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McCaskey mock trial succumbs in regional final

It was a well argued case on both sides, but defending regional champions Cumberland Valley High School from Mechanicsburg prevailed over McCaskey in a close and well fought contest.

McCaskey was given the role of the prosecution in the finals, a task that many consider harder than the defense in this fictional murder case, given the lack of corpse and the presence of an alternative suspect.

The team had worked arduously over the past two weeks and had significantly improved the prosecution's case, but this time they were up against their most formidable opponent. Cumberland Valley showed no visible lapses.

One can only speculate what the outcome would have been had the luck of the draw gone the other way.

There were tears, hugs, and general disappointment upon hearing the jury's decision. But for many members of the McCaskey team, there is next year. They had won eight out of nine contests.

As for the seniors, it's time to catch up with their assignments and for some to join spring athletic teams. Their only remaining high school anxiety is whether they will be receiving approvals in April from the colleges of their first choice.

The teenagers saw themselves this day as winners or losers. The audience recognized them all as the leaders of the future.

JSID: Extending the reach of city neighborhoods

In the next decade, James Street Improvement District president Lisa Riggs hopes to see more of the same within the organization's territory. *"When we think about where the community could be five or ten years from now, you take an already pretty incredible residential base, and you grow it,"* Riggs said. Specifically, she sees this process being driven by a growing 'connectivity' between various city neighborhoods and services.

With the \$12 million renovation of the Lancaster Amtrak station and new city blocks to be patched into former industrial sites, Riggs expects new and improved physical connections to bring considerable growth to the city's north and northeast. *"Even for those of us who have general*

knowledge of the projects, it's hard for us to get our arms around how that's going to change the community landscape," Riggs said, *"But it no doubt will."*

It should come as no surprise that the JSID's next big initiative is all about connecting district neighborhoods with increased quality-of-life amenities.

"How do you get people from these neighborhoods out here?," Riggs hypothetically asked, then pointing to Long's Park on a large map of the JSID territory. The park, though owned by Lancaster City, is virtually inaccessible to city **[Continued...]**

pedestrians. "It's not that long of a distance," Riggs noted, "It should be accessible somehow."

The solution proposed by the JSID is the development of a designated pedestrian trail that would link city neighborhoods to the park.

As for where this trail will begin and what course it will take along the way, Riggs remains uncertain. It could simply track alongside Harrisburg Pike, Riggs said, or it could extend from the city's west end into Buchanan Park and then follow the Farmingdale Trails to Farmingdale Road and, finally, end at the park...

LGH's reply to inquiries re its lack of public health efforts

Background: The executive director of the County Drug and Alcohol Commission, Rick Kastner, has estimated the heroin addict population in Lancaster County to be between 5,000 and 10,000. Lancaster General Health's reported earnings surpassed \$113 million in 2008, one of the highest among hospitals in the state. LGH's stated mission is "to advance the health and well-being of the communities we serve..."

*The sharing of used needles is the largest cause of the spread of HIV/AIDS through the heroin addict population and from them to the general population. Having helped bring about the deregulation of the sale of syringes and thus removing any stigma from syringe distribution, the funder for the decade-old Lancaster syringe exchange, **NewsLanc**'s publisher Robert Field, is redirecting his support to other charitable efforts.*

The following is an e-mail exchange between Field and John P. Lines, director of public relations and corporate communications for Lancaster General Health:

QUESTION: I have heard a rumor that LGH was offering to provide some funding [for the proposed Urban League syringe exchange] subject to conditions. Is this correct, and what can you tell me about LGH's offer and conditions?

REPLY: *LG Health is not providing funding, nor offering to provide funding, for the Urban League's syringe exchange program. We provided [Urban League CEO Josh Dixon] an explanation for our decision.*

QUESTION: Has LGH offered to fund Bethel AME's current syringe exchange? If so, how much a month?

REPLY: *LG Health has not offered to fund Bethel AME's syringe exchange program.*

QUESTION: Also, LGH had initiated a program for the treatment of heroin addicts. Is it ongoing? How many hours a week is the clinic open? Is there more than one doctor at a time? How many patients are they treating each week? How many new, how many repeat?

REPLY: *Lancaster General Health's Suboxone Clinic opened July 8, 2009. Patients are seen by one physician every Wednesday from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Three physicians participate in the program. We schedule up to 12 patients per week. In 2009, we held 17 clinics and conducted 83 visits with a no-show rate of 8%. The same volume continues today.*

All referrals go through RASE and patients are required to either attend Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous meetings or counseling. About half of the patients are new to the program.

NEWSLANC COMMENTS: Does treating only 12 addicts per week sufficiently "advance the health and well-being of the communities we serve..."?

Furthermore, why not use a tiny portion of the vast profits to fund a syringe exchange so that HIV / AIDs do not become a local scourge?

**The above items have been excerpted from NewsLanc.com.
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