

## EVERGREEN GUIDE BOOK QUESTIONNAIRE

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Many of today's travelers are looking for more in-depth ways to experience familiar places or discover off-the-beaten-path destinations. They want information about what the experience will bring to them. More and more they are looking for greener destinations. They want to be inspired. What better way to hear it from those who live it? And, then to experience it themselves!

The Southern Vermont Regional Marketing Program (RMO) has recently received a grant to produce a brand-new trail and guide designed to inspire visitors to learn more about Southern Vermont's "evergreen" opportunities for a day, a weekend or week of fun and maybe a lifetime of living -- the very qualities that brought those of us "from away" to our beautiful corner of this unique state.

The Southern Vermont EVERGREEN Guidebook & Trail will highlight Southern Vermont's natural beauty, cultural heritage and sustainable living lifestyle. It will be filled with travel ideas that point to all-season, seasonal and soul-shifting experiences as told from those who are in the know -- the insiders who inhabit this special "GreenR" place called Southern Vermont.

The *Evergreen Trail & Guidebook* will promote our region to visitors using stories told by insiders about what they like to see and do around Windham County that visitors would enjoy, too. The book's tagline is *Life's GreenR Here -- Visit Southern Vermont Like a Local*. (Isn't that what most travelers want -- to experience a destination like a local?)

By engaging local artists, writers, shopkeepers, farmers, and crafters— to inspire visitors with their EVERGREEN stories, the EVERGREEN Guidebook and Trail will be an endearing look at the quality of life here. It will highlight the beauty, closeness to nature, interest in sustainable living and other aspects that characterize Southern Vermont. An authentic and real connection will be made about why this is such a remarkable (EVERGREEN) place to visit, live, bring a business to and raise a family.

**Please note: We are not promoting Southern Vermont as an "eco-destination." We are promoting it as a place that cares about sustainable living, is full of natural attractions, state parks, byways, lakes and rivers, historic downtowns, localvores, farmers' markets, green-up events, all-season recreation and much more.**

Please type your "essay" and email to [prime@svcable.net](mailto:prime@svcable.net). Use the questionnaire as a guide.

- Name \_\_\_\_\_
- Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
- Where did you grow up? \_\_\_\_\_

- How would you describe yourself and what you do (most telling descriptor)\_\_\_\_\_
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- How many years have you lived in Southern Vermont/Windham County\_\_\_\_\_
- How did you come to live in Southern Vermont/Windham County?

(100 words or less total for above questions)

- Why do you choose to live here?
- Why do you stay?

(75 words or less)

- Please describe your favorite evergreen things to do in your town or nearby that a visitor would also enjoy. Tell us why you and others would enjoy the place, tradition or thing. We're looking for ideas for summer, winter, spring, fall in the following categories: Shopping, Adventure, Socializing, Entertainment, Evergreen, Stress Free/Relaxing. It might be your perfect day, a perfect weekend...the best day of the seasons or just your favorite places, things to do...

(approx 500 words)

- We need to take a picture of you in your favorite place...
- We will also promote a project of yours with a short bio, contact information, photo and website, etc. Please provide an appropriate description (25 words or less) and hi res jpeg.

Here are two examples: (too long). We're looking for more like 500 words.

### Example 1

*For Vermont artist Charlie Hunter, much of the beauty of his native New England lies not so much in its vistas and richness of color, but in the human intervention of road signs, the abandoned or transformed industrial structures, the trestle rail bridge and vintage gas stations.... Hunter is less fascinated by the grand pastoral landscape that by the single sheep looking warily over its shoulder, the baleful stare of a pastured Holstein, or the lone hen peering anxiously into the chicken house. ...This is not the Vermont of fall leaves and covered bridges the tourists come to see, but the Vermont of abandoned Plymouths, lost industries and declining family farms. And Hunter captures that everyday beauty with realism and sympathy, his eye eager for the telling detail, the unusual viewpoint, and the unexpected angle. - Robert Smith\_ Art New England*

I grew up in Weathersfield Center in the house built by my great, great, great grandfather. It was idyllic, with ponds for swimming, pigs, chickens, sheep and startlingly accessible ways to injure oneself in the barn. Then, like most of us with an ounce of gumption, I moved away for a while. Not that there's anything wrong with Vermont at all, it's just that when you're 20, you've got to see the wider world. So I did. And when I was done, I moved back to Vermont.

I chose to settle in Bellows Falls. Bellows Falls is an old mill town on the banks of the Connecticut River where International Paper was founded in 1890, left in 1920, and it was pretty much downhill after that. Every region has a town that becomes the butt of jokes. When I was growing up, it was Bellows Falls.

By the time I moved back, there were some interesting alterations to the landscape. A fellow who had purchased a house in Bellows Falls back then and had moved up was now working hard to show the economic necessity of a thriving arts scene in a town. And some motivated been-heres who were banding together with the motivated come-heres and making a vital, quirky little arts scene that was blending seamlessly into the blue-collar ethos of the town.

Bellows Falls, in short, has pretty much everything I like in a place—smart, engaging people devoid of pretension, a defiant quirky attitude leavened with a self-deprecating sense of humor, great 19th century architecture, no traffic problems to speak of, no strip development, a daily Amtrak train running south to New York and up to Burlington, affordable housing for artists, families and anybody else, a spectacular Square (it looks like Italy), locally-owned hardware and clothing stores, big-screen movie house and a really nice diner. And so on.

Some of us started putting on concerts, and pretty soon we had a reputation for being one of the live music hotspots in the region. Another crowd got together and formed a community radio station (WOOL-FM, 100.1, "Black Sheep Radio" - see what I mean about a sense of humor?), where you can now hear everything from Democracy Now to Fundamentalist Bluegrass to Japanese Pop Music (that last is deejayed by two 13-year-old girls). And we've just started the fourth year of our Farmers' Market, which takes place every Friday afternoon, and has become *the* place to relax and socialize at the end of the workweek. In the evenings, we've got two open mics, a song-critique group, a drumming circle, several poetry collaboratives, frequent touring-artist concerts... there's too much to do, actually.

A typical Friday could start with a Cyndy Wrap at Cafe Loco (a Cyndy Wrap is a New England take on breakfast burritos of New Mexico and Colorado. Cafe Loco is a most excellent bistro located within the fantastic greenery and produce The Last Stand, Dan Harlow's exquisite organic farmstand). Work at the desk for a few hours, breaking for lunch at Fat Frank's (their burger is amazing, hormone-free, all-natural, very large and amazingly seasoned. If you like french fries, they hand cut theirs and a lot of people swear by them) or Vermont Pretzel (Turkey Reuben if it's on the menu, or a BLT) or Boccelli's (whatever Sharon thinks you should have), then head down to the Bellows Falls railroad yards for some painting. The Bellows Falls rail yard is great - an actual, functioning junction of two rail lines - filled with chugging engines, shuttling cuts of freight cars, the seasonal Green Mountain Flyer and the daily Amtrak VERMONT at noon and 6pm. It's a great place to paint—Edward Hopper would like it a lot. Late afternoon, it's time to break and head over to the Farmers Market, catch some live music, socialize a bit, stock up on the week's groceries and bike home. Usually in the evening there's either a gathering at someone's house or a show at Boccelli's...and you can bike or walk to just about all of this. There are times where I won't start my car for three days in a row.

Heading into town? The choice is to hop on your bike (leaving the house unlocked) or find the damn keys, try to find a place to park and so on. Get a bite to eat? Aside from Subway and Dunkin Donuts, you can't get a franchise meal in town. Buying groceries for the week? You can get just about everything at the Farmers Market, except for olive oil, salt and seltzer, and you can get those for cheap over at the Dented Can across the river. Clothing? They have it at Sam's (and there's free popcorn). Gotta go to New York? Would you rather fight traffic all the way from Brattleboro south or read a book on the train?

You're welcome to sit at our table, anytime.

## Example 2

My ideal summer weekend:

First, it wouldn't be a Saturday morning without an early-morning trip to the Brattleboro's Farmer's Market, on Route 9 in Brattleboro.

The market is held in a packed-dirt clearing enclosed by tall maples near a small brook. It's a place where children play in a large sandbox, musicians play under a tree, neighbors greet neighbors, and people buy from stands heaped full of colorful flowers, fruits, vegetables and crafts. The market was founded by farmers, of course, around 25 years ago. Now it's a 50-member, bi-weekly, six-month, nonprofit organization of farmers, craftspersons and chefs. The rule is that everything sold in the has to be local.

In the past few years, the food at the market has gone international. On any Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., you might find cooks from Thailand, Cameroon, Turkey, Italy, India or France serving up their specialties.

After a tasty breakfast, I'd fly down Route 30 to the Townshend Auction Gallery. I'd get there a little late, but they usually run from 9:30 to after 1 p.m. so that's OK.

This is a real country auction where you can buy everything from antiques to used cars. But it's also something more - it's auction as theater. Auctioneer Kit Martin is a born performer and he's been in love with auctioneering all his life. There are older folks in town who remember him as a kid of eight, going about his chores while practicing auction chants.

Martin loves to pour on the emotion. He's alternately witty, clowning, teasing, gossipy, seductive and insulting, but he's never boring. I once saw him bring up to the block what looked like a stick of wood. He called it "a rare wooden blade from an old-fashioned lawn mower," and he auctioned it rapidly up to \$150. Then he admitted he staged the whole thing with a couple of friends. "That was fun," he said as the runner took away the piece of kindling. "Let's do it again some time."

On Sunday, I religiously attend the Church of the Newfane Flea Market, also on Route 30, in Newfane.

I like to watch the vendors unpack their wares. The first aisle tends to be full of weathered, bearded men who put out rifles, antique snowshoes, shotguns, traps, stuffed animals, and - in a touching tribute to eternal boyhood - marbles. In other aisles you can find white-haired women laying out patchwork quilts, decorated plates and costume jewelry. A witty Scotswoman who came once to empty her closets has become so enamored of flea market life that she now scours Glasgow in the winter for things to sell at Newfane in the summer.

In recent years eBay has decimated most flea markets, and Newfane's no exception. Sadly, it shrinks more every year. But it's still an important social scene for the vendors, dealers and customers, and I can still find enough to see and, occasionally, to buy. Mostly, I like watching the people and collecting overheard dialogue. My favorite? Two men were walking by a crowded table when one noticed a pith helmet for sale. He told his friend, "You know what a pith helmet is for? It's so monkeys don't

pith on your head."