

We need a glorious implosion and a party following it

The Bethlehem Gadfly Martin Tower, Serious Issues January 29, 2019

(2nd in a series on Martin Tower)

John Marquette is a retired librarian/archivist, author, historian, and a resident of Bethlehem. His current project is focused on the restoration of the interior of the Archibald Johnston Mansion in Housenick Park.

Gadfly:

Martin Tower is coming down. The developers have decided. For some, the demolition of the tower is painful. For others, it's overdue. I confess to expecting the building with its gaping windows to be taken down sooner rather than later, but hearing it today was still a shock. My first thought was to post the news link on the "You know you're from Bethlehem..." Facebook group, and found that I was beaten by one minute. My later reflections were about something more important: the life and spirit of our city and how we'll explain Bethlehem's history without being able to point to Martin Tower.

And then I thought about how I'd like to be remembered. My uncle's ashes were loaded on board a small boat and the family attempted to set it ablaze in the middle of a pond. They were not successful, but their hearts were certainly in the right place. A friend wants a New Orleans jazz-style funeral, with trumpets and celebration and music. I prefer joy to sadness.

The end of Martin Tower deserves an event the likes of which this city has never seen. With the cooperation of Messrs. Ronca and Herrick, we need a glorious implosion and a party following it to collect, share, and celebrate our collective memories of the building and of the Steel. I can think of only one party organizer big enough to handle this: Jeff Parks. Maybe Jeff has been planning something in the background all along and his (and ArtsQuest's) plans will be announced tomorrow. Or maybe in the turbulent months since the end of Musikfest, the flapping plastic from Martin Tower's windows haven't been front-and-center. Now we know. Let's plan for a party to laugh, cry, and celebrate our love for the

city and for the women and men — Nikolaus and Benigna Zinzendorf, Lenape Chief Lapowinsa, John Fritz, Archibald Johnston, H.D., Eugene Grace, Gertie Fox, Edmund Martin, Charlene Donchez Mowers, and many more – on whose shoulders we stand.
Jeff Parks, let's have a party!

John