

Easton Mayor Panto on Columbus: teach the history; embrace, don't hide the past

The Bethlehem Gadfly Columbus monument September 18, 2020

🌀 *Latest in a series of posts on the Columbus monument* 🌀



*“San Salvador” from the triptych “Columbian Triad” (1992)
by Kiowa artist N. Scott Momaday*

Mayor Sal Panto, on the controversy over Easton’s Columbus statue:

Panto says while people have a right to petition, the statue is part of history that can’t be re-written, and there’s a lot to be learned from it. “Humanity has come a long way since the early days, when

unfortunately people like Christopher Columbus and other founders of our country didn't have the same values we have today." "I don't think you just throw that part of history away," Panto said. "I think you teach the history — both sides and all sides of Christopher Columbus, but you just don't throw it away." While he agreed Columbus' methods were inhumane and racist by modern standards, he will oppose efforts to bring the statue down. "Where does this lead? Should we burn down the pyramids and the Colosseum because they were built with slaves? Do we change the name of Pennsylvania because William Penn displaced countless Native Americans?" he said. Instead, Panto offered his support for adding another statue along the riverfront. Back in 2006, the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania proposed building a \$500,000 24-foot-tall fountain featuring a dream-catcher-like circular ring with water flowing through it. It would also feature statues of a Lenape woman instructing her grandson about his heritage. Panto said the cost made the proposal untenable but offered his support for a scaled-back version. "I think that's the solution. Not hiding that past, but embracing it," he said. (woven together from several Morning Call articles)

What do you think of Panto's "solution"?

We're thinking about all of the things tied into our national reckoning about race triggered by the murder of George Floyd.

Gadfly ever thinks of the soft words of **Joyce Hinnefeld**, Clerk of the Lehigh Valley Meeting (Quakers), each Sunday morning: "we worship together on land that was originally the land of the Lenape people."

Remembrance is a form of reparation.

Representation is a form of reparation.