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## LETTER: Gil Smart's short memory

*From the Gil Smart column...* "If only a noble, selfless leader, a modern-day Andrew Jackson would emerge. Good luck. His opponents would get all the campaign cash and crush him like a bug. Hell, after the negative ad blitz, you'd vote against him"...

*Does Gil not remember what his newspapers did to Molly Henderson?*

From **DELAWARE COUNTY TIMES Editorial:**

Gov. Tom Corbett's "fee" proposal for drilling the Marcellus Shale is, at best, a lame attempt to address the bipartisan appeal for taxes on companies that stand to make billions on the natural gas in Pennsylvania's Appalachian Basin...

Pennsylvania State University Geoscience Professor Terry Englander and State University of New York Geology Professor Gary Lash estimated in 2008 that there is more than 500 trillion cubic feet of natural gas within the Marcellus Shale Fairway that stretches through the center of the state from southwestern to northeastern Pennsylvania. Even if

companies recover only 50 trillion cubic feet, that would be enough natural gas to supply the entire United States for about two years. The wellhead value would be about \$1 trillion, according to the professors.

A tax on the companies extracting Pennsylvania's natural gas would have gone a long way toward addressing the state's \$4.16 billion deficit projected for fiscal year 2011-2012. But with "no new taxes" as part of his campaign mantra last year, the Republican governor was loathe to admit that a severance tax on these gas companies drilling the Marcellus Shale made sense...

## Confessions of a Convention Center "Naysayer"

*Below is excerpted from an article by Randy Carney*

...The convention center is actually hosting nearly the number of events that were planned by its promoters years ago, although revenue is slightly below expectations. Unfortunately for taxpayers, the cost of operating the convention center portion of the "integrated facility" has been considerably higher than predicted – compounded by a design that focuses on esthetics at the cost of efficiency. (There are no comparable figures available for the "private" hotel; its equitable owners and management treat its operations as if they were issues of national security).

Complicating matters are the complex agreements which so tightly bind the "private" hotel and the publicly-owned convention center. The operators of the hotel don't even own its building (Lancaster City does, through RACL), and their "lease" payments are for a loan that amounts to less than half of its construction costs. Yes, taxpayers do receive some tangible benefit from operating the hotel and the convention center as a single "integrated facility", but the agreements stipulate that taxpayers own and maintain all of the hotel's meeting space and kitchen, and half of the hotel lobby (among other parts of the building).

*[Continued on back]*

What will happen next requires little speculation, thanks to the agreements which bind the project: the trustee of the convention center's construction bonds has the legal right to unilaterally take control of the balance of the "hotel tax" which currently helps fund the Pennsylvania Dutch Convention and Visitors Bureau. ...

There can be no doubt that the downtown [real estate tax exempt and] Lancaster taxpayer-financed hotel and convention center costs taxpayers far more than any economic development which could possibly ever be derived from the project. In

addition to tens of millions of dollars of taxpayer construction subsidies, the convention center debt payments and operational losses will total millions of dollars every year for decades to come. In addition, the hotel receives one million dollars annually from the State to help pay off its construction debt, for at least 20 years. Add to this the additional burden the project places on Lancaster City services, and it becomes practically impossible for this "integrated facility" to create enough economic development to justify its costs to taxpayers...

## **LETTER: Lancaster judges favor mothers over children**

*...My children BEGGED the judge to stay with me.*

*When it comes down to it, the court does NOT care about the best interest of children. They believe they should be with mother. Even if mother is abusive. The truth is as a mother you can do anything you want and the courts will be in your favor. Even though we watch as mother drown and murder their children the courts continue to believe in the fabled myth of a mother by default being the better parent...*

## **LETTER: "Occupy Wall Street" constructive**

*...Here in Lancaster, we have seen a microcosm of that global corruption detailed by NewsLanc in its coverage of the Convention Center story. When you multiply this singular, somewhat parochial frustration, by the hundreds, at other local, state, and, the national level, you have the makings of a certain amount of civil unrest. But when you add to*

*this the overall squeeze of unemployment, good jobs being shipped overseas, the foreclosures, bankruptcies, declining incomes, increasing prices, wars, union bashing, teacher firings, health insurance costs, higher education costs, etc. etc., it is a wonder that it took people so long to take to the streets...*

**INTELLIGENCER NEW ERA:** In his column "Obama picks a good fight", Robert Reich provides the following information:

*"For more than 30 years, from World War II to 1981, the top marginal tax rate never fell below 70 percent...The top rate is now 35 percent ..."*

*"Only just over 1 percent of small-business owners earn enough to be taxed at the top rate – and that's*

*just on the portion of their incomes exceeding \$379,000."*

*"The ratio of corporate profits to wages is higher today than it's been since before the Great Depression. Even as salaries and perks keep rising in executive suites, the median wage continues to drop, and jobs continue to be shed."*

**WATCHDOG:** Two wags of the tail!

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