



THE LANDMARK

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Newsletter of the Friends of Old Annville
P.O. Box 99, Annville, PA 17003

‘Come as Strangers, Leave as Friends’: Rebirth of the Corvette Grille & Bar

President’s Message, by Michael Schroeder

“The support that this community has given us over the past year and a half has been totally amazing,” exclaimed Jeff Dunn, Jr., owner of the Corvette Grille & Bar at 202 W. Main St. in Annville. “Phone calls, text messages, social media comments and posts, invitations to picnics and more, it’s been truly incredible.”

He was referring to the 17 months since August 21, 2019, when a fire raced through the historic building, site of one of Annville’s most popular watering holes and eateries. The fire caused extensive damage throughout the interior, especially on the second floor, which meant the whole building had to be gutted to be preserved. Union Hose Company Fire Chief Philip Snavelly called it the biggest fire Annville had seen in nearly ten years, since flames had engulfed the Flower Garden at 125 W. Main St. back in April 2010.

I called Jeff to ask him how the rebuilding process was going, after seeing a slew of hopeful photos on the Corvette’s Facebook page showing lots of freshly-framed 2x4 walls on the main floor, and on the second floor, gleaming new freshly sheathed trusses forming a new skeleton for the roof.

“Our motto that we created is ‘come as strangers, leave as friends,’” Jeff was quoted by CBS-21 Harrisburg News on the day of the fire. “That’s what it’s about for us and our team and the culture we were building. Ultimately that’s all that I was concerned about, the safety of others. The building we can fix”.¹

And we in FOOA are delighted they are fixing it. One of the oldest brick buildings in Annville, the two-and-a-half story, three-bay structure dates back to the early 1830s, according to notes compiled by Doris Flory in the 1990s. In Doris’s words, “Christian Hoverter took over the property in 1846; he was a blacksmith and his shop was no doubt located in back at the alley where



Jeff Dunn, Jr., owner of the Corvette Grille & Bar at 202 West Main Street in Annville.

a barn existed until it burned in the 1950s. The building was used as a residence until 1871 when David Radebaugh purchased the structure. He operated a music store from the front parlor and also started up one of the town’s bands – the Citizens Band of Annville. . . . In 1907, William Dietzler Miller purchased the property. . . . I believe William purchased this property so granddaughter Lottie could ‘come home’ [from Elizabethtown] and begin a restaurant business in Annville, which is exactly what they did! The building has operated as an eating & drinking establishment ever since.”

¹ Quoted by Brian Sheehan, CBS News 21, Aug. 21, 2019, at <https://local21news.com/news/local/come-as-strangers-leave-as-friends-bar-owner-vows-to-rebuild>

Known as the Golden Swan Inn, from the 1910s to the mid-1940s the eatery and confectionary was run by Arthur S. “Ussie” Miller and locally renowned for its “famous oyster stew” and fried oysters until Ussie’s death in 1946. In 1947 the business passed into the hands of Ussie’s son Richard and became known as Rich’s Bar. Soon after, as best as I can tell from Doris Flory’s notes and a Feb. 1996 article in *The Landmark* by Blanche Schaeffer, Richard died and the business was taken over by his son Michael Miller, who kept the name Rich’s Bar until 1990, when the building and business were sold to Jerry Wise and it became Corvette Bar & Grill.²

“We’re hoping to reopen by May at the latest,” exclaimed Jeff, who was born and raised in Hershey and has worked in the restaurant industry since washing

dishes and busing tables at IHOP as a teenager. The tavern’s layout and classic auto-themed décor will remain much the same, though with a bit of extra elbow room at the bar and a couple more tables for patrons thanks to the extra space in the basement for coolers and dry storage, formerly on the main floor. The exquisitely handcrafted exterior woodwork remains.

Readers are invited to visit the Corvette’s Facebook page for a closer look at the destruction caused by the fire, the exposed guts of this gem of a historic building, and its steady rebirth under the neighborly, community-minded ownership of Jeff Dunn and his business partners. We are fortunate indeed that this local treasure of a bar and eatery will soon resume its place as one of Annville’s most popular gathering places for visitors, friends, and families.



Flames shoot through the roof of the Corvette Grille & Bar, 202 W. Main St., on 21 August 2019, in what was described as the biggest fire in Annville in a decade. The fire caused extensive damage throughout the historic brick building’s interior.



Freshly installed OSB-sheathed trusses form the roof’s new skeleton above the second floor, where flames had shot through some 17 months before, in a space historically used as residential living quarters. Photos dated 31 Dec. 2020.

² Information in this and the previous paragraph from Doris Flory, “Corvette Bar & Grille,” c. 1995, unpublished mss., and Blanche Schaeffer, “Along Main Street: Corvette Bar &

Grille, *The Landmark*, Feb. 1996, both housed in the FOOA Digital Archives.

Mourning the Passing & Celebrating the Life of Betty Streicher



We mourn the passing and celebrate the life of Annville native Elizabeth M. “Betty” Streicher, age 93, late last year. The wife of the late Richard “Dick” Streicher (d. 2004), she was the daughter of Anson and Miriam Walters Fox. For many years employed as a seamstress at K.X.C.F. textile factory on South Lancaster Street in Annville, Betty was a member of St. Mark Lutheran Church in Annville; the Annville American Legion Auxiliary; and the Friends of Old Annville. In the 1980s, she and her husband Dick helped to author and publish the *Pictorial History of Annville*. In 2009 she and her husband Dick donated a huge collection of valuable historical photographs of Annville – the single largest collection of photographs in FOOA’s Digital Archives. She will be missed by many.

Memories of Growing Up in Annville?

We invite readers to share their personal memories of growing up in Annville – of your life at home and your parents and siblings, of the schools you attended, the chores you performed, the teachers and friends you had, the games you played, the stores you frequented, the places that made up your favorite stomping grounds, the families and neighbors that made up the community you lived in. Poems, stories, reflections, recollections large and small – all are welcome. If you grew up in Annville, please consider sharing some of your recollections for possible inclusion in future issues of *The Landmark*. We’d love to hear from you.

Thank You to Our Recent Donors to Quittie Creek Nature Park

“Annville is already a great place to live,” wrote local journalist Jeff Falk in a story for LebTown published this past November 4. “Quittie Creek Nature Park simply takes that quality of living up a notch.” How right he is!

The 36-acre park is maintained by Annville Township in collaboration with the Quittie Creek Nature Park Committee, a subcommittee of the Friends of Old Annville ably chaired by Danielle Hand, who’s quoted extensively in this terrific story. We’re tickled that LebTown saw fit to spotlight our treasure of a community park, and grateful to a number of community members for their recent donations to the Nature Park, which we are proud to acknowledge here.

A very generous anonymous donation in the amount of \$500 was received from Fidelity Charitable. Scott Ramirez generously donated \$120; Ralph Fetrow, \$100; and David & Ann Marie Lasky, another \$100. Anne Effland and Devany LeDrew each donated \$25. To all we extend a sincere Thank You!



Screenshot of LebTown story by Jeff Falk on *Quittie Creek Nature Park*, 4 Nov. 2020, at <https://lebtown.com/2020/11/04/quittie-creek-nature-park-reconnects-humans-with-their-natural-habitat/>



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