

# A modest proposal: dressing up the Address

The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts, Modest proposals, Serious Issues March 2, 2019

*(4th in a series of modest proposals)*

Gadfly is a shy guy, doesn't like spectacle (wink, wink, to you-know-who-you-are), spent his academic life with the American Puritans and Pilgrims ("plain people"), distrusts politicians who live to talk (Stephen Crane called them "wind demons"), but, curiously, he wishes he heard more from Mayor Donchez.

Gadfly means no disrespect, but the Mayor does not speak much at "Mayor report" time during Council meetings, and I remember thinking it took me a while to recognize his voice. From the Gadfly observation post in the cheap seats, the Mayor looks like a man who doesn't waste words. And that is good, very good.

But, still, Gadfly wishes he heard more from the Mayor. At least, at times.

The "State of the City" address is coming up: this Thursday, March 7, 7:30AM, Arts Quest.



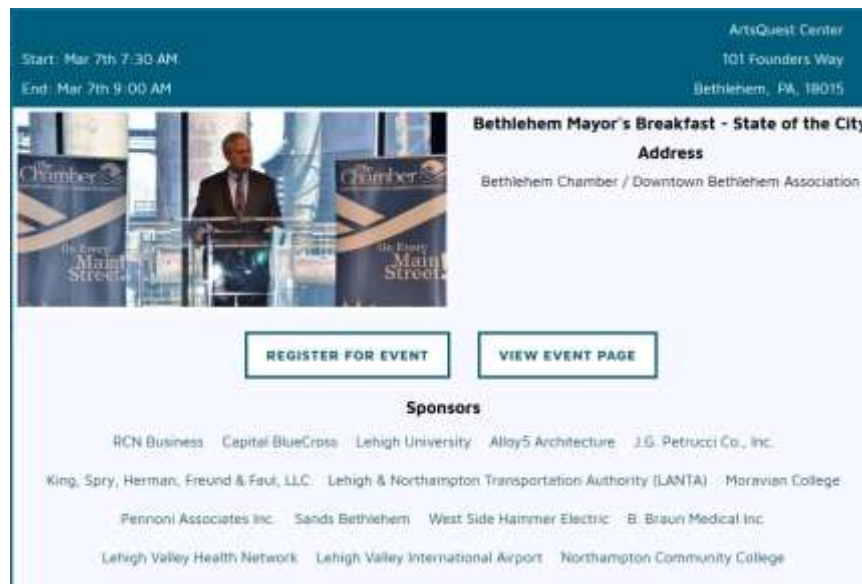
Gadfly was not Gadfly last year at this time, and he remembers that the address was over before he heard about it. And that didn't seem right.

It seemed to me that there really wasn't a lot of coverage by the media. I even had to dig down a layer or two on the City web site to find [the text](#) (it was subsequently moved to the Quick Links on the top page). The [accompanying video](#) is poorish quality (and mostly slides), seemingly recorded from within the audience at a distance. The *Morning Call* had a [one-minute interview](#) with the Mayor that felt rushed and competing with collateral noise. To me, the Mayor understandably looked kind of uncomfortable in that squeezed situation.

Just didn't seem good. Not first-class. There was lots good and positive in the address itself, but, to me, the medium seemed to diminish it. Here was the highlight speech of the year, and it did not seem – to Gadfly – to have the highlighting it deserved. And the Mayor deserved.

Gadfly feels that this is the occasion for the Mayor to strut his stuff proudly in a more widely distributed and visible way.

For the “State of the City” address is hosted by and delivered to the **Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce**: “The Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce is comprised of approximately 750 Bethlehem based businesses that are members of The Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce.”



Now Gadfly realizes how important business and businesspeople are to the quality of life in a city. But he is by nature and nurture a populist. And asks.

Why is the “State of the City” addressed – or addressed only – to businesspeople?

Why not to “the people”?

As writing teacher, Gadfly used to stress that job #1 was to consider your audience. Who is your audience? Whom are you writing for? Different audiences demand different content and different delivery.

This Chamber event costs \$99 to attend. Gadfly would like to attend. Nothing like being there. But that’s too much. And too much for the majority of “the people.”

And Gadfly wonders how differently tailored the address would (have to) be to an audience of “the people.”

The “State of the City” address might well (need to) be different delivered to businesspeople at Arts Quest over breakfast than to Southsiders on bleachers and folding chairs in Donegan School at dinner time.

Symbolism is meaningful.

So Gadfly’s latest modest proposal is to find ways to better engage the general public in the “State of the City” address and to think how to significantly improve the means of transmission and distribution.