VERMONT LIFE

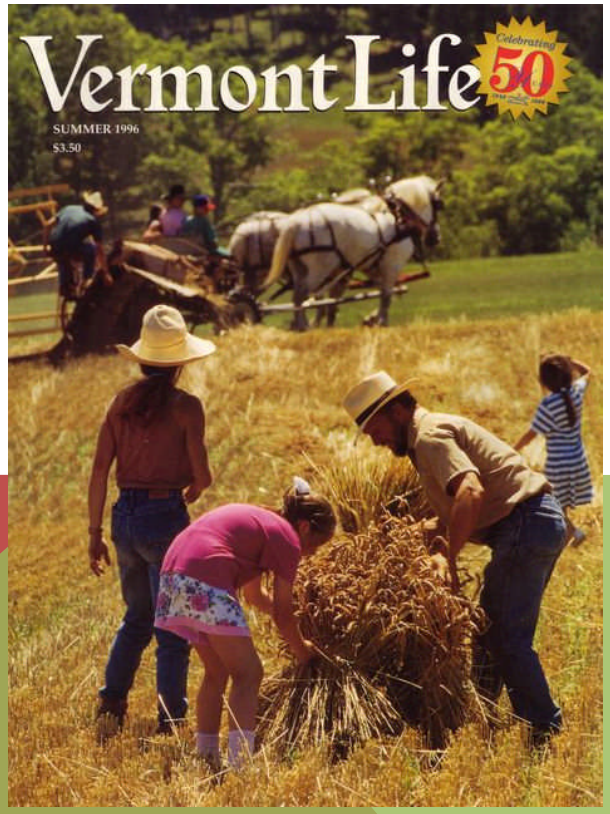
VERMONT'S PREMIER MARKETING TOOL

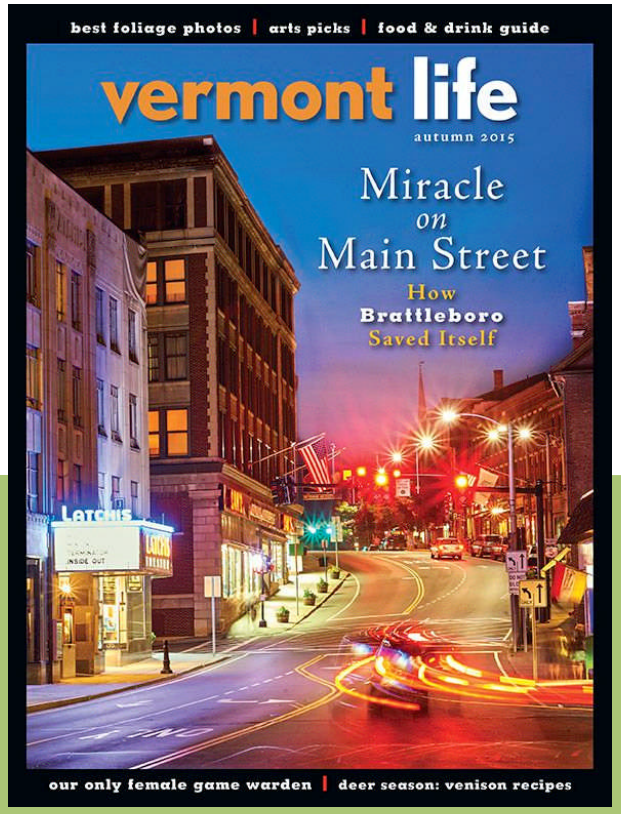
HISTORY

- Started in **1946**
- Suggestion of the **Vermont Development Commission**
- Meant to appeal to **urban, mobile, modestly prosperous** audience
- Purpose: to be **an attractive, effective promotional tool for Economic Development**
- Coincided with **post-war highway development, longing for pre-war agrarian-based economy** and tourism
- Though circulation has fluctuated over its 70 years of publishing, **Vermont Life remains the largest publisher in Vermont,** with a **greater** readership **than** the **Rutland Herald, Free Press, Times Argus, Seven Days and VT Digger.**

1946–2007

- Over the next 60 years, Vermont Life became **nationally known as the preeminent tourism publication.**
- The magazine was fixated on nostalgia. **Readership aged.**
- **In 2007, we began the task of reinventing the magazine.**





WE SERVE MANY MASTERS

Our **readers**, who want a useful, beautiful magazine at an affordable price

Vermonters, who want the state showcased authentically

Visitors, who want the state that they imagine reflected in the magazine's pages

Small business owners, who want exposure to a large, affluent audience

Small business owners, who want that exposure at an affordable rate

State government, who wants all rules followed regarding contracting, with preference given to Vermont firms

State government, who wants us to make money

Other state agencies, who expect free copies despite the focus on our bottom line

Freelancers, who want a fair wage

Vermonters, who expect unlimited support and free access to editorial because we are a state magazine

Everyone, who expects Vermont Life to contain exceptional photos and writing

Meanwhile, we get criticized for competing with private enterprise, and/or not keeping all vendors in state (despite the fact that sometimes no qualified vendor exists in Vermont).

FOOD

1. At the renovated **J.J. Hapgood General Store** in Peru, it's possible to get everything one could need, plus more: Paul McCartney (above, right, with store owners Tim and Juliette Britton) dined with friends last winter after skiing at nearby Bromley Mountain.

Food & Drink

A taste of Vermont's vibrant food scene

By Melissa Pasanen

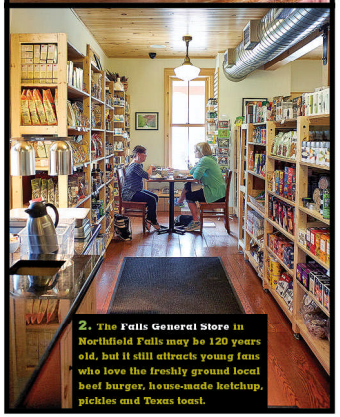
TRENDS

The General Store, Restored

More than a place to pick up a loaf of bread or gallon of milk, Vermont general stores are what anchor Vermont's small communities. And like everything, they change to keep up with the times. Here are a few that have made notable upgrades:

1. As a child, Juliette Britton remembers buying penny candy or dipping into the pickle barrel at **J.J. Hapgood General Store** in Peru. From 1827 until it closed in 2008, "it was the heart of town," explains Juliette. The store's closure was "a void everybody felt," she says — one she and her husband, Tim, decided to fill. After community input and extensive renovations, they reopened in 2013 with penny candy, a pickle barrel and even the same bells on the (still creaky) front door. Shelves are stocked with everything from night crawlers (they also sell fishing licenses) to local cheeses and jams.

There's excellent, scratch-cooked food to go or to enjoy in a comfortable seating area or side patio paved with local marble gifted by a community member. Flaky buttermilk-chive biscuits cradle local egg and cheese in one of the best breakfast sandwiches in the state. Sandwiches like fried haddock or grilled cauliflower with arugula and sriracha mayonnaise come on freshly house-baked bread. Last winter none other than Paul McCartney stopped in for the popular wood-fired pizza. It boasts creative toppings like kale and chickpea with winter squash — sure to please vegetarians like Paul — or spunky Thai chicken. There is wine and Vermont beer on tap as well as house-made cheesecakes, seasonal pies and very good cider doughnuts.

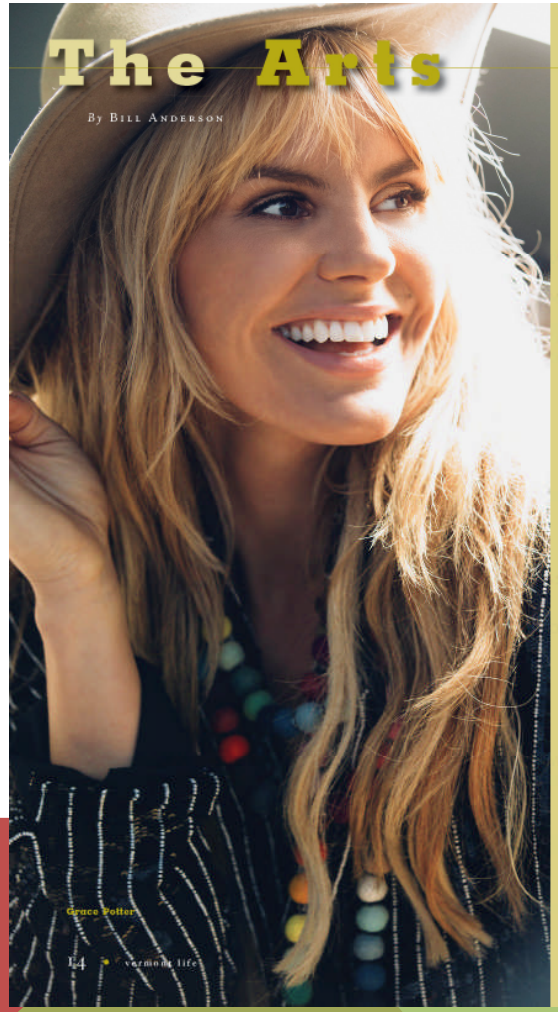


2. The **Falls General Store** in Northfield Falls may be 120 years old, but it still attracts young fans who love the freshly ground local beef burger, house-made ketchup, pickles and Texas toast.

2. Just around the corner from the covered bridge in Northfield Falls is another town landmark: the 120-year-old **Falls General Store**, which reopened last summer after a lengthy renovation. Long Island transplant and longtime local second-home owner Vince Rooney and his wife, Norma Berrios-Rooney, had decided to invest in the building and business because, as Vince says, "I found community here." Updating the historic structure proved a labor of love, but they stuck with it, driving toward their vision of a contemporary general store: part co-op grocery/part bakery with a coffee and juice bar and full kitchen. "Food brings people together," Vince says. "I want to offer real food for the community." The menu of solid, freshly prepared

PHOTOS: OPPOSITE, CARON KARLAN; PHOTO WITH PAUL MCCARTNEY COURTESY OF J.J. HAPGOOD; THIS PAGE, KEN BURRIS

THE ARTS



The Arts

By Bill Anderson

Grace Potter

GRAND POINT NORTH FESTIVAL

Waterfront Park
Burlington
Sept. 12–13

Grace Potter parted ways this year with The Nocturnals, but otherwise, her fifth annual festival on Lake Champlain remains intact. Potter tops the bill both nights with her new band, while each day has a different lineup that collects some 16 performers overall. National touring artists like The Flaming Lips and Mike Gordon of Phish are in the mix, and Potter, always mindful of supporting Vermont, includes local-scene artists such as Heavy Plains, Barishi and Maryse Smith with Michael Chorney. Noteworthy newcomer: The Snaz, who describe themselves as "teenagers in the depths of the Brattleboro, Vermont, wilderness with nothing to do but rock out." Still in high school, the group members have already been part of a Vermont music showcase at South by Southwest, and recorded an album with Vermont resident Peter Solley, a Grammy-nominated producer and former member of Procol Harum, who discovered the kids playing at the Guilford Fair. The Burlington Free Press says The Snaz "could be the next Vermont band your out-of-state friends ask you about."
www.grandpointnorth.com

PHOTO: JOHN REED

PUPPETS IN THE GREEN MOUNTAINS FESTIVAL

Putney, Brattleboro
Sept. 11–20

Vermont's penchant for politically minded puppet art gets a major workout under the auspices of Sandglass Theater, the internationally known troupe based in Putney. Performances, discussions, workshops and a pop-up performance artist, Quebec's Magali Chouinard, are all part of the event, threaded through with progressive takes on immigration, race and more abstract concepts of human rights such as "displacement" and "otherness." To that end, the festival, being held for the ninth time, introduces its first troupe from Cuba, and adds artists from Germany, England and Mexico. Erik Ehn, chair of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies at Brown University, delivers the keynote address Sept. 12, and, overall, the festival aims to provide "balanced programming for both family and adult audiences, virtuosity for the theatrical enthusiast, and dialogue and engagement for the social activist."
www.sandglasstheater.org

Magali Chouinard

SPRINGFIELD STEAMPUNK FESTIVAL

Sept. 11–13

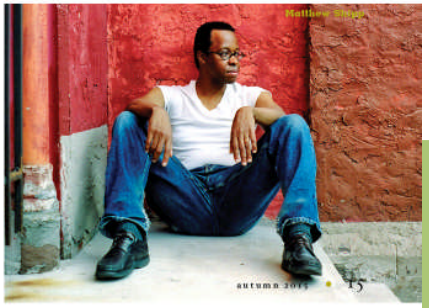
The first-ever Springfield Steampunk Festival launches with an ambitious three-day program that is part whimsical escapism, part community revitalization. Steampunk, a loose arts-and-design movement, has been around for a while, but its enigmatic, even ridiculous nature has kept it largely immune to mass marketing. Organizers of the event call steampunk "an imaginative mix of artisanship, Victorian-era fantasy and reality, [and] the science fiction of H.G. Wells and Jules Verne," a description that points to the choice of once-thriving Springfield. "This festival embraces what Springfield is all about," says festival coordinator Sabrina Smith, "a virile, vigorous, bustling Yankee industrial mill town, a town seeking a new identity, with a rich history of industry and innovation." Springfield and the Precision Valley are famous for their gear-shaper, tool, spindle and grinder factories, and many inventions that steampunk revels in, and festival events trace the era with music, performance, fashion, tastings, author talks, a telescope observatory tour, Victorian-style bike ride and more.
www.springfieldvtsteampunkfest.com

MATTHEW SHIPP TRIO

FlynnSpace
Burlington
Sept. 18

Savored by the cognoscenti, Matthew Shipp is a pianist, composer and producer known for expanding the horizons of jazz. The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers recognized Shipp with the foundation's Vanguard Award,

PHOTO: ISABELLE L'ITALIEN



Matthew Shipp

OUTDOOR RECREATION

We have literally nothing to protect us. We are a mile from the nearest neighbors," Harben says, the retelling animating his speaking cadence.

Cell phones were incinerating in the house. They had to drive for help. But no car keys. Harben charged into the inferno. He groped frantically for keys but reached "the terminal point," forcing him to do an about-face. Dragging his hand along a wall — he couldn't see through the black smoke — he felt keys. Harben, who is built like a black bear, grabbed the keys, lowered his shoulders and tackled the door. Singed and smoking, he rolled in the snow to cool off. Firefighters later found the front door 20 feet from the house.

As Harben got everyone into the family's old Volvo wagon and sped off, the first floor, where he and Linnea had been asleep moments ago, collapsed. "If we had slept another minute that would have been it," Harben says. Along with every material possession in his life going up in flames, Harben was also looking at the last of what his nascent, Vermont-branded ski company, Worth Mountain Designs, had built. Every spare ski was stored in the basement of the home, and after that frigid January night, thin metal edges poking out of the debris would be all that was left.

Worth Mountain Designs was an idea hatched two years earlier on a chairlift ride — the Worth Mountain chair at the Middlebury College Snow Bowl. Harben, who worked in mortgage finance and had recently moved to Vermont, was skiing with his friend, Jason Duquette-Hoffman, of Middlebury. Harben was musing about finding a vocation that dovetailed with his passion for skiing and the outdoors. As Duquette-Hoffman recalls: "I just half jokingly said, 'Maybe you should start a ski company.' He looked at me and said, 'How would I do that?' I said, 'I don't know. Let me get back to you on that.'"

Harben's love of the outdoors endured despite a horrific ski accident in 2010 in New Hampshire, on Mount Washington, that shattered his leg and required rescue by helicopter. At the time, Harben had been living in New Hope, Pennsylvania, but escaping to New England on weekends to feed his passion for skiing and the mountains. After the accident, not only was his leg in pieces, the mortgage industry wasn't in such good shape either. He posted on a popular backcountry ski forum, on the website of ski filmmakers Teton Gravity Research, that he was looking to move to Vermont.

Harben's medevac off Mount Washington had the Teton Gravity forum buzzing, and Duquette-Hoffman, who frequents the website, knew the story. When he read that Harben was looking to relocate, he volunteered to help him find a home, and even assisted with the move. They had a lot in common, it turned out. In addition to being contemporaries, Harben is 37 and Duquette-Hoffman is 39, both are of similar ursine stature, both have young families, and both prefer skiing in the backcountry, untracked and untouched by grooming machines.

> "Every spare ski was stored in the basement of the home, and after that frigid January night, thin metal edges poking out of the debris would be all that was left."

A self-identified "gear geek," Duquette-Hoffman, though he works with the state attorney general's office, had a background in ski industry retail. For a decade and a half, he'd managed ski shops and been a buyer, testing dozens of skis over the years. He grew up in Vermont and had learned to ski at Mad River Glen, known for its old-school, narrow trails and scant snowmaking. For Harben, whose roots are in New Jersey — mucking stalls on a 32-acre farm, he notes — the Vermont skiing connection began at Magic Mountain, another throwback ski area, in southern Vermont.

During Duquette-Hoffman's tenure in ski shops, he watched as major ski manufacturers moved their North American headquarters from the Northeast — Vermont was a major hub — to the West. The move influenced ski design, he felt. Skis became better suited for the West's bottomless, weightless powder. He longed for a more protean ski that would float on six inches of fresh snow

ENTREPRENEURS & THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

Rail jam: Paul Maravetz, left, and Josh Reid, right, founders of Rome Snowboard Design Syndicate, outside their workplace in Waterbury

ROME was built in 12 years

An independent Vermont snowboard company quietly racks up millions in sales

By Matt Crawford
Photographed by Shem Roose

There are those who get Rome Snowboards and those who don't. Those who do include a server at a Waterbury watering hole called The Reservoir. She's balancing truffle fries, a Heady Topper and an even more obscure Vermont microbrew on a serving tray while a black order pad adorned with "Rome SDS" stickers juts out of the back pocket of her jeans.

Across the street at the Blackback Pub & Flyshop, yet another Waterbury watering hole, a middle-aged man with a plumbing and heating company logo on the left breast of his tan polo shirt jumps into a conversation at the bar. When he's told the worldwide headquarters of Rome Snowboards is less than a mile away, in a nondescript building on a dead-end street before the bridge across the Winooski River, he gives that little head shake often used to express mild confusion. He's never heard of Rome. He's blissfully unaware that Rome is carving out enough of a worldwide market presence to support about 140 unique products — a line that fills a catalog as thick as a sandwich.

GOOD NEWS

Subscriptions

- **Increase of 11 percent** in last two years
- **Stopped 20-year downward trend; two-year subscriptions popular**

Demographics

- **Average age: 55 years old, 13 years younger than in 2007**
- **Highly educated: 11% doctorate; 30% Master's; 27% BS/BA**
- **Affluent: 39%: $100,000—$199,999; 11%: $200,000**

Products

- **Increased profit margin by focusing on Vermont Life-made products**

BAD NEWS

- **Running a deficit.** Vermont Life continues to be unable to close the gap between revenue and expenses, largely due to:
  - decreased ad sales
  - dwindling calendar sales
  - ever-increasing expense of employee benefits

- This, **despite extensive cost-cutting and revenue-generating measures** that have been put in place in the last eight years.

VERMONT LIFE COST SAVINGS

- **Reduced staff** from 16 employees to 8 since 2007
- **Eliminated** artisan catalog
- **Reduced** physical size of catalog ($88,000 to $51,000)
- **Cut print costs, shipping costs, and paper stock for magazine**
- **Cut editorial and photo costs:** Now less than in 2007
- **Changed shipping methods** for international subs and bulk freight
- **Eliminated** numerous long-existing spends (phone book listings)

VERMONT LIFE REVENUE GENERATORS

- **Increased circulation**
- **Added digital edition, online advertising**
- **Sold and fulfilled Vermont Strong license plates**
- **Set up social couponing programs** (JumpOnIt and Living Social)
- **Created two new lines of exclusive notecards** ($8,000-$10,000 annually)
- **Partnerships** with Fish & Wildlife, Tourism, Housing
- **Licensing name** to Country Walkers tours ($8,244 per 16 people)
- **Polybagging** Ski Vermont Magazine with Winter 15-16 issue ($7,500)

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS

Vermont Life's economic challenges are not new.

- **In the 1960s,** Vermont Life started publishing calendars to increase revenue because it was losing money.
- **In 1991,** Vermont Life began accepting advertising because the magazine was losing money
- For **8 of the 15 years** prior to 2007, Vermont Life didn't break even.

It’s time to

change the narrative.

VERMONT LIFE FUELS ACTION

We asked our readers what actions they took ***specifically as a result of reading Vermont Life,*** and they said the following:

- **67% bought a Vermont product,** visited a Vermont store or used a Vermont service
- **56% tried a new restaurant**
- **44% planned a vacation** or stay-cation
- **26% made lodging plans**
- **6% bought real estate** in Vermont

VERMONT LIFE GENERATES:

- **$33.5 million annually** in dining, lodging and real estate services, calendar sales and associated taxes. (**This** does not include **products/shopping, transit or other services such as spas, skiing, fishing, festivals.**)
- **$103 million annually** in property taxes

Vermont Life's operating budget:

$2 million annually, mostly self-funded

*These are numbers based on our reader survey, which specifically asked for actions taken *"directly as a result of something seen in Vermont Life."*

IT'S TIME TO CHANGE THE NARRATIVE

"Wherever possible, [I will] make smart choices by not cutting programs that deliver more to Vermonters in economic opportunity and support than they cost."

—Gov. Peter Shumlin, Budget Address

Jan. 15, 2015

BUT PRINT IS FAILING, RIGHT?

- **FALSE.** There are more than 7,000 print magazine titles in the U.S. — **holding steady for seven years.**
- **People under 35 read more print magazines than people over 35.**
- Consumers are **more influenced by magazines than TV.**
- 61% of **readers take action** after seeing a print magazine ad
- Brands achieve **higher brand favorability and purchase intent** in print magazine ads than they do online or on TV.

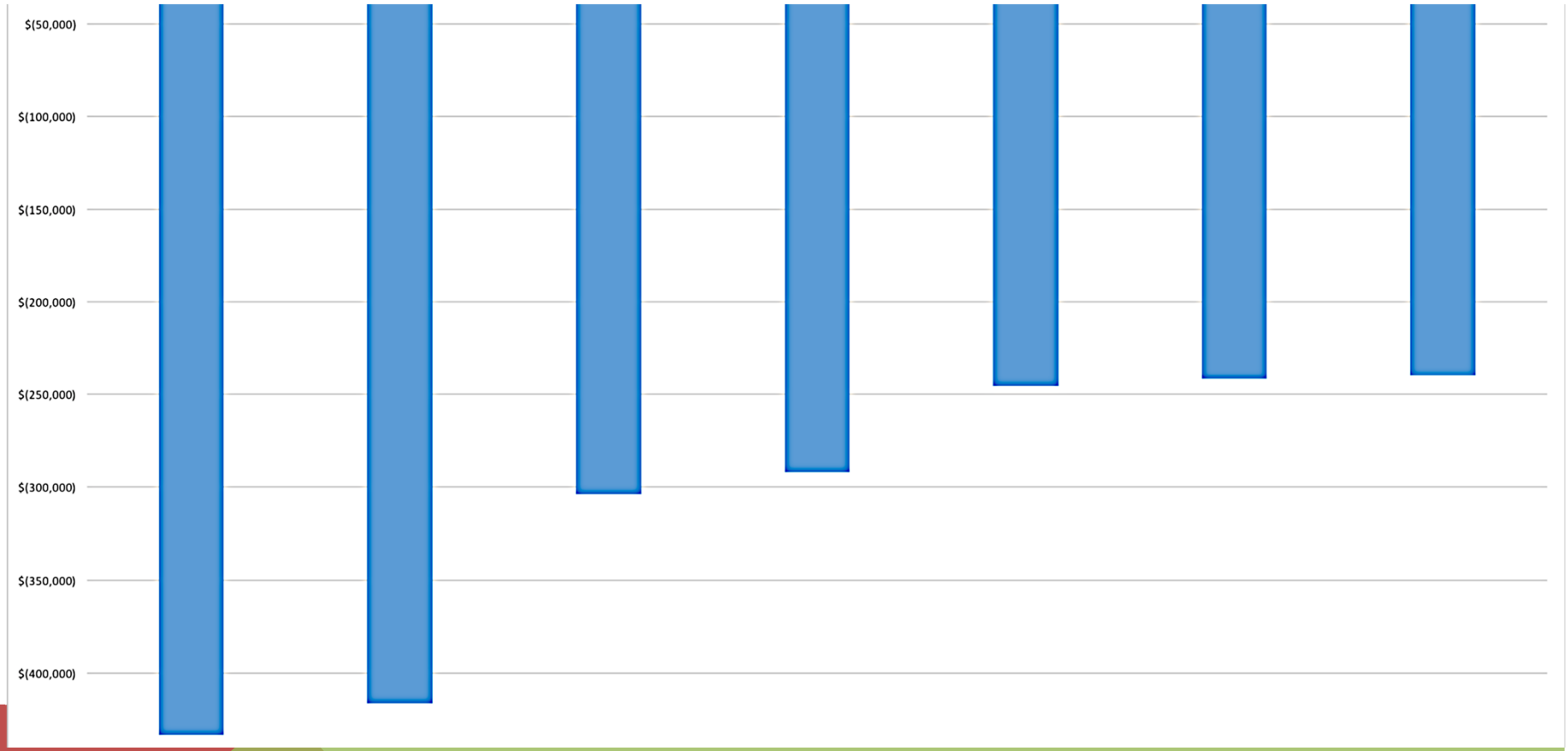
Sources National Directory of Magazines/Mediafinder.com, 2015; MRI Fall '14; Experian Marketing, Spring 2014 Source: InsightExpress 2014; GfK MRI Starch Advertising Research, July 2013–June 2014

Magazines are highly effective marketing tools that get results.

HARD TO BELIEVE? READER COMMENTS:

- "I recently **purchased Vermont property** as a result of reading this publication!"
- "**I moved to Vermont** … after picking up a copy of Vermont Life in my **college library.**"
- "I started to visit and vacation in Vermont after I began reading Vermont Life. It was the magazine I always looked forward to while I lived out of state for over 12 years. **It made me look forward to moving back."**
- I really connected to the **"Why millennials stay in Vermont"** article. I always go back to it when I think about leaving.
- "I love your state and try to visit often on my motorcycle. (Vermont Life) always **points me toward new roads and new activities** to try!"

VERMONT LIFE PROJECTED DEFICIT



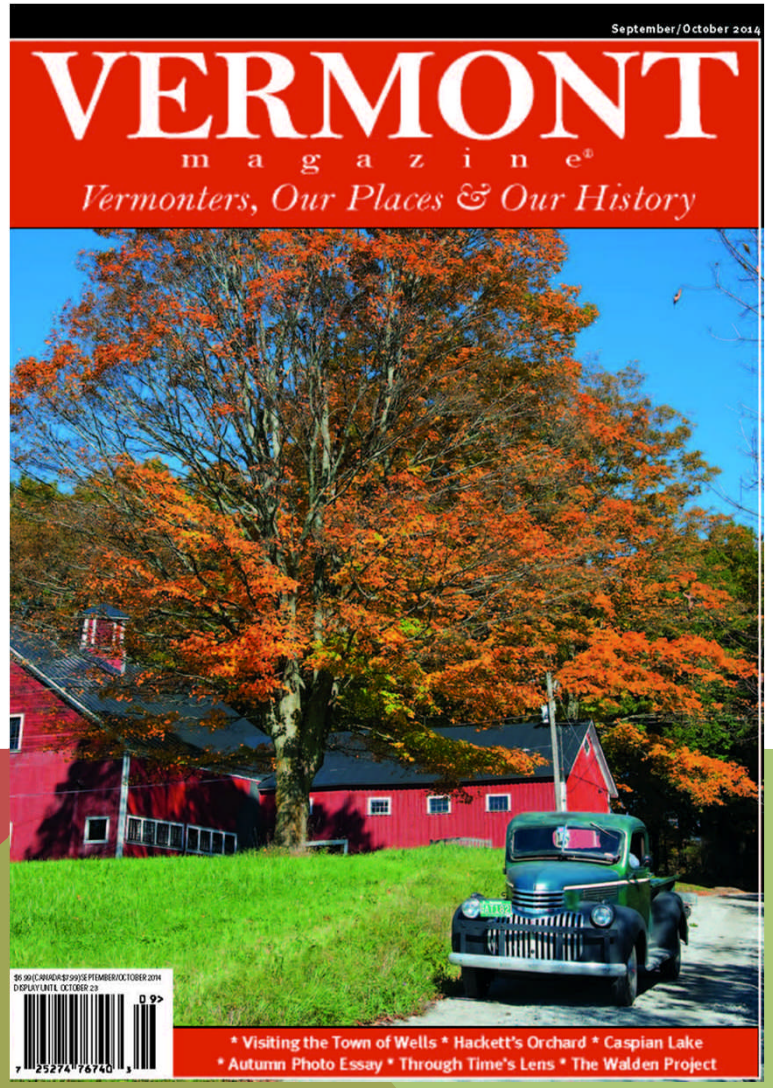
Vermont Life has tremendous branding power for $250,000.

THE STATUTE

The mission of Vermont Life magazine shall be to promote subtly the State in a premier-quality magazine filled with the **best writing, illustration, art, and photography Vermont has** to offer. **…**

An enterprise fund … shall consist of all revenues derived from the sale of Vermont Life magazine, advertising … digital and other emerging media, advisory services, sponsorships, grants, events, promotions, competitions, partnerships, licensing, fundraisers, retail sales …. other commercial activities that are consistent with Vermont Life values and supportive of the Vermont brand **….and any interest earned** by Vermont Life magazine, **and all sums which are from time to time appropriated for the support of Vermont Life magazine and its operations.**

WHO DO YOU WANT TELLING VERMONT'S STORY?



A publication that focuses on nostalgia and implies that Vermont's best days are past?

A publication that thrives on controversy and has a political slant?

The explosion of drugs like OxyContin has given way to a heroin epidemic ravaging the least likely corners of America – like bucolic Vermont, which has just woken up to a full-blown crisis

By DAVID AMSDEN

The New Face of Heroin

PHOTOGRAPH BY FREDRIK BRODEN

EVE RIVAIT RODE HER FIRST HORSE WHEN SHE WAS FIVE, too small to get her feet through the stirrups, let alone give the animal a kick that registered. Yet even then, bouncing in the saddle, she was aware that being on the back of a horse provided relief from the boredom and isolation that, for her, were a more dominant part of growing up in Vermont than the snowcapped mountains and autumn foliage that draw millions of tourists to the state each year. As Eve got older, she began spending afternoons exercising the herd at Missy Ann Stables, not far from her home in Milton, a working-class town of about 10,000 located along Lake Champlain, some 30 minutes north of Burlington. Before she could drive a car, Eve was training horses at various barns in the area,

A publication that doesn't have the state's best interests in mind?

vermont life

IT'S WORTH IT.