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AOL: Politics Today

“Arlen Specter Loses Pa. Senate Race: No Escape for a Political Houdini” goes on to say *“...Specter reinforced his new Democratic credentials by voting 96 percent of the time with President Obama, by Congressional Quarterly’s calculations. Specter was next most loyal to George W. Bush, voting with him 85 percent to 89 percent of the time from 2001 to 2005.”*

WATCHDOG: The above just about says it all. The Old Hound was told when Sestak first ran for Congress from Montgomery County that the admiral was a man of presidential caliber. Time and chance will tell.

Sunday News shines spotlight on Lancaster General Health

By and large, the *Sunday News* front page article “Billion-dollar baby” was very gratifying. It included much of the same information that *NewsLanc* has been reporting over the past couple of years. It also included attempts by LGH’s executives to put the best spin they could on information that suggests that LGH is more interested in rewarding its executives and personnel and irrational growth than fulfilling its responsibilities as a Public Charity to the community.

Until LGH makes public its past due 2008 / 2009 federal 990 return, we will not be able to make a definitive evaluation of LGH’s representations. However, there are a few that minimally require further explanation and likely condemnation:

“Just two years ago, Lancaster General Hospital recorded record profits of \$138 million. Last year’s profit of \$78.8 million represented a 42 percent fall from that summit.” Maybe yes, maybe no.

According to a recent *Intelligencer Journal New Era* article, LGH also added over ten million to its employee pension fund to make up for losses due to the stock market plunge.

“We have taken a disproportionate amount of responsibility for the medically underserved in this

community,” said LGH Executive Vice President Jan Bergen. Medical assistance patients account for 15 percent of patient days, but just 4 percent of revenues. ‘We get paid substantially less than cost,’ said Bergen” . This is disingenuous. All hospitals absorb some of the costs of Medicaid, but LGH’s share is among the lowest as a percentage of gross revenue throughout the state.

“The system employs 3,906 full-time workers and 3,215 part-time workers, said hospital spokesman John Lines. And one reason Lancaster General Hospital’s profit fell last year is that expenditures on salaries, other compensation and employee benefits soared 23 percent, to \$385 million.” Wow! No wonder profits were down when this so called Public Charity is providing a 23% increase in a single year in *“expenditures on salaries, other compensation and employee benefits....”* Talk about excesses on Wall Street!

And for sheer silliness, the article ends with a quote from Beeman as follows: *“It’s as if [hospitals] are at the head of the Colorado River,”* Beeman said. *“We’re all in rafts, some of us have oars and some of us don’t. Some of us just aren’t going to make it.”* With his \$1.3 annual compensation, he sure is!

New poll shows 8 in 10 support medical marijuana in PA

New polling conducted by Franklin & Marshall College saw a full 80% respondents either 'Strongly Favor' (53%) and 'Somewhat Favor' (27%) legal medical marijuana in Pennsylvania.

Medical marijuana is active in both the House (HB 1393) and the Senate (SB 1350) of PA.

LETTER: Need for consolidation of municipalities

"[Lancaster county has] 41 townships, 18 boroughs, one city, 16 school districts here, and the Lancaster County government. There are something like 34 cities in the U.S. which have a larger population than all of Lancaster County combined. Very few people would seriously consider breaking each of these up into multiple separate governments.

"The only thing that is achieved by having so many local governments is the 21st century equivalent of feudalism. In the name of "local control", each little municipality is a fiefdom which is primarily interested in itself, often ignoring or outright

denying the greater good of Lancaster County. To say this is counterproductive would be a serious understatement.

"Local governments cannot raise taxes enough to pay for out-of-control health care and pension costs for their employees. Like it or not, the day is fast approaching when all of Lancaster County will be financially forced to take decisive action for the greater good of all, and start running our local government like the efficient business that it really needs to be."

Donegal region plans for future; citizens asked to share opinions

PRESS RELEASE: LANCASTER County, PA (FEB 16, 2010) – Officials in the Donegal Region are preparing a plan for the next twenty years and will host a **Public Forum on June 9, 2010**, to hear

citizen opinions and ideas about the future of the community. **All residents of the Donegal Region are encouraged to attend.**

NEWSLANC salutes improved newspaper journalism

Five years ago much reporting in the Lancaster newspapers was sloppy, sophomoric, and often biased. Recently, articles have been largely accurate, well researched, and impartial.

Is the change the result of the merger of morning and afternoon editions, permitting a pruning of staff and perhaps better compensation to attract and keep qualified journalists? Has it been in part due to the critiques of the *Watchdog*?

We suspect that it is in large part the result of the restoration of staff pride after the sordid episodes of

misrepresentations concerning the Convention Center project, the Grand Jury the witch hunt, and reporter and editor violation of law by illegally and repeatedly entering a state confidential web site.

Our newspapers reflect the very soul of our community. We in Lancaster can again take pride in the quality of our local print medium.

Nevertheless, the *Watchdog* remains on the job.

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