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Promoting Vermont Films in Vermont's Libraries: Presenting Freedom & Unity - The Vermont Movie in a Small Vermont Library

Fred C. Pond

University of Vermont, fpond@uvm.edu

Nora Jacobson

Upper Valley Arts, norajacobson@gmail.com

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Promoting Vermont Films in Vermont's Libraries: Presenting *Freedom & Unity - The Vermont Movie* in a Small Vermont Library

Nora Jacobson, Project Director and Supervising Editor; Fred Pond, Film & Library Advocate

Vermont Films in Vermont Libraries

Vermont librarians **desire** programming of interest to their communities, particularly to older audiences.

Vermont filmmakers **seek** local audiences to inform their audiences.

With these two interests in mind, Tunbridge librarians and filmmakers **collaborated** to screen this documentary series over the Winter of 2014.

How We Did It

We presented all six parts over a two-month period in the Winter of 2014, on Sunday afternoons in the Tunbridge Public Library, inviting involved filmmakers to lead post screening discussions focused around topics in each part.

A carefully-timed, multi-faceted promotion program included library columns in local weekly newspaper, Facebook & Front Porch Forum postings, posters in library, stores & bulletin boards, and a road sign.

Popcorn was offered (of course!), free will donations accepted & movie DVDs and T-shirts sold.



A six-part collaborative documentary by Vermont-based filmmakers.

A Very New Idea

Consider the idea of Vermont, in the 1600s just a glimmer in the eyes of European explorers. In 1791, it becomes a state, adopts a radical constitution and a motto: Freedom & Unity.

Under the Surface

With industry come class divisions. Tensions grow—between workers and owners; between the state and federal government; between townspeople and hill farmers, rich and poor. In the 20th century Vermont evolves as a symbol of pristine beauty and potential.

Refuge, Reinvention, Revolution

By the late 1950s Vermont's Republicanism is shifting. Democrats gain power. The Interstate Highway arrives. Vermont becomes a refuge from political unrest and suburban ennui.

Doers and Shapers

What's a Vermonter? The state's tradition of "learning by doing" was articulated early on by education reformers. Vermont's motto, Freedom & Unity, is tested through divisive issues: environmental laws, gay marriage. Who's a Vermonter?

Ceres' Children

Community. Land. Water. Food. Vermonters' commitment to conserving resources originated with farmers, who depended on the natural world for survival. For some the solution is organic farming. Collaboration is Vermont's secret source of resilience.

People's Power

Chronicling debates over wind power and the struggle to close the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant, it reveals the power of protest, the influence of lobbyists and the importance of town meeting debate and a citizen legislature; The devastating impacts of Hurricane Irene reveal the power not only of nature, but of people and community.

Jacobson, Nora, Nat Winthrop, and Tyler Gibbons. *Freedom & Unity: The Vermont Movie* : One State, Many Visions. [Norwich, Vt.]: Upper Valley Arts, 2013.

How did it go?

Attendance started high at 40 attendees, dropping to ~20 average.

Overall **donations** reached \$400, helping purchase the DVD & pay filmmaker travel expenses.

Filmmakers engaged attendees' discussion on Vermont issues.



Filmmaker Nora Jacobson with community members.

'We achieved our goal of discussions on various viewpoints, bringing together diverse people.' Jean Wolfe, Tunbridge Librarian

Future Presentations

Reach out to schools, home schoolers to explore more participation.

Invite town officials/area experts to engage discussion on specific film parts that raised related issues.

Break out and publicize each part more dramatically as a theme, to dispel a perception that one part is similar to another.

FMI: www.thevermontmovie.com