

## Mendon Foundation Accepts 26 Acre Land Donation Near Park

Evelyn Lewis of Mendon has donated 26 acres of wooded land to the Mendon Foundation.

The land, which is a mix of soft and hardwoods along with evergreens, has established riding and walking trails. The parcel is located behind 1136 Pittsford Mendon Center Rd., across the street from Mendon Ponds Park.

Mendon Foundation President Carl Foss said that the Foundation is "honored to accept this most-wonderful parcel of land from Evelyn Lewis."

"Evelyn is helping to shape the future of Mendon with this land donation to the Foundation," Foss said. "This is a win-win situation. This type of donation represents our history and protects our future."

Foss noted that this recent donation brings 91 acres under Mendon Foundation protection. In addition, the Foundation has assisted several Mendon land owners in establishing conservation easements on their properties, which permanently restricts development on those parcels, but offer tax benefits to the land owners. "It's reassuring for many who live in this area to know that these parcels of land will be protected from development forever, and will be there for future generations to enjoy," Foss said.

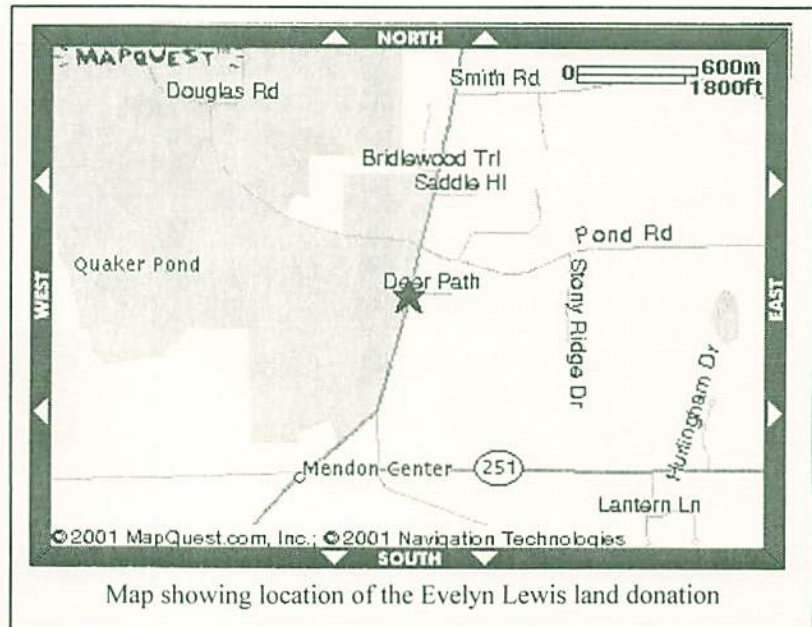
The Lewis's purchased the land in 1971 and built a house and barn on the property. Before moving to Mendon, they had lived in Pittsford. "At that time there was very little market for land in Mendon," she explained. The house and the barn have been subdivided from the parcel that was donated to the Foundation.

Over the years, Mrs. Lewis and her husband cleared wide paths for riding trails. Part of the parcel has an open space in the middle of the woods where Mrs. Lewis said they used to have a jumping course for their horses. "I've ridden horses all of my life and I rode these trails with my daughters," Mrs. Lewis said.

She said that "At one time we had a view, but all the trees have grown and there is no longer a view." But the views have simply changed into a quiet and peaceful woodland.



Evelyn Lewis walks down one of the old riding trails cleared by her and her husband on the land donated to the Mendon Foundation



Map showing location of the Evelyn Lewis land donation

When asked if she was sad to see the land leave her family estate, she said, "No, I'm happy that it will be preserved and it will never be developed."

*The Mendon Foundation Newsletter*

**The Mendon Foundation** is a completely volunteer organization which exists with the generous support of its members, volunteers and contributors. Our newsletter is published three times each year and paid for through its advertisers. You may contact us with ideas and suggestions for our newsletter, requests for advertising and suggestions, or membership information. Our mailing address is:

**The Mendon Foundation, P.O. Box 231  
Mendon, N.Y. 14506-0231**

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★**MENDON FOUNDATION MISSION STATEMENT**★

*The Mendon Foundation is a non-profit corporation established to:*

**PRESERVE**, protect and enhance the scenic, natural, recreational and structural resources in the town of Mendon and directly adjacent properties.

**MAINTAIN** a responsible stewardship of assets and properties held or controlled by the corporation.

**ESTABLISH** and promote local environmental education on issues pertinent to the preservation of natural resources in the town of Mendon.

As we succeed in these objectives, we enhance property values for all Mendon property owners. The Foundation is supported by membership fees, grants and other contributions. Donations to the Mendon Foundation are tax deductible. Proceeds are used to cover easement acquisitions, monitoring and communications. All labor is volunteer.

**The Mendon Foundation Membership Form**

- I would like to become a member
- I would like to volunteer on / my interests are in:
  - Lehigh Valley Trail Committee
  - Trail Park Committee
  - Mendon Community Park Playground Committee
  - Mendon Hamlet Committee
  - Fund raising
  - Marketing Committee (advertising for newsletter)
  - Open space/preservation

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**Work Days at the Mendon Community Park**

The Mendon Foundation was pleased to have Erik Beck, son of Kingsley and Lima Beck of Honeoye Falls, organize two workdays this summer on the Mendon Community Park as part of his requirements to earn the rank of Eagle in the Boy Scouts.

Erik's project involved the removal of the landscape timbers that form the border of the park and replacing them with new timbers. Thirty-five different people volunteered, including other Boy Scouts from Honeoye Falls and their parents. At least three of the volunteers had help construct the park in 1984.

The entire border of nearly 400 feet was replaced. The new timbers needed to be drilled for the metal bars that anchor them, cut for length and fit on corners, seated and finally the metal bars needed to be pounded into the ground. To simplify the border for maintenance, several areas were stripped of sod, and two loads of pea rock were spread in these areas as well as other areas where the rock covering was very thin. The project also included power-washing the timbers and then sealing them.

The Mendon Foundation and the community greatly appreciates Erik's work in ensuring that the playground remains a fun and safe place for our children and grandchildren to play.



**Mendon Playground Volunteers Day 1**



**Mendon Playground Volunteers Day 2**

## Pheasant Habitat Project Takes Root

By Steve Mango

Phase one of a pheasant habitat improvement project has been successfully completed this year, paving the way for the establishment of prime habitat in the Town of Mendon.

The project is a joint effort sponsored by the Mendon Foundation and the Genesee Valley chapter of Pheasants Forever, a nonprofit conservation organization founded in 1982, dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the pheasant and other wildlife populations in North America. The project also benefitted from assistance and oversight by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.



A farmer prepares a field for planting sorghum.

Four local landowners set aside a total of approximately twenty acres, which were planted in tall sorghum last spring. After an initial application of herbicide, the lands were plowed, disked, and planted. Despite a late start, the sorghum filled in nicely, providing a tall, thick mass that will winter over.



Mature sorghum in late September

Pheasant and rabbit have already been observed scurrying about their new playground and cover. This temporary cover will be tilled under next spring,

*Continued on page 4 ...*

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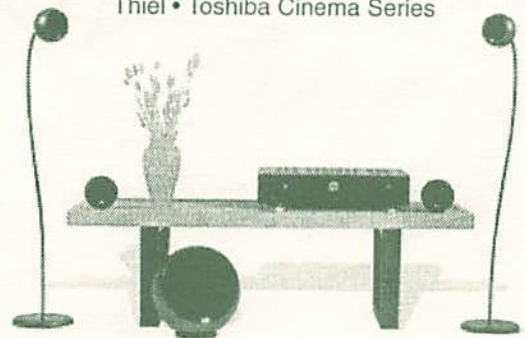
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preparing the soil further and paving the way for a planting of a permanent stand of switchgrass, an ideal cover for pheasant. Such cover quality is extremely important in reducing predation, concealing nests from both avian and mammalian predators.

Additional participants will be recruited in the spring, growing the number of acres in the project, with Pheasants Forever providing the guidance and plantings and the Mendon Foundation helping landowners with obtaining tax benefits.

The Mendon Foundation can work with landowners to retain ownership and use of their land (except for development) and help obtain federal and state income tax deductions and local property tax deductions.

This partnership will assist in bringing back the pheasant population to plentiful levels in Mendon. If you are interested in participating, or know someone who is, contact Pheasants Forever representatives Georgio Bracaglia at 624-1785 or Steve Mango at 624-2072 or Mendon Foundation President Carl Foss at 624-1634.

## Mendon Station Park Committee Update

By Warren Wallace

With the filing of our TEA-21 grant application on November 1, the Committee completed another major phase of its work. The Mendon Foundation is much indebted to Louis Amico of the Monroe County Parks Dept., who spent a great deal of time, including nights and weekends, working with the Foundation on preparing the application. We were impressed by both his dedication and the quality of his work.

Approximately 65 people attended the public meeting at the firehouse on October 11 regarding the plans for the Mendon Station. Questions were asked about Park lighting, dangers of crossing Route 64 and the use of asphalt in the parking lot. Nine people volunteered to help with the Park or other Foundation projects.

The Foundation has made 25 Park presentations, using the three-dimensional diorama, to various groups and individuals. In addition we have had coverage of the project by the *Democrat & Chronicle*, *The Brighton Pittsford Post*, *The Sentinel*, TV channels 10, 13, Fox, and R News, as well as WXXI radio. The overwhelming positive response that the Park proposal has received has been most encouraging.

The Picnic Pavilion construction has started, with the Mendon Foundation receiving the final go ahead on

*continued on page 5 ...*



Darcy Gregg from Bears Outdoor Play Products donated her time and Bobcat to help with the first pavilion.

Election Day. An anonymous donor has made it possible for the Foundation to acquire all the necessary materials and volunteers with experienced supervision will do construction. Tin Schiefen volunteered his time and backhoe to build the pavilion's foundation. Dan Bears and Marcy Gregg from Bears Outdoor Play Products have volunteered to work on the Park Committee and help build the Picnic Pavilion. They also donated the use of their Bobcat to move dirt from around the foundation. (See photo above.)

The Committee is now shifting its emphases to planning for the raising of the local portion of the funding necessary to complete construction of the Park.

### Lehigh Valley Trail Committee Report

By Dick Dehem

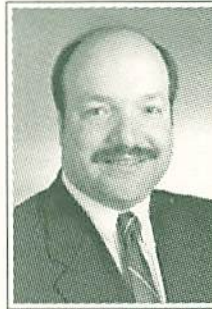
A contract between the design consultants, LaBella Associates, and the Monroe County Parks Department has been formalized. We were successful in obtaining a grant of \$1,211,459 that will fund this trail project. The Mendon Foundation is waiting for a meeting to be scheduled with the lead county engineer, the design consultant, and the State Dept. of Transportation to discuss the process for implementing the trail project.

Cinders, donated by Eastman Kodak, will be used as the base for the trail bed. These cinders will soon be located at a temporary storage site on the trail. The cinders have been certified by the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation as almost 100% inert.

An effort is under way to establish a plan and budget for trail maintenance. There have also been discussions with the Mendon and Rush fire departments with regard to emergency access to the trail.

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## Sibleyville Nature Reserve Progress Report

By Larry Hillabrandt

As recommended by the Sibleyville Nature Reserve Committee, the property was posted at a cost of \$412.92. Bow hunting was allowed with five permits issued and one deer harvested.

A report was filed with the town of Mendon that kids have been riding dirt bikes on the property. There are no motorized vehicles allowed on the property except for farm and emergency equipment.

Farmer Matthews has stated that he would like to continue to farm on the land in 2002. He has agreed to bush-hog approximately 4 acres on top of the drumlin. This fits with the recommendations made by John Hauber of the Dept. of Environmental Conservation.

The Committee is also looking into creating a walking trail that will follow the outstanding view of the drumlin, the frontage on Honeoye Creek, and "tour" the many ancient trees on the property. The Committee is also looking into a tree-planting program on the site. They hope to present their proposal to the Mendon Foundation Board of Directors in Spring 2002.

## Taverns and the Stagecoach Through Mendon

By Diane Ham, Mendon Town Historian

In 1810, 21 years after the first settlement in Bloomfield, of which Mendon was a part, the first stage coaches began to pass through the area on their way from Albany to Buffalo.

The coaches were drawn by four horses, had leather springs and rounding bottoms with three seats on the inside – one in the middle and one on each end. Each seat would hold three people, making an accommodation for nine. A 10<sup>th</sup> person could sit on top with the driver. Baggage was carried on the top or on "the boot" at the back.

In an article written for one of our local papers, the vehicles were described as "richly upholstered, with long, wide seats, capable of seating 12 if necessary. As a social vehicle, the old stage has never been surpassed; in the days when they were used, people had the idea that nothing better for travel could be made."

The stage coach driver had to dress for the season. In summer he wore a broad-brimmed hat for protection from the sun. In winter he dressed in a heavy fur coat, a bearskin cap and thick boots. The driver managed four to six horses over bumpy roads.

He not only acted as a driver, but also as a land agent for prospective settlers along his route. He also brought to the small towns, ladies fashions, selecting material and patterns for them in the larger towns.

Mendon-Ionia Road was the route of a stage coach line begun by Sam Hildreth in 1817. The line originated in Canandaigua and was a bi-weekly stage to Buffalo. The trip took three days and the fare was \$2.00. This stage is said to have had a stop at the present junction of Mendon-Ionia and Boughton Hill Roads. This was known as "Tomlinson's Corner." Two of the houses in existence at that time are still standing at the cross roads.

Many of the settlers in this area turned to inn-keeping. Almost every half-mile there was a large frame house built near the road to accommodate travelers and teamsters. The early taverns and inns were built about 1800.

One of the Mendon Taverns that we know of is the **Truman Smith House**. This was a place of importance to shippers of this area in the early days of the Erie Canal. Built before 1820, the house stands at 833 Pittsford Mendon Center Rd. It was formerly a tavern known as the Halfway House, because it is located four miles from Pittsford and four miles from Honeoye Falls. It represents one of the oldest and best preserved inns of pioneer times of this region and

*continued on page 7...*

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was a landmark to early settlers in the days when canvas-topped wagons heaped high with household goods plodded the narrow woodland roads of the town.

Truman Smith, member of a pioneering Mendon family, still occupied the old tavern in 1836 and with it 30 acres of land, according to early records. In 1844, shortly after a purchase of an additional 90 acre tract, the barns burned.

The front of the spacious house served as a taproom and restaurant with the two room divided by a hall and staircase. The room on the northside was a bar and grill, the south room was the restaurant. A large ballroom occupied the entire front of the upstairs. Four small bedrooms were available off the ballroom for overnight guests or travelers.

The tavern failed as a business venture and was sold at a sheriff's auction several times and by 1931, the building was used only as a residence.

Another popular tavern was the **Mendon Hotel**, which was originally a log-cabin tavern in the Hamlet of Mendon. In 1812 the Hotel replaced the cabin and was built on the northwest corner of the Mendon Four Corners where the Mini-mart and Mobil Gas Station now stand.

John Brown was the was early tavern-keeper. His first licence was recorded in 1814. John Tomlinson operated the hotel and then sold it to Jacob Schlaefer in 1890, who built a third floor ballroom.

Bedrooms in the Hotel were located on the second floor; living quarters, public dining room and the bar were on the first floor.

The hotel was very popular in the 1890s. Traveling men stopped here, stagecoaches arrived with passengers and local townspeople assembled for the dances held in the ballroom. There was lively music from an orchestra consisting of a parlor organ and two violins.

There were dressing rooms where the ladies arriving in carriages could change from traveling attire to party dresses. Men often changed outfits as well.

The midnight suppers were known to be bountiful and the dancers tramped down the long stairs when supper was ready. It has been written that prominent people from miles around arrived in carriages for these functions.

After Mr. Schlawfer sold the hotel, it changed ownership several times, continuing to be the center of community life and a stagecoach stop for many years.

In 1957 the Gulf Oil Co. bought the hotel and demolished it, building a gas station in its place.

*(More taverns will be featured in the next edition)*

## HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Are you interested in maintaining the feeling of natural spaciousness that is Mendon today?

Do you enjoy watching the wildlife in your open, wooded or wetland areas?

Would you feel comfort in knowing that there is a plan and an organization to support preservation of the rural Mendon charm that attracted so many of its current residents?

Could you use a tax deduction that a conservation easement or land donation would bring?

## LET US HEAR FROM YOU

By completing the form at the bottom of the second page of this newsletter, you will tell us of your support for the Mendon Foundation or that you have an interest in more information about us. Volunteer your time, talent or expertise. Join the Mendon Foundation today. Your membership fee is tax deductible.

For information on land donations or conservation easements call Mendon Foundation President Carl Foss at 716-624-1634.

## New and Renewing Members of the Mendon Foundation

*The Mendon Foundation would like to thank the following new and renewing members for their support:*

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