

The sale of Conestoga View nursing home revisited

For those of us with memories that stretch back five years, the following headline and opening paragraph from the *Intelligencer Journal* / *New Era* comes across as bitter irony:

“Conestoga View set to kick off expansion: In its biggest upgrade since becoming privately owned, Conestoga View next week will embark on a \$2.3 million expansion and renovation. The project will double the nursing home’s rehabilitation treatment area, replace its bathing area and expand its dining room.”

We also learn from the news report: *“It also will install flat-screen 19-inch LCD televisions for each resident. ‘We tried to concentrate on improvements that would have the highest impacts on our residents,’ administrator Jennifer Zufall said.”*

We recall how three commissioners were driven out of office because of the decision to sell the county nursing home to the private company that had been managing it for years, allegedly in violation of the Sunshine Act.

Former mayor Art Morris headed the parade in deploring the sale, endeavoring to convince one and all that the poor would suffer as a result of the change of ownership. It hasn’t happened! We know this not only through word of mouth, but because the facility continues to score just as high in state inspections.

The then district attorney Donald Totaro was rewarded with a judgeship in part for the witch hunt

he conducted, finally settling a year-long ‘circus’ of groundless allegations with an agreement to minor violations with \$100 fines. A close reading of the Grand Jury Report raises serious questions that any violation actually occurred. In fact, the commissioners had been bludgeoned into making a concession to get the investigation off their backs.

The Lancaster newspapers ran headlines that would not have been larger had the three commissioner been arrested on the Pennsylvania Turnpike fleeing with the county treasury in the trunk of their vehicle!

These were the dark days when the Lancaster Newspapers, Inc. lost its integrity and conceivably may have become involved in a conspiracy. (More on that later.)

Let us recognize the courage and honorable service of Dick Shellenberger and Molly Henderson.

Concerning Morris, let us take note that the best of leaders can be both impassioned and wrong on an issue (none of us bat a thousand).

Let us not forget that the newspapers were capable of going astray when their financial interests were involved.

And let us remember what private company benefited most from the development and construction of the convention center.

Lastly, let’s resolve to do better in the future.

LETTER: No library tax before reforms

“The ONLY way a local tax will be approved by voters is IF the ‘Library System’ sheds its wasteful overhead. Otherwise, opponents of the ‘Library System’ will once again focus on how much funding

it diverts away from local libraries, creating opposition to the proposed tax in the process.
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“There is no good reason for the ‘Library System’ to consist of more than the Bookmobile and a central shared Information Technology department. The current paid staff contains far too many

positions that are simply not needed for the operation of local libraries, and its first-class office space is an unnecessary luxury.”

LETTER: In defense of the Recovery Act

“I found your article, “Only the Young Despair“, very much on point although I have some disagreement on your point 13.

“Admittedly the Recovery Act had many things that could have been done better but about 1/3 was spent on keeping public employees on the job, which helped prevent the unemployment situation from getting worse, helped to maintain short term public services (teachers, police and firemen) and helped support the consumer driven economy; approximately another third involved tax cuts for

the lower and middle classes, which gave the lower and middle classes help in meeting financial obligations and maintaining consumer spending; and the remainder for infrastructure maintenance, laying rail for future growth projects, stimulating purchases and some for pet political projects.

“Could it or should it have done more? Perhaps, but the Republicans would not let it happen and are now criticizing the Recovery Act for spending too much of the public’s money.”

LETTER: Humans innately believe in change

“ ‘Only the Young Despair!’ is a nice summary of some of the present day struggles. I guess now that my beard is gray, I’m too old to despair.

I appreciate your positive viewpoint, one I share. I remember very early in my years as an advocate for social change hearing over and over from gray haired people in the audience telling me that they had lived through change. They had seen Jim Crow end and desegregation move forward, they had seen

women advancing in the workplace, wars ending and so many other changes. They knew from their experience that change was possible — indeed inevitable...

None of the progress is completely fulfilled and there are many injustices to correct. I have no doubt that when I am finished with my work, my work will not be finished.”

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