

Lucille E. Dearth Union Township Library



Grand Opening - June 26, 2011

From start to finish



Grand opening Sunday, June 26

by Jennie Szink

Friend of the Library are finalizing the plans for the Lucille E. Dearth-Union Township Library's grand opening Sunday, June 26, and are planning for at least 500 people to be in attendance.

The celebration will begin at 1 p.m. with children's games run by Community Unlimited. There will be a bounce house and the "Cross Country Band" will play. The games will temporarily stop at 2 p.m. for the opening ceremony.

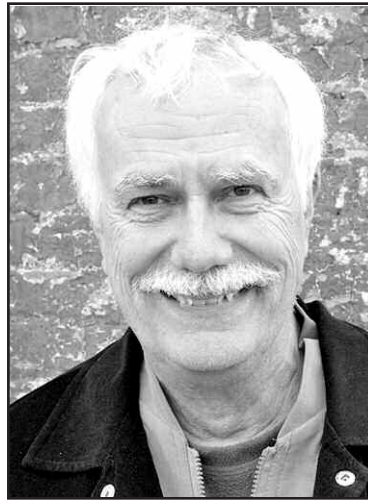
"We're so happy this is finally happening," said Jon Rick, Friends of the Library president. "There will be many of the big donors in attendance for the ribbon cutting."

The donors in attendance include representatives from the Lucille E. Dearth, Max Larsen and Binda Foundations; a representative for Frances Harrison, who was

previously an anonymous donor; Russell and Monique Springborn, who donated the fencing; Jim Hayden, who will represent the Union City Rotary Club; Ken Brooks, who will represent Southern Michigan Bank and Trust; a representative from Beck's Hybrid Seeds; Marv Carman, who will also represent his wife Marcia Carman; Robert Keene; Charles Bartlett; a representative for Florence McNett; and a representative for Helen Labar.

There are also several legislators who will be in attendance, including Kenneth Kurtz, Bruce Caswell and Tim Walberg. To signify the ownership of the library, Rick and Union Township Supervisor Ralph Strong will accept the keys during the ceremony. Branch manager Pat Kaniewski and librarian Sandy Patterson will cut the ribbon.

After the ribbon cutting, the



Jon Rick

public will have a chance to tour the library. Rick and Strong said it's unlikely the library will be furnished with books by the ceremony.

"We are still waiting on an occupancy permit," Rick said last week.

Marv Carman, a Friend of the Library member and key person in planning the ceremony, said even when empty, the library is striking.

"There's no one that hasn't been totally impressed with the library from the front door to the back door," Carman said. "Hopefully the community uses it as much as we expect."

The public will get to tour the

library and the township hall, located in the basement, and then may eat lunch prepared by Jack's Family Grocery until 6 p.m. Children's games will resume after the ceremony.

The first 500 who attend the ceremony will receive gift bags. Children will have a chance to win a girls or boys bike and an iPod. They may register for the raffle by receiving tickets at the library for the number of books they've read or receiving a ticket at the ceremony for attending.



This empty lot was transformed into the new library.

Congratulations

When it comes to community pride and involvement, you can always bank on the great people of Union City. Congratulations on your new library!



Leave smiling. Retire wealthy.

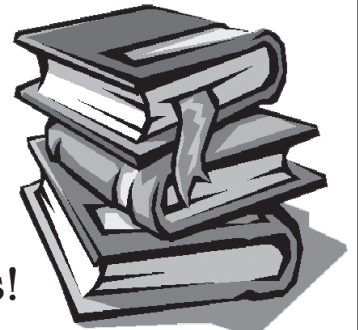
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Lucille E. Dearth - Union Township Library

A beautiful effort by the entire community.

Congratulations!



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Library site housed many businesses, park

□ Bray Motors on site 31 years

The site for the new Lucille E. Dearth - Union Township Library in Heritage Cultural Park has a long and storied history.

In 1845, Jacob Lazer and Silas Marble built a structure on the southwest corner of North Broadway and West High Street to be used as stores. In 1867, the building was purchased by J. S. Rowell, who converted the structure into a hotel.

The hotel was sold to Isaac Maltby, followed by the Titlow Brothers, in the early 1870s, who gave it the name of the Titlow House. When no longer used as a hotel, the south part was used as a livery stable.

In 1915, the structure was torn down to make way for the Gib Stanton and Howard Engle Ford garage in 1920. The west part of this building later burned.

In April 1927, Carl Bray Sr. purchased the property and opened Bray Motors in the facility. The auto dealership remained until 1958, when the company moved to a new building on North Broadway near M-60.

Schafer's Manufacturing, a plating company, purchased the building in October 1939. They rebuilt the second story at street level in 1946. A Schafer creation produced in the street level building was the "Wonder Button," which allowed a man to increase the neck size of his shirt.

In 1970, ground was broken for a new Schafer Manufacturing Company building on the corner

of M-60 and Arbogast Road.

Aerial Manufacturing Company started in 1952 in the attached building west of Bray's and above Schafer's Manufacturing.

The company manufactured small parachutes for food and supply drops and to drop flares during the Korean War. The company employed as many as 150 women to sew the parachutes. The manufacturer closed on January 1, 1955.

In 1971, Schafer's sold the building to Robert Hawken, who moved the Hawken's Furniture Store across Broadway to the new location. With the closing of the Hawken's Furniture Store, Treats Auto Parts, a branch of the Coldwater store, moved into the building. Hill Piston Auto Parts soon followed and remained until the property was turned over to the state.

The land became the property of the State of Michigan in 1991, due to unpaid taxes. The building was demolished and the Environmental Protection Agency cleaned up the site. In July 2008, the land was transferred to the Village of Union City.

In 2006, the village created Heritage Park on the site. The name was later changed to Heritage Cultural Park.

In 2008, the village agreed to lease part of the site to Union Township for the Lucille E. Dearth - Union Township Library. The lease is for 99 years at a cost of \$1 per year.



Heritage Cultural Park as it looked prior to construction.



The former Titlow House once stood on the site of the new library.

A BIG THANK YOU
to the Friends of the Library
and all the people and businesses
whose contributions of time and money
made our new library a reality.



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Library traces roots back to 1870

The Union City "Ladies' Lending Library" was started in 1870, and was located in various homes, stores and offices in the business district. As it grew in size and demand, it was decided to seek a permanent home for the library.

Union Township assumed responsibility for its operation and purchased the building at 219 North Broadway (now the north half of the United Methodist Womens' Thrift Shop). The library became a branch of the Branch County Library in 1941.

In 1953, Gerald Hensley bought French's Portrait Studio and the Allis Chalmers Implement Store owned by Clark and Rose Knauss. He also reached an agreement with the Union Township Board to trade buildings with the Township Library.

The library was to move into

the Allis Chalmers Implement Store (the current library). The agreement called for \$1,000 to be paid to the township by Hensley, who also agreed to move the contents of the library to its new next-door location.

This agreement allowed Hensley to combine the Township Library and French's Studio into one large store by removing the wall between the two buildings. This building has since become the United Methodist Womens' Thrift Shop.

In 1956, the Union Township Library moved into the W.R.C. Hall on Hammond Street where it remained for two months, while the building was remodeled and the move to the new facility was complete.

In 1973, an agreement was reached between the Branch

County Library and Union Township whereby the township would also use the facility for the offices of the township clerk and treasurer and for township board meetings and elections.

In July 2006, due primarily to a lack of building space for township elections and needed room for the library, the Union Township Board decided that the township's lease with the Branch District Library needed to be renegotiated. This decision prompted the Friends of the Library to launch a fund-raising campaign for a new library. By the end of July 2006, the first donations were being deposited into the new building fund.

Now, five years later, the new Lucille E. Dearth - Union Township Library is ready to open.



The original library was next door to the present library in the north half of the Hensley building.



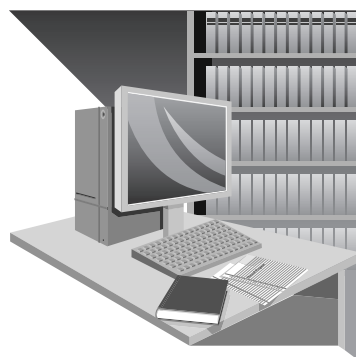
The original library

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RESOURCE FOR THE
COMMUNITY!**

Thank you to everyone who helped!

We are very proud of the new

Lucille E. Dearth – Union Township Library



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Township hopes for quick sale of old building

Offer has been accepted from former UC resident

by Mike Warner

Union Township officials are hoping for a quick sale of the old library/township hall building.

Officials have accepted an offer of \$10,500 from former Union City resident Eric Bronson, who is an attorney in Los Angeles.

"We've turned it over to our attorney and we hope to have it closed by the end of June when Eric returns," said Ralph Strong, township supervisor.

"I'm impressed everything moved that fast," Strong added. "Eric was really good to work with and we're sure he will do something nice with the building."

The supervisor said if a buyer hadn't been found quickly, the township was prepared to auction the building.

"We can't afford to maintain two buildings," Strong noted. "We were ready to just take our loss and move on."

Bronson, 52, is a 1976 graduate of Union City High School. He is currently practicing law in Los Angeles. While he has no firm plans for the building, he wants to move back to the area, at least on a part-time basis, and possibly practice law.

"I really miss the family farm," Bronson said of his parents' Jack and Phyllis' property in Sherwood Township. "I miss my family. I want to spend time with my folks and sister. I'd like to come back for the next planting season and spend spring, summer and fall in Union City and winters in L.A."

Purchasing the township hall/library building was a spontaneous decision for Bronson, who was home visiting in March and discovered the property was for sale.

"I looked at several places, but liked that building the best. I called my wife back in Los Angeles to ask what she thought," Bronson recalled. "We both decided it was worth pursuing."

The attorney said he enjoys restoring historic buildings and admitted the interior of the Broadway Street structure intrigues him.

"The building has a lot of nice



Ralph Strong

woodwork," he said. "I don't have any well-thought-out plans yet, but I'm really into historic preservation."

Bronson said one possibility for the upstairs is to convert it into a residential property.

"I'm just going to figure things out as we go forward," he said. "The first thing I need to do is bring the building up to the new fire codes."

Union City Village Manager Jim Campfield said it's nice the downtown building has the potential to change hands so quickly and possibly have a new tenant.

"I think it's great," the administrator said. "Obviously, we like having new ownership rather than having the building sit vacant. I think Eric is keen on doing something good for the downtown."

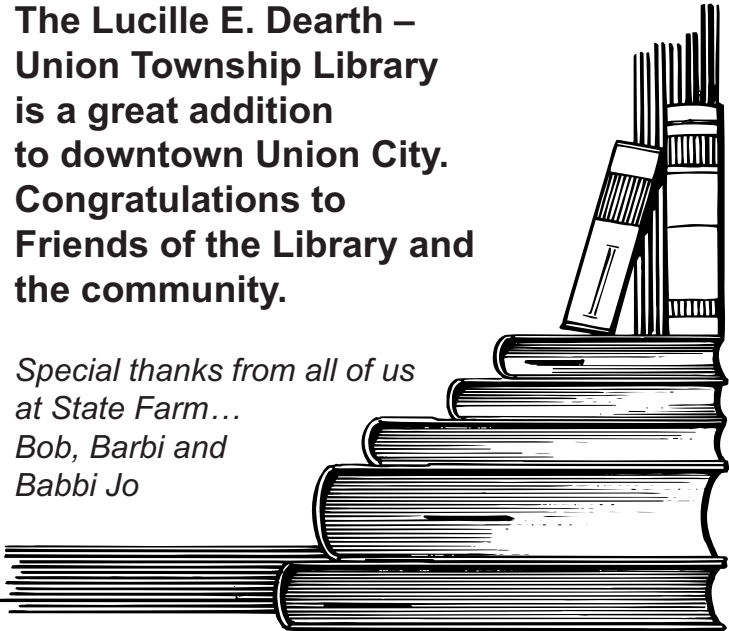


Congratulations
on the new library!
It is an exciting and important addition to the community.


Matthew C. Christopher, D.D.S.
Maureen M. Gierucki, D.D.S.
Richard W. Juhnke, D.M.D.
and Staff

The Lucille E. Dearth – Union Township Library is a great addition to downtown Union City. Congratulations to Friends of the Library and the community.

*Special thanks from all of us at State Farm...
Bob, Barbi and Babbi Jo*



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Carmans key to fund-raising efforts

by Mike Warner

It takes a community-wide effort to raise \$500,000, but it also takes a few key, dedicated individuals to pull it all together.

When it comes to the new Lucille E. Dearth - Union Township Library, Marv and Marcia Carman were two of those key people.

Many people credit Marv Carman for spearheading the fund-raising efforts. His bulldog tenacity and hatred of losing were the perfect recipe to lead the effort to raise a half-million dollars.

When he was first approached about helping in the effort, Carman said, "I had to know everything about it. I quickly realized how complicated it was because of the number of people involved."

Not only were both Union Township and the Village of Union City involved, but so were the Friends of the Library.

Carman jumped in with both feet and took the approach of hit-

ting hard and fast.

"At first, no one wanted to commit," he recalled. "Once we go the first money, things started to happen and everyone got on deck. I told people to give right away because that brings more people on board."

Carman credits Marcia with getting all the legal paperwork done so money could be raised as a charity.

"She did all the paperwork that I'm no good at," he said of his wife.

The fund raising got off to a great start when the Max Larsen Trust pledged a \$100,000 and said anyone who matched it could have their name of the library. After the township agreed to that arrangement, the Lucille E. Dearth Trust agreed to contribute \$100,000, and that's how the library came to be named after Dearth.

Initially, Carman and the rest of the Friends of the Library organization thought a goal of raising \$250,000 was lofty, but not

impossible. With that money, a pole building could be erected to house the new facility. However, as more money kept coming in, the vision changed, and dream became building a new library that would be the centerpiece of the downtown.

While the \$200,000 from the two trusts was a good start, it was still a long way from the \$400,000-\$500,000 needed to build the state-of-the-art facility. Then the Union City community went to work.

Dinners, breakfasts, hog roasts, plant sales, golf outings - you name it - were held. Donations came in by the dollar and by the thousands of dollars, until \$525,000 was raised and Carman was completed amazed.

"Look at what that says about this community. To see what this cash-strapped community did the past three-to-five years. What a deal. What type of community do we have? It's a great community that can raise that amount of

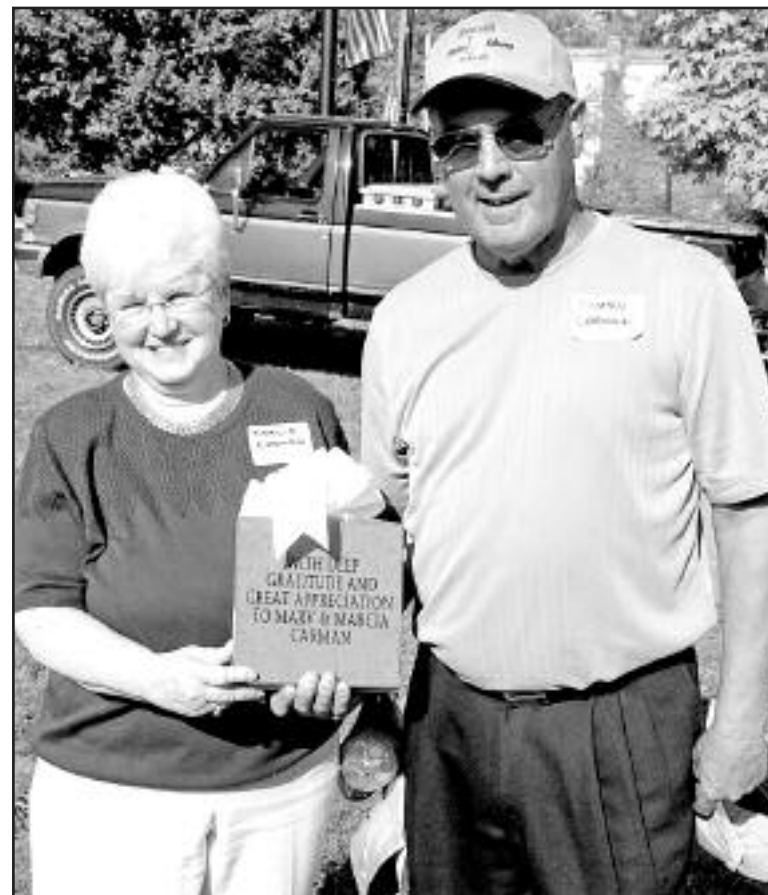
money."

Now that the end of the journey is almost here, Carman said the effort was well worth it.

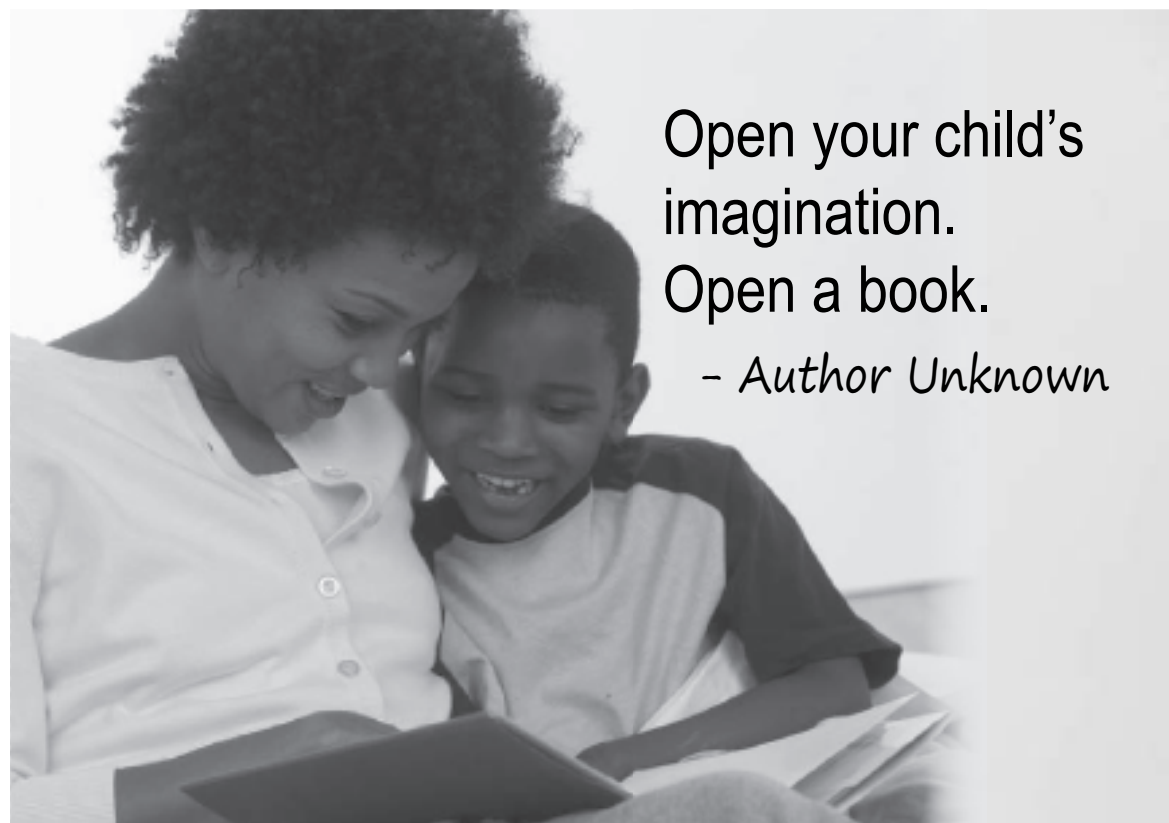
"I don't like to lose, that's why I got involved," he explained. "Whatever it took, I thought we

could do it. The goal kept raising as more money kept coming in. I hope when people see the new library they will understand why we kept raising the goal.

Now we are going to have such a celebration.



Marcia and Marv Carman played a vital role in keeping momentum going for the fund-raising.



Open your child's imagination.
Open a book.

- Author Unknown

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Manager: More space means better library

□ *Kaniewski sees big changes coming*

by Jennie Szink

To Union Township Branch Manager Pat Kaniewski, moving into a bigger library means getting the chance to evolve as a branch.

Kaniewski said libraries are no longer just about checking out books, but because of the tight squeeze at 221 North Broadway, the Union Township Library hasn't been able to expand as it would like.

"I see a big change coming with the library," Kaniewski said. "We can't make that change too much though because of our space right now."

Once the move is made into the newly constructed Lucille E. Dearth - Union Township Library, the local branch will be able to better serve its patrons, Kaniewski

said. There will be 12 computers instead of four and more shelf space.

Although the library will not receive additional books right away because its budget won't change, receiving donations toward new books won't pose a problem.

"The building is large enough to accommodate a couple years' growth," Kaniewski said.

She said she also thinks more books will be checked out because patrons will see titles they never noticed before when they were crammed into the old library. The new library will allow a space for new DVDs and books to be displayed in an eye-catching way.

Kaniewski is most looking forward to having more aisle space.

"We'll have more room," she said. "Patrons won't feel as if they're in the way."

Kaniewski has been with the branch since 1997, and said it's kept a steady number of patrons.

"The clientele evolves," Kaniewski said. "As new people come into our community, they always search out the library."

Once thing that is on the decline, though, is participation in the summer reading program. Kaniewski's biggest regret about the new building is tied to that.

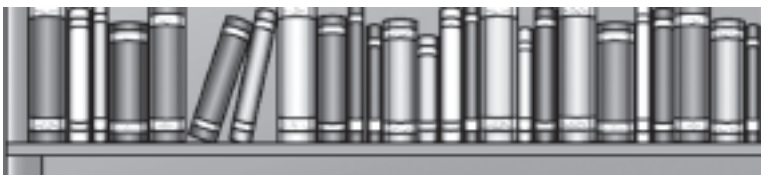
"I really wish we could have had a basement for our use and storage," she said. "We'll still have to find a place to hold summer programs."

But, that won't stop her from offering programs that are already in place, such as a craft the first Saturday of each month. She said she'll also eventually add more programming such as story time.

With Kaniewski's plans and more space, it seems that very soon the library will be able to evolve to meet patrons' needs.



Branch Manager Pat Kaniewski



Lucille E. Dearth – Union Township Library

CONGRATULATIONS
to the community on a fine project! We are proud of our involvement with building the new library! Thank you for letting us be a part of the process!

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FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY FUND-RAISERS

The fund-raising projects began in 2006, with all community volunteers. These volunteers accomplished each project with a smile and a lot of hard work, and we thank each one of them. We wish to thank our community for buying a dinner, a plant, an item at the auction, or golfing with us. These fund-raisers were hosted by many of our community businesses – hats off to all of them.

Jack's Cook Out	Lemonade Club T-Shirt Sale	Auction (3)	Beck's Hybrids
Jack's Family Grocery Rosie Shaffer Dennis Shaffer Cindy Fox John Shaffer	Hensley's John Soncrant Sharon Boley	William O Coats Agency Craig Hoppe, Auctioneer All donors of auction items Lawn mowers: Chip Riddle Verna Swain	Beck's Hybrids Rick Mears AcMoody Farms Marvin Carman Dovey's Roost Farm Bronson Farms Ross Byers
Broadway Brunch	Fabiano's Breakfast Buffet	Beck's Pig Roast	Hoath Auto Hog Roast
Scott Ladd	Chris Mead	Beck's Hybrids Rick Mears	Cliff Hoath
Ma Bucket's Place Dinner	Chatterbox	Golf Outing	Car Cruise
Mary Smith	Jerry Avery	Turtle Creek Golf Club Ray Voraber	Auto Value Barry Hill
Coupon Sale	Pumpkin Sale	Plant Sale	Heritage Chevrolet Oil Change
Elder-Beerman	Jeff Eyre	Karen Manney	Heritage Chevrolet, Battle Creek
Sweet Corn Sale	Meteor Festival	Heritage Days	Memorial Day
Melissa Jamerson & Family	Patricia Polacco Donna Claar	Chamber of Commerce Gail Schafer	Chamber of Commerce Gail Schafer
Bake Sale	Book Sale	Bag Sale & Button Sale	Canisters

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY DONORS

We, the Friends of the Library, wish to thank everyone who gave to the building fund.
This new library was your gift to our community. Thank you and enjoy reading.

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We, the Friends of the Library, wish to thank everyone who gave to the building fund.
This new library was your gift to our community. Thank you and enjoy reading.

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and many anonymous donors

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY ALL WHO HELPED

We, the Friends of the Library, wish to thank everyone who was instrumental in building the new library. This building project had many workers from our community, who gave their time, their energy, and their expertise to see this building to its completion. Without all of you, this building would not have happened. Job well done.

Union Township Board	Union City Village Council	Branch District Library Board	Union Township Library
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Branch District Library

John Rucker, Assistant Director

Building Contractor	Fence	Architect	Accountant
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Brussee / Brady Inc. Tom Brady	Russell & Monique Springborn	S.Allen Design Scott Allen	Hartman & Hartman Cheryl Hartman
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Jon Rick, President Marv Carman, Vice-President Cindy Sebald, Secretary Kathy Madden, Treasurer Jim Hayden Ross Byers Beckey Knowles Terry Knowles Marion Heator Russ Springborn Pat Kaniewski	Sandy Patterson Kathy Hitchcox Jillian Rick John Rucker Marcia Carman Mary Guthrie Dick Johns Benjamin Chard Diane Parkison Becky Spooner Jan Hedgcock	Bob Keene Terry MacDonald Carol Walter Joan Collins Janet Avery Sue Adolph Carle Kever Shelly Lindsay Jenny Smith	Dinner: Jack's Family Grocery
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 Jim Madden
 Burt Madden
 Gordon Dunn
 Eldon Mitchell

Obstacles prevent quick deeding of land

by Mike Warner

Never has giving land away been so hard.

The Village of Union City had a small, but vital role to play in the building of the new Lucille E. Dearth - Union Township Library. The village was to offer a 99-year lease to Union Township on the parcel of land in Heritage Cultural Park where the library was to be built.

Unfortunately, it took a protracted fight to get clearance from the Environmental Protection Agency to release the land. The

property had been contaminated at one time by an industrial business on the site.

While the contamination was eventually cleaned up, the EPA was not quick in supplying the village with the necessary documentation to allow construction of the library to begin. The village wouldn't have needed the EPA's help if they were just going to develop the land themselves, but since they were going to hand it over to the township, EPA approval was required.

It took a trip by Village Man-

ager Jim Campfield to the EPA Region 5 office in Chicago to get the ball rolling.

"It certainly was a lengthy process," Campfield recalled. "Region 5 is one of the busier offices, and I think that had a lot to do with it taking so long to get off square one."

"From my experience, if you can make personal contact with the EPA you have a better chance of speeding up the process, that's why I went to Chicago," he added. "I tried to put a face and a personality on the project. The personal-

ity being Union City and all the people who gave money to build this library.

"After the trip, things seemed to move along more quickly," Campfield went on. "It increased the momentum. It was about a two-year process for me personally, and I know people were working on it before I got to Union City."

When the EPA clearance finally did arrive, no one was happier than Campfield.

"It was a great relief. I could feel the pressure and anxiety from



Jim Campfield

folks who had worked so hard on the project. I know people couldn't see any sense in why it took so long, but it didn't surprise me because I've worked with them before."

Now that the project is almost complete, Campfield said the people can focus on the facility and not the length of time it took to finally build.

"It's a great facility. It's not just a building to me, it's almost like a piece of art."

He went on to say the aesthetics, the natural light, and the use of wood and brick all enhance the library's appeal.

"It just positioned so well on the property," the village manager noted. "I think everyone involved deserves a lot of praise."

JOB WELL DONE!

The Lucille E. Dearth – Union Township Library is a beautiful addition to Union City. It's nice to have a facility of this caliber for Union Township.

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Groundbreaking ceremony draws large crowd

Editor's note: It took more than two-and-a-half years from the groundbreaking ceremony for the new library until the grand opening celebration.

Here is a look at the original story that appeared in the Clarion following the groundbreaking festivities.

by Mike Warner

Approximately 200 people attended the ceremonial groundbreaking ceremony Sunday, September 20, 2008, at Heritage Park for the new Lucille E. Dearth - Union Township Library.

A number of local municipal dignitaries and civic organization representatives spoke and took part in the groundbreaking activities. Marty Chard served as the emcee, and opened the ceremony with a brief welcoming speech.

He told the audience, "This project has truly been a community effort by the people of Union Township, Union City, Branch County and beyond. Through large donations, small donations and many fund-raisers, over \$450,000 has been raised for the building of this new library.

"Beyond the money raised, we can all be proud of the dedication of the people who understand the importance of a library to the local community."

Chard finished by saying, "In my lifetime, I have never witnessed such a community effort."

State Representative Bruce Caswell was the guest speaker. Chard cited Caswell for his involvement in helping secure the Heritage Park property for the library. The land was in the possession of the state due to delinquent taxes by the previous owner. Chard also pointed out Caswell was a donor to the library project.

Caswell complimented the community, saying, "Through your efforts you have added to the independent spirit epitomized by our ancestors. When a need arises, take care of it at the local level. Through your numerous donations you are living the old proverb, 'Many hands make light work.'"

The politician thanked everyone who donated, whether the contribution was large or small. He used a track analogy to make his point, recalling as a track coach meets couldn't be won with just first place finishers. Second and third place scores were also needed.

"A project such as this has its superstars and they are very much appreciated. But it also has its second and third place scorers who



Local dignitaries took turns breaking ground for the library back in September 2008. (Photos by Mike Warner)



See Ceremony, page 15

Ceremony

Continued from page 14

also needed.

"A project such as this has its superstars and they are very much appreciated. But it also has its second and third place scorers who are every bit as important to the success of the team."

Caswell concluded by stating, "Generations to come will thank you, and will enjoy the fruits of your labor. Bless you for your efforts, and let's build it."

Ralph Strong, Union Township supervisor, praised the cooperation between the township and village in working out lease details which will allow the township to own the library, which will sit on village property.

Union City Village Mayor Protem Robert Kne echoed Strong's sentiments and thanked the township for their cooperation.

Dorothy Cherry of the Branch District Library board said while her group has been mostly on the sidelines during the fund-raising efforts, they are standing by ready to help furnish the facility once the new library is ready to open.

She said there is \$50,000 in a growing capital improvement fund which will help supply computers, desk, chairs and other items.

"I've been on the library board nine years and I haven't seen anything like building this new library," she remarked. "It has inspired us all. It is a wonderful project to be a part of."

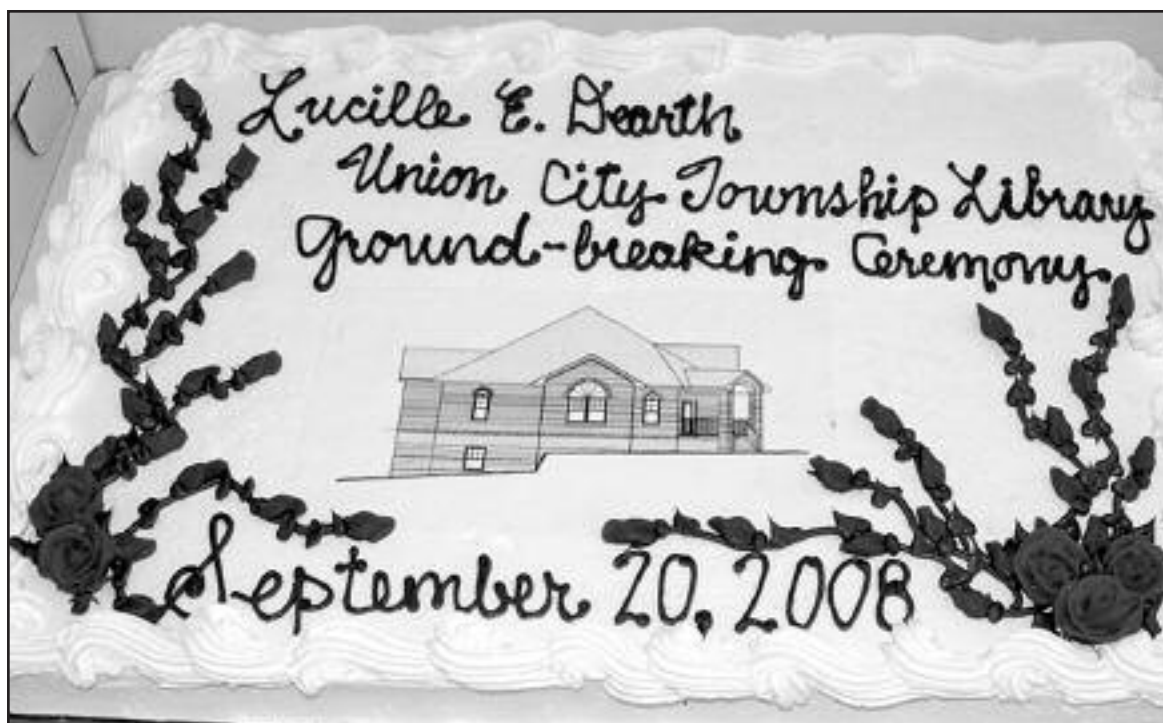
Lucille Dearth, whose name will go on the library, was present for the ceremony and was recognized, as was Florence McNett of the Max Larsen Trust. The Dearth Foundation and Larsen trust were both large donors to the project.

Also recognized was Elizabeth Binda of the Binda Foundation, another contributor to the library.

Tate Goodwin, president of the Union City Rotary, presented the second of three \$5,000 checks the club plans on making toward the project.

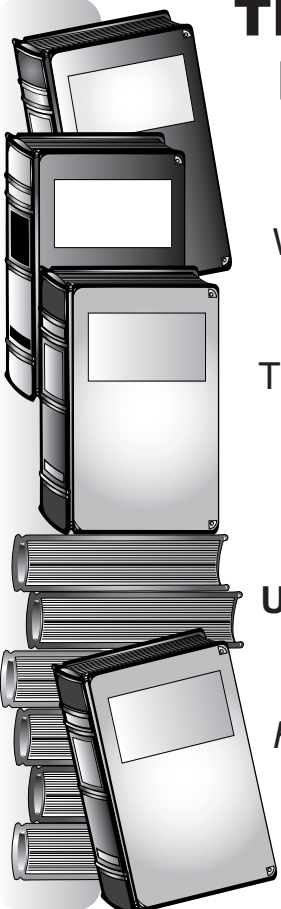
The Rev. Karen Nachtigall of the Union City Congregational Church gave the blessing for the new library.

Several groups took part in the actual groundbreaking ceremonies, and refreshments were served following the activities. The Cross Country Band played prior to and after the ceremony.



After the groundbreaking for the library, visitors enjoyed these cakes.






THE LONG WAIT HAS FINALLY PAID OFF!

We are very fortunate to have such a wonderful facility in our town! Thanks to everyone for all the time and effort put into our new library!


**Lucille E. Dearth –
Union Township Library**

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Group decided to build, not buy

The Union Township Library served area residents for more than 50 years at its former location, but it was apparent for many years that a new, modern and much-larger facility was needed.

Out of that need arose a community-driven effort to give Union City a state-of-the-art library.

One initial determination the Friends of the Library had to make was whether to buy an existing building and remodel, or build a new facility.

Marv Carman, FOL vice president, said the group looked at purchasing an existing site, but ultimately decided to build.

"We probably could have bought a building and got into it for about \$100,000," Carman recalled, "but we decided that really wasn't what we were looking for."

One trouble with revamping an existing building was that the structure needed a very solid foundation to hold the weight of all the books and furniture.

"We just became convinced that building was a better option," Carman said.

Starting from scratch meant having to raise more money, so the FOL got to work. A fund-raising campaign was launched, and by the end of July 2006, the first donations were being deposited into the new building fund.

After numerous fund-raisers, grants, pledges and large and small donations, the group raised more than \$500,000 to build the new facility, which will house the Lucille E. Dearth - Union Township Library on the ground floor and the Union Township office on the lower level.

Beyond the money raised, praise also goes to the dedicated people who understood the importance of a library to the local community and who wanted to continue a library to meet the educational and recreational needs of the people in the Union City area.

Because the library cannot legally own a facility, the village land-lease agreement is with Union Township. The western part of the property will remain Heritage Cultural Park.

As a part of the grand opening celebration, the Friends of the Library will "officially" transfer the ownership of the building to Union Township.

After many struggles and five long years, the Lucille E. Dearth - Union Township Library grand opening celebration will be held Sunday at 2 p.m.



State Senator Bruce Caswell, left, spoke at the groundbreaking ceremony and will attend the grand opening, while Marty Chard will once again be the master of ceremonies.

Congratulations

*We are proud to be
the architects for the*
**Lucille E. Dearth –
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Library bears name of Lucille Dearth

□ Dearth had fondness for books, reading

by Jennie Szink

When Lucille E. Dearth was a young girl in Iowa, books were a rare and special gift. If she and her sister did happen to receive one as a gift, they'd cherish it and read it over and over.

Of course, that was before Dearth had access to libraries. When she finally did, she and her husband, Dallas, took great advantage of the public system. Dallas would make a trip every day to read the Wall Street Journal before he passed away in 1995. When Dearth received news a few years ago that Union Township was building a new library, a large donation from her foundation helped make it possible for others to enjoy libraries as she did.

Dearth, a former special education teacher in Dearborn Township Schools, moved to Coldwater after her retirement in 1970. Before she passed away in May 2009, she'd already begun to allocate her funds through the Lucille E. Dearth Foundation.

"Her financial advisor told her to part with her money now so she could see it going to good use," said Ross Byers, Dearth's former neighbor and trustee of the foundation. His wife Marilyn Byers is also a trustee.

Dearth had allocated a significant amount of money in her fund for the Branch County District Library. Byers said Dearth made the decision to donate to Union Township's library fund after

"I'm just overwhelmed that they chose to name the library after me instead of someone closer. I know people here worked hard to get the money raised."

Lucille E.
Dearth
2008

meeting with Marv Carman.

"He said they needed an extra kick to get money going," Byers said. "She has a passion for libraries, and has also donated to the Bronson District Library so they could have handicap access."

Dearth was able to attend the library's groundbreaking ceremony in 2008. In an interview with the Clarion at that time, she said the groundbreaking was impressive and she was happy to see so many people participate.

"I'm just overwhelmed that they chose to name the library after me

instead of someone closer," Dearth said. "I know people here worked hard to get the money raised."

Dearth added it was unusual to find three women in their 90s who so heavily financially supported the library. They were Dearth, Florence McNett of the Max Larsen Trust and Elizabeth Binda of the Binda Foundation.

"You'll probably never get three ladies like that together again," she said.

She was right. Dearth and Binda have passed away since the ceremony. Marilyn Byers said it's a shame because she knows Dearth would have appreciated seeing the final product.

"When the Dearth Community Center was being built at the Branch County Fairgrounds (to which Dearth also donated), she'd just sit in bed every day and listen to the progress on the radio," Byers said. "It made her smile."

Byers added that Dearth supported anything that would help the youth in the county, including a new 4-H Fair Office and several scholarships.

After Dearth's death, the trustees donated more money to the library fund to help reach the goal of building a basement. Ross said he knew Dearth would have done the same, and it was worth it.

"The community will be elated when they see the new library," he said. "It's just beautiful inside and out. High praises to Brussee/Brady Inc (the contractor)."



Lucille E. Dearth

CONGRATULATIONS

The community can be very proud of its new library and the generous folks that made it possible.



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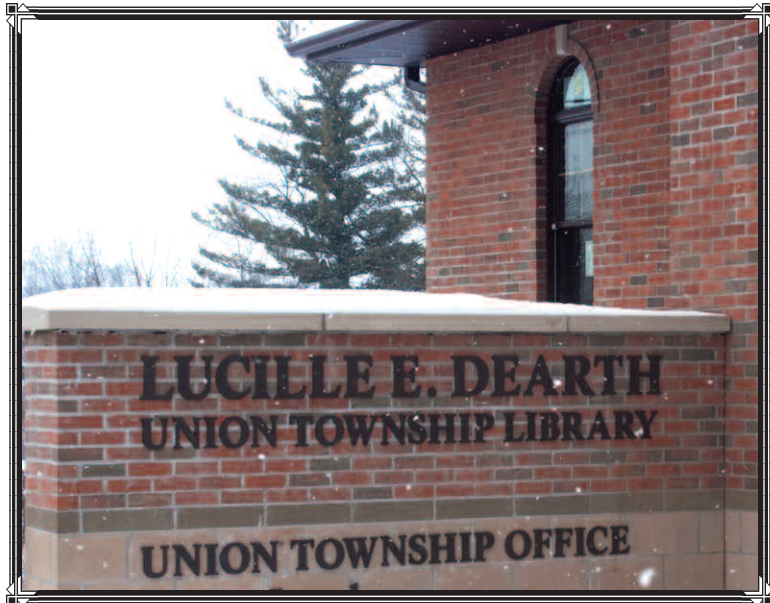
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Congratulations

**Shear Competition
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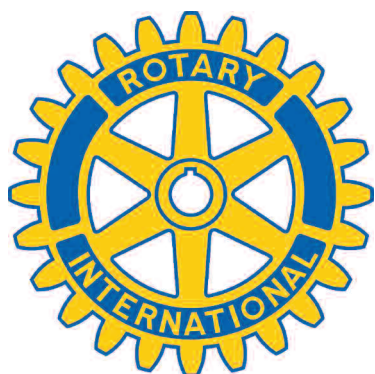
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Union Township,
the Village of Union City and
everyone who donated to give
Union City a state-of-the-art,
first class library.



*It's great to be part of such a
wonderful community.*



**UNION CITY
ROTARY CLUB**



The Lucille E. Dearth - Union Township Library: A testimony to what can be accomplished when a community rolls up their sleeves, works as one, and gives sacrificially of their money, time and talents. Thanks to your generosity, generations to come will be blessed by this outstanding facility. Well done, Union City.