

theithacajournal.com

[Home](#) [News](#) [Entertainment](#) [Communities](#) [Classifieds](#) [Shopping](#) [Homes](#) [Cars](#) [Jobs](#) [Customer Service](#)
[Archive \(1999-\)](#)
[SEARCH](#)
[Past Web Editions](#)
[Home](#)
[News](#)
[Local News](#)
[Archives](#)
[Local Sports](#)
[Lifestyle](#)
[Elections](#)
[Nation/World](#)
[Obituaries](#)
[Celebrations](#)
[Opinion](#)
[Technology](#)
[Weather](#)
[Entertainment](#)
[Communities](#)
[Classifieds](#)
[Shopping](#)
[Homes](#)
[Cars](#)
[Jobs](#)
[Customer Service](#)


For the **Best Service & Selection** in Central NY!

FREE Cushion with purchase

Opinion - Tuesday, March 15, 2005

☒ [SUBSCRIBE TO THE ITHACA JOURNAL](#)

Question fairness of county library tax

MARLAINE DARFLER

GUEST COLUMNIST

While recognizing the financial difficulties facing the Tompkins County Public Library, the board members of the Lansing Community Library Center, its committee members, volunteers and the Lansing town board do not believe that the tax referendum being placed on the Lansing Central School District ballot this May is a just and equitable way to bring resolution to this issue.



Darfler

The Town of Lansing (village not included) encompasses almost 21 percent of the assessed value of Tompkins County.

The residents of the Lansing school district comprise 4.35 percent of county library usage and are 5.6 percent of their cardholders. With the reality of these numbers, Lansing residents are more than adequately financing our personal use of the county library and supporting the library as a service to our whole county.

Adding an additional 27 cents per thousand for Lansing residents, which will generate over \$175,000 a year, creates a situation of double taxation and disproportionate support from Lansing residents for a countywide service.

Every Tompkins County tax payer pays 46 cents per \$1,000 assessed value earmarked for the county library. Adding an additional 27 cents per thousand for Lansing residents, which will generate over \$175,000 a year, creates a situation of double taxation and disproportionate support from Lansing residents for a countywide service.

The towns of Groton, Newfield, Dryden and Trumansburg acknowledged the importance of local library services over 100 years ago. Understanding that a county library building in Ithaca could not adequately service the outlying areas,

these towns chartered their own local libraries to supplement county library services, as well as to serve a population not able to be serviced by the downtown location.

Today, Groton, Newfield and Trumansburg libraries are partially supported by their local school districts via a direct ballot. This money is collected locally and used to support the local town library.

The county library is now asking the residents in the Lansing school district to begin paying this second library tax. However, unlike our neighboring towns, this tax will not remain a local tax for Lansing library services, it will go directly into the county library budget.

The Lansing Community Library Center, a reading room of the county library, provides local library services to the Lansing community. Lansing library center is not, at this time, an independently chartered library and therefore cannot collect taxes. The reading room opened its doors in June 2001 with the help of the county library's rotating selection of books to fill the shelves.

In a little under four years, the Lansing library center has grown beyond anyone's expectations. Our town board supports the library by leasing us the old town hall for a nominal fee as well as providing some financial support for the improvements to the building.

Lansing library center is a fully volunteer organization, with no added tax support. It now owns a collection of over 10,600 books, CDs, DVDs and books on tape, and 98 percent of the circulation is from its own collection. The library is open six days a week with close to 2,000 patrons and over 5,500 hours a year of volunteer time from a dedicated core of over 50 people.

Renovations to the downstairs, including a computer room, a book processing room and a community meeting room, have just been completed.

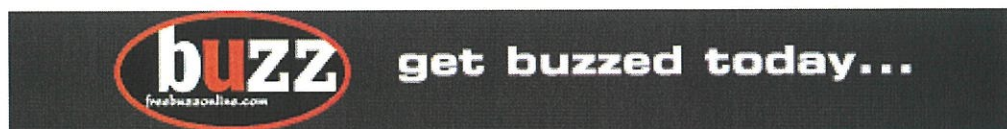
Lansing library center has outgrown its status as a reading room and is exploring future library options. To commit our local library tax money to the Tompkins County Public Library will severely hurt community fund-raising and capital campaign efforts as well as limit any future growth of the Lansing library center as a local library and community center.

—

Darfler is chair of the Lansing Community Library Center board of directors.

 [Email this story](#)

Originally published Tuesday, March 15, 2005



[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Communities](#) | [Customer Service](#)
[Classifieds](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Homes](#) | [Cars](#) | [Jobs](#)



[Contact Us](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Place an ad](#)



