

## Bill Jewell | September 29, 1938 - September 3, 2023: Eulogies



### **1. Diane Bennink, Bill Jewell's oldest daughter**

I would like to form a picture for you of our Dad and how he raised his three girls as he called us. I am going to talk about a 20 year span growing up in Vermont. The Jewell's call it the "Underhill Days."

Our parents traveled to Vermont in the late 50s on weekends in their little VW beetle (back then the heat in those cars was minimal). They would visit friends, ski, and hike in Stowe, located on Mt Mansfield. They fell in love with the area and decided to move to Vermont and start a new life. Their families in Peekskill

New York thought they were crazy! They found a cute little fixer-upper Cape Cod style house that suited them just fine. Their families couldn't believe they were to move to Northern Vermont and live in a house that has frost on the inside of the windows (the wind rattled those windows I might add in January), chop and split wood for heat, and WHAT -- grow their own food!!! This was back in the day when people moved to Vermont to live off the land.

This cute little cape is located in the picturesque town of Underhill Center, Vermont. The town is called Underhill due to its location of sitting under the towering Mt. Mansfield (the highest mountain in Vermont). When you drive past the elementary school "us girls" attended, the view takes your breath away! We looked at that view everyday on the playground at school.

We hiked to the top of Mt Mansfield from Underhill State Park any chance we could. The Fall was the best time for the foliage and cool days. Our Dad, always thinking about food, would pack our hiking lunch consisting of hot dogs heated over a sterno at the summit of Mt Mansfield. You can only imagine how good that lunch tasted after a long hike on young legs!

The town even had their very own ski hill with a rope tow lift. Every weekend December -March in the winter, no matter the weather, we were dropped off at the Underhill Ski Bowl with about 100-200 other Underhill kids to ski, ski, and ski! Those days in the 70s snow was abundant and we would get monster snowstorms! Snowmaking was nonexistent. In fact, the year Christine, our sister was born in 1971, is the third snowiest winter on record for Vermont. When my parents brought Christine home in March there were snow tunnels in the driveway from the garage to the house. The snow banks were one story high!

Lori and I both broke our (left) legs back from skiing. The equipment that was offered in the 70s were called bear trap bindings! This didn't stop us from getting back on the ski hill the very next season. Vermont had hundreds of these ski hills all over the state back then. If anyone is interested check out "Lost Ski Areas Of Vermont" on the internet and you will find lots of history.

As you visualize this story, I am sure you would agree this was the most magical place to raise a family. Our quaint home on Beartown Road was surrounded by fields, woods, and a winter sliding hill. A babbling brook ran through the property in the back. It was an ideal playground for kids. When the weather turned nice after ski season we were outside playing for hours with the other neighbor kids. No electronic devices needed for us, just the great outdoors and our imagination! We had a black and white TV with only 4 different stations. Our favorite channel was broadcasted from Canada and we would watch ski racing after a day on the ski hill while Dad cooked us a warm hot dinner. We would all get together and eat next to the warm wood stove.

Dad worked tirelessly on that property from enlarging the second floor with a back dormer, to a gorgeous screened in porch with a VT Stone floor he did himself, to a cute post and beam barn near the babbling brook. How could we forget his beloved huge garden nestled by the brook with the best growing soils you can imagine to grow lots of vegetables! Dad would brag about the cold frames he built to start seeds early before the ground warmed up for planting. Dad also loved going to one of the many local farmers and

loading up his truck with pig manure. He thought it was the best fertilizer to grow vegetables. The word organic was nonexistent back then. Dad tried his hand at raising goats, and a pig but that didn't last long, but we always had chickens and turkeys.

As we became more established in our paradise the New York relatives couldn't wait to visit. We had numerous memorable visits with Dad's twin brother, his wife and the cousins. To this day, Uncle Bob (Dad's twin brother) still watches YouTube videos on Vermont and Underhill. I can also remember those visits with Dad's parents. "Us girls" loved those visits as we were allowed to play poker and Michigan rummy, betting with pennies, nickels, and dimes. Those warm summer evenings on the porch playing games were the best!

Okay everyone, my final piece of the story is next.

In 1976, Dad and Mom came to us with this crazy idea: they wanted to move from Beartown Road and build our dream house in Pleasant Valley. Yup, Underhill has an area called Pleasant Valley. Visualize that! We all loved the idea. Dad was tired and bored of an old house and wanted something new. Of course good old Dad wheeled and dealt with a friend and talked him into selling 20 acres with another gorgeous view of Mt Mansfield's ridge line. He also convinced a well-experienced builder and friend to design a "Passive Solar" saltbox style home. Dad knew everyone in our small town and we all helped each other. This building thing was going to be like clockwork and for the most part it did!

Before we moved from Beartown Road Dad built the garage on Harvey Road in Pleasant Valley. He worked nights and weekends to build the garage so when we sold Beartown Road it would be storage for our stuff while the house was being built.

Ok here we go, Dad's next plan. The beautiful Beartown Road house sold quickly. We had nowhere to go and it was June. So guess what -- we're all going to camp on the property for the summer while the house is being built! What fun us girls thought! We borrowed a friend's tiny Airstream camper for Dad, Mom and young Christine to sleep in. Diane and Lori would live in a tent! We had camped a lot, so of course we loved the idea of camping for the summer!

The new Beartown owners didn't want the above ground pool and attached wood deck. So thrifty Dad decided to haul the wood deck up to Harvey Road in his truck. He placed it on the ground next to the camper and pitched a large army tent on top of it: Diane and Lori's new living quarters for the summer! We had cots, so we were not right on the ground I might add. Thank goodness because it was one of the rainiest summers on record. Lori and I can vividly remember having to sweep out the tent of water, slugs, dirt and grass everyday! Dad raised us to be tough-minded, work hard, and persevere, so we all worked diligently painting, cleaning, you name it, to finally finish our beautiful home in Pleasant Valley. The crown jewel of the project was creating a beautiful pond for swimming, diving off a rock, and ice skating in the winter.

Dad raised his girls in the most beautiful, magical place imaginable and I am proud to say his three daughters are still avid hikers, skiers, and snowboarders. We all love being in nature and our green thumbs for gardening are second to none!

Dad, your girls will miss you dearly but we know now you are resting in peace.



## 2. Brett Howe, son-in-law / Jean Howe's son

I was first introduced to Bill in a very modern and uniquely "Bill Jewell" way. It was an email with no subject line from an AOL email address on June 14, 2006:

Hi, Brett (he always started his emails this way):

Just wanted to introduce myself as the man in your mother's life and to assure you that I am a very reliable, stable person who has become very fond of your mother, as she has of me and we are so looking forward to a future together in being with each other and "helping each other."

And he did all of that because he was true to his word. Bill was reliable and brought stability to my mom's life. He was my mom's rock. He took care of everything. They made shared decisions, but Bill handled the execution and he did it gladly.

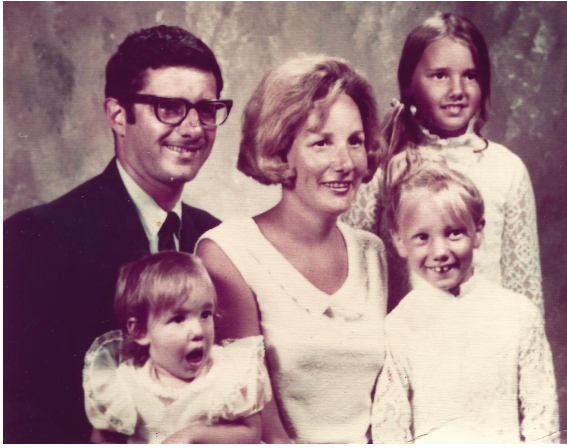
He was very fond of my mother. They loved each other very much. My mother told me that every night before going to sleep he would say, "I love you," and mom would say it back. I calculated from the time they were married in October of 2006 until Bill's passing last week, that is 12,320 combined "I love you's." If they were to say them all in one sitting, it would take 13 ½ hours straight to say those combined "I love you's" almost 18 years.

- He did build a future with my mother, almost 18 years or 9 million minutes.
- He became the only grandpa that my kids Simon and Juliet and Scott's son Roman grew up with.

Even though we lived far away in DC / NY / NJ, Bill made sure to be there for his adopted grandkids. This included Juliet's horseback riding lessons, cross-country meets, trips to the zoo, and trips to the beach. Two years ago, he and my mom traveled up for Simon's championship soccer game. It was below freezing. They sat on the sidelines in their lawn chairs curled up in a pile of blankets to see Simon win.

Nobody can replace my father, but Bill came as close as possible. This past June, Bill was the first person that I called when my A/C flooded our home. We traded bad investment ideas and went to breakfast together - my mom hates going out to breakfast. He borrowed my golf clubs and I bought him monogrammed golf balls for Christmas. He made the time to be the father figure I no longer had.

I wanted to say, on behalf of my mom, Scott, Gemma, Claudia, myself and the grandkids Simon, Juliet, and Roman: thank you Grandpa Bill for sharing your twilight years with us, for being my mom's rock. She doesn't know what she is going to do without you. We all don't know what we are going to do without you. We love you.



**3. I am Christine Jewell, the third and youngest daughter of Bill Jewell.**

**Vermont Strong.** I was in VT recently and you see these license plates everywhere. My dad embodies this concept, which symbolizes the strength and resiliency of Vermonters to rebuild communities in the face of disaster. Resilience. This is my dad.

Whenever I tell people that I grew up in Vermont they say, “Aw, that’s so sweet!”

No. You don’t get it. It was HARD.

We worked hard to live on the side of the tallest mountain in Vermont, Mt. Mansfield.

He pinched pennies and worked on our houses for years to make them safe and comfortable for us. He built us a house by hand on Harvey Road. I remember being taken to the property when he bought it, a clearing full of tall grass and weeds. We’re going to live here?!? As you know, dad, mom, neighbors, and friends worked on this house all summer, while we camped nearby.

My dad came to Vermont not because he was a hippie or a beatnik. He wanted a simpler life and he built it from scratch, under the watchful gaze of the mountain. The living and dining rooms were planned to face the mountain. The view was incredible. Every day Mt. Mansfield towered above us. It was a magical place to grow up.

He dragged my mom away, too. I’m not sure what she felt like, settling in the middle of nowhere, but she became strong, too. One year she received a chainsaw for Mother’s Day. We are all Vermont strong because of my father and his hard work.

We worked hard. We “cleaned out” the forest, pulling brush out into piles to burn. Dad would get huge piles of logs delivered and chop them down. We stacked endless amounts of wood for the woodstove. During the summer, we picked unbelievably ridiculous amounts of vegetables to process and freeze.

Diane mentioned the animals, including the chickens and turkeys that my parents slaughtered. I learned to stay away during those times. One time we had two turkeys named Romeo and Juliet. At dinner they would come up onto the deck and watch us.

One day I was with my mother and she started to back out of the driveway. Wouldn’t you know, she ran over one of the turkeys! She freaked out, ran into the house and frantically called a neighbor to help us - there was no way that we could reach Dad. The neighbor came over, took one look at the turkey and said, “Yup, it’s dead!” So we threw the turkey in the trunk and waited for Dad to come home. Guess what we did with it! Wouldn’t you know it, he processed it and we ate it for dinner that week.

Every Sunday, Dad was famous for driving to Underhill Central Store to get fresh donuts. Just last week Jean made sure that Alessandro, Erica and Brett had fresh donuts! To this day, I will get up and drive to a

local shop in the morning to get a fresh bagel or donut. It's just true, these are the simple pleasures in life that dad treasured.

For many years he delivered tires to farmers throughout the countryside. He drove miles and miles every day. We always sat down together for dinner. We had to wait patiently for him to come home to eat. If he was late and we were getting antsy, mom would put the food on the table. Every time, like clockwork, he would arrive just at that moment.

**“Just put the food on the table and Dad will show up!”** This was always true.

My dad was very thrifty. Some may call him a cheapskate! He got our neighbor, a reporter for the Burlington Free Press, to write an article about the cost of extra butter at Kentucky Fried Chicken. He had to pay for extra and he was outraged! He also loved to shop for bargains. He would stop at different stores just to get a BOGO or three-for-one. Just the other day I drove out of my way to save 2 cents on a gallon of gas.

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Fast forward to the year 2000 and my mom filed for a divorce. My dad was devastated and we got really worried. A few years later he found Jean and we were all so relieved. She was so good for my dad and they loved each other very much. Jean is so lovely and we all love her. It was incredible that they were married at Diane's house in Vermont. Jean grew Vermont Strong, too!

In one of our last conversations I was telling my dad about all of the house projects that I'm currently doing. Dad was a “doer!” He was always doing things and making us do things, too!

He said to me, “Wow, you've gotten really handy!” Of course! I'm a doer - I'm a Jewell!

All of us have the ability to make something out of nothing. Sometimes I had to remind him: you raised three very strong, independent women! Vermont Strong!

In our childhood, we knew all of our neighbors and dad loved talking about all of the families in Pleasant Valley. One of the most important things that he taught us is to care about other people. All of “us girls” care deeply about the people in our lives. I am so thankful that he left this life happy and content, with so many people caring about him.