

# A Star is Born: Stephen Antalics, June 22, 2001 (1)

Ed Gallagher, The Bethlehem Gadfly Fun Stuff, Gadfly History, Gadfly's posts September 16, 2018

*The Gadfly seeks stories or suggestions for stories on the Bethlehem tribe of Gadflies. If we had something like Bill White's Hall of Fame, who else would be in it? Bill Scheirer (with Stephen the current other "iron horse" in Bethlehem Gadflydom), Eddie Rodriquez, Mary Pongracz, Bob Pfenning, Chuck Nyul, Lucy Lennon?*

Click here for Stephen Antalics, "With a stigmatic past, Bethlehem's South Side suffers history of neglect," *Morning Call*, June 22, 2001.

[Antalics 6-22-01](#)



The name of Stephen Antalics, who ranks as Gadfly No.1 in the pantheon of Bethlehem Gadflies, first appeared in the pages of the *Morning Call* in 1996, but here is the 2001 first article with his by-line (a robust 1000 words). Stephen burst into print here as a Southside warrior, and current City Council attendees recognize that his combative voice is undiminished. Stephen sees a kind of Civil War at the very beginning of Bethlehem history rather than mid-way as in our country at large. From the get-go it's the North and its high-toned Christians and culture v. the "sin city" of the South filled with speakeasies, gambling, opium dens, and brothels (who knew??). The "native Americans" of the North looked down on the "foreign invaders" of the South and the "unopposed infiltration of organized crime."

Most importantly, for Stephen this "arrogant attitude never disappeared" and "can still be traced in social attitudes and administration policies even today" [2001]. To wit, the 1950s Clarke-Rapuano Study, the city's first formal redevelopment plan, relegated Southside development to "a later date." To wit, the 1970s Gruen plan urged the formation of "Southside 76," but "This plan never saw fruition." Thank God for Bethlehem Steel and Lehigh University – "There is a God!" literally

exclaimed one businessman. In the 1990s, for instance, Lehigh responded to Southside needs “by building a student housing and shopping complex . . . on Morton Street, designed to improve the area and keep the buying power in the community,” but the City administration refused “to amend zoning codes to reduce the number of student housing in a given area by a density clause.” “A drive down Montclair and Birkel avenues today [2001] shows the results of this omission,” claims our Gadfly. Bottom line: the history of the Southside is a “history of neglect.”

*What do you think of the Stephen’s vision of history here? How does it relate to the resurgence of the Southside we are seeing now? What about Lehigh’s current construction of additional dorms close to the Southside business district? How about Stephen’s grim Jeremiah-type prophecy at the just-past September 4 City Council meeting about the Montclair/Birkel cancer spreading to the Northside via the Airbnb contact? What else does the piece make you think about? Stephen, would you like to comment on your own piece of seventeen years ago?*