

# PENNSYLVANIA

The Newsletter Dedicated to Preserving Pennsylvania's Historic Places

Retro Roadtrip Mod Betty

-here had

HELPING YOU MAKE YOUR TOWN A BETTER PLACE.



1910

Providing technical assistance, and educational services for communities in revitalizing their central business districts and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

PENNSYLVANIA Downtown Center PADOWNTOWN.ORG

## Welcome

e are thrilled to welcome the one and only Mod Betty, the ultimate road-tripper from Retro Roadmap, as our guest "curator" for this year's "Destination Pennsylvania" travel edition of our member newsletter. Mod Betty has put together a special list of places in Pennsylvania for you!

As we have in previous issues of this newsletter, we're celebrating "legacy businesses" – those shops, pharmacies, bakeries, diners and other establishments that have endured for generations, servicing the community and playing an important role in the fabric of downtown. They are an important part of the character and economy of Pennsylvania.

Please use this guide to explore, enjoy, and help preserve these local treasures.

A sign we saw outside a shop in Lewisburg summed it up, "Small businesses are the heartbeat of your neighborhood, the spine of your local economy, and the spirit of your town."

See you on Main Street,

Mindy D. Crawford

Mindy G. Crawford, Executive Director WE HOPE YOU'LL SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES ON SOCIAL MEDIA! #LEGACYLOVE



257 North Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101 www.preservationpa.org

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# Hello, from Mod

Hello Preservation Pennsylvanians – this is Mod Betty from RetroRoadmap.com, the website where I share places from the mid-century and more that survive and retain their authentic vintage charm.

I am so excited to share with you some of my favorite downtown destinations across Pennsylvania, so you can learn about them and love them the way I do!

Nothing makes me happier than eating a grilled cheese sandwich while seated at a lunch counter located in a family-owned 5 & 10, hearing music played on a historic pipe organ, sipping on an ice cream soda at a drugstore soda fountain, or watching classic films in a downtown movie house with a shining neon marquee.

We are lucky in Pennsylvania that we have so many of these places still around, yet we can't take them for granted. For every charming downtown that honors its history there are many more that are cookie-cutter replicas of each other.

The good news? How much fun you can have while you're also supporting the places that are important to you! Miniature golf, historic tours, classic cocktails, a shopping treat – every little bit helps when you're in a Retro Roadmap-worthy spot. And of course, they're perfect spots for snapping photos and sharing on social media, with their architectural details, vintage decor, and distinctive signage.

So get behind the wheel, grab this guide, and discover (or rediscover) what makes our Pennsylvania downtowns so special. And don't forget to turn up the fun!



# Betty

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## Berks County Berks County Ham with are j muc

Hamburg is one of my fave little towns with a lot of cool stuff going on. Here are just a few highlights, but there's so much more! Plan a visit!

## ADAMS & BRIGHT PHARMACY 306 State St.

## This little gem dates from 1906 as a full-service

pharmacy and is filled with original items found in storage above the shop. The soda fountain was added in the late 1920s. It's one-stop shopping – have a sundae at the marble counter and grab your sundries before you go! Pharmacist May Bright (as in Adams & Bright) received her pharmacy degree in 1918. Today, there's still a woman filling prescriptions and proffering advice as owner Loralee Heckman, Pharm.D., carries on the tradition.



## STRAND THEATRE 65.4th St.

The Our Town Foundation, Hamburg's community revitalization organization,

purchased the theatre to prevent its demise. Under new management (a mother-daughter team, Adam and Sholl) since 2016, the Strand (built in 1920 in a building from 1799, one of the earliest in Hamburg) is being revitalized one project at at time.

## Quakertown Bucks County

Not that Mod Betty plays favorites, but Sine's 5 & 10 Cent Store in Ouakertown has a special place in her heart. Swoon over that cheery, bright red exterior, then step inside and be transported back in time. Sit down at the lunch counter to get your bearings - and a grilled cheese and milkshake - before shopping. The Harr family celebrated the store's centennial in 2012, and mixed in among the cookie cutters, retro oilcloth to cover your kitchen table, back-to-school supplies, toys, notions, doodads and more, vou'll find displays that highlight the history of the store and Ouakertown residents.

## Mod Betty recommends:

SINE'S 5 & 10 236 W. Broad St.

## **MOYER'S SHOES** 316 W. Broad St.

(family-owned and qualityfocused since 1952)

## and an array of **ANTIQUE STORES**



## Eastern PA

# Neutour



You'll love exploring the charming little downtown area of Newtown (so charming that the entire business district is on the National Register of Historic Places). Here are a few highlights to get you started.

## A NEWTOWN HARDWARE HOUSE

108 S. State St.

This blast-from-the-past hardware store has been in continuous operation at the same location for almost 150 years (opened in 1869 for those who don't want to do the math). Just because it is that old doesn't guarantee its future, but luckily owners Bill and Meg Newell stepped in just a couple of years ago to buy the business, moments before it was slated to close for good.

## NEWTOWN BOOK & RECORD EXCHANGE

#### 102 S. State St.

This quaint shop carries a large selection of new and used LPs and CDs, hard-to-find collectibles, and used paperback books for trade or sale.

## THE NEWTOWN THEATRE 120 N. State St.

Walking past this staid brick structure, you might think it is a church. Well, at one point it was, for traveling ministers. Or perhaps you might think it is a town hall? It was that too – built in 1831 as Newtown Hall, later reconfigured in the 1880s as a place where the townspeople would gather for meetings and stage shows. This is The Newtown Theatre – thought to be the oldest movie theatre in the United States! The glow of the neon sign above the door is one of the only details giving a nod to its Hollywood history. It was the first theatre to show movies, beginning in 1906.

## Phoenixille Chester County

COLONIAL

Healthfully AIR CONDITIONED

The Blob turs 60 this year!

## THE COLONIAL THEATRE

#### 227 Bridge St.

Built in 1903, the theatre was recently expanded and offers movies, music, and special events from TEDx talks to Wurlitzer organ recitals. Each summer the kitsch-filled Blobfest festival celebrates the 1958 sci-fi thriller that shot pivotal scenes at the theatre Phoenixville, once a thriving industrial center, now offers an impressive selection of restaurants, independent shops and brew pubs - all in close proximity to walking/biking trails and the history of Valley Forge National Historical Park.

## Mod Betty recommends:

Vintage treasures at

LULU BOUTIQUE 12 S. Main St.

MINX VINTAGE 24 Main St.

## STEEL CITY COFFEEHOUSE 203 Bridge St.

Food and live music.



# Beruice Columbia County

A great spot to celebrate Pennsylvania's entrepreneurial genius is here in Berwick, home of the Stuart Tank used in WWII and made right here at the American Car & Foundry Company. Come for the annual WWII reenactment or visit to enjoy Berwick's other throwback charms.



## 🔺 WHITE HORSE GRILL

#### 1200 4th Ave.

Look at the white horse outside! Check out those terrazzo floors! Jukeboxes in the booths! The White Horse looks almost exactly like it did when it opened in 1940! This is the type of place that gets Mod B acting like a total spaz – trying to act all normal and order breakfast when just below the surface, I'm like "omg-omg-omg-this-place-is-so-awesome!"

## THE BERWICK THEATER AND GENTER FOR COMMUNITY ARTS 110 E. Front St.

This theater has roots that go back to the early 20th century and the Patriotic Sons of America. Today, the business is a family affair, and the theater serves as an important downtown anchor.

#### **MICKEY'S RESTAURANT** 104 S. Mulberry St.

Mickey's has been serving homemade food since 1939. Coffee is only 25 cents!

# Media

## Delaware County

Did you know that Media is the only suburban town in the United States to have an operational trolley running down the middle of its main street? It's been operating for more than 100 years.



Whether you get here via trolley or not. Mod Betty says don't miss these two spots!

## **MEDIA THEATRE**

## DEALS VARIETY STORE

15 W. State St.

Deals was once a Woolworths store and carries on the tradition of stocking a little bit of everything. Admire goodies on the shelves – along with architectural details like the pressed tin ceiling and wooden floors. (And don't miss the stationery annex down the street.)

#### 104 E. State St.

This 1927 theatre is Delaware County's only professional music theatre, bringing big-city excitement to the small-town feeling of State Street. The wonderful neon marquee lights up the street!





Lancaster effortlessly blends history (settled by German immigrants in 1709) with hip. Start any visit at the Lancaster

Plancaster County ter Central Market, the oldest continuously-running public farmers' market in the country since 1730. Try delicious smoked meats and cheeses, German specialities like spaetzle, mustard or dumplings, and take home jars of jams or pickles made from traditional Amish and Mennonite family recipes. Mod Betty insists that you don't miss the 300 block of North Queen Street. Check out these hot spots to shop:



## **A REPTURE DIRER** 924 N. Prince St.

Eniov homestyle cooking at the family-owned Neptune Diner. This stainless-steel diner was built in 1951 by the Mountain View Diner Company of Singac, N.J. (Mod Betty-approved, also featured on the Travel Channel!)

## SPACE

334 N. Queen St.

Mid-century modern and fun finds; an eclectic mix of vintage and modern housewares.

## **TELLTALE DRESS**

323 N. Queen St., Suite 101, 2nd Floor Located in the historic Keppel Building, browse carefullycurated vintage clothing for women and men.

## **MY AUNT DEBBIE**

#### 336 N. Oueen St.

Boutique filled with locally handcrafted fashion, accessories and home goods using vintage textiles and curious objects. (She makes custom wedding dresses!)

## THE SCARLET WILLOW

#### 320 N. Oueen St.

A little bit of all things vintage! Clothing, accessories, furniture, home décor and much more.

## MADCAP & CO.

#### 310 N. Queen St.

Exceptional handmade and vintage goods – with a retro candy counter! Find hundreds of local, regional, American-made, and fair trade products.

## BUILDING CHARACTER

### 342 N. Oueen St.

Marketplace filled with vintage and handmade/ upcycled finds. Don't miss the Heritage Press Museum, preserving the craft and history of letterpress printing with live demonstrations.



Ambler

## Montgomery County

A sleepy borough no more! You'll find pedestrian-friendly Ambler on lots of "top 10" lists, and the town draws visitors day and night to its quaint main thoroughfare lined with restaurants and familyowned businesses. You can buy a model train in an old train station, rent a tux, paint some pottery, try award-winning craft beer, buy the perfect birthday present, and so much more.

Mod Betty insists you check out:



## **THE AMBLER THEATER** 108 E. Butler Ave.

Opened by its owner Warner Bros. on December 31, 1928, the theater features an ornate terracotta facade in the Spanish Colonial style. It now operates as a nonprofit, community-based movie theater that specializes in independent, art, and foreign films – with lots of special events. As part of ongoing rehab work,



the original 30' vertical neon sign was recreated with a Keystone Grant from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission.

### COSTA DELI 901 E. Butler Pike

Owner David Costa's Italian grandfather opened this luncheonette in 1950, and it remains very much a family business today. Sit at the counter and try the best milkshake in town, or shop the delectable grocery section, featuring a large selection of imported Italian pastas, sauces and olive oils. Costa stocks these items to

save their customers a trip into Philadelphia's Italian Market. In the refrigerated section, you'll also spy quality Di Bruno's cheeses and Talluto's pasta, other South Philly staples. The photos lining the walls reflect the history of the family and the business and remind us that this family-owned place has been around for 65+years. We hope it sticks around for 65 more!

## Eastern PA

This 300-year-old town has history aplenty. Look online for

from the Upper Moreland Historical Association. While you're walking, check out a great assortment of the downloadable walking tour shops, including one of the most photogenic dry cleaners you've ever seen! Take a walk and explore all the antique, collectible, and thrift stores. Mod Betty isn't sure what I need with another fez, but I came home with one!

## 🔻 BURDICK'S NEWS AGENCY

#### 206 S. York Rd.

Burdick's News Agency has something for everyone - including a working soda fountain! The Burdick family has owned and operated the shop since 1950. The building itself dates to 1860.



NU-LIFE CLEANERS

#### 340 S. York Rd.

If I lived near here I'd bring all of my drycleaning there! AND I'd make sure to let them know that the reason I was bringing my business to them is because they kept their unique mid-century modern look and didn't try to boxify and blandify in an attempt to look new.

## Mod Betty recommends:

Montgomery County

### **WRDV RADIO** 89.3 FM

tatboro

While driving through town don't forget to tune your radio to 89.3 FM WRDV, located right on York Road in downtown Hatboro. Mod Betty is a fan of singing along with the old standards from the 1920s - 1940s, but they play a wide variety of tunes for all to croon to!

## V DADDYPOPS DINER 232 N. York Rd.

Though the diner is classic stainless steel on the outside, on the inside, it is a bit more rustic, with wood panels, booths and counter stools. Check out the Seeburg jukebox.





Easton demands to be explored. Take a walking tour of the downtown historic district, or enjoy a mule-drawn canal boat ride. If you like museums, there are canal or crayon options! Mod Betty scoped out RetroRoadmap-worthy spots for you to check out.



## **THE CARMELCORN SHOP** 62 Centre Square

SALTED DUTS

They pop the corn on-site (the secret to making their signature treat so fluffy and light). You'll also find a trove of homemade chocolates, old-fashioned candies and flavors (horehound, anyone?), nuts galore, peppermints, and more.

## STATE CAFE AND GRILL

14-16 S. 5th St. Enjoy locally sourced breakfast and lunch – and oh! – that vintage-inspired neon sign!

## EASTON ANTIQUE EMPORIUM

20 S. 3rd St.

A project of the Easton Main Street Initiative, this marketplace offers more than 40 dealers offering antiques and collectibles, from Victoriana to midcentury modern.

## STATE THEATRE 453 Northampton St.

Almost demolished in the 1980s, this 1901 building is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It hosts the annual FREDDY awards, honoring excellence in high school musical theater.

# Eastern PA Chestnut Hill



## philadelphia County

Although it feels like a leafy suburban village, Chestnut Hill is part of the city of Philadelphia. Mod Betty wants to tip you off to a few classics here at "the top of the hill," however, Germantown Avenue is lined with wonderful, independentlyowned shops through Mount Airy into Germantown.



#### 🔪 WM, A. KILIAN HARDWARE 8450 Germantown Ave.

Philadelphia's oldest hardware store, established in 1913. Sandwiched between the wooden floors and tin ceiling, you can find just about anything – paint, light bulbs, watering cans, birdseed, tools, snow shovels. However, Kilian's has found a niche by stocking the hard-to-find items particular to the old homes prevalent in the neighborhood. Both local residents and historic homeowners from across the country consult with Kilian's when looking for antique doorknobs, window sash weights and chains, iron strap hinges, and glass drawer pulls for their 100-year-old homes.

What is this? Kilian produces the Franklin Busybody, a device attributed to Benjamin Franklin that uses three mirrors to allow one to look out a second floor window and see the street below.



#### 🔺 MERMAID INN 7673 Germantown Ave.

Some places are known by word of mouth only, and Chestnut Hill's Mermaid Inn is one of them. While it's practically centuries older than her typical Retro Roadmap 1920s-1960s sweet spot, Mod Betty is charmed by the historic yet welcoming atmosphere of this cozy spot, so she's gettin' the word out. The stone building dates to 1919 and owner Joanne Mekis carries on the hospitality after her father, who bought the place in 1959. Meet friends for drinks and pub dining, and stay for the music!

# Cettysburg

Now, when you think of Gettysburg, you may think of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War, but let Mod Betty show you another side of this charming small town!

## NESTIC MAJEST HOLIDAY HOLIDAY

Middle PA

### **LINCOLN DINER** 32 Carlisle St.

Though remodeled, this was originally a 1954 Silk City diner. It opened in 1955 as the Varsity Diner and became the Lincoln Diner in 1971. Stop in for homestyle cooking 24/7!

## THE MAJESTIC THEATER 25 Carlisle St.

The Majestic bills itself as "the grandest small-town theater in America!" When it opened in 1925, it was the largest vaudeville and silent movie theater in south-central Pennsylvania. For years, the ornate theater served as the cultural crossroads of commerce, college and community – just as it does today, featuring live music, theater and movies.



## ERNIE'S TEXAS LUNCH

58 Chambersburg St. Since 1921, Ernie's has been serving their texas weiners slathered with meat sauce and covered with onions. It's a beloved community institution!

## Middle PA

Cumberland County



Carlisle has a historic college at one end and historic buildings (see the damage from Civil War cannonballs!) at the other. Get historical perspective at the Cumberland County Historical Society (21 N. Pitt St.) and then experience all this pedestrian-friendly town has to offer.

arlise

## ▲ MASSEY'S FROZEN CUSTARD

600 W. High St.

A favorite destination since 1949 for delicious frozen custard, milkshakes, pretzels and more. And get a load of the giant cone in that amazing neon sign!





## MISS RUTH'S TIME BOMB 24 N. Hanover St.

This shop started out online, but the owner always dreamed of operating a brick-and-mortar retail shop. Miss Ruth now presides over a "vintage dreamland and community cultural hot spot" where you can find an outstanding assortment of vintage goodies from the 1920s to now, sourced from all over the country.

## CARLISLE THEATRE 40 W. High St.

This historic, art deco theatre in the center of town has been showing movies since 1939 and it was the first public air-conditioned building in Carlisle! Its offerings have expanded to include musical acts, live theater productions, and family programming.

# PRETZELS Lebanon County





## ▲ SHUEY'S PRETZELS

#### 702 E. Lehman St.

Shuey's Pretzels is a family-owned and run pretzel bakery. Open since 1927, the tiny shop has been nestled in a primarily residential area since 1941. They offer both hard and soft pretzels, all hand-twisted.

## Mod Betty also recommends:

## SNITZ CREEK BREWERY

7 N. 9th St. Drink beer and support charity!

## LOSER'S MUSIC

#### 728 Cumberland St.

Founded over 90 years ago, this family-owned business has been passed down from generation to generation. Source instruments and sheet music here.

## HIDDEN STILL SPIRITS

#### 435 Willow St.

Get in the "spirit," sipping in a wonderful 100-year-old building downtown.

## SELTZER'S LEBANON BOLOGNA

#### 61 W. Front St. in nearby Palmyra

Seltzer's started making lebanon bologna in 1902, and they continue to produce it the old-fashioned way – in tall, wooden smokehouses over hand-tended fires, using a family recipe that has been handed down over generations. You can check out their outlet store – and shop for antiques!

## **WERTZ CANDIES** 718 Cumberland St.

This candy store is the epicenter for a delicacy loved for generations by people from Lebanon County. It's one of only a handful of places in the entire world that makes Opera Fudge and the biggest producer of this local treat. Opened in 1931 by Bill Wertz, this tiny shop on Cumberland Street is still family-owned and run by grandsons William, Richard and Charles.



### **MEL'S DINER** 8 E. Cumberland St.

The neon sign in front of Mel's is a knockout! Pull in and park next to the 1955 vintage O'Mahony diner. I was thrilled to discover that the booths each have a vintage Seeburg Consolette jukebox.





## ▲ WELLSBORO DINER

19 Main St.

Check out this 1938 Sterling diner, with its barrel roof and cream and old-school burgundy colored interior. Photo credit: Ruhrfisch

## ARCADIA THEATRE 50 Main St.

This theatre has been a fixture since 1921, the height of the silent film era, though now it offers the community a selection of film, theatre and music performances.



# DUNHAM'S DEPARTMENT STORE 45 Main St. Serving the community since 1905 th

Serving the community since 1905, this is one of the last family-owned and operated independent department stores in the country. Check out that lovely 1932 art deco facade! Photo: Doug Wells

Bedford County

The area around Bedford is Retro Roadtrip mecca, smack dab on the historic Lincoln Highway (the 3,400-mile road that stretches from New York to San Francisco)!

Western PA

See more neat little things:

### GIANT COFFEE POT 108 Telegraph Rd. Roadside architecture rescue!

## PITT THEATRE

**134 E. Pitt St.** A simple old-fashioned movie house (since 1939), it wowed us with the size of the auditorium and screen.

## PRESIDENT BUCHANAN'S "SUMMER WHITE HOUSE"

2138 Business Route 220 Now the Bedford Springs Resort.



JEAN BONNET TAVERN
6048 Lincoln Highway

Mod Betty admits that sometimes the places she loves are not exactly defined as "retro." Such is the case with this 18th-century tavern. But it's so charming! Photo: The Progress Fund



oro

300 W. Pitt St. Beautiful art deco.

## LINCOLN MOTOR COURT

5104 Lincoln Highway, Mann's Choice

For those of you not familiar with the concept of the motor or cabin court, just think of an old-timey motel where each room is a tiny little cottage. The Lincoln Motor Court has been around since 1948 and has been lovingly owned and maintained by the Altizer family since 1983.



## THE PIED PIPER

of the Lincoln Highway actually resides a few miles west of Bedford in Schellsburg, but alerts eastbound travelers that they're about to enter Bedford and have a swingin' vintage time! He's about all that's left from Storyland, but the owners of the property keep him nicely maintained, and we thank them for that.

There's so much to see and do in Erie, but here are a few of Mod Betty's favorites!



Western PA

## 🔺 WARNER THEATRE

#### 811 State St.

This lovely art deco theatre, built in 1930, is listed on the National Register. The fantastically ornate "picture palace" now serves as the cultural center for the region. Photo: PNoble805

## WALDAMEER PARK

#### 3100 W. Lake Rd.

Established in 1896, this is the fourth oldest amusement park in Pennsylvania, and the 10th oldest in the United States. Check out the awesome retro rides, like the Comet wooden roller coaster, built by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company in 1951.

## LAURENCE PARK DINOR

Erie County

#### 4019 Main St.

This National Register-listed Silk City diner was manufactured in 1948, and has been in operation since then. The unusual spelling of "dinor" is speculated to have been a typographical error that was never corrected, or a variant derived from the German language. Wikipedia says that by 1930, three out of five diners in Erie used the spelling; by 1958, it was used by over 90 percent of Erie "dinors."

### V PULAKOS CHOCOLATES 2530 Parade St.

George Pulakos arrived from Philadelphia in 1903 and began selling his wares from a pushcart. You can still buy the famous marshmallow and sponge candy, an Erie taste treat!



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AND

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