

History of Blessing's Tavern

"Oldest Operating Tavern in Colonie"

In 1930, George Blessing opened a fruit and vegetable stand on the site now occupied by Blessing's Tavern. George owned 17 acres surrounding the stand which included some land for farming. Most of the produce sold at the stand was grown directly across the street, on an 84-acre family farm owned by George's father-in-law Vincent Plowinske. In today's landscape, that parcel is now made up of a housing development that branches off Willoughby Drive and the West Albany Rod & Gun Club.

In 1932, George built a house next to the farm stand for his family; himself and his wife Ida, their son Ed and daughter Betty. Later they would welcome another son, Chet. In 1939, when the original mid 1700s farmhouse burned down, George's in-laws would move in as well.

The vegetable stand was moved behind the house to be used as a chicken coop. Returning from a tour in the Navy during WWII in 1946, Ed and his father built the building that would later become Blessing's 3B's Tavern. The bar area was originally used as the fruit and vegetable stand while the kitchen was used as an ice cream stand, serving customers through the windows.

On June 15, 1950, Ed Blessing opened Blessing's 3B's Tavern. George helped run the business until his death in 1953. Younger brother Chet returned from the Navy in 1958 and helped Ed run the tavern. In 1969, Chet and his wife Jean moved to Piseco Lake to run Jean's father's establishment, Piseco Lake Lodge.

On December 8, 1983, Liz Bennet Altrock came "to tend bar for Ed for 2 or 3 weeks until he could hire another bartender..."

Ida Plowinske Blessing Polstolka, Ed's mother, continued living in the family house next door until her death in March 1998. At that time, the family decided to sell the house and tavern.

On February 19, 2001 Ed Blessing closed the doors on Blessing's 3B's Tavern after nearly 51 years. After 17 years of working for Ed, the family had decided to sell the house and tavern to Liz. Four days later on February 23, 2001 Liz Altrock opened Blessing's Tavern.

Liz continued to run the tavern until the fall of 2016. At approximately 11PM on Friday October 28, a speeding car crashed into an employee's pickup truck, sending both vehicles into the building through the back kitchen wall. Both vehicles exploded and ruptured the kitchen's gas lines, which set the entire tavern on fire. The cook was thrown by the impact, but miraculously managed to escape the flames out the back door. Nearly fifty patrons and staff were inside enjoying karaoke and all were able to escape the burning building as well. Unfortunately, a young passenger in the speeding vehicle, Niko DiNovo, was not as fortunate. He suffered severe burns to his entire body and after a valiant 500-day battle, he succumbed to his injuries.

In December of 2019, after 3 years of struggling to rebuild, Liz opened Blessing's Tavern II in a newly built structure with overwhelming community support and God's grace.

The Blessing's legacy and the oldest tavern in Colonie continues...