



21st Century News

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An excerpt from the Littauer Foundation announcing their pledge



In view of the Foundation's ties to Groversville, our historic commitment to libraries, and our current interest in economic development, the Groversville Public Library Restoration and Expansion Project is a unique opportunity to have a positive impact on the lives of people in a community that remains important to us. The new and improved library will serve the needs of the entire community in the 21st Century with a full range of resources and services. Further, we have had extensive discussions with the leadership of the library and the campaign and visited Groversville to see the library and talk with community leaders. We were impressed by the knowledge, thoughtfulness and commitment of all involved, and we are convinced that the library project has the potential to be a key factor in the revitalization of Groversville.

The Foundation is proud to contribute to this effort. We hope that our commitment will encourage the people of Groversville and other donors interested in the community to support the Capital Campaign."

"It is my desire and hope, through the agency of this foundation, to enlarge the realms of human knowledge, to promote the general, moral, mental and physical improvement of society so that the sum total of human welfare and wisdom may be increased..."

— **Lucius N. Littauer**
(from the Foundation website)

How the Littauer Foundation Came to Support the GPL Capital Campaign with a \$1,000,000 Gift

When we began the Library's capital campaign we believed that to be successful, we would need to reach out not only to local donors in the area but also to those who have roots in Groversville. Because of the historic ties of the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation to Groversville, we decided early in the campaign to approach it for a major contribution. We knew that we faced a challenge. But we also knew that if we could pique the Board's interest, we had a very strong plan to bring to them and a terrific case for why their support of this project could have a major impact on the capital campaign and on the revitalization of our community.

In 2014 Matt Blumenfeld, campaign consultant, and Chris Pesses, co-chair, met with the Littauer Foundation in New York City and learned that the Foundation had only a modest interest in supporting Groversville. But more importantly, the Foundation was trying to make their philanthropy more targeted and effective. After that meeting they knew that the campaign had to demonstrate that a major investment in the Library would have at least as big an impact as any other investment that they would make.

Over the next year, Chris and Matt updated the Foundation leaders, Robert Frost and Alan Divack, about the campaign's progress and demonstrated what a renovated library could offer the community. They met again in early 2015 to make a final presentation, to discuss how this project would affect the community, and to extend an invitation to visit Groversville. They accepted; we had gained their interest! The fact

that our project and our honorary chair, Richard Russo, had prominently appeared in the *New York Times* was certainly a huge help.

So in May of this year, Robert Frost and Alan Divack, came to Groversville for the first time. Barbara Madonna, library director, led them on a tour of the building and discussed the future needs of the library. Vince DeSantis guided them through downtown where they met with people who see Groversville's potential. They listened to ideas and discussed concrete plans for the revitalization of our city. They saw that our library's project is part of a greater whole; that our rebuilding of this library is part of a larger vision to rebuild Groversville. They saw that our plans to modernize the library would continue the expansion of life-long learning opportunities, and would provide the information services and public meeting spaces that this community needs. They saw how the transformation of our children's room into a large Youth Center with a dedicated teen space would support educational attainment for decades to come. In short, the Littauer Foundation understood the impact that a significant donation to this library could have on our community as a whole and that NOW was the right time to make a major philanthropic commitment.

So that is the story behind winning the confidence of the Foundation. It was a long, challenging and wonderful journey, one that has taught us a great deal about generosity, philanthropy, planning and community.

A note attached to a donation from Paula Glatzer of the **Committee to Save the New York Public Library:**

“From a library supporter in New York City, where we are having our own fights to save libraries.”



Steering Committee Members

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Library Director
Barbara Madonna

Campaign Coordinator
Matthew Blumenfeld

THE BUILDING PROJECT: Frequently Asked Questions

Very little that should be simple or easy actually is, and the Library renovation project is no exception. The answers to why we can't simply add a tower with an elevator or simply replace the furnace demonstrate just how complicated a renovation project can be.

#1: Why can't we scale back and just put in the elevator?

To erect the tower that will house the elevator, the existing handicap entrance will need to be removed which would mean the Library would be temporarily inaccessible. Because the Library has been accessible since 2005, it cannot operate without being accessible so it would have to be closed during construction of the tower. In addition, the current electrical service is not sufficient for the proposed elevator. Such major reconstruction results in the building having to meet NYS Building Codes.

#2: So the furnace is 111 years old and failing. Why not just replace it?

Replacing the furnace also requires replacing the ancient pipes, and if we ever wish to air-condition the building, replacing the radiators as well. The heating system runs through every wall, floor and ceiling in the building. Removal of the furnace and steam pipes in the basement will require asbestos abatement. During the removal of the old system and the installation of the new, the Library will have to be closed. And once again, such major reconstruction means the building will have to meet NYS Building Codes.

#3: So what does the Library have to do to meet NYS Building Codes?

In general, the Library will have to be compliant with NYS plumbing, electrical and fire codes and adhere to ADA law, which will impact the entire interior of the building. In addition to affecting all the walls and ceilings, compliance means such things as a second means of egress from all floors, installation of a sprinkler system, an expansion in the number of restrooms, and accessibility to all levels. A new certificate of occupancy will not be issued otherwise.

We Will Leave No Stone Unturned

There is no more exciting news than the receipt of a \$1,000,000 pledge from the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation. Coupled with exceeding our benchmark of 500 donors, reached because of the generosity of employees of the Gloversville Enlarged School District, alumni, fans of Richard Russo, and the friends and family of the Library we are close to our goal of reach \$4.5 million in donations and pledges by the end of 2015.

Meanwhile Library Director Barbara Madonna has been unceasing in her efforts to secure grant monies. In 2014 she applied for and received \$150,000 from the NYS Public Library Construction Grant program to go toward the elevator. She applied again for the 2015 – 2016 grant cycle, and was awarded \$214,000 for the heating/cooling system. She also applied through the Consolidated Funding Application for \$1.2 million through the Empire State Development Agency and \$500,000 through Environmental Protection Funds under New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

In addition, Senator Farley and his office are working to secure significant funding for the renovation project through the State and Municipal Facilities Capital Program.

“Thank you for allowing me to contribute to a cause that evokes many precious memories! I spent hours and hours availing myself of our Library’s resources. What a worthy endeavor!”

—Jean Bisnett

We are also in the pipeline for receiving New Market Tax Credits, which will generate an additional \$1.8 million. To receive this money we must have all our funding in place and be ready to put the shovel in the ground, something we hope to achieve by late fall 2016.

We continue to work to receive state and federal historic tax credits, which have the potential of generating \$2.4 million. This funding stream necessitates our project design be approved by both the state and the federal government agencies. We have been approved by the State Historic Preservation Board but were initially rejected at the federal level. We have appealed their ruling and are waiting to learn the result. If we are approved, we will continue to advance the legislation necessary to be able to monetize these funds.



"I recently read the New York Times articles about Richard Russo, his connection to the Gloversville Public Library, and your fundraising efforts. Mr. Russo is one of my favorite writers — I've read every one of his books and enjoyed them all. It is in Mr. Russo's honor that I enclose a check."

—Jackie Bogardus



Richard & Barbara Russo

Can Your Class Compete?

The GHS class of '65 has risen to within striking distance of the top of the class challenge for the most money donated to the Gloversville library's capital campaign. Prior to their 50th reunion celebration, the class had donated just over \$1,000. After the reunion, their total surged to \$8,815.68. That puts the class of '65 in second place. The class of '62 holds first place with \$8,924.62. The class of '62 currently is in first place for greatest number of donors with 52. The class of '61 has the second highest number of donors.

Mary Jane Balzano Paris ('65), now a Connecticut resident, learned about the capital campaign from social media, specifically the "Proud to be From Gloversville" Facebook page. She was inspired by the speech Richard Russo gave when accepting the role of Honorary Chair. "Let's save the Library" became her mantra as she used Facebook to contact classmates and regularly post reminder messages to create awareness. Checks for \$65 began to roll in from near and far.

Mary Jane identified the Library as the place where most classmates spent time. She described the Library as her generation's search engine, a reliable place to get the information needed for schoolwork. It was also one of their social outlets before the world had cell phones and social media sites. "To be able to make a donation to our hometown library – a memorable part of our personal history, education and learning – in my opinion, is an honor. I hope other GHS graduates who have yet to do so, will be inspired by our class of '65 and send in their donation," she said.

The Alumni Appeal recently received donations for two centenarians. Carl DeSimone, at 101 years old, decided to donate in honor of his graduating class of 1932 and a donation was made in honor of Kenneth Swann who graduated with the class of 1933.

So we now have two donations from the 1930's, six from the '40's, twelve from the '50's, 143 from the '60's, thirteen from the '70's, two from the '80's, one from the '90's, one from the 2000's and two from Bishop Burke. Wouldn't it be neat to have every class represented from 1932 to the current crop of first graders who should graduate in 2034!

To donate online please go to www.gloversvillelibrary.org and click on the "Donate Now" button. If you wish to write a check make it out to GPL Capital Campaign, write your graduation year or Bishop Burke in the subject line, and send it to GPL Capital Campaign, 58 E. Fulton Street, Gloversville, NY 12078.

To organize your class for the challenge, email Merry Brown at m-brown-172@hotmail.com for guidance and ideas.

To check on how your class is doing:

1. Go to www.gloversvillelibrary.org and click on General Information,
2. Find Capital Campaign in the upper right hand corner, and drop down to Appeals.

It's All In Who You Know

Henry and Virginia Baker were volunteers at the Library for many, many years and longtime friends of Chris and David Pesses. They are also friends with Steven Greenhouse, a journalist with the *New York Times*, who was visiting with his wife Miriam, a fan of diners. Chris loves the Palace Diner, and as luck would have it, they were all able to meet over homemade soup and sandwiches at the diner. Weeks later Chris bought a book on diners in New York she thought Miriam would like, and the next year the Greenhouses visited to pick up the book. Of course conversation turned to the Library and the capital campaign and Richard Russo. As luck would have it again, Steven both admires our library and loves Russo's novel, "Empire Falls" and thought an article about their connection would be of interest.

And that is how a well-known journalist came to write an article about Gloversville, its library, and Richard Russo for *The New York Times*.

During his address at the event announcing the Littauer Foundation grant, Russo noted that at the time he decided to write his article, Greenhouse was retiring and as a consequence, wasn't writing about Gloversville as part of his job. Instead, like the members of the Littauer Foundation, Greenhouse realized that Gloversville is poised for renewal, a renewal in which a renovated Library will play a significant part. His interest in the connection between Gloversville, Russo, and the Library brought that connection to the attention of a national audience and sparked interest in our project from across the country.

To see the article go to gloversvillelibrary.org and look under the campaign tab.



The following is an excerpt from an article entitled "In Praise of Libraries" printed in therotarianmagazine.com and sent to us by Laura Buckley after reading *The New York Times* article.

You can hang out in a library no matter who you are, no matter what your income, no matter how you are dressed, not matter what your interest. The library's philosophy is simple: Come one, come all. The wide array of things that libraries offer means that they reach all levels of society. They make society better than it would be if left to its own devices . . . The library is the only place where people of all colors, creeds, ages, and political beliefs freely, easily, and inadvertently intermingle. The public library is the only fully democratic institution that I know of.

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