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AMOS MILLER REACHES DEAL IN SECOND CONSENT DECREE



An aerial view of Miller's Organic Farm in Upper Leacock Township.

By Michael Yoder

Embattled Upper Leacock farmer Amos Miller could have most of his civil fines wiped away and the threat of jail removed through a new consent decree presented to the court during a short 5-minute telephone conference last week.

Miller, who has been in a years-long dispute with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Justice over the processing and selling of meats through his private buyer's club, was ordered by Judge Edward G. Smith on Dec. 13 to pay \$30,000 within 10 days of signing the second consent decree in the case. The Amish farmer had originally faced around \$250,000

in court sanctioned fines, including payments to George Lapsley, a food safety advisor assigned to the case.

Smith also ordered Miller to pay \$55,065.72 over two installments to reimburse the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) for expenses involved in the case. And the show cause hearing scheduled in the case for Dec. 16 was continued and held in abeyance until Miller makes the three payments, and then the hearing can be suspended.

Smith said he was appreciative of the work done by Robert Barnes, Miller's lawyer since September,

and Gerald Sullivan, the assistant U.S. attorney for the Department of Justice overseeing the Miller case, to come to an agreement and resolve outstanding issues. Smith said Barnes did a "great service" for his client, and Sullivan did the same for the U.S. government.

"I was always hopeful that this would be resolved by a meeting of the minds as opposed to adversarial litigation," Smith said. "I find the second consent decree to be an appropriate resolution of this matter."

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COUNTY ELECTION BOARD NOW OVERSEEN BY THREE APPOINTEES

By Michael Yoder

The Lancaster County Board of Elections has two new members after county commissioners Josh Parsons and Ray D'Agostino had to recuse themselves because they are both running for reelection next year.

The two new members, former Lancaster County Solicitor Christina Hausner and current Court of Common Pleas Judge Jeffery Wright, took the seats at the Dec. 14 election board meeting. President Judge David Ashworth appointed Hausner and Wright to the positions the previous week.

To avoid conflicts of interest, elected officials serving on boards of elections must temporarily vacate their seats while running for office, according to state law.

Hausner's and Wright's appointments remain in place until Parsons and D'Agostino are certified as the winners of the 2023 general election, or they are no longer candidates.

Commissioner John Trescot (D), who was appointed to the board of commissioners in February after Craig Lehman resigned from the position in the middle of a four-year term, remains on the board of elections. In exchange for his appointment, Trescot agreed not to run for the commissioner position when it was opened.

Trescot was appointed chair of the election board, while Hausner will serve as vice chair. Trescot was also appointed as chair of the Registration Commission, another board typically overseen by the commissioners, and Hausner as vice chair.

Parsons and D'Agostino are still involved with some county election issues involving budgeting. If the board approves a measure requiring...
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Innkeeper Rebecca Gallagher stands outside the Historic Smithton Inn in Ephrata. The inn dates back to the 18th century. For story, see page 3.



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LANCASTER NEWS

By Diane Boone

The history of Lancaster County is a rich one, and many buildings in the area date to well before the formation of the United States. One such building is the Historic Smithton Inn: opened as a tavern in the mid-1700s, it has now become a beautiful bed-and-breakfast that offers a glimpse into the past as well as providing the modern conveniences that guests want most.

The building has a fascinating past. Henry Miller and his wife, Clara, built what was initially a wooden tavern that Miller operated until he died in 1757. The tavern then went to his son Henry, who replaced the wooden building with the stone house that can still be seen to this day. The younger Miller ran the tavern with his wife, Susana, making good use of its hilltop location overlooking Ephrata's famous cloister and the main road that passed that way. The stagecoaches and travelers streaming by delighted in the Millers' tavern, which one traveler noted in a diary was "a good and proper house that would not offend a lady." The Millers provided good food and care — which extended beyond the hospitality of the inn, since Miller and his wife volunteered their assistance in tending the wounded men who had fought in the Revolutionary War and had been taken to the Ephrata Cloister to recover. When an epidemic referred to as "camp fever" passed through the area, it took the lives of many of the wounded, and since Miller died during that time, it is likely that he succumbed to the disease as well. After his death, the inn passed to one of his sons, the third Henry Miller.

It was during this Miller's time that the tavern, thanks to its prime location, served for more than a decade as a polling place for northeastern Lancaster County. After Miller died in 1832, his children operated the inn, then during the Civil War era the building was turned into a private residence. In 1875, a south wing was added that served as a tailor shop.

For eight generations, the Henry Miller house was owned by the family. Then in 1979 it was sold at auction to Alan Smith, an architect and artist who saw the potential of the building and decided to turn it into a bed-and-breakfast. Smith restored the property and made many structural renovations and major improvements that honored and emphasized the building's origins — including its connection to the Ephrata Cloister, the art and architecture of the period, and the Miller family's Swiss and German heritage. Smith was intentional about every change he made, and his savvy choices are exemplified by the way in which he added private bathrooms and closets to the different rooms. To reduce the problem of sound carrying easily through the historic building's thin interior walls, he placed the new amenities along the walls between the guest rooms, creating a buffer that better insulated the rooms from each other.

Smith ran the inn with his wife, Dorothy Graybill Smith, for three decades until his death in 2004. In June 2009, his widow sold the property to David and Rebecca Gallagher. The Gallaghers had lived in Texas

EPHRATA BED-AND-BREAKFAST CARRIES ON TRADITION OF HISTORIC INN



Christian Giannelli

The Chocolate Room at the Historic Smithton Inn

for more than 20 years and dreamed of returning to the Northeast to live in a historic home.

At first they lived on the upper floors of the Smithton Inn, continuing Smith's work of restoring the interior and exterior of the building to their former glory. They also expanded the business by converting the living room into a wine bar and adding a courtyard along Main Street. The building retains its original stone walls and wooden beams, but history is mixed with modern comforts, like reliable Wi-Fi, a charging station for electric vehicles, and large smart TVs.

The decision to update the Smithton Inn for the modern guest while still preserving the building's history has been the optimal business plan, Rebecca Gallagher told The Lancaster Patriot. "It's a new facet to the property that didn't exist before, but it's allowing us to compete in this market where you're competing against Airbnbs and VRBOs and big hotels with fancy restaurants," she explained.

Gallagher's passion for history goes beyond the property she purchased. "As an owner of this B&B," she said, "I'm not from here and yet I know more about Lancaster County than anyone else I know. I know more things to do, places to eat, the local history, the hidden treasures, than somebody who lives here. And I think so often when you live in a place, you take it for granted or you purposely avoid the tourist things, because that's where all the tourists go." She pointed out that there are tons of things to do in Lancaster County that rival other vacation destinations. "Why should you know all these other places better than your own backyard?"

To help others learn more about the great sights, restaurants, experiences, activities and history of Lancaster, Gallagher regularly updates the inn's blog with detailed posts about places to go and things to do in the area. The blog's well-over 200 posts are a great resource for her B&B

guests, but she also recommends the blog to all locals, whether someone is looking for the best things to do in their hometown or wanting to discover something fun for a day trip or a weekend excursion.

Of course, many Lancastrians have already been exploring the place where they live and getting to know its wonderful locations like the Historic Smithton Inn. Gallagher has served tourist-for-a-day guests in addition to out-of-state and international travelers. "You don't have to drive far to feel like you're being pampered and to feel like you're in a different place," she said — and she would know something about pampering, since she's the one who cooks the delicious and beautiful homemade breakfasts every morning that get rave reviews from the B&B's guests.

Still, plenty of people drive by the inn all the time and have never been

inside. The wine bar, which is open Friday through Sunday and has live music on Friday and Saturday evenings, offers an easy way to step in and enjoy the history of the Smithton Inn even without making a reservation to stay overnight.

The Historic Smithton Inn will mark its 260th year in 2023, and there are plans in the works for a June celebration. The Gallaghers celebrated the 250th anniversary of the inn all year long, with a special event almost every other month that benefitted a community group or organization, but the 260th anniversary will have a smaller celebration.

For people interested in holding a celebration or event of their own, the Historic Smithton Inn allows reservations for events and small weddings. For more information, visit historicsmithtoninn.com or call the Gallaghers at 717-733-6094.

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