



Welcome to the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA)

**Upcoming...**

- Open Houses  
\* Note new dates & times!

Thursdays	Fridays
Afternoons 1:30 – 3:30 pm	
July 19	August 3
August 16	September 7
September 20	October 5

Email us at [rim@sec.state.vt.us](mailto:rim@sec.state.vt.us)  
or  
Call Rachel Muse at 828-2397  
 See [p. 2](#) for more information

**Reminders**

- Requesting multiple records
- See [p. 4](#)
- Time to reauthorize!
- See [p. 5](#)

**General Record Schedules**

All about general record schedules  
 See [p. 6](#)

**Fast Fact**

Electronic records  
 See [p. 3](#)

**Contact us!**

**VSARA**  
1078 US Rte 2, Middlesex  
Montpelier, VT 05633-7701  
Phone: (802) 828-3700  
Fax: (802) 828-3710  
E-mail: [rim@sec.state.vt.us](mailto:rim@sec.state.vt.us)  
Visit our website:  
[vermont-archives.org](http://vermont-archives.org)

**Gregory Sanford Retiring**

**State Archivist Retiring After 30 Years of Service**

In our Winter 2011-2012 newsletter, we introduced you to [Vermont State Archivist Gregory Sanford](#). As of August 1st, 2012, Gregory Sanford is retiring. The news of his pending retirement created media-blitz like none other and through the mountain of accolades expressed for Gregory, we learned that our "affable Vermont state archivist with the long gray beard" is also affectionately referred to as Vermont's "History Keeper", CST ("Chief Storyteller"), and a "walking encyclopedia." *(continued on p. 2)*



**Court Records Project**

**Court Records on Parade at the Vermont History Expo**

The [Vermont Historical Society's](#) 2012 [Vermont History Expo](#) at Tunbridge featured a Civil War encampment, a porcine obstacle course, kids (the human variety) on stilts, and colorful exhibits by dozens of historical societies and organizations. VSARA's exhibit highlighting the court records project, prepared by project archivists Susan Swasta and Kathryn Puerini, attracted an appreciative audience. *(continued on p. 4)*

**Information as a Strategic Asset**

**Records as "Stuff" or Managed Asset?**

*Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.*

Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, circa 500 B.C.

Paper and electronic storage media accumulate as byproducts of tasks and processes. What happens next? Read on! *(see p. 5)*

**General Record Schedules**

**Four new schedules available!**

Functions of government that are shared by multiple agencies can share record schedules. *(see p. 6)*

**Green Mountain Care Board Manages Records**

**Green Mountain Care Board Cares about Records Management**

The Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB) is a brand-new government entity. Created by Act 48 of 2011, the GMCB is charged with improving access to high-quality health care services and reducing health care cost growth. Records management is helping them reach their goals. *(continued on p. 3)*



**Upcoming...**

- Open Houses

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Open houses are held at VSARA twice a month.

At these events we provide informal, basic training in records management and using the State Records Center. We give you the opportunity to tour our facilities and meet our staff.

We encourage new records officers and liaisons, or anyone who has never been to VSARA, to attend!

We now offer open houses on the first Friday and third Thursday of every month, at 1:30pm.

If you can't make it to one of our scheduled open houses, and have two or more people in your office who'd like to visit VSARA, let us know and we'll be happy to schedule a visit at another time.

To register for an open house or get more information, email us at [rim@sec.state.vt.us](mailto:rim@sec.state.vt.us) or call Rachel Muse at 828-2397.

**Gregory Sanford Retiring**

*(continued from front page)*

We would like to celebrate Gregory Sanford and his contributions in his own words. His writings will continue to inspire the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration to grow and expand and, at a minimum, never plateau.



*Ceremonial "beard-cutting" at the ribbon-cutting for VSARA's expanded archival vaults in June, 2010*

*With former Governor Jim Douglas and former Secretary of State Deb Markowitz*

*Photo by VSARA staff*

"In 1799 legislators extensively debated the statement 'that free government is founded on jealousy, not in confidence.' While the immediate issue was whether state governments could nullify federal acts, the debate offered different perspectives on human nature and on how democratic government must reflect that nature. It is at such times, above the cacophony of politics, one can begin to hear the music of government. I hope in the coming months you have an opportunity to hear, or better yet, to make, that music." *Snelling Center for Government: Orientation to New Legislators, January 1999*

"This approach allows a more systematic view of records and the processes that produce them across government. In turn that provides a structured platform to compare and evaluate business practices and information flows within government... Too often, however, these efforts border on alchemy, believing that by simply changing one process in isolation or by adding more information technology government will magically be transformed into a gold standard of efficiency and effectiveness." *Opinions, December 2012*

*(continued on page 3)*



### More on Gregory!

You can find additional tributes to Gregory in media throughout the state, including

articles in the *Times Argus* (<http://www.timesargus.com/article/20120522/OPINION01/705229959>),

the *Addison County Independent* (<http://www.addisonindependent.com/201205vermont-history-keeper-calls-it-quits>),

and *Seven Days* (<http://7d.blogs.com/blurt/2012/05/state-archivist-gregory-sanford-to-retire.html>).

### Fast Fact

- **Electronic records**

"Today, most records in an organization are created by electronic means.

In fact, The Sedona Conference estimated that 93 percent of all the information that a business generated in 2006 was produced in electronic format – e-mail, word processing documents, information on databases – and that percentage surely continues to increase."

*ARMA International*

(<http://www.arma.org/rim/101/articles.cfm?key=rिम101erm>)


### Gregory Sanford Retiring

([continued from p. 2](#))

"As our current public dialogues affirm, linking civic duty and civil rights remains a vital topic. Each generation of Vermonters has had to address that balance. Now it is our turn. Our answers will continue to define not just what we mean by citizenship, but who we are as citizens." [Vermont Judicial History Society, June 2000](#)

"Planning, as a collective, structured effort to describe not only who we are but also what we want to become, is an important government function... It is important not simply to preserve such records but also to make them known and accessible. Let's plan on it." [Opinions, 2007](#)

"Within our vaults are centuries-long dialogues about the nature and limits of dissent; about the impact of, and responses to, epidemics; about the changing nature of New England communities; or about our evolving awareness of the environment. There is a desperate need for better sharing that knowledge and the context it provides. Informed dialogue is the essence of our democratic society. Who better to provide the tools for that dialogue than those who claim to hold society's most valuable records?" [New England Archivists, July 2003](#)


We know that Gregory will continue to do "what Gregorys do best" and share his wisdom, knowledge, and insights for years to come. But we thank him for the legacy that he already leaves us -- not too shabby for a former "cow-freak hippie" who is "a cross between Jerry Garcia and Bigfoot." 

### Green Mountain Care Board Manages Records

([continued from front page](#))

With valuable input from health professionals, the business community, and a wide range of Vermonters, the Green Mountain Care Board will oversee the design and implementation of innovative strategies and systems to keep Vermont among the leading states in expanding quality, affordable health care to all Vermonters while reducing waste and controlling costs.

Staff at the GMCB quickly realized that strong records management would be crucial to meeting their goals. To that end, Records Officer Mike Donofrio and Records Liaison Monica Buzzell met with VSARA staff to discuss the development of a records management program for the Board. Already, an inventory of records maintained and created by the GMCB is underway and a records management policy is being drafted.

All Vermont government entities are dependent on good records and information management to ensure that the information needed by agency staff and the public is readily available, that legal requirements are being met, and that we are serving the citizens of Vermont as efficiently as possible. Putting a records management plan into place at the creation of a new government entity demonstrates a true commitment to public service. 

## Reminders

- From the State Records Center: Multiple Requests

When you're requesting multiple records, we ask that you make each request **individually**, even if you know that the records are stored in the same box. This is extremely helpful for organization in the State Records Center and allows us to maintain accurate statistics concerning requests!

<http://vermont-archives.org/records/services/storage/recordrequest.htm>

Making individual requests is not as difficult as it sounds. Once you've made your first request and are on the confirmation screen, simply click on the back arrow on your web browser and you'll go back to the request page which will still show the data you input – now all you have to change is the file request information, rather than retyping the entire request.

## Court Records Project

### Court Records on Parade at the Vermont History Expo

*(continued from front page)*

Many who stopped to visit with archivists Scott Reilly, Mariessa Dobrick, Swasta and Puerini at the exhibit had positive comments on VSARA and the excellent service they have received there. Other visitors learned about our services and picked up cards and flyers. Many had interesting stories to tell of their own research, and had questions about VSARA collections. It was an enjoyable two days, and a great opportunity to raise awareness of VSARA and its services, including the court records project. We miss the maple creamees already! 🍌



*Vermont State Archives court records exhibit at the Vermont History Expo. Photos by Susan Swasta*







## Reminders

- **From the Reference Room: Authorizations!**

**Be Aware:** Every year, June 30th marks the date when all authorizations to access records at the State Records Center become invalid.

If you've authorized individuals who are not records officers or liaisons to have ongoing access records stored in the State Records Center using the VSARA-003 form, those individuals will need to be reauthorized for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013).

## Information as a Strategic Asset

*(continued from front page)*

### Records Management, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Style: Records as "Stuff"

Paper and electronic storage media accumulate as byproducts of tasks and processes. Media go in file cabinet drawers, then months or years later, contents of drawers go into boxes. Boxes go into a storeroom intended for records. The storeroom gets too full, so some of the boxes go to some otherwise unused corner of an attic or cellar.

Years later, even that room gets too full, so boxes get sent to an off-site records center, which gradually gets filled, too. Finally someone asks, "Why do we still have these records, and do we still need them?" Sadly, by this point, the original creators and users of the records are probably long gone.

However, the fact that the records were saved for this long has created its own mystique: if they're still around, there must have been a reason to keep them, and some reason to keep on keeping them ..."just in case". Information increases in volume but loses its context and relevance, reducing the chances of retrieving any bits of it that might actually have some continuing value. The resulting situation is not only inefficient but frequently paralyzing.

### Information Management as Strategic Asset, 21<sup>st</sup> Century-Style

At every stage, starting from its creation, ask: Is this particular information an asset? If so, why, and to whom? How long will it remain an asset? When you have those answers, preserve that information in a known, accessible location and format.

If particular information is not an asset, it probably is or will become a liability, either because it obstructs access to other information, or because it might one day be used by others against the organization that created and still holds the information.

Develop a strategic plan. Know, keep, and maintain your assets, and have them available to those who need them, while clearing out extraneous or adverse items. In the field of Records and Information Management, your strategic plan is your records retention schedule.

As long as you are cycling out information based on consistently-applied standards, it is fine to dispose of information that could carry future negative implications. However, if your approach is instead more an eleventh-hour seat-of-the-pants one, when you suddenly fear that a public records request or litigation discovery demand is just around the corner, you will likely experience problems.

How nice would it be to not have to keep skeletons in the closet, because it was valid for you to have cleaned your closet, as had become your consistent, authorized standard practice?

*(continued on p. 6)*



## General Record Schedules

General Record Schedules set minimum retention requirements for records related to certain activities or functions of state government.

Retention periods and directives are determined based upon a review of state and federal legal requirements.

Agencies using GRS should, of course, review any legal requirements or administrative needs that are unique to them, since this may mean that records should be retained longer than the time set in the schedule.

VSARA records analysts are always available and willing to assist in determining if and how GRS can be used by your agency.

Visit our website, <http://vermont-archives.org/records/schedules/general>, to learn more about using this and other available GRS.

## Contact us!

### VSARA

1078 US Rte 2, Middlesex  
Montpelier, VT 05633-7701

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## General Record Schedules

*(continued from front page)*

### Four New General Record Schedules Available!

At VSARA, we are constantly looking to identify functions of government that are shared by multiple agencies. The goal is to create one General Record Schedule (GRS) that can cover the work of a number of offices, rather than specific schedules created for each agency, department, office, or other government entity. This saves all of us time in developing records management programs. We are pleased to announce four new GRS that we hope will be useful to a number of agencies and departments.

Every agency and department in Vermont is responsible for planning for the allocation of financial resources, which is why we have created a GRS that covers the retention of [Budget Records](#). Many agencies also have a role in auditing, whether they are auditing accounts, procedures or holdings. Our new GRS for [Audit Records](#) should help you plan for the disposition of files related to those practices.

If you or others at your agency play a part in appointing individuals to roles in state government, you'll find a GRS for [Appointment Records](#), which provides guidance on how those records are to be managed.

Finally, many offices, particularly under the Agency of Natural Resources and the Department of Health, have a role in monitoring compliance with state laws. Our new GRS for [Monitoring Records](#) will help you plan for the maintenance and disposition of plans, reports, and laboratory data gathered during that process. 📄

## Information as a Strategic Asset

*(continued from p. 5)*

Real substance-oriented examination of information makes it more accessible and valuable. It can serve as a complement to and even a catalyst for business process improvement, both formal and informal.

With any other type of asset, you would not leave your most valuable items scattered around, lost in the clutter of obsolete and irretrievably deteriorated items. Nor would you be likely to hold onto items you no longer needed when they had the potential to "blow up" and render you liable in some way. Information is increasingly being recognized as one of the most important assets -- maybe *the* most important asset -- in modern government, business, and public dialogue, and the importance of information as an asset is only likely to intensify.

Do you know where your assets are?

VSARA's records analysts have tools and resources to help you recognize, manage, and maximize the value of your information assets. Visit [Managing Records](#) for more information and State Information Management Standards. 📄