



Philadelphia Inquirer Spotlights CC and High Self-Dealing

On Sept. 2, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* ran a front page exposé concerning the Lancaster Convention Center.

It observed: “*High Real Estate Group is the hotel-convention center developer. High Construction Co. has the general-trades contract for the interior and finish work. High Concrete Structures Inc. handled the precast concrete on the job. High was low bidder, or the only bidder, on those jobs.*”

The *Inquirer* relates: “*High and the newspapers formed Penn Square Partners and are investing \$11 million in equity to build the hotel. Initial construction estimates in 1999 were for a \$45 million private hotel and a \$30 million publicly funded convention center. But in 2003, the project changed; the hotel and convention center were no longer separate buildings. It became one structure, with a single heating and cooling system and one kitchen. The center grew in size from 61,000 to 220,000*

square feet.” (Editor’s note: The “\$11 million in equity” is neither up front or in cash.)

Lancaster mayor Rick Gray is quoted as saying “County taxpayers are on the hook for next to nothing.” Not so. Lancaster City taxpayers are on the “hook” for almost the entire mortgage of the High / Lancaster Newspapers’ hotel.

The article accurately continued: “*While supporters see the convention center as a catalyst to spur growth, the city’s renaissance really began in the 1990s*”, said pharmacist and former mayor Charles Smithgall. “*Lancaster has a new minor-league baseball stadium, burgeoning art galleries, and the Pennsylvania Academy of Arts. Housing prices have shot up; new restaurants have come to town.*”

It is a shame that state-wide attention is only being directed at the controversial convention center project now that it is too late to abort it.

WATCHDOG

SUNDAY NEWS: On Aug.31, the paper ran a one-third of a page Turkey Hill ad featuring four brands of cigarettes, and an offer of free candy with a soft drink. The ad shows boxes of Sundance, Marlboro, Camel and Newport brand cigarettes. The “Surgeon General Warning” was too small for most to read without a magnifying glass.

NewsLanc: We are surprised that a family publication would carry a cigarette advertisement, especially one obviously directed at young people. We are also critical of Turkey Hill for sponsoring

such an advertisement.

Does Marv Adam want his daughter Abigail reading “Cigarettes Lowest Price Allowed by Law On all major brands” above “Sweet Deal, Free Reese’s with 44 oz. Fountain or Slushy Purchase.”

Isn’t there an implied relationship about the mutual pleasure of the products?

**Break free from the monopoly press! Visit www.NewsLanc.com daily.
Suggestions and letters welcome at info@NewsLanc.com.**

General Hospital Should Operate a Syringe Exchange

In a knowledgeable and insightful letter to the *New Era* published on Sept. 1 entitled “What can be done to address city’s downside,” contributor Russ Laudenberger recommends in part:

“Address the demand side of illegal drugs, especially chronic users – the top 20 percent that use about 80 percent of the drugs. It’s absurd to believe that illegal drugs go away when dealers are taken down. The demand is just the same, and new dealers take over; licking their chops.”

Over the years, the Lancaster Newspapers and local government leaders have demonstrated a progressive understanding of the need for prevention and treatment. Recently they were constructive in permitting the opening of a methadone clinic.

Nor have the newspapers interfered with the operation of the sole and meager church based, privately funded public health program that for almost a decade has helped reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and encouraged and assisted addicts to seek treatment. However, these efforts have been tiny in scale and conducted in an ultra-conservative manner that prevents achieving their full potential.

The most cost effective and publicly desirable effort for the improvement of public health, reduction of crime, and solving problems of the homeless, would be for Lancaster General Hospital (LGH) to exercise leadership by sponsoring a full service syringe exchange!

Syringe exchanges are endorsed by the federal government. They have long been supported by the City of Philadelphia and more recently by Pittsburgh. They operate across the United States and throughout the Western World.

By providing clean needles, condoms, health care and public health counseling to addicts, LGH would retard the spread of HIV / AIDS and Hepatitis throughout the general community. And through ongoing, supportive contact with clients, they would be able to encourage detoxification and enrolment for methadone or Suboxone treatment.

Every dollar spent by LGH would ultimately save LGH many dollars in non-reimbursed health care costs. LGH has the opportunity. Will it seize it?

An Example of Raw Political Clout

Usually invitations for fund raising events come from a committee, with a chair, several co-chairs, and various members. It isn’t easy to attract potential donors to these events. But this isn’t the case with the invitation recently received for a “*private lunch in honor of U.S. Senator Arlen Specter*” at the Hamilton Club.

Rather the invitation states: “*S. Dale High cordially invites you...*”

We can be confident that the luncheon will be

well subscribed, with many attendees being contractors and suppliers of the various High companies as well as associates of High from the Lancaster Alliance and elsewhere.

Nor will the message be lost on Senator Specter or other politicians: High is able to provide heavy funding for campaign war chests, and High’s needs - such as federal funding of the Rt. 30 Interchange improvement for the proposed “Crossings” shopping center - merit full attention.

Credo

“...I have never made it a consideration whether the subject was popular or unpopular, but whether it was right or wrong; for that which is right will become popular, and that which is wrong, though by mistake it may obtain the cry or fashion of the day, will soon lose the power of delusion, and sink into disesteem.”

Thomas Paine, Common Sense, on “Financing the War”, March 5, 1782

***NewsLanc.com* DOESN’T JUST REPORT. IT INVESTIGATES!**