FIRST
IMPRESSIONS
REPORT
Sister Bay Participants Visit To New Glarus
November 21 & 22, 1994

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FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I. What was my perception before visiting? What did I expect?

The Village would be "quaint" Swiss feeling - small townish -- "Disney World Cute".

Small tourist town with Swiss image. Before asked to participate actually didn't know anything about town. Never here before.

Cute, quaint small village -- tourist area - lots of Fabric/lace Factories - Outlets.

Swiss flavor, rural atmosphere, smaller town.

I thought the Swiss image was artificially created.

II. The "five minute" impression:

Lot to look at -- More places than I expected, but not sure if I had been through the "center of town". Absence of color.

Charming town in valley, new housing on surrounding hills, Swiss theme fairly consistent. No signs directing me to downtown or business district from 69. Town signs on highway not kept up well -- in fact a little shabby.

Disjointed. "Downtown" area unmarked. Quaint buildings - definitely followed Swiss theme. Only basic gift shops - no specialty shops -- need more shops like Peter's Briar Patch.

Needs directional signs pointing out downtown area, entrance from south has a "strip mall" feeling.

Small town USA with a strong Swiss character.

As you "drive" around town:

Very impressed with evident residential growth, excellent upkeep of older homes.

III. Driving ... evaluate EACH entrance.

Wide open from both sides -- no "real" entrance until at turn. Unusual that road goes by the town. Village entrance at this time of year fairly drab.

69 from the north -- see back of buildings of town on right, cars on left (looks industrial area or junk yard). Main town sign beautiful others shabby without landscape. No signs for sites or business district. 69 from south beginning to look like "strip". What is being new construction off road on left? Bike trail is great! County roads from west beautiful, residential new -- a little stark.

69 from north - industrial area. Seemed to see the back of buildings and storage areas. 69 from south - less commercial (industrial), but more businesses. Architecture dated - neither entrance "signed" you to downtown.

Would be nice to have some indication of getting closer to New Glarus. Stopped at a gas station to make sure we were getting close. Sign at north (?) end of town needs plantings.
Welcome to New Glarus signs busy, cannot read everything at 45 mph.

IV. (a) Driving ... evaluate the downtown business area:

Store signs on Swiss buildings are legible and great from across the street, but not when you’re on the street (same side). Not much "art" in signs. Store fronts -- buildings have wonderful character and possibilities, but again, a lack of color (time of year?). Downtown needs better directional signs.

Need more signs for directions, especially to get to business district from highway. Location is obvious reason to go there questionable. (Not billboards -- directional signs.) Corner of 6th Ave. and First Street nice signs, Swiss buildings, beautiful landscaping, particularly liked the areas for outdoor eating and resting and people watching. Area clean and shop owners friendly (Schoco-Laden & Meat Market).

Nice Swiss feeling. Needs downtown map and signs as shopping area is not on a "strip".

Impressed with how many businesses have followed the Swiss theme in the architecture. Non Swiss type buildings are also well done, taking advantage of the Victorian style. Also great to see the absence of power lines in the downtown area.

Neat appearance.

(b) Driving ... evaluate other business area.

Larger town than I thought. Seemed spread out -- never did find shopping for locals, i.e. groceries, Wal-Mart, etc.

The industrial type are on the north end and the "strip mall" on the south end detract from the overall flavor. Plantings (trees, flowers) to block the unsightly areas and soften the buildings would help.

V. Driving ... comments on residential:

Nice combination of older homes and newer. Lots of character -- wide streets -- clean.

New homes seem larger - located on hills with extensive views. Few trees. Few directional signs. New retirement apartments - attractive Swiss theme - excellent location as long as some transportation available. Area appears to be growing as a bedroom suburb.

Nice layout for newer developments and retirement areas. Lovely older homes and nice job of homes turned into B & B or shops.

Impressive. Can tell its fairly recent growth and may turn New Glarus into a bedroom suburb. This can have positive as well as negative effects and needs to be monitored. Again, impressed with the quality and upkeep of the area.

VI. Driving ... comments on:

a. street signs:
   Satisfactory

   Only on one corner.
Street and Avenue numbers - very confusing.

OK

Not unique, ordinary.

b. traffic patterns/street conditions

Good as expected.

Parking inconsistent - sometimes parallel and sometimes angled -- appeared disorganized.

Confusing because of different parking styles.

Seems fine.

Good, seems to work well.

c. welcome signs (at entrances)

Very nice - welcome to N.G. in center of town. Could be nicer landscape or planters.

Two very poor. Large one in park very nice -- even in November.

First one needs plantings - should be similar to the one in the park.

Too many words on signs north and south 69 entrances. No welcome signs on 39 entrances.

d. direction signs to parks, schools, hospitals/clinics, attractions, services (i.e. police), etc.

Other than the New Glarus guide -- not so easy to find.

One of the biggest weaknesses -- even need better direction signs for historic village.

Entrance signs to each OK, but no long range direction signs.

I didn't see any signs for schools, the clinic hospital or police. After our first day, we still had not found a grocery store -- even though it was across the street from our motel!

Map at park was a good idea, but not in good condition, also located away from pedestrian traffic downtown.

VII. Driving ... comments on industrial park/area:

Saw an area of what looked like industry cluster, but no specific area.

Brewery new and optimistic, sausage and food manufacturers seemed to be doing well. Lace and fabric store appeared run down -- people not particularly helpful or friendly.

Not very clean or upgraded, but its the same in most small older towns. That portion of
the community not interested in "looks".

No "Industrial Park" sign. New Glarus Brewery did a good face job on a metal building.

Did not notice a sign directing people to industrial park.

VIII. Driving ... comments on schools:


High school -- large fence gave appearance of prison - location next to park excellent. Older elementary with modular -- are you outgrowing your schools?

Very nicely laid out - but chain link fence makes track look like a prison with watch tower! Grade school needs help -- but you know that.

Found the grade school and high school just by driving around -- the fence around the high school could use evergreen trees to soften the stark look. Found them also in the chamber booklet.

IX. Driving ... comments on parts, play grounds, athletic facilities, etc.:

Excellent school athletic fields and playground, etc., adjacent to high school.

Nice parks -- need better signs, etc., perhaps just spruce up with paint, better grass, more landscaping.

Parks and playgrounds looked very nice and kept up. The bike trail is really super and is a real asset to your town.

X. Driving ... comments on other:

a. hospitals/clinics
   Great looking clinic -- a little out of the way perhaps for "tourists" to find but not negatively so.

   New clinic.

   Looked large, clean, and well organized parking, but no sign leading to it.

   Happened to find clinic -- saw no directional sign.

   Located on 39 west.

b. billboards/advertising
   Not many, but some in bad physical conditions.

   You are fortunate to not have a strip of billboards coming into town. The signs you do have should be maintained and landscaped. Be sure you don't encourage a strip of "generic" development along highway.

   Not too much which is nice. Some were in need of repair.
Advertising appliances and the "House on the Rock" does nothing for your image. South 69 entrance.

Less billboards and more directional signs would be a positive step.

North 69 entrance -- small few and not clustered. South 69 grouped too large.

XI. **Walking around ... comments on businesses (physical part):**
Loved the Swiss style of most stores. Applaud even the smallest effort (Brewery) to fit that image.

Swiss buildings have a great deal of character - should consider getting historic district or buildings on the historic register.

Everything seems out of date. Gift shops were low end. Downtown needs some expensive classy shops not all souvenir shops.

Overall appearance of town is pleasant. I'd love to come back in the summer and see it planted with flowers.

Positive impression.

XII. **Walking around ... comments on people:**
Most very friendly, owners of businesses more helpful than waitresses - clerks.

Waitress in old hotel, some shop keepers or their employees didn't have any recommendations and little information about town.

Most people were sort of friendly, but had very little information on town or its history. Lady at Meat market excellent! Took us to see backroom and storage. Interesting.

About half and half. Some newer shopkeepers were more willing to talk. was not impressed by an employee of the motel sitting in the lobby and smoking.

Yes. Great welcome at Peter's Briar Patch. Friendly and informative at library.

XIII. **Community information: comments on ...**

a. **community brochure**
   Both were excellent

   Four color brochure very attractive.

   Excellent.

   Nicely done -- map helpful.

   Attractive, informative.

b. **businesses/attractions**
   Excellent

   Excellent
Could use more upscale shops to attract the serious shopper. Be careful of too many shops carrying "Wisconsin Dells" types of gifts.

Green County -- good business brochure available at Village Hall.

c. community profile

Seems oriented towards "day trippers".

Partial information available in New Glarus, Green County Good Business brochure

d. map

Good.

Excellent.

Found in Chamber magazine.

Map in tourist brochure is very useful.

e. other

Need kiosk or attractive sign map at corner of Sixth and First (this is your prime tourist location). Sign in park in wrong location -- also poorly maintained.

Could use a nice new kiosk on busy corner downtown.

None found.

XIV. City Hall ... describe your visit:

a. Village hall and library located together, head librarian very helpful.

b.

c. Glarner Haus Retirement Apts. and New Glarus Haus -- this new and growing population should be made a part of activities in town. If they have stories and memories they should be recorded and marketed.

Also you should have an annual town poster (color) that is framed and sold by Brian Rose Gallery. (Black and white building poster is not a collectible.)

XV. Chamber of Commerce ... describe your visit

a. did people know where it was

closed

b. comment on information available

just adequate

c. comment on staff

Joyce is the best!!!
d. other

XVI. Other stuff ...

a. public restrooms
   None.

   Only public restrooms we saw were in the historic village which was closed. It
would be nice to have public access to indoor facilities somewhere near the center
(Sixth and First) with a sign.

   Couldn't find any downtown -- one at Historical Museum, but closed
understandable.

   No - closed for season?

   Open at library, closed at depot.

b. pay phones
   None
   Not noticed.

c. parking
   Good except found it confusing to have some angle & parallel.

   I was impressed with parking available near the center of town. Most seemed to
provide access to the Trail.

   Poor.

   Available.

   Street parking, depot.

d. water fountains, benches, etc.
   None seen.

   There is evidence that there are more outside facilities and amenities in the
summer. I'm sure the center is more attractive with the window boxes full of
flowers.

   Nice area around "candy store". Corner well done - clean - provided outside
   seating.

   Benches.

   Not noticed.

e. Found the town in general to be larger and more spread out than I expected.
   Needs to have downtown area defined.

WRAP UP
A. Using your "senses"...

1. TASTE
   Beer. Did both -- all - wonderful. Waitress wouldn't tell us what meat balls had in them -- meat market gave us a brochure about sausages. Brewery very nice.

   (I'm sure these are very different in winter). Have cooking -- this is the new hot cuisine and you should make use of this trend.

   The places we stopped were very good. Have good meals -- good sausage shop, but expected homemade chocolate in shop -- not wholesaled in. Nicely landscaped on corner.

   Swiss flavor, fondue, cheerses, lovely bakery

2. SMELL
   Rural -- clean.

   Small town -- fresh air.

   Wrong time for this, as many places were closed (especially on Mondays) and not much going on outside.

   Fresh air, clean.

3. SOUNDS
   Quiet - small village - wondering about the bells we saw but didn't hear.

   Conservation, bells when you enter shops.

   More large city noises than I expected. Lots of local traffic -- not just a tourist town.

   None - town was far enough from town to avoid highway traffic noise.

4. What did the community feel like.
   Felt cold - walking around (it was) but most of the business owners very warm. Surprised at how much "local" business was being done.

   Small town with the beginnings of a strip on the highway.

   I feel we came at a very poor season to see the warmth and beauty of the town. Its looks seemed cold and plain, but I'm sure it looks much better in the summer in full swing.

   Inviting -- unfortunately we visited on a Monday when quite a few businesses were closed.

   Inviting.

B. List 5 positive things:

   1) People  2) Building character  3) Town layout  4) Food and drink
5) History

1) Charming buildings give it character  2) Center off main highway  3) Proximity of state trail to town  4) Nice development - implies money coming into town  5) Attractive new tourist related businesses. (Gallery, gift shop, Trudy's, Land Haus, Brewery)

1) Swiss design buildings  2) Historical park  3) Festivals  4) Large park  5) Bike path!

1) Swiss flavor - architecture - bike path!  2) Rolling hills, terrain  3) Rural atmosphere  4) Evidence of floral plantings in season  5) Growth

C. One idea you will steal:
Make sure our staff knows local customs and history -- directions and is willing to share.

We have got to figure out how to get a state bike trail or even a county trail to connect our towns and parks.

Concentrate on more floral focus.

D. What will you remember most:
The people we met -- intelligent - friendly.

Swiss flavor and state bike trail.

Swiss architecture. Local history.

Swiss architecture.

The Swiss character.

E. Other comments:

We know that this "in-between" time of year is a tough one. My biggest feeling is lack of good landscaping.

Find the money and the political wherewithal to reroute 39 one block toward highway and create limited access area around Sixth and First. Also, move entire historic village to a historic reserve on the highway with a recreation of an historic Swiss farm with cows with big bells grazing on the hillside. It should all be visible from the highway and near the center of town.

Surprised at how few motels there were. Our unit was clean and well done. Very nice stay. Town has a problem with having to "turn off" the highway to get to it. Needs a better sign to make the turn.