

I exchanged “farewells” with a colleague in the State House earlier this week and on the way back to my office to (continue to) clean out my desk and shelves, I thought about the word. Most of the time, when taking my leave of someone, I say simply “Buh-Bye!” (if I’m in a [David Spade](#) kind of mood) or “seeyuhlater.”

But this time it was different. He said “farewell” to me first, and I of course responded in kind. I don’t think he had ever said that phrase to me before and it got me thinking, Why don’t we always say “farewell” when we take our leave of our colleagues and friends? And Why is now the time that he says it to me for the first time in our near 20-year acquaintance?

Fare well. Meaning, I suppose, I hope things turn out all right for you. Meaning, perhaps, I can’t believe you are leaving the Arts Council after 20 years; it’s practically the best job in Vermont! Meaning, I’m nervous for you; I hope it goes well, but if it doesn’t I’ll still be here for you.

The truth is I’m nervous and excited to be leaving a career in the arts. First, the arts in Vermont and the Arts Council in particular are in relatively good shape (Donald Trump and his budget plans notwithstanding) and the staff is moving forward and the board is in the process of electing at least four new trustees by June. This is an opportunity for the Council to examine its structure, operating priorities, job descriptions, and reporting protocols and chart a new organizational course for itself that is best suited for the next 50 years of its existence; a job for which the incoming interim director, Teri Bordenave, is ideally suited.

As for me, I can only say how lucky I have been, and how lucky I am.

I am lucky to have been associated with such an extraordinary institution for nearly half of my career. I am lucky to have counted among my colleagues some of the most dynamic, thoughtful, inventive, and crazy people the world has ever seen fit to put on the planet (yeah, I’m talking about you, Bracey). I am lucky to have served some of the most thoughtful, experienced trustees, legislators, and constituents (four stand out: Bill Botzow, Peggy Kannenstine, Bruce Bouchard, and Irwin Gelber). I am lucky to have rubbed elbows with a slew of wonderful collaborators across state government and beyond (and of the dozens possible, I will only mention one name here: Paul Costello).

As to how lucky I am, I have only three things to say. I am lucky to be living in Vermont. I am lucky that Vermont has the best Congressional Delegation in the country, and the most progressive state political system someone like me could hope for. And, most important, I am lucky to be married to my wife Sue—coming up on 27 years.

Sue, I’ll be in on Monday.

To the rest of you, thank you and fare well. Especially you, Michele.