



## **LETTER: Tragic additions to the homeless**

“I have walked the streets of Lancaster every morning for many years. Some may recognize me. The other day, a Saturday, I stopped by a local fast food restaurant. Used to seeing the “usual cast” of homeless, I was struck by a most unsettling sight. There was a new feature upon the human landscape.

**“Two faces hit me out of about a dozen of the same: neat and well groomed 16 and 17 year olds never present before.**

“What was so striking was the blank, vacuous and unblinking stare from the two teens, heads resting upon a collection of belongings, never been cast aside by the modern world before.

“Whether or not their parent(s) were among the gathered I could not ascertain. However, the depression in these two kid’s eyes was not the expressions of the ‘usuals’. These are kids; never having experienced their known world ripped away, waiting for breakfast at St. James.

“The local media had a recent article on the subject of ‘displaced’ within the public school system and their struggle academically; yet not mentioning the unspoken factor, socially never having been faced with poverty. I do hope the social welfare network of Lancaster County is up to this new challenge of our lifetime.”

## **LETTER: Commissioners neglecting libraries and education**

“Stunning and saddening statistics in Gil Smart’s front page story, ‘Where we stand in a shaky economy.’

“Lancaster’s library “per capita circulation” is higher than the state average by about 10%.

“Smart notes F&M professor Antonio Callari’s observation that ‘Lancaster County lags significantly behind both the region and the state, as it long has,’ when it comes to spending for education and learning, as evidenced by it’s library expenditures.

“This article goes on to quote Commissioner Scott Martin as stating that “everyone is

*struggling right now and having to do more with less.”*

“Perhaps I missed it, but I don’t recall the commissioners cutting their own salaries.

**“This is more evidence of the wrong mentality by county officials. It’s as if he is proud of Lancaster’s backwards attitude on spending for education and learning, particularly as it applies to children in the city of Lancaster.**

“But then, with his large county salary, I suppose he can afford to buy his children their own books and doesn’t need to rely on the public library as a resource.”

## 2002 PWC Market Study rejected current Convention Center Project

*(Seventh in a series)*

The 2000 PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) Market and Economic Analysis report researched a much smaller convention center than was actually built. The 2002 update reviews the potential for a convention center of the size eventually built and rejects the new plans, recommending the much smaller 2000 size concept “*should continue to be used.*”

PWC was engaged in 1999 and again in 2002 by the Lancaster County Convention Center Authority to perform a ‘*Market Study*’ but not a ‘*Feasibility Study*’. (A Market Study largely deals in regional and national generalities; a Feasibility Study predicts the financial outcome of a specific project.)

A copy of the 2002 update states: “As identified previously a goal of this report was to consider the potential for a modified convention center assuming a larger exhibition hall (50,000-56,000 square feet) and seating for concerts and certain sporting and special events...”

***“Based on the findings presented in this report, we have concluded that the prior estimates of utilization for the proposed Lancaster County Convention Center should continue to be used for long term planning purposes.”***

The PWC 2000 study was predicated on a Convention Center that would be from 102,000 square feet to 116,000 net of Back-of-house support and Food Service Areas. The actual Convention Center is 183,917, about 75% larger on a comparable basis.

In 2006, PWC withdrew both its 2000 study and 2002 update, stating the large difference between what they had studied and what actually was to be built. They had previously warned the LCCCA about misrepresenting the conclusions of their studies.

An email, which first appeared on [5thEstate.com](http://5thEstate.com), reveals Robert Canton, Director of PricewaterhouseCoopers Sports, Convention & Tourism Services, voicing serious professional concerns about the feasibility of proposed project.

***Canton writes: “In March of this year, I was so concerned that [PriceWaterhouse Cooper's] analyses (demand study, economic impact, etc.) of a different building program were being used to ‘promote’ the proposed convention center development, that I wrote a note to Mr. Hixson requesting that all reference to PWC be removed from the LCCCA website.”***

The memo also includes: “Regardless of any review of our prior studies, the physical characteristics of the development that I understand to be proposed are VERY different from the project I studied (the equivalent of using a study of a 500 room Marriott to evaluate a 300-room Hampton).”

***Canton concludes the memo by stating: “...I try to be very clear that we will not be influenced by what the client or community stakeholders ‘want,’ but rather will base our findings on what the market supports.”***

Visit [www.NewsLanc.com](http://www.NewsLanc.com) daily for news, commentary, letters, and other features.  
Suggestions and letters welcome at [info@NewsLanc.com](mailto:info@NewsLanc.com).