

Visiting every town in Vermont with the 251 Club

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By Judy Simpson

RICHMOND, Vt. -

For some, traveling through Vermont is a vacation. For others, it's a mission. Jenny and Jim Hewitt from South Royalton are on the road again; it's a hobby really because they are members of the 251 Club of Vermont. They are on a mission to visit every city, town and gore in the Green Mountain State.

"Officially 127, unofficially probably 227," Jenny said. "That's since 2006 so. And the ironic thing is I still don't think we have Royalton in our book."

"Exactly," Jim said. "Not a lot of Windsor County."

The 251 Club was started 60 years ago by Arthur Wallace Peach, a professor at Norwich University, president of the Vermont Historical Society and a board member of Vermont Life Magazine.

"And he used those two forums as native son and love of his state to invite Vermonters and visitors to Vermont to go off the beaten path and explore all that Vermont has to offer," said Sandy Levesque of the 251 Club of Vermont.

To commemorate the 60th year, the club has published a new travel journal to help members keep track of their towns.

"It lists all of Vermont's 255 place names, so it's not just the 251 Club members, but we do alphabetically list all of the towns and cities and gores and grant in the state alphabetically with their charter, grant or patent date. And the idea is to get out, explore jot down your favorite memory and create a keepsake," Levesque said.

Jenny gave Jim the journal as an anniversary gift.

"My daughter helped me the other day," she said. "We have color coded where we have been. You can see Windsor County is kind of bleak looking, but a great visual to see where we have been."

Jenny admits she has a Type A personality; she likes to have everything planned out. But when she hits the road for the 251 Club, plans go out the window.

"It's crazy," Jenny said with a laugh. "Yeah, spontaneous."

"I'm spontaneous and she is the Type A," Jim said.

"Yeah, I am definitely not spontaneous. So, I think it is the one area of my life where it's not well planned."

Jenny, however, does the driving.

Today's trip will take the couple to Richmond, Shelburne, South Burlington, Burlington and Colchester. And at just the second stop, a surprise. They bumped into two fellow 251 Club members.

Jenny also incorporates her travels into her lesson plan; both Hewitts are teachers. She asks each student to research one of Vermont's counties, then go explore.

At each new stop, another picture to document the trip. And a special photo in Shelburne—a memento of today's adventure, adding to the history for these 251 Club members.