

## Lansing Community Library Flourishes

The past year has been busy for the Lansing Community Library (LCL). Volunteers enthusiastically completed the transformation of LCL from a reading a room of Tompkins County Public Library to an independent, chartered public library for Lansing residents. LCL now boasts 2,880 library patrons with 5-10 new people signing up for library cards weekly.

*copy of  
Newspaper that  
appeared in  
Ithaca  
Journal  
May 4, 2008*

After securing funding to sustain an annual budget in 2007, the Friends of LCL transferred library operations to the elected Board of Trustees. In March 2008, the library earned its NYS Charter. As required by the Charter, a certified Library Manager, the energetic Susie Gutenberger (a Lansing resident), was hired to provide much-needed professional guidance for LCL.

The library still relies on volunteers for book processing, bookkeeping, grounds maintenance, its elected Trustees, and the Friends of LCL. Approximately 550 hours per month are donated to LCL by Lansing residents!

In 2008, LCL was voted a member of the Finger Lakes Library System (FLLS). This organization helps coordinate library services for 33 libraries in Cayuga, Cortland, Seneca, Tioga and Tompkins Counties. With FLLS help and a grant from local Triad Foundation, the Lansing Community Library jumped into the digital era! Library staff, volunteers, and patrons now have full computer access to the 13,000+ holdings at LCL, and holdings at the 32 other Finger Lakes libraries. The entire FLLS catalog can also be viewed via the internet from home computers.

Library stacks were rearranged to maximize natural light and to accommodate tables and easy chairs, offering patrons cozy reading nooks and comfy workplaces. The public computers, which are occupied about 55% of the time, were relocated to promote easier use. LCL is a free, wireless hotspot, too!

For two years, Lansing residents have enjoyed a wide range of free library programs featuring local artists, and covering topics from gardening, fly-fishing, planet Mars Rovers, and financial planning, to various historical themes that combined demonstrations with art displays. Two best-selling authors also drew large crowds. The popular Children's Summer Reading Program, conducted every year, enrolled 141 children in '08. Younger Children's Story Time resumed with 11 children and 6 adults attending last Tuesday. Grant funds enabled the purchase of more Large Print books to build that collection for Lansing residents with vision challenges.

A modest tax funds operations at the Lansing Library. The tax rate for the fixed library budget in September '08 was 12.6 cents/\$1000 of property assessment, meaning a \$100,000 Lansing property paid \$12.60; the library budget amount cannot increase unless it is voted on by the Lansing public. This year Tompkins County gave \$29,870 to each chartered library (Groton, Dryden, Trumansburg, Lansing) – money LCL used to hire a part-time Clerk, Paula Weaver (Lansing resident). LCL is also pursues grants from the State and Federal Governments - grants it could not have applied for before it received its Charter. These funds and our talented professional staff, plus thousands of volunteer hours, will keep our library strong.

For ten years, many generous local individuals, businesses, foundations, and the Town of Lansing helped to build LCL into the successful community service it is today. Lansing Community Library will continue to improve services to help you get even more entertainment and education from your local library. Come check us – and a book -- out!

*Donna Scott, President  
Friends of Lansing Community Library*

This proposition will appear in the voting booth at the Lansing Central School District Annual Meeting and Budget Vote:

Question: Shall the Lansing Community Library Center be abolished as a Public Library under the Lansing Central School District, and all funding of said library through taxation of taxable property of said School District be terminated?

Vote to be held Tuesday, May 19, 2009  
At Lansing Elementary School  
7:00 am to 9:00 pm

The way the proposition is worded, library supporters must vote NO to keep the library from closing.

According to NYS Education Law Sec. 268, if a chartered library is abolished, its assets are seized by the State for re-distribution to other public entities. This means our entire collection and all our equipment would be gone. The library would close. Lansing Community Library *cannot* return to its previous status as an all volunteer-staffed and donation-funded organization.

*David: Re this last sentence: library opponents' first petition misled voters by saying the library would return to "all volunteer run and funded". This first petition was rejected by the school's lawyers and the school board. However, most the 70 people who signed the second petition do not know why the first petition was rejected and changed. Opponents believe the library can just "go back to all volunteer". This is not true.*