

life of a party



Smithton Inn's owners and party-throwers, Dave and Rebecca Gallagher.



HISTORIC, HIP & PRIMED TO PARTY ...

SMITHTON INN CELEBRATES 250 YEARS

BY JILL BROWN AND ROBERT FENNINGER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT GILLIS PHOTOGRAPHY

IN 1763, Henry Miller and his wife Suzanna were running an inn and tavern situated along Ephrata's main route leading to points north. As they served meals to their guests, they likely heard discussions of the issues of the time: King George III's oppression of the 13 colonies and the Quakers' recent turning against slave trade. Just down the road was the Ephrata Cloister, where celibacy was just one of the austere principles practiced by the 300 "brothers and sisters" who were living under the spiritual leadership of Conrad Beissel. The Millers themselves were members of the Cloister, but being married, they were considered "householders" who lived in their own home rather than on the communal property.

Two hundred fifty years later, the Millers' inn still stands at 900 W. Main St. (Route 322) in Ephrata. Now, guests arrive to spend the night in the historic bed-and-breakfast's seven luxurious rooms, to snuggle in hand-sewn quilts, and enjoy the modern comforts of flat-screen TVs and Wi-Fi.

Owners and innkeepers Rebecca and Dave Gallagher acquired the historic property in 2009, as only the third family to own the home since the Millers hosted weary travelers in Colonial America. Moving to the area from upstate New York, the Gallaghers recognized the significance of Ephrata's local history and Lancaster County's culture with fresh eyes, and now enthusiastically share those treasures with their guests. With the home's 250th anniversary arriving in 2013, the Gallaghers decided it would be a year-long celebration marked by events that would give back to the local community's cultural and nonprofit organizations.

"We want our community to cherish and love this place as much as we do," Rebecca says, adding that the inn's 250th anniversary celebrates the rebirth of the historic building and its revitalization in the community. The home had remarkably remained in the Millers' family of descendants for two centuries, until it was sold to Alan Smith in 1979 and operated as Smithton Inn. Renovations by the Gallaghers brought the bed-and-breakfast into the 21st century, with its modern amenities blended into the historic home's working fireplaces and other original appointments.

THE INN'S MILESTONE YEAR has been commemorated with a jazz brunch (benefiting Ephrata School District's music program), an open house highlighting new businesses in the area, a canned-goods drive (benefiting Ephrata Area Social Services) and a back-to-school ice-cream social (benefiting the Ephrata Area Education

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1: Louise Jones and Harley Baker command the dance floor. 2: 99th District State Rep. Gordon Benlinger presented Rebecca Gallagher with a House resolution to commemorate the inn's 250th anniversary. 3: Lowell and Sandra Haws (Sandra is a descendent of Smithton Inn's original owner, the Miller family). 4: Amanda Kemp and Michael Jamlinis. 5: Ephrata residents Stephanie Harley, Jack Harley and Suzy Creighton of Akron brought the past to life in their 18th-century costumes. 6: Congressman Joe Pitts of the 16th Congressional District joined the celebration. 7: The stately Smithton Inn has welcomed overnight guests since 1763. If these walls could talk





CREDITS:

Event Planner: Melissa Martin/Stylish Occasions

DJ: DJC Productions

Flowers: Weddings & Blooms, Petals with Style and Royer's Flowers

Cake: House of Clarendon

Caterer: Black Horse Restaurant

Supplies: Eagle Rental

Photo Booth: Katy Trefry Photography

Photographer: Matt Gillis

Wine: Chaddsford Winery

Beer: St. Boniface Craft Brewing Company

Tent: Hess Tents

Lighting: Arethusa Designs

Commemorative Mugs with

Chocolates: Historic Smithton Inn and Intermezzo by Stephanie