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New bar/restaurant coming to downtown Mount Clemens

Driving force behind Orleans Sports Cafe takes over old Barleycorn's venue

By Mitch Hotts, The Macomb Daily

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The team that brought Orleans Sports Cafe to downtown Mount Clemens plans to bring a new restaurant and banquet hall to town next summer.

Brothers Paul and Mark Boone have purchased the John Barleycorn's Bar & Grill and adjoining Monte's martini bar -- both immediately next to Orleans' billiards facility on Macomb Place -- and have launched a massive rebuild.

The new place will be called O'Halloran's Public House, a European-style tavern with a full menu. It is named in honor of Nora O'Halloran, the maiden name of their mother.

"We had talked for years about opening a bar for our mom for all of the help she gave us over the years," Paul Boone said. "We're finally doing it."

Barleycorn's was shut down in January after owner Bud Montreuil became involved in other business ventures. The Boones had long considered adding a new restaurant downtown, so they jumped at the chance to gain the property, located across from Anton Art Center. Paul Boone is also a co-owner with his wife, Debbie, of Bath City Bistro.

They added partners Eric Cebalt, a chef and partner at Orleans and Krystal Robertson, a manager at Orleans, to form a new team to launch O'Halloran's.

They closed on the deal this past Friday, said Joe Sowerby, president of commercial real estate brokerage Anton, Sowerby & Associates in Mount Clemens. He said the entity will bring renewed life to Macomb Place, which endured the unexpected closure of Mario's Luigi's Downtown in late 2014.

"Mount Clemens is a small town, so when the recession hit and two of the biggest landlords went sideways, it was a real blow for the city," Sowerby said.

Sowerby said the Boones view the rebuild as being "like a civic thing for them. It's more than a business deal, they truly believe in Mount Clemens and want to get this project done."

Work has yet to begin on the rebuild, which is expected to take place over the winter months. There is about 8,000 square feet between the two buildings.

The team has yet to decide on specific menu items, but say there will be some Irish fare, some English fare, and some Belgian dishes for starters.

“We may have a little slice of several different concepts,” Robertson said.

O’Halloran’s social media director Jennifer Hawk said the focus will be on food and beverages, but stressed it will not be a craft beer pub. She said a new entity will complement Bath City Bistro, Three Blind Mice, Madison’s Pub and the city’s other bars and restaurants.

“Mount Clemens is in need of some new energy,” Hawk said. “The more the merrier, in terms of having choices and more things to offer. This is another step in making Mount Clemens a destination city again.”

In addition to opening O’Halloran’s, the group has long-term plans to make Macomb Place a Beale Street-style “feature street” that will host free live entertainment in summer months and generate additional foot traffic. They hope to gain permission to close Macomb Place and erect a stage for outdoor concerts on a periodic basis.

The Boone brothers have been among the most passionate supporters of Mount Clemens, which is why they decided to set up Orleans Billiards back in the mid 1990s. While other restaurants and owners have come and gone, Orleans continues to thrive with periodic updates.

“Everybody is talking about investing in the community, well we went and signed on the dotted line,” Paul Boone said. “We believe in Mount Clemens and we are backing that up with our investment.”

Mark Boone agreed.

“We are expanding on the success at Orleans, where the owners kept the place looking good for 20 years and developed a brand name,” he said. “Now we are bringing another cool place to hang out at in Mount Clemens.”

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