

Municipality Triviality May 2022

May 18, 2022

Only Bevan Quinn and Lisa Walker of Guilford and Stowe, respectively, knew that on May 16, 2012, **Governor Peter Shumlin signed into law H.464, a bill that banned both the practice of fracking** and the collection, storage, or treatment of fracking wastewater in Vermont – **the first U.S. state to do so**. “I hope other states will follow us,” said Shumlin. “The science on fracking is uncertain at best. Let the other states be the guinea pigs.” Maryland (in 2017) and Washington (in 2019) joined Vermont in banning fracking, but those states have few, if any, known frackable gas reserves. Good job of, um, drilling down for the correct answer, folks!

Drivers, start your engines.

After swapping our winter tires for summer ones, the Now-And-Again Municipality Triviality Motoring Team (NAAMTMT) recently embarked upon our seventh educational around-the-state road trip. Can you, by following the following quality directions, wind up where we did? Drivers, start your engines.

Way back when, when Jacob (no last name) was on the lam from his brother Esau, he dreamt of a ladder leading up to heaven. When he awakened, he took the stone he'd used as a pillow, stuck it into the ground, and called that place the same name as the town where our adventure begins. From here, drive 30 mostly westerly miles to a town whose name mirrors that of a 1998 multifaceted web project by an artist whose name is an anagram of “eagle's haunch” and which was the Guggenheim Museum's first official engagement with the then-emerging medium of internet art. Now drive 33 miles, first south-southwest and then due south, to a municipality that shares its name with an Australian Rules footballer nicknamed “Bomber” who won his club's award for Most Determined Player in 1946, as well as with an English cricketer who played in 302 first-class matches between 1951 and 1965, taking 998 wickets at an average of 24.26 who was *also* nicknamed “Bomber.” Really, you can't make this up!

The next 29-mile leg of our journey leads south, with a little swing to the east followed by a comparable swing west, to a burg that shares its name with twenty others in the U.S. – Wyoming has the tiniest one (pop. 25) and Texas the biggest (pop. 365,438) – and which is also the name of an archeological site in Northampton County, Virginia, that includes materials from the Eastern Shore's first English settlement. Keen to get on to the next stop? Then head 23½ miles southwest, west, northwest, southwest, northwest, west, north, northeast, north, northwest, and north again to a town whose name is also a Kentucky bourbon distillery as well as the leading manufacturer of wall faucets and yard hydrants, gizmos the attentive homeowner really can't do without. Now make your way 39 miles east and south-southeast to a place with the same name as an English Muggle who lived at 4 Privet Drive, Little Whinging, until he and his spousal unit and son were forced into hiding during the escalation of the Second Wizarding War. Next up, a metropolis with the same name as the U.S.'s oldest incorporated boarding school, founded in 1778, whose first two heads of school were dubbed Eliphalet and Ebenezer, which is 44 mostly north-northwesterly miles away.

Following the road as it wends its way 31 miles east, southeast, northeast, east, northeast, and north, we arrive at a conurbation that shares its name with a knot named after a Peerage of the United Kingdom known for its wide and symmetrically triangular shape. (Persons who sport only turtleneck sweaters simply won't understand.) Push on for another 24½ miles that meander south-southwest and then west again (mostly) to a town that mirrors, regrettably, the name of a mass killing during the Colorado Coalfield War that was a watershed moment in American labor relations and which ultimately led to the enactment of child labor laws and an eight-hour work day. Our next stop – 33½ miles away via roads that lead north, northeast, and north-northwest – is a community that is also the name of a red dwarf star six light-years from Earth in the constellation Ophiuchus that was used as an interstellar transit stop by the Vogons in Douglas Adams's "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy." Time for a quick refueling stop before continuing 25½ miles southeast, northeast, and north to a town that shares its name with an 1837 tragedy in blank verse that describes the downfall and execution at the infamous Tower Hill in London of the advisor to Charles I shortly before the English Civil War.

The next lower limb of our adventure consists of 45½ north by north-northeast miles to a town with the same name as a character on *As the World Turns* who arrived in Oakdale in 1992 hoping for a small-town experience. Despite trying to pass herself off as an average girl, she was in reality an heiress worth millions (dollars, not experiences). She dated farm boy Hutch

Hutchison but their relationship soured due to his fling with Debbie Simon. See what you learn here?! Our ensuing destination – 75 squiggly miles away on byways that generally lead east, north, northeast, and south-southeast – has the same name as a six-time All-Star Major League Baseball center fielder who played from 1929 to 1941 and who was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame the same year that *Wheel of Fortune* premiered on television. It's 58 miles to the next stop, a town with the same name as a National Historical Park dedicated to the era of textile manufacturing during the Industrial Revolution and whose gift shoppe offers a replica dish towel woven on restored Draper Model E looms for only \$4.95. To get here, by the way, your way should have wended north-northwest, southwest, and then west.

Next up, a burg whose name mirrors that of a platforming video game that features a magical, um, *something* whose quest is to restore the Crystal Kingdom by retrieving lost crystals. Next Generation rated the game three stars out of five, noting its “interesting level designs, challenging structure for item collection, and bright, competent visuals.” Said burg is 19 miles away via an east by east-southeast by southerly route. We'll pause here for a moment to chase the raccoon off the rear bumper (don't ask) before heading 55½ miles south, west, northwest, southwest, and west again to a town with the same name as an animated comedy streaming television series in which four middle school best friends embark on a never-ending quest for popularity on “Los Angeles' pulsing heart of hypebeast culture.” (That term, totally new to me, “in theory symbolizes self-made success, rising from humble origins on the streets.” Right.)

Onward!, this time for 27½ south and then southeast miles to a municipality that shares its name with a former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, U.S. National Security Advisor, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs. Among other things. The finish line isn't far off now, but first we make our penultimate stop 12½ southwest miles away in a town that shares its name with a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel and Oprah's Book Club selection that chronicles the effect of a mutated gene on three generations of a Greek family. If you crane your neck, you can see the final stop – actually, it's more accurate to say if your neck were a crane and it flew up in the sky to an altitude of 2,900 feet, you could see it, because it's 31 miles away over roads that trend southeast, south, and then west-southwest. And *this* town shares its name with both an Alabama county created out of the last Creek Nation land cession formulated by the Treaty of Cusseta as well as a high-end sunglasses-manufacturing company founded by Jan Waszkiewicz, a navigator, and Stanley Zalesk, a machinist.

There you go: nineteen of Vermont's finest burgers, none of which was visited in our six previous road trips. Can you name them? In order?

If you followed the instructions to the letter – NAAMTMT recommends either a ? or a ¥ – your final stop will be a mere 7½ miles north of where you started after driving 637 macadamized miles.

There you go: nineteen of Vermont's finest burgers, none of which was visited in our six previous road trips. Can you name them? In order?

Email your answers to dgunn@vlct.org. My stopping points will appear in June's juicily jumpin' *Journal*.*