



The New “Broom” at the SD of L is “Sweeping Clean”

Several months ago, *NewsLanc* was advised by a knowledgeable observer that the School District of Lancaster had two huge problems: The first was the leadership of its athletic program. The second was the administration of McCaskey East High School.

It is worthy of note that within less than two months of Pedro Rivera assuming the Superintendent of School position, Merv Witmer has been engaged to replace Allen McCloud as interim athletic director and Jay Butterfield has been appointed to succeed

Damaso Albino as the new McCaskey East principal. Both McCloud and Albino are returning to teaching math.

Yet to be seen is whether Assistant Superintendent Drue Miles, to whom the former athletic director reported, remains with the SD of L. Also, is it practical for all principals to report directly to the superintendent? Given Rivera’s many other duties, it doesn’t seem feasible to us.

Is Lancaster Alliance a Front for Predatory Interests?

In its Aug. 22 cover story entitled “*Money Grab: Does Big Business Hide Behind ‘Non-Profits’?*” the **Lancaster Post** challenges whether the Lancaster Alliance is a tool of business interests who directly benefit from its efforts, and therefore whether it qualifies for 501(c)(3) status which permits donations to be treated as charitable contributions.

The **Post** asks “*Can a non-profit organization legally work to further the business interests of its directors?*” As an example, it points out that in 1999 the Alliance “*sponsored and paid for a study which advocated the establishment of a Lancaster County hotel-motel tax (over \$3 million a year) and the building of a public convention center beside a ‘private’ hotel at Penn Square.*” The **Post** reveals that three members that were to end up owning the hotel – Fulton Bank, High Group, and Lancaster Newspapers, Inc. – made large contributions to pay for the study. (Fulton subsequently dropped out of the project.)

The **Post** goes on to charge that “*This non-profit not only ‘fronts’ for the various corporate interests, but is also used to create propagandistic quotes that are intended to influence the public.*” It then provides examples.

The article suggests that business interests are again using the Lancaster Alliance to further the scheme to obtain “Federal and State Funding for the estimated \$12-14 million to install the two-mile [street car] loop....”

Listed as major contributors to the Lancaster Alliance are prime beneficiaries, directly or indirectly, of its advocacy: Armstrong, Barley Snyder, Franklin & Marshall, Fulton Financial, High Industries, Lancaster Newspapers, Steinman Foundations and Wachovia Bank.

The entire article can be read at www.LancasterPost.com. Click on Page Two to make the print legible.

Comments on “A City Transformed”, Part Two

In “A City Transformed, Redevelopment, Race, and Suburbanization in Lancaster, Pennsylvania 1940-1980,” author David Schuyler states as part of the Introduction:

“As a result of failure of commercial renewal, Lancaster has not experienced the prosperity that major downtowns have enjoyed in recent years – the gleaming sky scrapers, hotels, festivals, market places, gentrified neighborhoods, and other monuments of the construction boon of the 1980s and 1990s, which attract tourists and generate much needed tax revenues that sustain the municipal government.”

We only take issue with the word “failure” because it suggests that a different outcome was possible.

In fact, Lancaster has long been handicapped by its location between Philadelphia, decades ago the third largest city in the country, and Harrisburg, the state capital. (York suffered similarly from being between Baltimore and Harrisburg.) Businesses seeking regional headquarters passed over Lancaster which meant downtown attracted mainly law firms and then local banks.

The strengths of Lancaster’s economy were threefold: Agriculture, tourism and industry ...

all three of which were situated in suburbia and exurbia. Furthermore, there was no expressway linking downtown with the Interstate Highway System.

Park City was built in the 1970s. What instantly became the new ‘downtown’ was made possible inadvertently by a well meaning collusion among the establishment to prevent the development of neighborhood shopping centers in suburbia in order to protect downtown retail business.

Lancaster Square was born out of misbegotten desperation to ward off retail flight from downtown. Its co-anchor Hess was acclaimed by the *Wall Street Journal* as the first downtown department store to open in the country in 20 years. It was short lived and eventually converted to light industrial use.

The other co-anchor, the opulent Hilton Hotel (now the Brunswick) suffered from the ongoing paucity of downtown business and thus declined under subsequent names and franchises.

To have created Lancaster Square in the 1970s was misguided, but understandable. But with that hindsight, to mortgage the county’s – and especially the city’s – future in order to bring about the Convention Center Project is unforgivable.

LETTER: Finders Keepers, Losers Weepers?

“There is no [good] explanation for a newspaper putting a black grandmother’s picture on their front page for allegedly ‘stealing’ a hundred dollar bill from a casino floor. I don’t care if she’s an SD of L school board member. Her arrest was racist and LNP putting her on their front page was unbelievable...”

Editor’s note: Our sense was the article put to question the judgment of the casino security personnel rather than the school board member. Who wouldn’t pick up off the floor a hundred dollar bill in a crowded area? A *NewsLanc* staff member found two fifties together on a New York street corner and donated it to charity. Others do the same thing with found money.

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