



# CENTER *Piece*

PENNSYLVANIA DOWNTOWN CENTER'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER / *Fall 2017*



## WEST CHESTER

*An Award Winner and  
2018 PDC Conference Host!* **P 8**

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EMBRACING A  
YEAR *of AND for*  
CHANGE

*The most critical component  
in a successful revitalization  
effort*

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CHANGE IN  
ATTITUDES/  
CHANGE IN  
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*Are we Ready?*

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## Embracing a Year *of* and *for* Change

by Bill Fontana

The 2017-2018 fiscal year is upon us; another year of uncertainty, challenges and opportunities. As is our practice at PDC, the new fiscal year ushers in a new theme for the year before us. The theme for 2017-2018 is “Embracing Change: Empowering the Future of Your Community’s Revitalization Effort.” The old adage that “*the only thing that is constant is change*” has never been truer. This statement is actually a quote from the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, who lived from 535 BC to 475 BC. So, as you can see, the issue is not exactly new.

For some time now, we at PDC have been talking about a theme for the year, and a conference at the end of that year, that addresses this issue of change. The problem has been: what aspect of change do we address? Consider the potential topics:

**Physical Character** The built environment of communities is constantly evolving. For many of us, our aging and decaying infrastructure needs to be upgraded. The adaptive reuse of our historic buildings is evolving as new 21st century economic uses replace many of the traditional economic generators. And as the auto evolves into a smaller, electric, self-driving, self-parking vehicle, the impact of the car on our communities and how we address that evolution will change as well, even as many of us seek to reduce the use of the auto. And a renewed interest in downtown living, while providing exciting new downtown and close-in neighborhood opportunities, further complicates physical improvement decisions.

**Diversity and Inclusiveness** Here I am referring to the composition of the organizations that

govern and oversee the revitalization efforts that we undertake. As the socio-economic character of our communities evolves (see below) so must the composition of our governing bodies, be they public or non-profit. As I have stated on several occasions, it is not just about race/ethnicity. It is also about gender and age. You can add several other easily definable “diversity” characteristics to this list, but I would be happy if we can just begin to address these three in a consistent manner.

**Socio-Demographic Composition** The issue of diversity in our organizations is being driven by the ever changing composition of the people who live and work in our communities. As many of our rural communities continue to shrink in population and get older in the process, the vision for the future of the community and the character of the services we provide must adapt. The same is true for our more urban centers as they deal with a renewed interest in downtown by millennials, boomers and immigrants.

**Retail** The change in retail is undeniable. As Amazon and other web-driven retailers consume a greater share of the market, the impact on our neighborhoods and central business districts will continue to grow. It is not just a question of the merchants losing market share. It is the elimination of local, entry level employment opportunities and decreased pedestrian foot traffic which then impacts the service and hospitality sectors.

**Technology** Last, but certainly not least on this list, is the increasing use of technology. From personal gadgetry to district-wide systems such as cameras, hot-spots, drone delivery systems, data collection



devices, etc., technology will be the ultimate change agent of the future. More than the others previously listed, technology will determine when and IF we leave our homes to physically interact with our neighbors, our merchants and our community.

There is however, one critical and over-riding factor that we must consider and that will ultimately mean more to the success of our programs than any other item on our list - the CULTURE of our organizations. I'm not talking here about whether you are African-American or Caucasian, Italian or Irish, Hispanic or Asian. The element that, in my opinion, will be THE most critical component in a successful revitalization effort will be your organization's willingness and ability to acknowledge, accept and deal with the difficult decisions that all of these other changes will bring about. This is the culture within your organization that defines how you conduct your business, how you make decisions, how you recruit new board members, how willing your organization is to address new issues and hear

new ideas and how willing your organization is to change the "way we have always done things here." In short, how willing your organization is to embrace change by changing itself. So during this year, and at our June 2018 conference in West Chester, we will seek to deal with many of these changes, with an emphasis on culture.

*The element that, in my opinion, will be THE most critical component in a successful revitalization effort will be your organization's willingness and ability to acknowledge, accept and deal with the difficult decisions that all of these other changes will bring about.*

There is another lesser known quote from Heraclitus that is equally applicable to the work we all do. "No person ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and you're not the same person." Here is hoping that you and your organization have the ability to adapt and change so that you can successfully navigate your ever changing river.

# 2017/2018 EVENTS Calendar

*For more information or to register for an event or training, please [visit our online events calendar](#).*

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
New Manager Training	Monday, November 6 - Tuesday, November 7	8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Harrisburg, PA PDC Offices
Community Revitalization Academy: Community Marketing	Wednesday, November 8 - Thursday, November 9	8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Harrisburg, PA PDC Offices
Fall Manager's Make-Up Meeting Regional Leadership Forum	Wednesday, December 6	9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Harrisburg, PA PDC Offices
Statewide Managers Meeting Regional Leadership Forum	Tuesday, February 13	9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Harrisburg, PA
New Manager Training	Monday, February 26 - Tuesday, February 27	8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Harrisburg, PA PDC Offices
Community Revitalization Academy: Asset Enhancement	Wednesday, February 28 - Thursday, March 1	8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Harrisburg, PA PDC Offices
National Main Street Conference	March 26 – March 28	Ongoing Events	Kansas City, MO
New Manager Training	Monday, April 16 - Tuesday, April 17	8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Harrisburg, PA PDC Offices
Community Revitalization Academy: Safe, Clean, & Green	Wednesday, April 18 - Thursday, April 19	8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Harrisburg, PA PDC Offices
PDC Annual Conference	June 3 – June 6	Ongoing Events	West Chester, PA



# THE NEWEST FACES on Main Street & Elm Street



*Venture Lititz*  
**Holly DeKarske ,  
Executive Director**

Holly DeKarske is the new Executive Director of Venture Lititz, the main street program for one of Central Pennsylvania's "coolest small towns".

She has spent the last four years working in the City of York, both in private development and City Hall, focusing on economic and community revitalization. Venture Lititz is an opportunity for Holly to combine her passion for downtowns and community, with her experience in nonprofit, marketing and development. Growing Lititz as a destination, aiding in future redevelopment initiatives, and expanding the support and programming offered to the merchants and community are of top priority.

Holly grew up in Central Pennsylvania, attended the University of Oklahoma to study Marketing, and continues to further expand her education in economic development and urban revitalization.



*Wilkinsburg Community  
Development Corporation*  
**Josh Rolón,  
Main Street Manager**

Josh Rolón joined the WCDC in spring 2017 as the Main Street Manager. He comes to the WCDC from Bloomfield Development Corporation where he was the Community

Coordinator. Before working in Bloomfield, Josh was in the Pittsburgh Office of the Mayor as a liaison to the veteran's community and manager of civic engagement programs like the Civic Leadership Academy.

## ***PDC Board Report***

*The PDC Board of Directors met on August 23, 2017 in the Community Room of the Historic Harrisburg Resource Center.*

*The highlights of the meeting are as follows:*

### **DCED-PDC CONTRACT APPROVAL**

The board was informed that DCED, the Department of General Services and the Governor's Budget Office had all reviewed and approved a new five year contract between DCED and PDC to provide technical assistance to designated Main Street, Elm Street, and Keystone Communities. PDC was required to submit a proposal to DCED and the Department of General Services (DGS) based on a public proposal through DGS's "Invitation to Qualify" (ITQ) process. The contract includes continuation of PDC's New Manager Training, Community Revitalization Academy and annual conference. Reporting support to non-designated organizations receiving Keystone Communities funding is included as well as PDC continuing to serve as the "State Coordinating Program" to the National Main Street Center. Technical assistance, application reviews and annual program assessments will continue to be provided by PDC under the contract. The five year value of the contract is just over \$2.15 million, or about \$430,000 per year, subject to funds being appropriated in the Keystone Communities, or some other, Commonwealth budget line item. This figure represents about 55% of PDC's annual budget. The contract is effective August 16 of 2017 and will expire on June 30, 2022.

### **NEW PDC BOARD MEMBERS**

PDC Board Chairman Larry Newman welcomed two new members to the PDC board for 2017-2018. Gary Laird, Executive Director of the Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce and Mark Ickes, Executive Director of Explore Altoona. Mr. Ickes replaces James Rodriguez of the Kutztown SBDC who moved to France and Mr. Laird will fill out the second term for Blanda Nace of the York County Economic Alliance.

### **PDC BOARD STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT**

The PDC Board determined that it will hold a strategic planning retreat on November 28-29 in State College. With the DCED contract having been approved and several other funding irons in the fire, including continuation of Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh Blueprint Communities contract work, several other third party contracts and increasing interest in the work of PDC's non-profit real estate development assistance subsidiary – Keystone CORE Services – the board felt that this was an opportune time to update its five year plan for the 2018-2023 time frame.

### **PDC 2016-2017 AUDIT UPDATE**

PDC consulting accountant Chuck Bussard informed the board that the accounting firm of Smith, Elliott, Kearns had completed its on-site work in preparation for issuing PDC's 2016-17 fiscal year audit report. A final report will be issued at the board's November 28 meeting in State College. The final report will be impacted by a pending decision by DCED to reimburse PDC for services provided by PDC to designated communities for the March 1 through August 15, 2017 time frame. PDC's previous contract with DCED expired on February 28, 2017. The PDC board determined that it was appropriate for PDC to spend its own resources during the March-August time period, which included the National Main Street Conference in Pittsburgh and PDC's 30th Anniversary mini-conference. During that period, PDC expended over \$224,000 of its own funds to maintain services to designated communities. The decision by DCED will have a significant impact on whether or not PDC registers a net gain or loss for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

## 10 Design Freebies Websites For Your Revitalization Effort

WHETHER YOU'RE BRANDING YOUR ORGANIZATION, creating a brochure to promote the mission of your community revitalization effort or assisting local volunteers in creating a flier for a special event, you can find high-quality resources to help you speed up the process and get things done in a professional manner. There are tons of online design communities sharing free design resources such as mockups, icons, fonts, textures, photos and much more.

To save you time researching design freebies, here's a list of 10 great websites to find free design resources!

### Fribbble

[www.fribbble.com](http://www.fribbble.com)

*Fribbble is a website for curated design freebies from the biggest online design community called Dribbble.*

### Freebiesbug

[freebiesbug.com](http://freebiesbug.com)

*Freebiesbug is a web design blog showcasing free and high-quality design resources. You can download Photoshop, Illustrator, Sketch files and more.*

### Graphic Burger

[graphicburger.com](http://graphicburger.com)

*GraphicBurger is another large website for design freebies. You can download mockups, UI kits, icons, text effects, backgrounds and more.*

### Pixeden

[www.pixeden.com](http://www.pixeden.com)

*Pixeden provides free and premium web design resources. The focus is on prints, icons, vectors and graphics resources.*

### Pixelbuddha

[pixelbuddha.net](http://pixelbuddha.net)

*Pixel Buddha has a huge collection of free and premium design resources. Everything is in one place for your next design project.*

### Free Design Resources

[freedesignresources.net](http://freedesignresources.net)

*Free Design Resources is a valuable website with a vast collection of free design resources with over 5 million downloads.*

### Blugraphic

[www.blugraphic.com](http://www.blugraphic.com)

*Free icons, templates, logos, flags and maps. All of these freebies you will find at Blugraphic.*

### PixelsMarket

[pixelsmarket.com](http://pixelsmarket.com)

*Every week PixelsMarket shares a new freebie. You can find free and premium resources including cover photos for your Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts.*

### Icon Deposit

[www.icondeposit.com](http://www.icondeposit.com)

*Every icon on Icon Deposit is submitted by the best designers from around the world. It's a huge community of icon lovers!*

### Designer Mill

[www.designermill.com](http://www.designermill.com)

*Designer Mill is a bakery website for designers sharing new freebies on a daily basis. Everything from sweet fonts to melting mockups.*



## The Wonder of Downtown West Chester

*West Chester BID to host 2018 Premier Revitalization Conference*

*“Embracing Change: Empowering the Future of Your Community's Revitalization Effort”*

Let's gather together next June 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> to experience first-hand what makes [Downtown West Chester](#) a [GAMSA winner!](#)

In the words of Malcolm Johnstone, Executive Director, West Chester BID, “it's a great place to visit”. West Chester is located in the Brandywine Valley—35 miles west of Philadelphia with 100 regional attractions—the most famous, [Longwood Gardens](#) and [Valley Forge National Historic Park](#).

Although only 1.8 square miles in size, downtown West Chester has numerous attractions and features of great interest and appeal within those boundaries. These include the [Chester County Historical Society](#) and the old Armory—now the new [Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center](#)—both key venues for our conference sessions, meetings and events. When not in sessions or on mobile tours the greatest challenge will be choosing what to see and where to eat! Just within downtown West Chester there are 64 restaurants—appealing to every taste and budget—where, according to Malcolm, “sidewalk dining is a hallmark of the thriving foodie scene”. Then browse—or better yet, make a purchase at—the more than 75 retail shops and dozens of galleries “dotting the walkable brick sidewalks”.

This year's conference hotel is the re-purposed 1930 Warner Theater, [Hotel Warner](#). Opened in 2012, it is now part of Historic Hotels of America and is less than a block from our meeting venues. The room block will open in early January and because of limited capacity at Hotel Warner alternate accommodations are being secured and will be announced at that time.

We've opened the [Call for Proposals](#) and we're counting on our members, readers and revitalization experts to submit ideas to share (don't delay—accepting submissions through November 5<sup>th</sup>). And, of course there are numerous sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities as well; the packages will be announced early this fall. Contact either [Malcolm Johnstone](#) or [Maria Wherley](#) with sponsorship and vendor interest or suggestions.

During walking tours and mobile workshops conference goers will take in West Chester's local history from the authentic buildings, where there's a strong preference to maintain the integrity of [historic structures](#) (4,200 structures listed in the [National Register of Historic Places](#))—visually and in the stories heard behind the walls. We'll venture out of the borough limits to visit neighboring [Historic Kennett Square](#) and other revitalization areas.

Much can be said and written about Downtown West Chester and chances are if you don't arrive early to or stay after the conference, once experienced, you'll certainly make it a place to return to time and again.

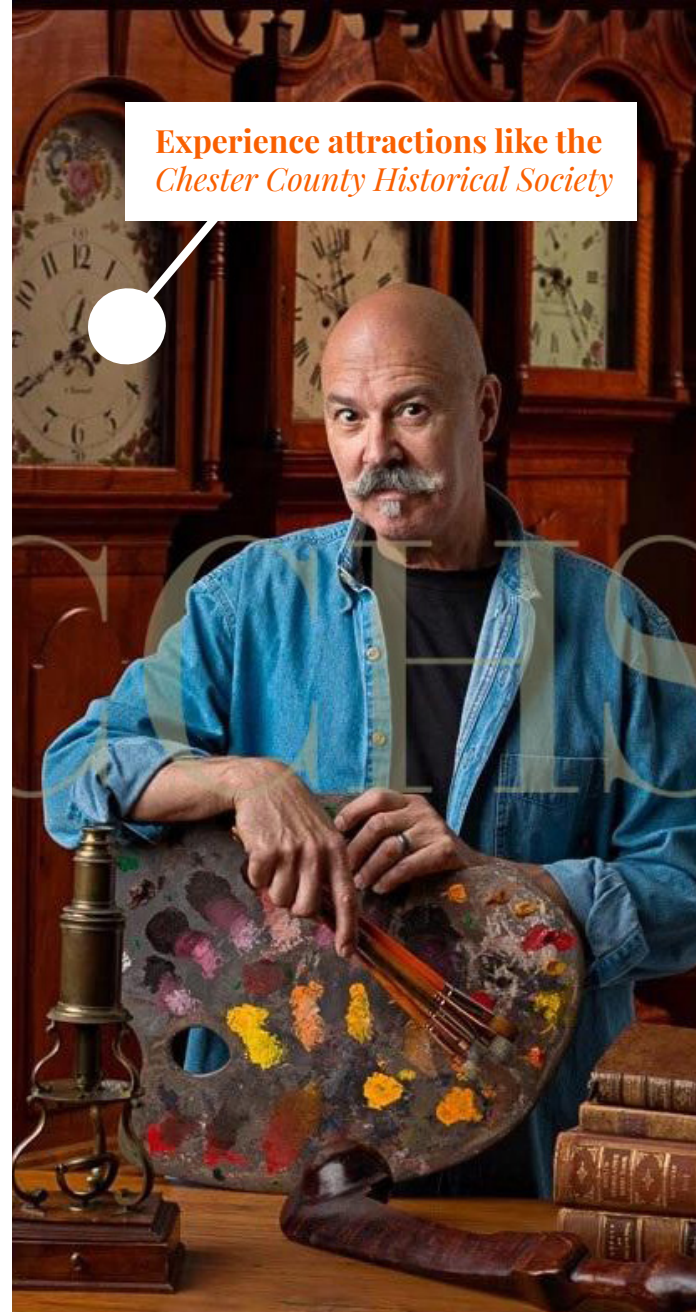
*“West Chester BID is an outstanding example of the Main Street Approach in action—making the downtown an attractive, livable, safe and interesting place for visitors and residents alike.”*

MALCOLM JOHNSTONE,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WEST CHESTER BID





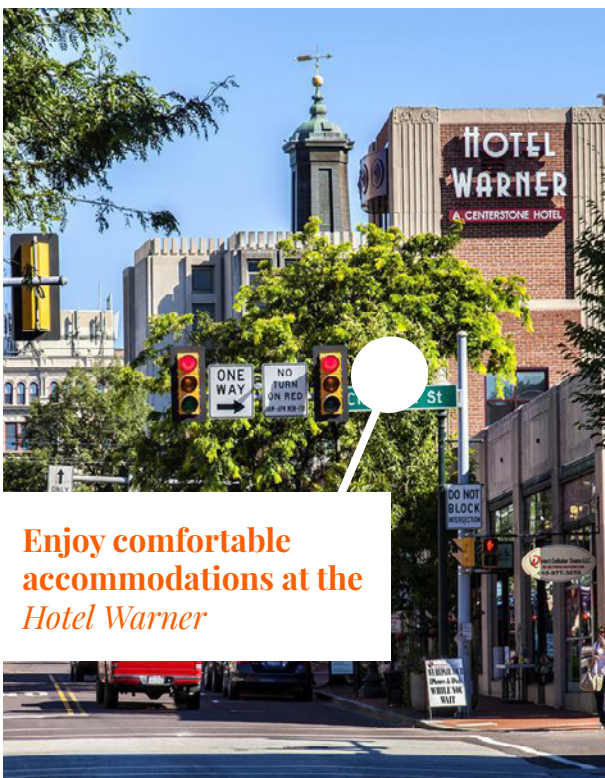
**Become part of**  
*West Chester History*



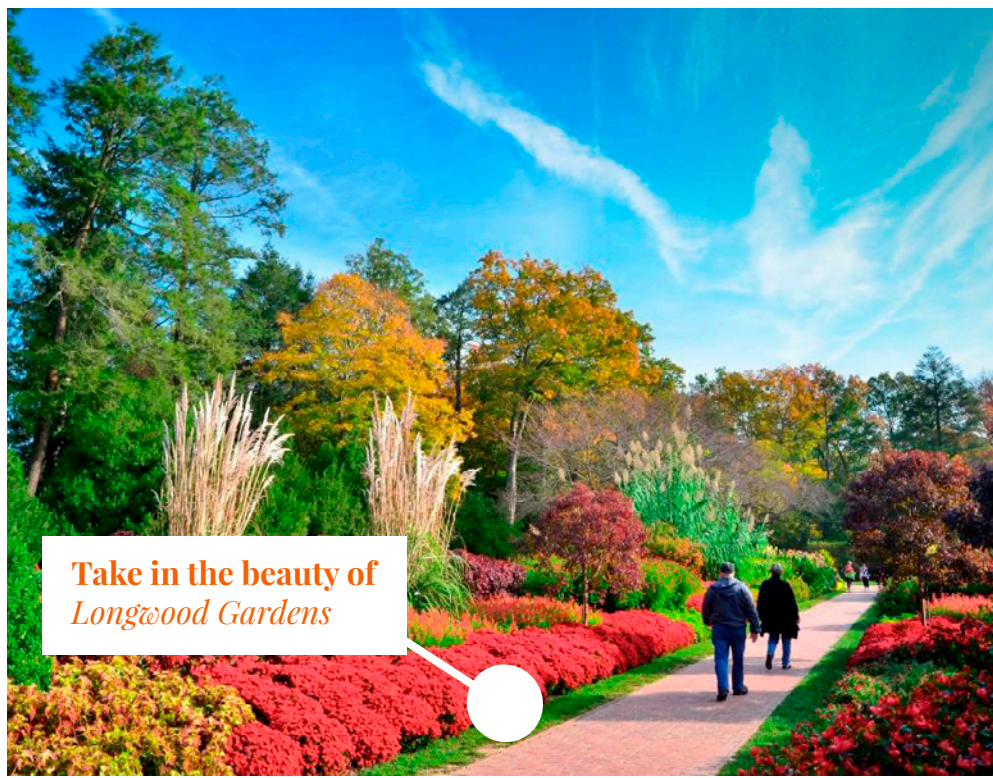
**Experience attractions like the**  
*Chester County Historical Society*



**Get a glimpse into the past at**  
*Valley Forge National Historic Park*



**Enjoy comfortable accommodations at the**  
*Hotel Warner*



**Take in the beauty of**  
*Longwood Gardens*



# West Chester

*The Winner of the Great American Main Street Award for 2017*

*by Stefan Klosowski*

*The town of West Chester is fortunate to have such a dedicated and talented leader as Malcolm Johnstone the Executive Director of the Business Improvement District. Malcolm has been here working with volunteers and local business leaders for sixteen years. The downtown community of West Chester is still basking in the glow of the Great American Main Street Award (GAMSA). The award was presented to the West Chester BID at the National Main Street's Annual Conference in Pittsburgh this past May. This award recognizes communities exemplifying the use of the Main Street Approach to revitalize traditional downtowns and neighborhood business districts.*

## Mr. Johnstone has had an impressive career.

In 1985 he was living in Pendleton, Oregon and one morning, while picking up a cup of coffee at the Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Company in downtown, he asked Ken, the owner, what was new. Ken mentioned that the city was looking for a person to manage a newly formed Pendleton Downtown Association. It sounded interesting so Malcolm applied and was given an interview. In those days, the well-dressed gentleman, that is, one who wore a three-piece suit, evidently had the advantage. He was hired and soon found himself taking a crash course on The Main Street Approach. In 1986, he became the start-up manager for the McMinnville Downtown Association in Oregon and stayed for eight years. He had a five-year stint as the Main Street Specialist for the Oregon Downtown Development Center, went off to Coeur d'Alene Downtown Association in Idaho in 1999, and eventually landed at the West Chester BID.

Malcolm considers West Chester the quintessential historic town, particularly compared to most west coast communities. When the West Chester BID was established in 2001, he applied to be the start-up manager and has enjoyed it ever since. He feels that the Main Street Award was one of his greatest achievements and believes that one of the most important things that the community has achieved is a long term commitment, not just him but most of the BID Board members, who have identified goals that have taken a long time to accomplish. Economic vitality occurs over many years, not just months. The Great American Main Street Award was the first to be awarded to a Pennsylvania community in nearly twenty years.

Malcolm had not planned on a career in revitalizing downtowns. He graduated from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in 1975 with a degree in Classical Guitar Performance and Composition. After a few years as a happy guitar wanderer, he converted over to the Main Street Approach and completed a two-year course created by the National Main Street Center, and graduated in the first class of Certified Main Street Managers in San Francisco in the early 1990s.

In Richard Florida's 2001 book "The Rise of the Creative Class", Florida writes about how many successful community and corporate leaders have avocations in the arts outside of their working life. Likewise, his guitar playing and composing has been a big part of Malcolm's life. He helped establish Pendleton's Oregon East Symphony in 1985, and he composed musicals that were staged by the Gallery Players of Oregon in McMinnville, and most recently,

one of his guitar recordings was used as the sound track for a promotional video of downtown West Chester.

A man of many talents, he has become an amateur historian for the downtown and has published articles about the people, events, and structures that have shaped downtown West Chester. He believes that it is important that the stories behind the historic downtown structures be told. This adds to their historic integrity and is an important aspect of preservation and by preserving the stories of the past; it has an enduring effect on the future.

### *Other awards and accomplishments include:*

- The West Chester Business Improvement District was honored in 2005 by the PDC for the Best Overall Design Award. The award recognized physical improvements that the BID initiated which represented a total investment of over \$14 million.
- The West Chester BID is sustained by an assessment district that overlays the downtown that raises about \$300,000 annually. This is matched by an annual Borough allocation along with funds from the West Chester Downtown Foundation.
- Volunteers from the WCDF organize an annual fund-raiser called "Up On The Roof." This is a fun filled event that takes place on the public garage roof-top.
- One of the most visible and successful marketing campaigns was borrowed from the strategies of regional marketing agencies. This approach is commonly known as destination marketing and is applied to their marketing practices. The results are the ability to reach millions of potential visitors through social media and publications.



*Malcolm had not planned on a career in revitalizing downtowns. He graduated from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in 1975 with a degree in Classical Guitar Performance and Composition.*

- The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development provided funds for a Facade Improvement Program. One of the more striking improvements occurred at 12 East Market St. Maintenance on the structure had been deferred for decades. A new property owner indicated they would like to spruce it up; the BID was able to match their investment with DCED funds.
- Even small businesses like Van Ryn's Barber Shop at 106 East Gay St. were able to see significant improvements with the addition of Facade Grant Funds.



*Representative Carolyn Comitta with daughter at the annual Up On The Roof event in West Chester.*



*PA Downtown Center's annual conference to be held in West Chester in June of 2018*

An interesting thing happened on the way to the GAMSAs awards ceremony. A few minutes before the National Main Street Conference plenary session began in Pittsburgh; Malcolm was a little bit frantic because of the thunderstorm brewing outside and no one from West Chester inside. So he attempted to chill and channel some inner peace. Then his cell phone rang with "no caller ID". Nevertheless, he answered it. It was Governor Tom Wolf -- or so the caller said! A prank call is always good for a laugh, so he went along. It soon became evident it really was the Governor who congratulated West Chester for receiving the GAMSAs. They chatted a while and Malcolm soothed and smiled.

Mr. Johnstone has made a career of revitalizing downtowns and he realizes and appreciates that it takes a village! When he stepped on the stage to receive the award, he was not alone. He had also asked that Bill Fontana and Julie Fitzpatrick share the lime light. Malcolm feels that there is no better place to work in downtown revitalization than Pennsylvania. He believes that the assistance provided by the PDC is second to none and the partnerships in the region such as the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and Chester County Conference & Visitors Bureau are invaluable.

Malcolm and his wife Susan live in downtown West Chester. Several years ago, she was honored as the Missouri Downtown Retailer of the Year so she understands the Main Street concept as much as anyone. Susan has had a successful business in the downtown for many years. She is currently head of a local group of volunteers and volunteers at the Chester County Historical Society. They both walk to work in one of Pennsylvania's most livable great American Main Street communities.

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**MALCOLM JOHNSTONE**

*West Chester Business Improvement District  
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# THEME of CHANGE

## Change in Attitudes = Change within Ourselves

*by Julie Fitzpatrick*

*Through the years we have taught and explained the Eight Principles of the Main Street Approach - most of which are fairly concrete and measurable, but the one that is difficult to impact and the one that is challenging to overcome is - change. Regardless of your age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or political stance - change can be difficult to accomplish. So many of us consider ourselves to be open-minded, fair citizens, but when it comes right down to it...*

*Are we? Are we really?*

Change - or true transformative change, occurs when there is a shift; a shift in one's perspectives, a shift in attitudes, and a shift in behavior. If we are being truly honest, for any of us, that is a difficult role to overcome. Regardless of our educational attainment and life experiences, we are all creatures of habit and of our environment. We feel comfortable and safe when we are surrounded by familiarity and predictability, but if something or someone attempts to challenge our "normal", then look out! We need to have our basic human needs met, those of safety, security, and sustenance, then and only then, are we able to focus on relationships and community. But, those relationships are often comfortable, easy and safe. What happens when someone who may look differently, speak differently, think differently, enters our realm of security? Can we trust them? How can we trust them? Do they want things to change in a way more like "them", and less like "us"? This is the internal dialogue that is occurring in every neighborhood, town, and city all over America, and all over the world.

Can we support change? But, most importantly, are we as community leaders leading by example and supporting and encouraging it? Change happens - whether you want it or not - but what are we doing so that the change that does occur is: healthy, inclusive, sustainable, and welcoming? What is our legacy to the younger generations - are we leaving our neighborhoods, our communities, and our world better than how we found them? What are those issues in your own community that have been divided - whether by the political spectrum or by other varying opinions and viewpoints?

Think about beginning the dialogue...

**INVITE THE COMMUNITY** to have an open and honest conversation; don't hold back, often true breakthroughs only occur when there are open and honest conversations.

**BE WILLING TO LISTEN** to one another and allow and encourage everyone to have a voice. Once empathy is reached, defensiveness is no longer needed.

**REALIZE** that this is a process and solutions will not occur overnight.

**LEAVE EGOS** at the door.

**BE WILLING** to discuss difficult and often ignored topics.

**BRING FOOD.** It may seem trite, but breaking bread together can often create a level playing field and help build a sense of togetherness and community (remember, it's one of our basic human needs). Encourage a potluck and favorite recipes from their grandmother. It's a great way to introduce various cultures and backgrounds, and help to break down barriers.



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Downtown Center  
• *Since 1987* •



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