

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 3, 2010

PAM lawsuit will hurt other nonprofits here

TO THE EDITORS:

As the director of development for a prominent Lancaster nonprofit organization, I am dismayed by the Aug. 28, story that Pennsylvania Academy of Music is suing William and Karyn Regitz for failing to fulfill \$150,000 of a \$240,000 pledge toward construction of its downtown building. PAM has declared bankruptcy, and, as it no longer owns the building, presumably intends using the pledge fulfillment to pay off its creditors instead. You report that more suits are planned against other recalcitrant donors.

Whatever the legalities of the case, there is little doubt that this lawsuit will have a seriously deleterious effect on the ability of local nonprofits to attract philanthropic funding not only for major capital projects but also for the simple annual appeal. We rely on the goodwill of generous local benefactors who understandably will now be wary of making any commitment to giving their support.

I am doubly dismayed by PAM's hypocrisy in pursuing these donors for failing to follow through on their promises.

Earlier this year, PAM approached me for help in

promoting a benefit concert by the Canadian urban roots group Po'Girl during its "No Shame Tour." PAM told me \$5 of every ticket sold would benefit YWCA Lancaster's Sexual Assault Prevention and Counseling Center. It was a generous offer and naturally we did all we could to promote the venture.

On the evening of the concert, I saw many of our supporters there. They might be interested to learn that we are yet to receive the promised \$5 per ticket sold. The concert was held on Feb. 23, long before PAM's declaration of bankruptcy in May. The money was available for distribution immediately but PAM chose to hang onto it.

When I realized we weren't going to get the money, I shrugged my shoulders and told not a soul outside our management team. But after reading your report I no longer feel that way.

We hope the benefactors of Lancaster County will recognize those nonprofits that are scrupulous about using charitable donations for the purpose for which they're given.

John Jascoll
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