

Treloar Bar, long the heart of community, to be razed

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REMINISCING — Standing at the original bar are some of the locals who shared memories of their time at the Treloar Bar & Grill. The building will be razed sometime in August to make way for the “Treloar Trees” park, featuring native Missouri shade trees. Dan and Connie Burkhardt have purchased the property and will continue to highlight conservation efforts begun at Peers Store and the Treloar Mercantile as part of Magnificent Missouri’s mission. Pictured, from left, are Stephen Foley, Norman Hellebusch, Judy Liermann and Lisa Ketterer. Cindy Gladden photos.

By: Cindy Gladden

Staff Writer

Since the late 1890s when the railroad ran strong through the community of Treloar, a family bar has been located in the tight-knit farming community. It has been owned by a variety of people, has been called by different names, but the heart of the bar and grill has always been family.

Dan and Connie Burkhardt recently purchased the property of the old Treloar Bar and Grill. Unfortunately, the building will not be saved, but the memories will never fade if the Burkhardts have anything to do with it. Plans are to create a green space featuring native Missouri trees on the site directly across from the Katy Trail.

“There are 28 trailheads along the Katy Trail and none of them has this kind of setting that Treloar does with the historic grain elevators and the Treloar Mercantile building,” said Dan Burkhardt. “We wish it would have been possible to save the old bar and grill.”

The four miles from Peers to Treloar along Highway 94 west of Marthasville is now called the “Country Store Corridor,” and highlights the conservation mission of Magnificent Missouri. Peers Store and the Treloar Mercantile are already attracting the attention of tourists and conservationists alike, both owned and restored by the Burkhardts.

People who have family ties and memories of gathering at the bar have been coming forward with stories, photographs and historic information. Nearly everyone in the area has a story or two to tell.

“It’s a community place,” said Janice White, who owned the bar with her husband Leroy from 1976 to 1999. During the time the Whites served their “world famous” hamburgers, they also lived above the bar and operated a beauty shop in the same building.

During the Whites’ ownership, it was called Our Place. White said it was much more than a bar and grill.

“The county nurse would come once a week and do blood pressure checks while the men were having their morning coffee, ministers would meet every Tuesday morning, and neighborhood kids would get off the bus and do their homework here,” she said. “I cooked everything from scratch. We patted out 100 pounds of hamburgers a week and the kids would help.”

White said the village was named after “famous teacher of music,” William Mitchellson Treloar, who was also a U.S. representative, who moved to Missouri in 1872.

Greg Jarvis said he “pretty much grew up in the bar.”

“People came from all over,” he said. “The steaks would hang off the plate and the hamburgers hung off the bun. I played a lot of pool there, especially on Sunday when the bar was closed.”

Stephen Foley said he would bike down the Katy Trail in the late '90s, eat lunch and sit in the pool room with his friends. Wesley Hasenjaeger, one of the former owners, always bought the kids M&Ms, according to Foley.

Foley remembers getting his haircuts, plenty of his favorite cheeseburgers and fries, and even began dating the girl that became his wife, Jodi Owenby, at the Treloar Bar.

“I even worked here for a while, making burgers, painting the fence, whatever needed to be done,” said Foley. “It is sad to see it go.”

Jason Marschel, of Marschel Wrecking, will be in charge of bringing the building down in late August, and he has his own memories of the place.

“I grew up north of here on Dry Fork,” he said. “It was the place to be on Friday and Saturday nights. It is hard to beat an old Treloar burger. We also played a lot of football in the street in front of the bar.”

Judy Liermann was born in 1942 and spent her first 18 years living in the apartment above the bar.

“My grandfather had the bar, then an uncle, then her father, then another uncle,” she said. “One of the stories I remember the most was when I was six or seven years old and I came home to a ‘bum’ cleaning out the cistern. It nearly scared me to death.”

Liermann explains that the men who hitched rides on the train or walked on the tracks were called bums or hoboes at the time. They often did a little work in exchange for food and rest. She said there was a communication network among the transients that spread the word that Treloar was a friendly community.

Lisa Ketterer, Judy's daughter, was the owner of Treloar Bar and Grill from 1999-2006, then sold it to spend time raising her kids. She opened again at her current location just around the corner from the original bar in 2012 with her husband John.

"The building is often packed," she said. "I know everyone that comes in the door."

Ketterer said during the COVID pandemic she lost no business, due to the supportive nature of her customers who continued to order takeout during the worst of the shutdown.

"I love it so much or I wouldn't do it," said Ketterer of owning the current Treloar Bar. "From generation to generation, it just circles around."

Norman Hellebusch said he spent his teen years at the bar playing pool and meeting people. He and his buddies consumed the same burger and fries mentioned by everyone sharing their memories.

"It was a different day back then when people felt safe enough to turn their kids loose here," said Hellebusch. "The building needs to come down unfortunately, but the Burkhardts have an excellent idea for the place. If it wasn't for them, these places will be totally ruined. It will be an improvement to the area."

The Burkhardts are pleased with the developing Peers Prairie in partnership with the Missouri State Parks Department, the corn sculpture at the Treloar Mercantile and the plans to continue educating the public on conservation efforts in the Missouri River Bottoms. Native trees for the "Treloar Trees" site will be procured from Pea Ridge Nursery with advice and help from Bill Spradley of Trees, Forests and Landscapes.

"This is an opportunity to continue to use a place that was so much of the past of Treloar to be a part of the future," said Burkhardt. "We believe that conservation of land in southern Warren County is good for the future — and this is a way to help tell that story."