

COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT

RANDOLPH **Community Forum Day notes** **November 19th, 2007**

- Randolph High School
 - 9th Grade Class 1
 - 9th Grade Class 2
 - 10th Grade Class 1
 - 10th Grade Class 2
 - 10th Grade Class 3
- Two Rivers- Ottauquechee Regional Commission
- Randolph Municipal Staff
- Chamber of Commerce
- Evening Session

Facilitators: Paul Costello, Sarah Waring

Scribes: Bonnie Smoren, Sarah Waring

Listening Team members: Kevin O'Connor (Rutland Herald/Times Argus), Richard Mallary, Tom Debevoise

COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT
Scribe Report – **Randolph High School Class One - 9th grade**
Randolph Community Forum Day – 11/19/07
(Notes Due November 27)

Note Taker: Bonnie Smoren

I. What does Vermont mean to you? What common values do Vermonters share?

- I don't like it. It means unhappiness.
- One student observed that there is too much space between homes, however another thought that open spaces provide freedom.
- Several students stated that Vermont is a good place for the very young or the very old, but it is boring for teenagers.
- "Vermont is a horrible place to live." The state is too quiet and if you don't have a car, it is limiting. It is difficult to walk to activities.
- Vermont provides freedom to do what you want because there are not many people.
- There are too many tourists who don't speak English. Tourists who ask for direction in another language are annoying.
- Vermont is a comfort zone; on the other hand young people like adventure and there is nothing to do. Cities provide more stimulation and adventure.
- One student thought the state was too rural. Conversely, another student finds the open space is appealing
- Numerous students declared that Vermont is boring.
- "New York was more fun because they have subways and you can go places."
- "There is not much violence so you feel you are safe, but it is boring."
- The school system is good. Educators care about the students.
- There is a sense of neighborliness. People will help each other.
- People are involved in community activities.
- Vermonters value the environment.
- Several students spoke about the value of Vermont agriculture and products unique to the state such as maple syrup.
- Farms are connected to Vermont history and are part of the culture
- Many Vermonters like to hunt – it is a tradition that some people look forward to. It is a chance to get outdoors in a rural environment. It can be a family activity.
- You can do what you want in your house, like having a party, and not have to worry about disturbing neighbors with the sound. There is privacy.
- Vermont is valued for being a quiet place, but there are areas that are noisy. Vermont is a mix of cities like Burlington and rural areas.

II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for Vermont?

- There could be problems getting electricity. Our energy future, including oil, could be a challenge.
- Global warming could affect skiing and maple syrup production. It could affect Vermont foliage.
- We need to think about gas prices because Vermonters have very little public transportation. Vermont gas prices seem higher than anywhere else.
- Prices are high because we need to import everything. We need to be more self-sufficient around energy.
- We should look at alternative energy more. We should make our own energy.
- Not many people care about Vermont so we need to be aware of important things ourselves.
- Taxes are high and people are leaving.
- Vermont will get bigger and more crowded. More land is being cleared.
- People have to drive a long distance to get to work and gas to get there costs a lot. Jobs often pay low wages. This will increase the debt load people carry.
- More people will try to move here. We will try to make it bigger, but people will hate it.
- If there were more things for people to do, like shopping, it would be better.
- Communities need to support what young people want, like skate parks.
- Vermont is geared toward adults and older people, rather than youth. People need to listen to young people more and provide more youth-oriented activities.
- We have opportunities for some jobs, but not enough. Young people who want a job have limited options in their own areas and need a car to get to work.
- Vermont needs better public transportation.
- I've heard that housing costs are high and it is expensive to live here.
- Vermont should have better technical centers in its schools with more vocational options.
- Many young people will leave the state. The music industry is horrible. You have to go to New York to get anywhere in the music industry. There are no opportunities for musicians.
- It is hard to find CD's
- Drinking and driving is a problem in Vermont.

III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare Vermont for the future?

- Make sure that the young generation is happy. Make youth a priority.
- Young people should be more involved in order to have power to make things happen.
- Maintain open space.
- Young people can relax on their front porches – this is unique to the state.
- The health of Vermonters is important. We need more health and dental care, more hospitals.
- Alternatively, one person thinks Vermont has progressive health care, but people don't use those opportunities. People need to learn what is available.
- Vermont should have more box stores and it needs more affordable shopping.
- Certain areas should be developed for commerce with box stores.
- Conversely one person said what makes Vermont unique is opposition to box stores.
- Keep the small scale.
- Have more quality, for example better restaurants – like a good Chinese place.
- Focus on developing renewable energy.
- Alternative energy could attract more people to the state, especially young people.

IV. We've been talking about Vermont, but how does this discussion concern the future of your community?

- We could write letters.
- Be aware of what is going on. Don't just think, but act.
- There are no jobs and that is why everyone is moving. We should have more offices, hospitals and stores
- School food should be healthier. There should be better produce. We could use local foods.

COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT
Scribe Report – **Randolph High School Class 2 – 9th grade**
Randolph Community Forum Day 11/09/07
Notes Due November 27

Note Taker: Bonnie Smoren

I. What does Vermont mean to you? What common values do Vermonters share?

- Vermont has a lot of local opportunities, such as food and music. This encourages buying local.
- Local products such as maple syrup are an important part of Vermont's identity.
- Vermont values natural products such as foliage, cheese, maple syrup
- One student's parent works at Community Action and he cited that as an example of Vermont's skill at helping people in need.
- People are friendly and help their neighbors and others
- "Vermont is settled and calm – there is less violence than elsewhere." People are low-key
- Vermont's small size is a value – its scale. Vermont stands for community.
- There are many opportunities in Vermont colleges.
- Outsiders may view Vermonters as hicks
- Vermont has a "home touch". You can't get lost, even in the largest city, but there are things to do.
- The change of seasons and what that brings, like skiing is valuable. "I love how it's muddy in the spring and the foliage – these natural elements are a source of pride and identity".
- Many students cited Vermont's small population, which provides privacy and open spaces, access to wildlife and the land. .
- The band Phish. Vermont has a hippie connection
- Vermont is not commercial, but that means people have to travel a long distance to shop.

II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for Vermont?

- There is not a lot for young people to do.
- Vermont is boring; there is nothing exciting to do.
- Young people want to leave Vermont to see what else is out there.
- It is hard to get around. You need to drive a lot to do anything
- “I don’t think global warming is real and I don’t want to hear about it.”
- Solar panels and wind turbines will change the landscape.
- Vermonters need to realize that alternative energy is a tradeoff. Wind turbines can obstruct the view, but help offset energy needs.
- Trees are being cut down – there is destructive forestry.
- The price of gasoline will make travel difficult and present financial challenges.
- There is no public transportation for getting around.
- Gas prices affect agriculture and create rising costs. This will impact the cost of food.
- Vermont will become an older state as youth leave.
- Young people are becoming more materialistic, so they will want to move to get material things. There are generational differences in value.
- Young people have less respect because so much is given to them without working. Young people don’t have to work as hard.
- It is hard for people under 16 to get jobs.
- There is a sense that young people need money – to buy a car for example.
- There are not many career choices. One person said she would move to a city to have a greater choice in business opportunities. She wants to be an architect and feels there is not much need for that here.
- Vermonters may move to cities, but urban people may get tired of the city and they will move here.
- It is expensive to go to college in Vermont. People go out of state for a more affordable school.
- Less people will work in agriculture. There may be fewer dairy farmers or maple producers.
- Vermont has smaller farms, and they are difficult to sustain economically.
- “I’ve heard that Taxes are high in Vermont. There are lower taxes in New Hampshire.”
- The climate is changing in Vermont. The cold comes later and there is less snow.
- It is scary to grow up because everything is so expensive. How will I get a house?
- Jobs will have to pay more so people can pay for their everyday needs.
- Vermont’s rural nature requires a lot of driving and gas is expensive.
- People may build more malls so they don’t have to drive so far. Vermont could lose its essence if we build too many stores.
- Vermont’s character is related to its small size. It is cozy, like a home.
- It would be hard to live somewhere else. People are close – you know everyone.
- There seems to be a growing number of sex offenders in Vermont.

- Vermont stands out; it is distinct, but someday it will be just like everywhere else.

II. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare Vermont for the future?

- Energy and the environment. Look toward alternative energy to combat pollution and use the technology we have.
- Keep the Vermont the same – not developed. We would lose the essence of the state.
- The cell towers detract from the landscape. Satellite technology would be better.
- Keep the ‘no billboard’ policy. It is important to keep the landscape.
- Covered bridges will deteriorate. We need to repair and maintain them.
- Develop local businesses with good products but they should not have offensive marketing strategies.
- Address the price of housing and make it available for all.
- Rude and aggressive people from cities may move to Vermont. Native Vermonters could try to teach civility.

III. We’ve been talking about Vermont, but how does this discussion concern the future of your community?

- There should be more to do in Randolph for youth recreation.
- Local people lose site of their assets.

COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT
Scribe Report – **Randolph High School Class One - 10th grade**
Randolph Community Forum Day – 11/19/07

Note Taker: Sarah Waring

I. What does Vermont mean to you? What common values do Vermonters share?

- VT is home and no matter where I go it feels like home.
- Vt is a place that's clean and beautiful. It's good to look at.
- It's a beautiful state in the Northeast. It's where I was born. It has gorgeous mountainsides, farming communities all over the state and barns everywhere.
- VT is a sanctuary for wildlife. It is a place where natural habitat is protected for endangered and non-endangered species.
- VT means a lot to me: it is quiet and it is the country. Big cities have too many cars and people screaming.
- VT means sugar maples.
- VT means a place to live. There are others like it, but when you turn 18 here you can participate in town meeting.
- VT is too quiet.
- VT doesn't mean anything to me; it's too cold and it smells. I don't like farms.
- I hate Vermont and I've lived inside and outside of towns here. I liked New York because of the summers and the malls.
- Most VTers are farmers – in the sense that they love the land, they live and work on it. You have to take care of the land – even if your stewardship is modest (like keeping the weeds down). This is a common value. Lots of Vermonters grow food and have animals.
- Most VTers care about their schools and towns. They want to see their kids and grandkids go to school.
- Independence is a common Vermont value – we don't have to live with each other to get along fine. We also have political independence:
 - Examples of VT independent people are: VT Castings, Finneaus Gage, Jake Burton, Ben and Jerry's, Sanders, Jim Douglas
- State pride is a Vermont value: we are all proud of living here and we're proud that we still have rural areas. We get lots of tourism in the fall around foliage – we're proud of that natural resource.
- Welcoming newcomers is a Vermont value: we treat people coming in pretty good. Sometimes we don't treat tourists well, but in general we treat people who are new to the state pretty well.
 - Example of Thunder Road being a welcoming community to newcomers.
- Community/Small town life is a Vermont value: we stop each other on the road to talk – and not just the backroads either!

