



Properly publicized, Latino Fest has great potential

A letter writer complained to *NewsLanc* that the Lancaster Newspapers had ignored the Latino Fest until after the fact. So we researched the matter and learned the following from Diana Hurlburt, the Events Coordinator for the Puerto Rican Committee of Lancaster:

- The Puerto Rican Committee of Lancaster organized the parade and Latino Fest.
- No actual news release was sent out.
- Lancaster Newspapers was aware of the event ahead of time and a reporter from the *Sunday News* contacted her in advance of the September 21st issue for a possible interview.
- She understands that the interview was called off and the reporter placed on another assignment.

- To her knowledge, no article appeared in the Lancaster Newspapers prior to Saturday's festivities.

Nothing could be done about the rain which dampened activities. But hopefully next year the promoters will send out press releases two weeks and again three days before the event.

We feel confident that the Lancaster Newspapers and possibly the TV media would cooperate in its promotion. *NewsLanc* certainly will.

With over 32,000 Latinos in the county, this could become a major Lancaster downtown attraction.

New Era editors panic over "Bail Out"

Keeping in mind that some of the greatest experts in economics and government have serious reservations that the \$700 billion "Bail Out" as currently constituted is the best approach, we question on what basis other than the hysteria that this provincial newspaper should twice describe the delay in passage as "*despicable*" in its Sept.30 editorial.

It states: "... *the do-nothing Congress members infused more uncertainty in markets here and abroad, raising uncertainty, fear and the risk of panic.*" The very day the editorial appeared, the Dow Jones soared 475 points. The next day it only lost 18 points. Hardly seems like panic, other than by the editors of the *New Era*.

As was proposed last week, the "Bail Out" was to purchase mortgages, not at current market value which reflects the bad debts, but as if they were of high quality! That's a direct give away from tax payers to mortgage owners! We have yet to have read or heard that the new bill mandates purchase at market value as recommended by Warren Buffett and other careful observers.

Whenever local newspapers join the public panic (often stirred on by Administration propaganda), we can expect that our civil rights are going to be reduced, our wallet is about to be picked, or we will soon be going to war. Instead, what we need from what is supposed to be our conservative newspaper (as well as the liberal) is sober and learned analysis.

F & M Center's 2007 "Streetcar Ridership Survey" misleading!

On Sept. 19, *NewsLanc* interviewed Berwood A. Yost, Director of the Center For Opinion Research at Franklin & Marshall College, about the "Streetcar Ridership Survey" reported in the July 1, 2007, *Sunday News*. Backers of a streetcar system for downtown Lancaster have cited this survey as indicating community support for such a project.

Salient revelations from the Yost interview were:

1) The Executive Summary states *"Most respondents (83%) feel that a streetcar system would improve transportation between downtown destinations."* **However, the question failed to mention that trolley buses already run on much the same route.** Yost acknowledged that information about the trolley buses was not provided.

(When Marv Adams, Editor of the *Sunday News*, was asked whether the reporter had simply lifted the misleading statement from the "Executive Summary" or actually examined the related question, his response was *"No comment."*)

2) The Executive Summary fails to point out only 2% cited lack of public transportation when asked *"What if anything keeps you from visiting Lancaster city more often?"* (Yost pointed out that the question was only asked of the people who do not come downtown frequently.)

3) **In response to the survey question "How likely would you be to ride a streetcar system if it were available in downtown Lancaster", only 1% indicated streetcars were "more convenient than buses."**

NewsLanc asked *"Isn't this overwhelming indication of a lack of interest in substituting streetcars for bus transportation?"* Yost replied *"You can interpret it that way. All of this is open for interpretation. You're asking me to do something that I wasn't asked to do."*

4) *NewsLanc*: The survey didn't ask whether they *"favored using \$14 million or whatever the figure is, in tax money, to install a street car system, and undertaking a \$300,000 annual subsidy to operate the system."* Yost: *"It wasn't something that we were asked to do."* Yost said that figures related to the cost of installing or operating trolley cars were not available to him at the time of the survey.

5) *NewsLanc* : Why didn't the survey ask: *"Would you be more likely to come downtown and use public transportation if we replaced the buses with these historic-type trolley cars?"* Yost: *"Because that's not what we were attempting to do."*

6) *NewsLanc* : *"The purpose was not to determine whether streetcars would be more desirable, would bring more people?"* Yost: *"No. I don't think that was ultimately it."*

7) Yost said the survey was commissioned by the Lancaster Alliance and the questions were prepared by him and reviewed and approved by Jack Howell, its president.

About the purpose of the survey, Yost said, *"We were interested in people who were coming downtown - what they're doing when they get here and whether they would be looking for alternative means of getting around."*

"You can quibble with the results," he continued, *"but we weren't asked to come down with these recommendations - this is what we saw, anyone can review it and people can draw their own conclusions from it."*

Yet, by what Yost chose not to ask and cherry picked what to include in the Executive Summary, the bias is apparent and a disgrace.

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