

Happy Mirthday, Gadfly!

The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts October 14, 2018

The Gadfly is one month old.

I hope it's obvious . . . I hope you can tell . . . I hope it's evident . . . I hope it shows

that Gadfly is having fun.

I started my freshman year majoring in Civic Observation back in January.

I have met such wonderful people.

I have watched from afar such hardworking people, especially the volunteers.

I have seen elected officials fighting the good fight.

I feel really part of the town for the first time as I have sort of entered its bloodstream.



In the digital age we are losing our sense of place, of city, of neighborhood. I was thinking about that a lot hearing the Mayor, Councilman Reynolds, and others kick off Northside 2027 last week. I realize that I have been trying to regain a sense of neighborhood. For instance, after years of not paying attention to it, I subscribed to the *Bethlehem Press*, where, as I wrote there a while back (in print next to veteran civic observers Barbara Diamond and Bill Scheirer), “The BP reminds me — with the help of lots of color photos! — that I have neighbors who lead regular lives of family, work, church, school, sports. I need to feel that normality. I forgot my small town is pulsing with old-fashioned normality. The BP reminds me.” A simple delightful town newspaper. Reflecting and creating community.

The major “serious issue” over Gadfly baby’s first month has been the parking fees. 40 posts. I hope I have modeled there the approach that will typify the Gadfly. I am about to venture some judgments, but I will always try to show you that they come out of as full a consideration as possible of varying perspectives. And, of course, I encourage thoughtful alternate views.

(My model, frankly, is Michael Smerconish, Lehigh grad of the 80s, who has a Sirius XM talk radio show and is a CNN commentator. When his

call board shows a caller with a contrary opinion, he goes there first and gives him or her the floor. Nice.)

I have a lot to learn. Pontification is not my strong suit.

For instance, you have seen me several times on these pages admit that I don't understand the relation between the Bethlehem Parking Authority and the City. Now I don't think I'm alone. I wager that if Dana Grubb asked residents what the BPA was as part of his "The People Say" column in the *Bethlehem Press*, he wouldn't get much of an answer. The City organizational chart (see the Gadfly sidebar) shows a line from the Mayor to BPA. But the Mayor just yesterday told me the Authority is "independent." Go figure. I don't get it. The BPA answers to the Mayor and City Council to sanction the nature of its income, yet it's independent. Don't get it. Ha! Yet, that is. Don't worry, I'll eventually get it. I'm researchin.'

One month. A good time to ask for feedback.

I describe gadflies as unofficial officials, as self-appointed representatives of the people.

I invite you to let me know how I'm doin'.

If you think we're doing well, please spread the word. Gadfly can only work if it is widely read by a substantial range of people with serious interest in our City. Help me to foster that readership and participation. And I invite you to contribute. To the serious stuff, for sure. But I know there must be people out there with "local color" photographs, stories, and the like. Help make Gadfly a varied experience. A fun place.