

EDITORIAL: Don't just fault Veri and Jamanis

The *Intelligencer Journal New Era* article “Dispute over direction, control of PAM leads 9 trustees to resign” was well written, well intentioned, direct in storyline, and entertaining to read. However, readers would be misled to place the full blame for the financial debacle of the Pennsylvania Academy of Music on co-founders Michael J. Jamanis and his wife Fran Veri, rather than perceiving what went amiss holistically.

Fran Veri is quoted as saying “*The academy has got to be driven by its mission. I realize the business world will say it's driven by its finances. But the business plan must support the mission. The mission must not be modified to support the business plan.*” On the surface, this appears to be utter nonsense. But this is the way most artists see the world! Should we expect them to think like bankers, manufacturers, lawyers, or merchants?

Cultural institutions must have a working relationship between business leadership and artistic leadership... So where was the board of trustees who had the responsibility for making the business decisions for the Academy?

The article goes on to say, “*The new trustees also persuaded the Ferree Foundation of Lancaster, which had partially guaranteed the mortgage, to support the plan. This was done by signing over other PAM assets to the Foundation. (Ferree is led by former PAM chairman Paul Ware, who pushed in vain to close PAM at a June board meeting, then resigned the next day, Veri said.)*”

Ware, heir to a fortune, is to be admired for his philanthropy. But his business acumen is subject to

question... Ware, as chairman, was as responsible for moving ahead as Veri and Jamanis!

It should also be noted that Robert Falk, MD, who resigned as chair over the weekend, was also chair of the board before Ware took over.

Nor should too much credit be given to the business committee that was formed last year in attempt to rescue PAM's finances—despite the abilities of its members, their hard work, and good intentions. Perhaps this could not be avoided short of filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, which would have bought time for reorganization and reduced debt. But the outcome was uncertain. Once the building was given over to United National Community Bank on the basis of a short term lease and no established plan to move the school, whatever opportunity PAM had for survival at its current location was slight.

This entire drama played out against a background of lifelong friendships among the participants and major donors. As so often is the underlying reason for error in Lancaster affairs, acquiescence to establishment figures and the desire to get along socially undermined critical judgment and discouraged leadership.

In summary, there never was effective business leadership at PAM, from start to finish. Until almost the very end, direction was given over or seized by the artists. Those who allowed such a situation to occur are at least as much to blame as are Veri and Jamanis.

City snow removal bill estimated at \$340,000

Between the heavy snowfall of last Wednesday, February 10, and the storm of the previous weekend, the City of Lancaster has had to shell out about \$340,000 for snow removal and cleanup efforts, according to Public Works Director Charlotte Katzenmoyer. The first snowfall absorbed about \$90,000, she said, while the second drew an additional \$250,000 from City road maintenance funds.

Counting yet another \$90,000 for December's snowstorm, the City has spent more than \$430,000 for

snow removal this winter—at least a quarter of a million dollars above the 2009-2010 allocation...

There is a chance, Mayor Rick Gray noted, that the City could see some of that \$250,000 returned. According to Gray, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) may reimburse money spent on outside contractors, a provision that last occurred for the City in 2003. *"If we get reimbursed, then we would have some money for paving,"* Gray said.

Report: Nation's libraries get more use, less funding

From the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*: *"Preliminary figures from a new American Library Association survey of how libraries fared in 2009 show that nearly 75 percent of them were handed significant government budget cuts, forcing libraries to reduce services. Pennsylvania registered a 27 percent reduction in state library aid."*

"At the same time, demand for services was growing, fueled in part by rising unemployment. The jobless were flocking to their public libraries to use their Internet services to look for work..."

ASSOCIATED PRESS: An article, **"Debt will still grow, even with recovery"**, is sub-headed, *"Congress rejected a bipartisan deficit commission that could have forced painful steps on tax increases and entitlements."* The article states, *"The commission would have been modeled on one that makes military base-closing decisions, forcing Congress to take up or down votes."*

WATCHDOG: Ironically, had all members who originally sponsored the bill voted for it, it would have passed. This is testimony to the hypocrisy of our elected representatives and, in most cases, to their subordinating the welfare of the nation to bi-partisanship. Many would rather have this country fail than allow the Obama Administration to succeed. Growl!

SUNDAY NEWS: An article, **"Hotel room tax off 8% in 2009"**, concludes, *"According to a study by Smith Travel Research, the number of hotel rooms in Lancaster County has increased by 35 percent since 1990, while demand has remained flat."*

county guarantees of debt (per a Fox 43 survey), the newspapers jammed the convention center project and their Marriott Hotel down the taxpayers' throats...

WATCHDOG: Despite report after report indicating the thin hotel demand, and despite the wishes of 78% of the county population who opposed

Meanwhile, we saddled the hotel industry with a 6% room sales tax, which, as a *de facto* price increase, discourages patronage, much to the economic harm of this vital local industry.

The above have been excerpted from NewsLanc.com.
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