Please turn over to Connell Gallagher any VAAS archives you may have from your time on the board. He and Paul Krapcho have been going through the VAAS archives at UVM and are hoping to arrange and describe what they have there. Send directly to Connell at cbgallag@uvm.edu. Thank you in advance!

14TH ANNUAL

CLIMATE PREDICTION APPLICATIONS SCIENCE WORKSHOP
CPASW

THEME: "CLIMATE SERVICES FOR ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS AND HAZARDS"

WHERE: BURLINGTON HILTON

WHEN: MARCH 22-24, 2016

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION RATE ENDS: FEB 23, 2016

SPONSORSHIP: UVM College of Arts & Sciences; UVM Office of the Vice-President for Research; UVM Office of the Vice-President for Human Resources, Diversity & Multicultural Affairs

HIGHLIGHTS:

Remarks by: Governor Peter Shumlin; Senator Patrick Leahy's Office; Dr. Richard Galbraith - UVM Vice-President for Research

Keynotes by: David Grimes & Filipe Lucio - World Meteorological Organization; Secretary Deb Markowitz - VT Agency of Natural Resources; Dr. Dan Kahan, Yale Law School

Participation by the United National Disaster Reduction Risk Programmes

Sessions on Food Resilience; Human Health; Flood Risk; Coastal Issues; Hydrometeorological Hazards; Regional and Local Climate Services; Emerging Needs by Stakeholders

Special Issue of the journal - *Remote Sensing Applications: Society and Environment*

www.uvm.edu/~cpasw

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New Fellows Inducted at Fellows Luncheon

by Christina Chant

On September 19th, the VAAS had the pleasure of inducting five new Fellows. After a wonderful lunch at the Windjammer Restaurant in Burlington, we had the chance to honor five people for their contribution to the community. This year, those five included Dr. H. Nicholas Muller III, a historian from Essex, New York; Kate Pond, a sculptor from South Burlington; Robert Buckeye, a librarian from Middlebury; Luis Battle, a pianist from Marlboro; and Karen Hesse, an author from Brattleboro. Nearly 50 persons including 20 VAAS Fellows were present. To honor our golden (50th) anniversary, Dan Bean, Fellow and former VAAS president and executive director, presented a brief history of the Academy. A great time was had by all.

In an e-mail to me, Dan encouraged members to nominate people who would make good Fellows. VAAS Fellows “Must be living and of mature experience; Must be exemplary in repute; Would respect being a Fellow of the Academy; Would bring prestige to the Academy; Must have made an extraordinary contribution in or to the arts, humanities, sciences or teaching; Contributions must have made a substantial impact on the life and conditions in Vermont, or if such impact be elsewhere, credit therefore rebound to Vermont, its institutions, people or influence, and such contribution must have been culminated, at least in its effect, since 1964.”

Congratulations to the five new Fellows!



Edited by Christina Chant, St. Michael's College
Happy spring!



VERMONT ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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TO:

Come visit us at www.vaas.us!