

## MT MANSFIELD SOFBALL LEAGUE

by  
Betty Moore

The Mt Mansfield Softball League was informally started in 1973 with two teams of ten players each. They played in what was then an open field behind the Village Service Center (which now has a residence). This modest beginning sparked a real interest in having local competition. The next year there were six teams and by 1982 there were 13 teams competing. Players came from Underhill, Underhill Center, Jericho, Richmond, Westford, Essex Center, Essex Junction, Williston, Cambridge and Jeffersonville. Some larger towns supported more than one team. The large participation did not last long, however, mostly due to scheduling problems and difficulty in finding enough fields to play on. Over the years many local businesses have sponsored teams, including Parisi Masonry, Underhill Garage, Villeneuve's Mill, Nadeau Lumber, Gillespie Construction, E.T. Moore and Sons (Moore or Less), Smuggler's Notch, Autosshine, Essex Cinema, Pat Clarke Construction, Jacob's Store. There were other private sponsors, including the Tobins, Bolios, Hendees, and Fitzgeralds.

As of 2012, four teams were still playing, competing in the summer each Sunday and Wednesday evening, usually double headers. A double-elimination tournament is held at the end of the season in August, scheduled according to the season wins and losses.

For many years League teams played on the open field at Underhill Central School and took turns mowing the grass. Jericho Elementary School also provided an open field. The teams laid out their own bases and there was no backstop screen. Fans and family brought their own chairs, or watched from the tailgate of pickup trucks. Each team has always had its own scorekeeper, and umpires were and still are, recruited from the knowledgeable fans or the opposing team, leading occasionally to lively discussion (and entertainment). As the school playgrounds developed and Little League became popular, formal softball fields were laid out, complete with backstops, benches, fences, even dugouts. The Mt Mansfield Softball League still uses these fields, now modern, scheduling with the school principals.

The community spirit and camaraderie of the League often leads to post-game celebrations and always, end-of-season gatherings at the home of Parisi Masonry, initial inaugurator of the League and primary sponsor for 39 years. As of 2013 The Mount Mansfield Softball League has been a highlight of the summer season for almost four decades.

Source : Matt and Mary Parisi