

Mansfield Barn - where memories are made

SPECIAL EVENT VENUE

The Mansfield Barn is rich in history of the families who worked and farmed here. By making it into a wedding and special events venue, the barn will afford folks the opportunity to become a part of the continuing history of the Jericho community.

History of the Mansfield Barn

Written by Gary Irish

Little is known of the early history of the farm. The land was originally part of the farm of the Joseph Brown family, Jericho's first settlers, and it is thought that Joseph Brown Jr. lived there for a time. It was later owned for many years by Hiram Day, whose first wife was Joseph Brown Jr.'s daughter Elizabeth. After Elizabeth's death in 1856, he married her sister Polly Brown. By the mid-1890s the farm was owned by Elmer and Jennie Irish, who had moved there from Underhill. By that time, there existed an old house and an old barn on the farm, in addition to the main house and farm barn. It is speculated that Hiram Day had built both the newer house and barn, likely in the mid-1800s, as the style of the house dates it to around 1850.

Disaster struck early in the morning of October 29, 1897 when according to a news article in the Green Mountain Press of November 2, "The barns on the farm occupied by Elmer Irish were burned to the ground Friday morning at 3 o'clock. Mr. Irish was going to Burlington with a load of pork, and had risen early and had lighted a lantern and was doing the morning work when he overturned his lantern on the hay, and in a moment all was afire. The livestock, with the exception of hens, were saved, and some farming tools. The things were insured."

The current barn, which replaced the one destroyed by the fire, was built in two halves. The eastern part was built in 1900, and the western half was built by the Breen Brothers of Underhill in the summer of 1905. This barn is what is known as a bank barn, and was the latest technology at the time.

It was built into a side hill, with the stable on the lower level and the hay mows on the upper level, with the side hill, or bank, making both levels accessible from ground level, and gravity delivering the hay to the cattle. After the new barn was completed, the old house mentioned above was moved from its original location to the south of the barn and attached to the western end of the barn, being used as a grain room and for storage. Likewise, the old barn mentioned above, which had escaped the fire, was moved to the eastern end of the new barn, adding to the capacity of the barn.

The old house eventually deteriorated and was torn down around the 1930s, and the old barn was taken down in the 1970s by volunteers from the Jericho Historical Society, who used the material for restoration work in the wheelhouse of Chittenden Mills. Mrs. Irish died in 1905, and Elmer married Mable Perigo in 1907.

In 1916, they purchased the Appolus Bishop farm across the road and moved there the next year. Thereafter the house on the home farm was rented out, although Mr. Irish continued to operate the farm. After his death in 1937, his son Hugh Irish continued to farm there until the place was sold to Frank and Mable Irish from North Underhill in 1944. They operated the farm along with their son Harley, who continued it until his retirement when he rented the farm to Arthur "Cub" Blades while continuing to live in the house. After Harley's death the farm was sold to Ben and Joanne, and Cub continued to rent the barn from them until the farm was sold to John



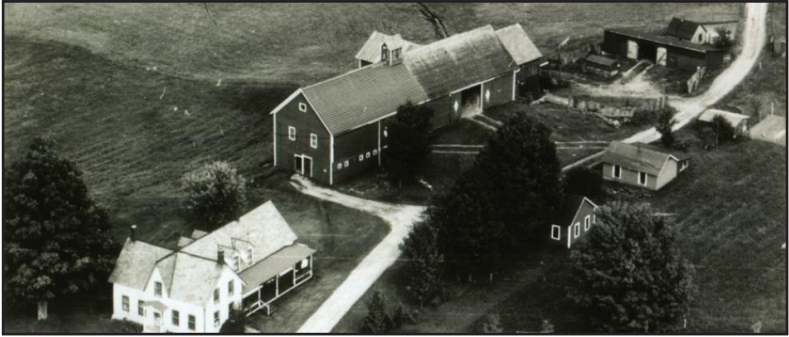
and Denise Angelino.

A barn reborn

The former "Irish Farm" was purchased by Grant and Susan Allendorf in November, 2014 from John and Denise Angelino. Major renovation of the barn started the summer of 2015, with completion estimated for May, 2016. Everything from the roof, sills, floor, and walls is slated to be either repaired or completely reconstructed. In addition to the restoration of the original building details, three bathrooms, a bar area, and a large dance floor will also be put in, making it a remarkable space for special events.

Grant has been in the wedding business since 1978 with SuperSounds Entertainment, and he has seen the impact of the wedding barn movement that has swept the nation. His vision is to make The Mansfield Barn a special setting for couples from near and far to have the Vermont barn wedding of their dreams. With the beautiful backdrop of Mount Mansfield in the distance, and the small town charm of Jericho, The Mansfield Barn is bound to be a place where memories are made.

The Mansfield Barn is now booking dates starting in August, 2016! Please visit their website at www.mansfieldbarn.com for more information.



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Jericho becomes more pedestrian friendly

Business landscape in Jericho

By Phyl Newbeck
Special to the Mountain Gazette

The news is good for those who like to get around Jericho on their own two feet. The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) is putting the finishing touches on the pedestrian bridge over the Browns River on VT Rt. 15, which was wiped out by floods a decade ago, making life easier for locals and visitors who enjoy viewing and photographing the falls by the Old Red Mill. Additionally, new sidewalks are being constructed in Jericho Center, and pedestrian-friendly traffic calming improvements are being planned for other parts of town, as well.

The 1620-foot sidewalk currently being constructed on the west side of Browns Trace north of Jericho Center was made possible by a Transportation Alternatives Grant from the VTrans. The project involves excavation and the laying of a gravel base and is expected to be completed by the end of October. The sidewalk is raised a bit higher than the road for a number of reasons. The first is that the extra height provides a greater feeling of safety and comfort for pedestrians, but the second is that it leaves open the option for future curbing, on-street parking or bike lanes. The sidewalks are entirely within the Town’s right of way, although some temporary construction easements were obtained from residents.

The Jericho Center sidewalk project had its genesis in a scoping study dating back to 2010. The Town received its first grant for the project from VTrans in 2012, but fear of a funding shortfall led Jericho to apply for two additional \$50,000 grants from VTrans and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission for a total of \$350,000 which will cover two of the four sidewalk segments. Segment four goes from where the sidewalk currently ends to Plains Road, and segment three goes from Plains to Pratt Road. Jericho has just received a grant to design and construct segment two, which goes from Pratt to Lee River Road. This segment will be a multi-used shared path rather than a sidewalk, which means it will be eight to ten feet wide and suitable for cyclists as well as pedestrians. Segment one, which will extend from Lee River Road to the high school, will be more complicated to build since it has to cross the river.

This September, Jericho received the good news that three additional bike/ped grant requests have been funded. The largest one is for segment two of the MMU sidewalk project but the others will assist pedestrians in other parts of town. One grant is for the construction of a crosswalk/speed table at the Jericho Center Country Store. Additional improvements will include rectangular rapid flashing beacons at the north and south crosswalks at the entrances to Jericho Center. The Town will also be able to install a beacon at the Dickenson Street crossing on River Road. Several years ago Jericho received a scoping study grant for that intersection and at the Select Board meeting on October 1, the Town will present various options to improve that intersection including flashing beacons and the possibility of moving the crossing toward the center of the “island” in front of Jolley and installing a median and some lighting for easier pedestrian crossing.

Jericho has also been awarded a scoping study grant to connect some Lee River Road developments to Jericho Corners. The Town has not yet decided whether this will take the form of sidewalks or paths. Another scoping study will determine whether it is possible to have a shared use path along VT Rt. 15 from Jericho Corners to Riverside. All these projects require that the Town provide 10% of the funding, which can be in the form of in-kind work or money. Since Jericho has a Sidewalk Reserve Fund, there is a dedicated source of funding for these projects.

In the past four years, Jericho has received roughly \$1.25 million in grants for pedestrian improvements, starting with the sidewalk extension project in Riverside. Town Administrator Todd Odit is modest about the Town’s success in this area. He served on the VTrans grant committee for several years so he is aware of the agency’s parameters, but he thinks the real reason Jericho continues to get funding is that success breeds success. “We’ve shown we can follow through on projects,” he said.

“I think we’re doing great,” said Odit, “and I hope we can keep this going. We try to have both scoping and construction projects ongoing and there is also something to apply for.” For that, the walkers of Jericho are thankful.

H.O.P.E. for the holidays

H.O.P.E. (Help Our Precious Elders), formerly Shining Stars for Seniors, is a program to honor our elderly community members and make sure they are remembered during the holidays.

The program works by having several local non-profit partners collect information like sizes, hobbies, and interests on any of their older clients they feel could use a special surprise during the holidays. Then local individuals and businesses “sponsor” the senior and purchase these items for them. The wrapped presents are then delivered to the United Way office and volunteers help to deliver to seniors’ homes.

If you are interested in spreading some cheer this holiday season, please contact Dawn at the United Way office, 888-3252.

This program is made possible through a partnership with the United Way of Lamoille County, Lamoille Home Health & Hospice, Meals on Wheels, Central Vermont Council on Aging, and the Morrisville Rotary.



Dollar General on VT Rt.15 in Jericho. PHOTO BY SARA RILEY

By Brenda Boutin
Mountain Gazette Staff

The Route 15 corridor through Jericho and Underhill is in transition. The Dollar General building is completed and has received its certificate of occupancy and is now open; the barn on the Harley Irish farm at the corner of Browns Trace and VT Rt. 15 is being transformed from housing cows to a wedding venue to be known as The Mansfield Barn; and plans are in the works for a new market on David Villeneuve’s Riverside/Underhill Flats property. Gary and Tammy Davis have just announced the addition of The Davis Farm Guest House at their farm on Cilley Hill Road in Jericho.

The Mansfield Barn wedding venue located on the Irish property will be a complete renovation of a post and beam structure being undertaken by Grant Allendorf, the owner of SuperSounds. The 150-year-old structure is being restored by Eliot Lothrop of Building Heritage. Lothrop restores 10-12 barns a year. The Mansfield Barn’s renewal includes a new roof, floor, gable end, and sills. Allendorf received a Vermont Preservation Matching Grant for \$15,000, which is the most that is awarded.

The Jericho Development Review Board voted 5-0 against doing a traffic study, deeming it a low use facility. “We won’t have a huge amount of traffic,” Allendorf said, adding that most Vermont weddings have 100 or fewer guests, although the permit from the fire marshal will be for a capacity of 200. The facility will be used only one to two days a week most of the time. The venue has an allotment of 91 parking spaces. He also added that there would not be much traffic on weekdays.

“We’ve met all the criteria to receive state and town building permits,” Allendorf said. He stated that there had been only minor opposition from one of the neighbors, but after discussion and disclosure of the plans that issue was resolved.

Allendorf must clear 250 feet of brush and provide signage and special events signs. There are two other homes on the road through this property and a road maintenance agreement has to be drafted. Allendorf will also have to pave the first 50 feet of the road because the property changed from a minor subdivision to a major subdivision.

The fire alarm system is being designed by structural engineer Katy Hill, and Jim Greenia of JLG Construction will have the task of installing bathrooms, granite counters, and the hardwood flooring from Lathrop’s Mill in Bristol, VT. “We want the facility to reflect the 1950s,” Allendorf said. He has gathered 15-20 old photos of the families, barn, and property that will be hung throughout the barn along with antique farm implements.

The property received a \$70,000 septic system installed by Spence Excavating, and the Edison lighting and electrical service is being installed by Linde Electric. “I have tried to use local guys to do the work,” Grant said.

There are plans to renovate a milk house on the property to provide space for catering services. There will be a large catering tent outside with hot and cold water for catering until the milk house renovations are completed.

Allendorf said he felt he was knowledgeable in wedding



Artist’s rendition of Jericho Country Market.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



Artist’s rendition of Mansfield Barn.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

service; his business SuperSounds provides DJ services for 200-300 weddings a year. He adds that for the past eight to ten years, everyone has wanted to marry in a barn and he doesn’t believe that it is a fading fad.

Allendorf’s vision for the property doesn’t stop at weddings. He says that this will be the biggest venue in the Jericho, Underhill, and Bolton area and could be used for a family fun night, or perhaps the farmers market.

Allendorf says that the building can be placed on the National and Historic registries, he just needs to fill out the paperwork and will do so eventually.

Just down the road at the Riverside/Underhill Flats sawmill property owned by David Villeneuve, there is a proposed grocery store to be built on the vacant parcel at the corner of VT Rt. 15 and Dickenson Street. David Villeneuve and 41 WTC, LLC have proposed the construction of a +/- 17,700 SF retail general merchandise store, with an accessory use of deli and food service.

The first Jericho Development Review Board hearing was held on December 11, 2014 to receive questions and public comments on this proposal. A second hearing was held March 12, 2015.

The proposal was modified to incorporate several suggestions from the 12/11 hearing, aimed to improve pedestrian accessibility and the overall fit of the project into the character of the district. The revised site plan was submitted on February 12, 2015.

A Traffic Impact Study has been prepared to identify the impact of project-generated traffic on the adjacent roadway network, in accordance with Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) guidelines and methodology. The study area encompasses two intersections – the VT Rt. 15/Raceway Road/project driveway intersection, and the VT Rt. 15/Dickenson Street intersection.

An Act 250 hearing was held on Thursday, August 27, and according to Peter Keibel a recess order was issued. Those having party status still need state permits and have been asked to provide additional information to the Act 250 panel.

According to Jim Hardy from Hardy Structural Engineers, in the next week or so a final drawing will be submitted, created from the architectural drawings provided by Gardner Kilcoyne Architects of Williston, VT. The civil engineers on the project are Trudell Consulting, Williston, and the mechanical engineers are Dubois and King of South Burlington.

The market will be run by Mike Comeau, who also owns Sterling Market in Johnson and the Richmond Market and Beverage Center in Richmond, VT.

Gary and Tammy Davis have created a guest house that will allow visitors to experience the Vermont’s fall foliage and life on a farm – from milking cows and feeding calves to gathering around the farmhouse table. The farm includes 242 acres of open and wooded land with spectacular views of Mount Mansfield and Camel’s Hump. The Davis family has been actively farming this land for more than 75 years. Primarily a dairy farm, the Davises also raise chickens and pigs. A side composting business is also a part of the diverse operation.

The guest home has three bedrooms (the master bedroom includes a fireplace), one bath, a living room and kitchen/ dining room.

More information will be provided as the projects progress.

Last chance to be in the Jericho-Underhill Community Directory!

Was your phone number left out of the last Jericho-Underhill Community Directory?

Did you change carriers? Did you give up your land line in favor of only your cell phone?

Did you move to town recently, and would like your number to be listed in a local phone book?

Do you want your mobile phone listed in the directory as well as your home phone? Would you like your email address listed, or your website?

We have always gotten our phone numbers from Fairpoint and with so many people changing to Comcast or to cell phones, we know that we are missing many residents of Jericho and Underhill who were previously listed. We don’t want to leave anyone out who wants to be included!

Please email your information to mtgazette@earthlink.net, or mail it to Mountain Gazette, 6558 VT RT 116, Starksboro, VT 05487.

The final deadline for all information is Thursday, October 15, 2015. Any information received after this date will be saved for the 2016-17 directory.