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## EDITORIAL: Are Commissioners being taken for a ride?

Despite the valid concerns they raised during their discussion at Tuesday's work session and Wednesday's public meeting, the County Commissioners are taking a giant step towards being taken for a ride by the streetcar idiocy.

Anyone who studies the streetcar that is displayed downtown can envision what an obstacle they would be when utilizing one of the two lanes available for traffic.

Trolleys run silently, presenting a real danger to children and adults getting out of cars or crossing streets.

The current mock trolleys hardly generate enough revenue to pay the drivers wage, which is only a small fraction of the overall cost.

**Streetcars still exist in Eastern Europe. But they are located in major urban areas, run down dedicated right-of-ways in the middle of wide boulevards, have islands for picking up passengers, and are heavily subsidized. The situation in Lancaster could not be more different.**

Every example of streetcars cited as successful elsewhere, there were either dedicated right-of-

**READER'S COMMENT:** *"Just try to drive down North Prince or Queen Streets with a street car in one lane going slow and stopping for passengers and the cars in only one lane of traffic. We have the Trolley bus that can change*

ways, ridership was free, streetcars had failed to generate expected downtown development, and/or they were bleeding money.

And what national firm is expert in this field so that their findings would be reliable? In the hotel industry, there are four or five international prestigious specialists that perform hundreds of such studies each year. The successful performance of the hotels built is testimonial to their accuracy.

**Since there is no firm with such experience, let alone national prominence, the streetcar proponents will hire a firm after making certain they are predisposed to write a study supporting the project. This would be unethical? Look at the lies and deceptions, the violation of public trust, and possible criminality that swirled around the convention center project!** We are basically dealing with the same rascals: predators, dimwits, and the large body of influential people who don't want to step out of line lest it harm their earnings or cost them friendships.

If the Commissioners are going to contribute to a study, they should insist on participation in the selection and having a veto right over what firm is going to be engaged?

*lanes and pull over to pick up passengers and that seems to be working... Why is Red Rose not reducing the cost of trips to their riders instead of spending 150,000 on this study?"*

# Compass Mark emphasizes choice in student intervention

By Cliff Lewis

Since its inception (then as the “*Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse*”) in 1966, Compass Mark has been seeking to work “*ahead of the curve*” in providing addiction treatment and prevention services in Lancaster County.

In the early years, according to Executive Director Dave Bender, this meant setting up Lancaster’s first detox, halfway house, and residential counseling program. Today, Compass Mark has shifted most of its efforts to a prevention and early intervention strategy, focusing on the County’s youth.

In all of Lancaster’s 16 school districts, Compass Mark runs a variety of programs dealing not only with drugs and alcohol, but also engages troubled students in solving problems and coping with the difficulties of life. Out of the 4,000 students expected to go through such programs this year, there will be about 600 involved with Compass Mark’s “*Skills for Life*” program, which is reserved for students with drug and alcohol related problems.

Using alcohol offenses as an example, Bender noted that student recidivism has been reduced from 30% to 3% through “*Skills for Life*”:

*“District judges used to tell us that they would get repeat offenses over and over. Kids would go out, get busted, pay the fine, go out, drink again, get busted, pay the fine....One judge said that there was a kid who came back before him 13 times. He said that now, since referring [offenders] to our program, it’s rare that he gets a second offense, and he can’t even remember getting a third offense.”*

The groups are led by recovering addicts who often surprise the students attending with their level of respect and empathy.

The central goal of these groups is to facilitate genuine discussion among the attendees about the personal challenges and choices that they each face: “*It’s basically kids holding up mirrors to each other,*” Bender said.

*“We don’t talk so much about the substance,”* Bender said, “*What we’ll talk about is building decision-making skills, coping skills, stress-management skills, problem-solving skills. We’re helping kids and adults function with life, and be able to make reasonable, rational choices with what they decide to put into their bodies.*”

## INTELLIGENCER NEW ERA

An article “**Dairy farmers meet with state, national representatives**”, which describes how the costs of milk production has gone up but the price paid to the farmers has gone down, goes on to report:

*“[Congressman Joe Pitts] ...announced that the federal government would increase the price it pays for dairy products. That move will put \$250 million in additional revenue in farmers pockets nationwide, the congressman said...”*

**WATCHDOG:** Doesn’t the heavy subsidizing of milk lead to a glut which in turn depresses prices? Is keeping people living on dairy farms the best utilization of resources and taxes?

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