

# Real Reporting.org/ NewsLanc.com

May 2012 Edition

*This semi-annual tabloid includes a variety of articles that have appeared at RealReporting.org / NewsLanc.com over recent months. We have selected items of regional interest. The web site is updated several times a day and carries excerpts and links to news and commentary of local, state, national and international importance, much of it unreported by the local media.*

*Please be among the thousands who visit and the scores who add their own anonymous comments and letters.*

*Robert E. Field, Editor / Publisher*

## Attorney General should investigate LGH for 'private inurement' violation; each director subject to a \$100,000 fine

*Posted on April 10th, 2012*

**Lancaster General Health is a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization**, a 'public charity.' Therefore, it pays no real estate taxes to the county, city or school district which otherwise might amount to over a million dollars a year. Also contributions to LGH are tax deductible, encouraging donations.

Its president, Tom Beeman, was absent a year while serving as a captain in the U. S. Navy. LGH, organized as a 'Public Charity', paid him the difference between what he was paid by the Navy and his regular annual compensation. The difference amounted to about \$1,150,000!

The following pertains to 501(c)3 non-profit hospitals and is excerpted from "The Private Inurement Prohibition" posting at Guide Star USA:

*... "The courts and the IRS have consistently ruled that any unreasonable benefit or inurement, however small, is impermissible and can result in the revocation of a charity's tax-exempt status." ...*

*"In 'an excessive compensation case, the 'excess benefit' is the amount by which the total compensation paid by the charity to an insider exceeds the reasonable value of the services provided by the insider to the charity'....*

*"Section 4958(a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code also imposes a tax equal to 10 percent of the excess benefit on any charity manager, typically a board member, who knowingly approved the excess benefit transaction, unless his or her participation was not willful. (emphasis added)..."*

If the \$1,150,000 pay is ruled improper, each LGH board member may be fined \$115,000.

While the Attorney General office is conducting this necessary investigation, it should also look into LGH blatant and contemptuous refusal to allow public to its meetings, most recently even preventing the public from being able to address the board and audience during its only public meeting of the year.

It isn't that the individuals who make up the board of directors set out to cheat the public who actually own LGH. Rather, it is their misguided and arrogant sense of being the omniscient stewards of what is best for the community. It is not allowing representation on the Board of Directors other than members of the affluent Caucasian establishment. It is the silence of the editorial voice of the Lancaster Newspapers, Inc. whose Executive Director Dennis Getz is a Board member. (Shades of the Convention Center conflict of interests.)

**LGH can set its own prices with insurance companies. The result is the public pays higher premiums. Hence LGH extraordinary profits averaging around \$100 million a year. Yet share only 2% to 3% of its profits with organizations also dedicated to advancement of public health.**



LGH has been allowed to go dangerously astray without public check. It has a strangle hold on the medical community and monopolistic control of health pricing.

Lancaster is justly proud of the people who work for LGH and for the quality of the care it gives. But the public with the aid of the media needs to break through the wall of arrogance and secrecy, insist that the directors represent the diverse interest of the community, and demand that LGH indeed fulfills its stated mission: *"To advance the health and well-being of the communities we serve."*

A positive first step would be to help fund the syringe exchange that the Urban League has offered to establish to reduce the spread of HIV / AIDS and other diseases and to help get addicts off drugs and back to their loved ones and productive activities.

Sadly, who dares criticize LGH, Lancaster's powerful sacred cow? Thus the need for intervention by the State Attorney General and the State Department of State, both involved in the supervision of 501(c)3 institutions.

# Meet the Board of Trustees of Lancaster General Health

Posted on March 21st, 2012

**Do you notice a common thread among the below?** All are powerful establishment figures, either affiliated with Lancaster General Health for their livelihood or a head of a major Lancaster institution. There is a lack of diversity.

Should Dennis Getz, Executive Vice President of the Lancaster Newspapers, Inc., even be a board member? Is this a way of muzzling possible criticism from the Fourth Estate?

Clergy? No. Social workers? No. School teachers? No. People of color? No.

It is hard to perceive an advocate for the legitimate needs of the community as defined by their mission statement: *"To advance the health and well-being of the communities we serve."*

More likely, the discussions are about enriching LGH, its executives and affiliates.

All of the above are at the summit of prestige and affluence, all 'givers'. Not represented are

leaders of charities that are 'receivers' who are essential advocates of the health and educational needs of the community.

Little wonder the hospital only gives a pittance of its vast earnings to struggling organizations who also share LGH's stated mission to "advance the health and well-being of the communities."

We are not questioning the integrity or dedication of the individual trustees. We are challenging the lack of representation of the diverse needs of the community and failure of the LGH to provide transparency concerning its plans and dealings.



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Lancaster Radiology Associates



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Lebzelter's Total Car Care



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## Lancaster General Health





# Tom Corbett throws Joe Paterno under the bus, inept media, and the decline of the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office

by Bill Keisling

***“What counts in sports is not the victory, but the magnificence of the struggle,”*** Penn State Coach Joe Paterno for years was fond of saying. It's a variation of the phrase, *“It's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game.”*

This ethos of fair play, honesty, doing the right thing, abiding by the same rules as everyone else, hard work, proper preparation, and decency in all our endeavors is lost on Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett.

Insiders at the state attorney general's office speak of moral bankruptcy, blatant hypocrisy and raw politics in the AG's office under Corbett.

Tom Corbett misused the office of attorney general to win the Pennsylvania governor office at any and all cost, by any means necessary, those around him say. Part of the great cost paid, we now see in the Jerry Sandusky case, included the safety, dignity and well-being of children.

As governor, Corbett then attempted to distract public attention away from his own mounting failures, political machinations and dishonesties by making a fall guy of Joe Paterno.

Look at the wreckage in Corbett's wake. The reputations of Coach Joe Paterno, Penn State, and its football program, are all in tatters and ruin. Like a scandalized widow, Penn State would contemplate changing its name. Penn State's once-proud football team, for decades among the finest in the nation, suffered a fall from grace, deep disgrace, and was in jeopardy of disbandment.

The moral authority and integrity of the governor office and its predecessor -- once occupied by great, sincere and hard-working men like Benjamin Franklin, Andrew Curtin, and Gifford Pinchot -- has also taken a devastating hit.



Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett



Joe Paterno

Pennsylvania and some of its most hallowed institutions would be discredited and become the butt of national jokes and disbelief. All that has been much discussed.

Not so clearly seen and spoken about is that Corbett, on his political run to the governor office, would leave in tatters the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, and potentially the careers and reputations of the many good and dedicated people who work there.

But that's only part of the unseen story.

Jerry Sandusky's kid glove treatment at the hands of diverse Pennsylvania institutions, from 1998 until late 2010, reveals a classic pattern of looking the other way. From at least 2009 onward, AG Tom Corbett would be the lead player in this culture of cover-up, shielding and confidentiality.

Read the rest of this article at at:  
<http://newslanc.com/document/JoePaTakesTheFallFinal12312.pdf>.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Make Penn Square Partners do the right thing re Convention Center

Posted on April 1st, 2012

**“For months, officials have worried...”.**

And what exactly have those officials been doing other than worrying?

I am disappointed (although not surprised) that our County Commissioners did not step up to the plate and require that the proponents of this venture ‘make whole’ any immediate shortfall.

I am disappointed (although not surprised) that the one-sided lease agreement between the Hotel and the Convention Center has not been summarily thrown out and reworked into a more amenable agreement for the Convention Center.

I am disappointed (although not surprised) that once again Penn Square Partners ‘gets their way’ and apparently will not be required to do ‘the

right thing’ for county taxpayers and the hotel industry who remain ‘on the hook’.

“Power to the Elite” rules the day once again.

### Padding results, not lack of I.D., cause of voter fraud

Posted on March 23rd, 2012

**The problem of voter corruption** is not of people coming to the polls as someone else, some dead person. The problem of voter ID fraud has little, if any, documented proof.

Fraud can occur where the election officials act in collusion and falsify the vote count. One wonders in Conoy Township, where the vote is 95% or greater Republican, how padded that night's totals become. How many really come out to vote and how many were added behind closed doors?



### Gov. Corbett turned a blind eye re Hershey Trust

Posted on January 27th, 2012

**The same can be said about [Governor Tom] Corbett** (and his entire office) regarding abuses in the Hershey Trust. He turned a blind eye to multiple improprieties and perhaps criminal activity because of political cronyism and a twisted allegiance to former AG, and Hershey Trust board chairman, LeRoy Zimmerman.

The whole mess STINKS, the Hershey Trust, Sandusky, Corbett, the Attorney General's office — ALL OF IT!!!

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...continued

## Reasons for cancelling men's track making less and less sense

Posted on March 18th, 2012

[**Millersville University**] can't touch the **women's program** because of Title IX. But as for the latter part of your third question: We all feel like we're missing something.

We can't figure out why they've cut one of the cheapest and most cost-effective sports. At Millersville, the Men's and Women's teams travel together-1 Bus, 1 Cost, train with the same facilities and primarily the same equipment, and fundraise for most of their expenses.

It is still to be determined where the \$200,000 in savings comes from. Bottom line: We're all missing something.

The reasons provided by Breaux and the McNairy administration are continuously changing and making less and less sense.

**EDITOR: Bureaucratic arrogance?**

## Public should not be hostage to unfair PSP agreements

Posted on February 13th, 2012

**Maybe what we need** is a court injunction to 're-open' those agreements and have them be FAIRLY written to better protect the taxpayers and the hotel/tourist industry.

I wonder if the County Commissioners would have the intestinal fortitude required to see that this gets done.

When it comes to 'Business As Usual' with PSP and the 'power elite'; we need to rewrite the parameters. Hoteliers, tourist industry associates, city and county taxpayers should NOT be held hostage!!!!



## Paterno's treatment will be remembered

Posted on February 3rd, 2012

**From the READING EAGLE Letter:**

...After all, it took the attorney general's investigator an entire year to find the police report filed in 1998. It also took him an entire year to find out that Sandusky wrote a book. Where was the sense of urgency to get a child predator off the streets? What happened to the sense of urgency to report in a timely manner? Who is at fault if Sandusky abused more children from 2008-2011?

So why was Paterno excoriated for not doing enough when Corbett's office dragged its feet several years later?

There is more to this scandal than the people are being told, but thanks to people such as Phil Knight, Anthony Lubrano and Bill Keisling, who found the courage to say publicly what needed to be said, the public is learning more...

## What a syringe exchange accomplished elsewhere in March

Posted on April 6th, 2012

**EDITOR: Below is a report from a syringe exchange in a comparable sized Pennsylvania City.** By spurning a proposal by the Urban League to operate an exchange, Lancaster General Health refused to help support a syringe exchange for here in Lancaster. Yet LGH, a public charity, paid its president \$1,150,000 to take a year off to be a captain in the Navy!

### "March 2012 Monthly Report

Twenty-three participants were tested for HIV in March.

- Total contacts: 384
- Total IDU contacts: 332
- Total unduplicated IDU contacts: 279

- Syringes: 3460
- Condoms distributed: Male- 2128, Female-50, Dental Dams-38 Finger Cots-70
- Demographics of unduplicated IDU contacts:
- African American male: 44
- White Male: 48
- Latino: 70
- African American female: 31
- White female: 47
- Latina: 39

We completed 274 referrals for various services.

This month, as a result of our 87 total D&A referrals, seven participants entered into drug treatment facilities. This indicates those of whom we are aware; there may be additional entries of which we are not aware."



Photo (c) AidsConnect.com



# EDITORIALS

## We respect the LNP but...

Posted on April 14th, 2012

**Lancaster is fortunate** to have relatively competent, well meaning, and generally responsible newspapers — but on occasions the Watchdog is very frustrated by the obtuseness of the editors, their valuing sensationalism over the rights of individuals, and their failure to report on some big local issues lest they ruffle friendships or antagonize advertisers.

## Intelligencer Journal LANCASTER NEW ERA

### Five cases at point:

1) They plastered the photo and a prominent front page article concerning a young man accused of exchanging drugs with a friend, something which is a violation of dubious law and not uncommon, albeit certainly undesirable. What made the unfortunate but relatively routine infraction so important? The youth was the son of a local politician. The young man is not a public figure; the father is. So why special treatment for the young man, let alone when he has only been accused, not even convicted?

2) To further bollox up the handling of the matter, the newspaper was not critical of the county district attorney, Craig Stedman, for passing the case along to the state attorney general. If Stedman felt conflicted because of his relationship to the youth's father, he should have simply recused himself and allowed an assistant district attorney handle the case, as is normal. This was patently unfair to the young man, making the usual plea bargain to a lesser charge and a lighter sentence far less likely. Is Stedman more concerned about his own reputation than treating the young man justly?

3) When J. P. McCaskey High School youngsters went to the state Mock Trial finals and barely missed winning, there wasn't a photo or any conspicuous coverage of their extraordinary accomplishment. Which is more newsworthy: the prosecution of a relatively routine drug offense or the achievement of local youngsters representing the best and brightest of their generation and likely our leaders and professionals of the future? (The answer in private from LNP would likely be the former sells more newspapers.)

4) Most disturbing is the abject docility of the newspapers in covering Lancaster's biggest scandal: the arrogant, clandestine and unrepresentative handling and mishandling of hundreds of millions of dollars of public charity funds by Lancaster General Health.

5) Finally, The Lancaster Newspapers, Inc. has Dennis Getz, their executive vice president sitting on the board of Lancaster General Health. Being privy to confidential information and hob knobbing with directors and executives inhibits frank coverage, let alone criticism. No representative of the media should be on any board outside its own industry.

The Fourth Estate is not just about making money; it is also a public trust. Like Caesar's wife, it should be above criticism. The Lancaster Newspapers carry some excellent articles and provide commendable opinion items on both editorial pages.

A recent example of excellence in journalism was the Sunday News series on the county judicial system. Over the past few years, our pride in the newspapers has been restored. But they could do better. And to our last edition we will encourage them to do so.



## Millersville University administration willfully blind to solutions

Posted on March 24th, 2012

**Concerning the cancelled track and field program at Millersville University,** the Intelligencer Journal / New Era article "Critics rally at Millersville University" reports: "... an alumnus has offered to donate \$300,000

to fund men's cross country and outdoor track programs over the next several years while alumni look for permanent funding solution.

"[James McCollum, executive director to the university president, Francine McNairy] said a university can't run that way.

"*You can't operate a \$125 million business where you have outside sources saying, 'We want this program, and we're willing to offer this amount of money,'"* he said. "*We have to look at it in the total context.*"

Balderdash! The responsibility of McNairy and the others is to benefit the students. If others are prepared to pay to continue this or any other program, they should welcome the overture and cooperate fully.

Furthermore, a good portion of the track and field participants are members of the football team. That's how they stay in condition out of season.

This appears to be a combination of bureaucratic arrogance and ignorance of the value of sports on the part of the university leadership. They should reverse their positions immediately and explore offers that would continue track and field and other underfunded programs.

Of course, it may also be a way of drawing public attention to the cutback in state funding. If so, shame on them.

## PA voter-ID law a modern version of Jim Crow

Posted on March 22nd, 2012

**From the PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS  
Op Ed:**

LAST YEAR, as president of the Philadelphia Young Democrats, I had the opportunity to engage our membership in a bipartisan event with Republican leaders on the heels of some of the

*Continued on page 6...*



# EDITORIALS... continued

Continued from page 5...

most tragic partisan incidents in recent history. When my group sat down for the event, "Peace in Politics" with our Republican counterparts, I had no idea that the GOP was going to decide, for the most cynical of reasons, to reintroduce the poll tax. What a difference a year makes.

The state House and the governor of Pennsylvania have, by passing the voter-ID bill, set us forth on a course designed to disenfranchise millions of people across the commonwealth. While I remain confident that

either we'll win this fight in the courts or that the federal Department of Justice will block this law – as it has in Texas and a host of other states that overreached – the Republicans have done this terrible thing in the cleverest of ways, and that requires an answer. For the Philadelphia Young Democrats, voter registration and turnout is essential. This includes unobstructed access to the polls.

By arguing that voter fraud must be stamped out, the Republicans mask their true intent to

deny millions of people easy access to voting. They do this with a feigned appeal to the common good. The Republicans choose to align themselves, using this tactic, with the very worst of the race-baiting Jim Crow laws of the first half of the 20th century. Those laws were written to prevent fraud as well. What they did instead was prevent millions of African-Americans from voting. It wasn't until the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965 that African-American voting rights were protected federally.



## Birthday reflections by the Editor

Seventy-five years ago the Watchdog was born in the midst of the Great Depression and the rise of fascism in Germany. There were great problems but they were not largely self-inflicted. The country rose nobly to fight to free the world from Nazism, and to improve the condition of all Americans (ultimately including African-Americans) as well as much of the rest of the world. But things changed three decades ago when the benighted concluded that "*Government is the problem.*"

Today the country is again in great trouble, but this time almost all self-inflicted.

We are trying to end two foolhardy wars costing almost four trillion dollars, more than 50% of the national debt. The middle class income is shrinking and 0.01% of the population has gained immense wealth and, through unbridled campaign contributions, gained control over both political parties. Examples: Military-Industrial complex; Wall Street; Criminal Justice Complex; Health Industry, Big Oil. (We are bombarded with ads telling us the wonderful things the subsidized petroleum companies are doing for us while we neglect funding alternate sources of energy and blithely pay \$4 a gallon at the pump.)

An unwieldy and exploitive health industry costs 50% more of Gross Domestic Product than the most expensive of other advanced nations and yet ours is rated on the level of Cuba.

Thanks to unwarranted consolidations led by craven Wall Street manipulators, our economy is led by vastly overpaid financiers rather than the largely socially responsible industrialist of the past.

A Military – Industrial complex forever beats the drums of war and causes the nation to bleed both literally and figuratively, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths here and abroad and spending twice what is needed to protect our

worldwide interests on the belief that running the world is our responsibility. (How the Chinese laugh at us!)

I would add an outrageously expensive educational system, rooted in methods from the Middle Ages rather than from the modern Internet.

We permit high unemployment at a time when the nation's infrastructure is rusting away, when little investment is being made for modernization, and the government has all but abandoned partnering with private enterprise in research and new investments. (We have virtually ceded economic dominance for the balance of the 21st Century to China.)

Ignoramuses believe the way to reduce a deficit is to shrink the economy by reduction in governmental expenditures and even less taxes on the rich, who already enjoy the lowest taxes by at least half and probably two-thirds over much of the past century. One can argue that higher taxes correlate to periods of real national economic growth.

To have lived long and well is great good fortune. But to see your country decline from greatness to mediocrity, from civic virtue to crass greed, from wise industrial and social policies to stupidities... of which none is greater than the indiscriminate War on Drugs ... these do detract from the joy of the occasion.

## TO CONTACT US

**[RealReporting.org / NewsLanc.com](http://RealReporting.org / NewsLanc.com)** can be reached at **[info@newslanc.com](mailto:info@newslanc.com)**. Comments and contributions are most welcome. Also communications can be sent anonymously by following instructions found on the left column of web page.



# A discussion: “What the heck is going on with the Obama administration concerning medical marijuana?”

Posted on April 17th, 2012

## EDITOR:

We have been puzzled over why federal prosecutors had launched a war against medical marijuana distribution in California, contrary to state law and overwhelming public opinion there and nationwide. I asked our chairman from Common Sense for Drug Policy Michael Gray (neither he or we are “revolutionaries” in a literal sense) for his views as a Californian. Later, our president Kevin Zeese added his comment.

## Robert and Kevin:

Fellow revolutionaries, if I’m wrong about this, I owe you all a drink next year at a cheap saloon of your choosing, but here’s my West Coast take on the current state of the drug war.

While the thoroughly fragmented and politically incompetent marijuana legalization community rails at Obama for going back on his campaign promise, we ignore our own part in the debacle. We can’t even get together on a simple initiative in California because the dispensary operators oppose legalization, the medical community castigates the “stoners” for giving reefer a bad name, and the stoners are demanding the right to feed pot brownies to the neighbors’ kids.

To expect the President to get out in front of this leaderless mob is unrealistic. He knows better than to antagonize the Prohibition Lobby right before the election because it’s one of the wealthiest combines in Washington, fueled by the pharmaceutical industry, the liquor industry and lawmen of every stripe

We forget that our President is a chess player who’s usually three moves ahead of us. As he said to the Russian Premier, “I’ll have a lot more flexibility after the election.”

I believe that in his State of the Union Message he will say, “Many world leaders are now calling for a re-examination of the

War on Drugs and I believe the time has come for a serious public debate on this issue.”

He will then empanel a collection of experts – (Shafer Commission II) – only this time the report won’t get buried. And as we all know, the War on Drugs is more vulnerable to a serious scientific inquiry than the Flat Earth Society. The evidence is overwhelming and



totally one sided.

The Commission report will be followed by a broad public demand for marijuana legalization and the White House will reluctantly agree. That will be followed shortly by a demand to end the violence and corruption of global drug prohibition altogether.

(Black Knight to King’s Bishop 4 – Checkmate.)

We have to remember that most of FDR’s New Deal was accomplished in his second term. If he’d pushed it in his first term there probably wouldn’t have been a second. When angry leftists railed at him for not immediately doing what was clearly the right thing, he said, in effect, “Take to the streets. Make me do it.”

That’s our job now. Settle our stupid differences and organize, organize, organize.

See you on the barricades.

**Best to all,  
Mike Gray, CSDP**

## Mike :

I was wondering how you would avoid blaming Obama for his actions!

While you are right about the “movement” not having its act together there is no reason for Obama to be leading a war on medical marijuana. The “Prohibition Lobby” is not demanding it and the people are not demanding it.

**KZ**

## Mike and Kevin:

I fear if the Obama administration does not reverse its aggressive persecution of medical marijuana distribution there will be no second term. People are very serious about their religions, their wives (or husbands), and their pot.

**Robert**

## Bill Keisling

**Bill Keisling**, author of the following article on page 8, is author of more than a dozen books of fiction and nonfiction. His essays, investigative writings, and short stories have appeared in diverse magazines and journals including The North American Review, Rolling Stone, and The Progressive magazines. He was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship for his novel The Meltdown. The introduction to his first nonfiction book, Three Mile Island: Turning Point, was written by R. Buckminster Fuller.

Keisling grew up in close proximity to the Pennsylvania governor’s office, and the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General. He has published several books on corruption in Pennsylvania government and the attorney general’s office, including The Sins of Our Fathers, We All Fall Down, and The Midnight Ride of Jonathan Luna.

He is also the writer and editor of [Yardbird.com](http://Yardbird.com).

## Private interests seek to grab invaluable watershed for pennies on the dollar

by Bill Keisling

Harrisburg: Broke, and Soon Thirsty: Introduction to a RealReporting.org / NewsLanc.com series.

*Harrisburg PA may soon lose control of its priceless and historic public water system to bottom feeders who hope to pay pennies on the dollar.*

*One hundred years of sound public works could be lost to a score of years of folly, fast bond trading and high finance, and a public that wasn't paying attention.*

*"It's Chinatown, Jake"*

**Private companies are jostling in line** to pick up broke Harrisburg, Pennsylvania's public water system for pennies on the dollar.

The water system is the undisputed crown jewel of the bankrupt city.

It's a public water system of inestimable historic and economic worth.

The water system's most valuable assets are tucked away, out of sight, about an hour's drive upriver and into the mountains north of Harrisburg.

The system includes a vast reservoir and dam that supply water to the city of Harrisburg and nearby municipalities.

Along the reservoir's banks, protecting the watershed, stand some 8,200 acres of city owned, unspoiled forest.

The city reservoir itself is more than five miles long. It holds 6 to 7 billion gallons of mountain water.

The dam -- called Dehart Dam -- that holds the reservoir is 100 feet high, 2,000 feet long, and 600 feet thick at its base. It took a year and a half to fill the reservoir after the dam was built in 1939.

The protected watershed that feeds the reservoir stretches twenty-five miles into the forest of the mountainous undeveloped Clark Valley.

Some days you can drive or walk for hours along the reservoir on state Rt. 325 without encountering a soul.

The roadway passage through the forest alongside the reservoir is unspoiled.

There are no amenities. There are no housing developments.

All that may change.

The real value of the reservoir, the dam, and the 8,200 acres of land could easily approach \$5 billion dollars, I'm told. Over time, decades into the future, its actual value could be more than \$50 billion, concerned insiders say.

It simply cannot be replaced, at any price.

Nevertheless, a recent plan put forward by the administration of Gov. Tom Corbett appraises the value of the water system at a mere \$50 million -- possibly a fraction of a percent of its true worth.



The Harrisburg Reservoir and Delhart Dam

Should Harrisburg lose its water system, more than one hundred years of sound public works could be lost to a score of years of political folly, fast bond trading and high finance, and a public that wasn't paying attention.

Before the citizens of Harrisburg built their pure mountain reservoir in the late 1930s, they drank treated raw sewage pumped from the muddy Susquehanna. Sometimes the water ran brown from their spigots... If it ran at all.

No private company back then stepped forward to build a clean water supply for the city. The city had to build its own, with the help of the WPA. (Works Project Administration.)

That's why, for these and other reasons, it would be ironic and tragic should a private company end

up controlling Harrisburg's water system.

Harrisburg's remarkable water works was a far-sighted gift to today's residents of the city, from residents of the past.

Past citizens wanted a water system that they and their progeny would control, away from the hands of private interests. It would allow the city to chart its own destiny, to grow, and plan.

Today's residents didn't have to build the reservoir, or even pay for it. Its sound bonds have long since been retired.

All the residents of the city today had to do was care for it, and guard it.

Like a fool who has blown his inheritance overnight in a casino, today's residents of Harrisburg may yet lose it.

The dam and its mountain reservoir are connected by miles of underground water main that snakes down through the mountain valley toward the Susquehanna River and connects to Harrisburg at Seventh and Division Streets, some 21 miles away.

The water to this day runs clear and clean.

But, at the far end of the pipe, miles from the dam, in the city of Harrisburg, things are not running so well politically these days. The political waters run putrid, if they run at all.

At the federal courthouse in Harrisburg, where the drinking fountains splash with the fresh water from the reservoir, a supposedly all-powerful court-appointed receiver recently pounded his fist with exasperation on a witness stand in a courtroom while he spoke about the ill state

of the city.

The receiver had been appointed by Gov. Corbett and the courts a few months earlier to straighten out the financial mess that was consuming the city.

The city authority that today owns the water supply also owns an incinerator that somehow gobbled up \$300 million in borrowed money. The authority and the city defaulted on payment of the incinerator debt to bondholders.

Bondholders and their allies now are lining up to in courts to clean the city's cupboards. So the water supply, in some fashion, if not in total fashion, like other city properties, may end up in private hands, at bargain basement prices.

**...to be continued.**