

TOMPKINS COUNTY  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

# Report

TO THE COMMUNITY



TCPL.ORG



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Ask anyone why they love libraries and more often than not, the response is that there was a really wonderful librarian who made a difference. For me, every day after school I went to our neighborhood library until my mom could pick me up on her way home from work. The librarians took an interest in me and showed me a world beyond any I could imagine. Those early experiences inspired me to a career as a librarian.

That's the privilege we who work in libraries enjoy: to change lives. At the Tompkins County Public Library (TCPL), I see the impact our library, librarians and staff have, every single day.

I have witnessed relief on the faces of people anxiously waiting outside the doors, when told that the library would in fact open on a snowy day. I have seen despair transformed into hope for a young man, who entered feeling like he had nowhere to turn, and emerged with resources on how to combat his post-traumatic stress. I have heard the laughter of infants hearing stories read aloud for the first time; felt the joy of patrons experiencing art and marveled at the number of teens using the library for homework, tutoring and as a safe place to just "be".

Libraries are at a crossroads. More and more people are getting information in ways we never dreamed of just ten years ago. Every week it seems there is something new. As the speed of our information world increases, the library will be more important than ever.

As we move forward, we cannot overemphasize the value of collaboration. We need to team up with our community partners and businesses more often, to reach audiences we have not traditionally reached. This requires new ways and methods of outreach, to provide services beyond what we are able to provide on our own. I see a future where we will be able to serve adults and children from every neighborhood in our county—either in our library or by taking the library's offerings to their neighborhoods.

I am proud to be part of an organization that makes a difference in people's lives, and in our community as a whole. Thanks to all our partners and supporters who play a part in giving each resident of Tompkins County the opportunity to thrive, through access to information and lifelong learning.

*Susan Currie*  
Susan Currie, Library Director

### Did You Know

Since the opening of the new TCPL building in November 2000, we've had over 4 million visitors! In 2009 alone, we had over 440,000 visitors.



## COLLECTIONS, REFERENCE & INFORMATION SERVICES

### Did You Know

A librarian is available online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to answer your questions. Learn more about our virtual reference service, "Ask us 24/7" at the "Ask a Librarian Now" link on our website.

We have an entire website devoted to homework help—check out the resources available at the Library's Teen website.



The new web design is particularly wonderful. I am not technologically talented, but even I am comfortable searching it.

— Long-time weekly library user

**Promoting books and reading is still at the core of the library's mission.** TCPL introduced *Bookletters*, an electronic newsletter featuring the latest books, DVDs and audiobooks, author directories and bestseller and award lists. Readers' services librarian Sarah Glogowski's blog "What's Sarah Reading Now?", topical booklists and books and literature databases guide reading choices.

**The Community Read** is an annual project held in conjunction with Cornell's New Student Reading Project. TCPL distributes 2,000 copies of a single book to schools, groups and library patrons, and holds a range of complementary book discussions and programs. In 2009 the title was *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. Launched in 2002, the Community Read program promotes civic unity through the reading of literature.

*I just wanted to thank you for including the Louis Gossett Jr. Residential Center once again in your community read. Our students have really learned quite a bit from this novel.*

— Consuelo P. Bernard, librarian

**The Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Build**, a project for which TCPL is one the partners, kicked off in 2009 with a public meeting at the Library in July. The goal is to build community by bringing people together across racial, economic and political backgrounds through a shared reading and exploration of the writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., particularly his last book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*.

**Local history information** is now more accessible, thanks to a project to expand our online digital collections. In 2009, 129 items—approximately 22,000 pages—were digitized and posted on the website, including farm, town and city directories, town histories, obituary indices of the Trumansburg and Ithaca newspapers, 19<sup>th</sup>-century atlases and early fire insurance maps.

**TCPL launched a new website and Facebook page** to enhance online services and communication. The more user-friendly website makes navigation easier and highlights many lesser-known services. The Facebook page provides a way to network with library users and fans in an immediate, direct way.

Making information available through electronic means, particularly for those who otherwise would not have access, is foremost among the library's goals. **TCPL recently introduced a Kindle e-reader** as a circulating device so patrons can read *The New York Times* electronically. Patrons can download audiobooks, ebooks and music to their computer or portable device with the OverDrive digital download service; a sizeable number of titles were added in 2009. New services now available remotely through the website include the Alexander Street video, music and sounds collections and Mango Languages, an online language-learning system.

## PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

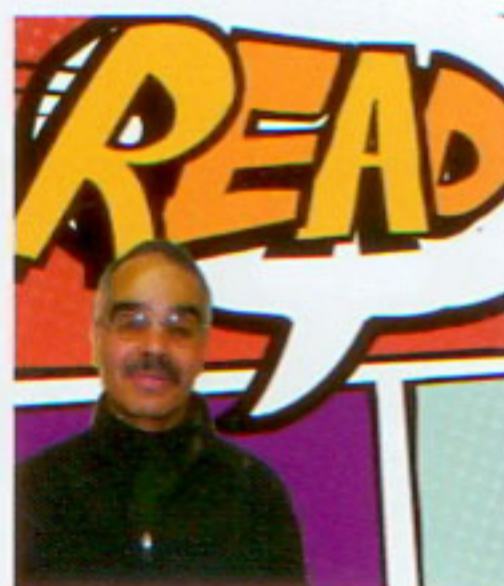
Programs related to the **Community Read** of *The Grapes of Wrath* illuminated the book's themes. Celebrated author and local resident Philipp Meyer discussed his novel *American Rust* – hailed by critics as being in *The Grapes of Wrath*'s ranks – and looked at the “great American novel” in the world of literature. **A musical performance** in October by Johnny Russo and Friends celebrated the important role music played during the Depression era. The program was so popular that Johnny Russo returned in 2010 with partner Doug Robinson as they celebrated the release of their newest CD.

**WSKG's Off the Page**, a biweekly radio program produced and hosted by Bill Jaker, convened two events at TCPL for broadcast. In 2009, a panel of publishers, featuring Jeff Fox, of Snow Lion Publications, Peter Potter, editor-in-chief of Cornell University Press and young adult science-fantasy self-published author Tina Field Howe, talked about what it takes to get a book into print. In spring 2010, as part of the Community Arts Partnership's inaugural “Spring (W)rites” festival, a group of writers from the region, J. Robert Lennon, Katharyn Howd-Machan, Beth Saulnier and Michael Turback talked about “Writing About Ithaca” - Ithaca and the Finger Lakes Region as setting, inspiration and even a character in itself in prose and poetry.

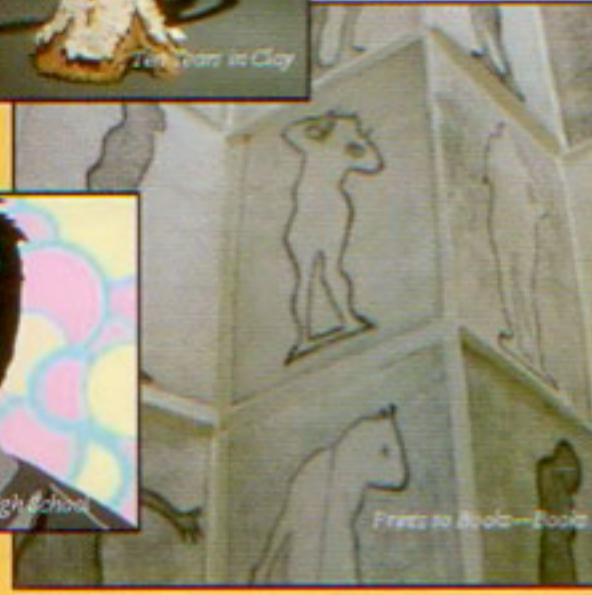
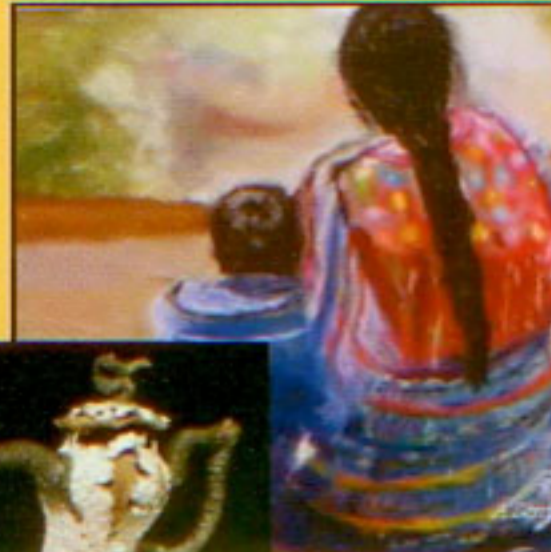
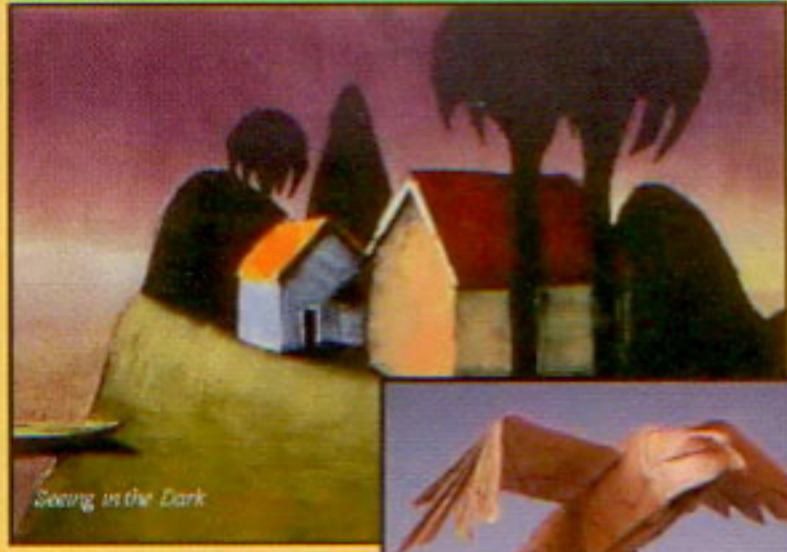
**Mental health awareness** was a focus of programming in 2009-2010. TCPL was a cosponsor of the Mental Health Association's 16<sup>th</sup> annual conference on depression, “Living in Difficult Times”, held at the library in November. A discussion and book signing by local social worker and author Elizabeth Root explored the growing trend of medicating young children, and the program “Autism Success Stories” brought together researchers and clinicians to share recent advances in research and therapies.

**Author talks** with local writers gave insight into the people behind the stories. Michael Turback talked about how he conducted research for his book, *Surrounded by Reality: 101 Things You Didn't Know About Ithaca*. Cornell poetry professor Kenneth McClane spoke on his book *Color: Essays on Race, Family and History*, and historian Carol Kammen held programs on two recent books: *Part and Apart: The Black Experience at Cornell*, and *Tompkins County: Images of Work and Play*.

**Sustainability programming**, part of a grant-funded project, focused on ecological stewardship. Speakers from the Lab of Ornithology held two programs on birds' habits and habitats, one on owls and one on crows. The library hosted nationally-recognized green living expert and best-selling author Annie Bond for the presentation “The Ten Chemicals to Keep out of Your Home.” Two workshops were held by Rusty Keeler, author of *Natural Playscapes: Creating Outdoor Play Environments for the Soul*, on creating natural play environments. With the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, TCPL hosted an urban lichen walk and an urban trees walk and workshop.



## ART EXHIBITS



### Did You Know

You can view opera, theatre and dance performances and listen to jazz, blues, gospel, contemporary and classical music through Alexander Street online streaming databases. You can even listen to more than 35,000 tracks of spoken word, natural and human-made sound and music!

### A Year of Art @ Your Public Library

Curated by Christa Wolf, **Prints to Books-Books to Print** included artists' books produced by artists whose work also exists as prints. Their work could be viewed on the wall or as books to be opened and closed or manipulated as the artist has envisioned it.

Organized by the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, **Living Light**, a juried art exhibit, highlighted the beauty and diversity of the region's native plants through works in a variety of media.

**Landscape and Memory**, curated by Tim Merrick, featured works that use landscape as a vehicle to explore deeper emotion. While landscapes have been used throughout art history to depict a sense of place, many artists such as Frederic Church, Winslow Homer, Georgia O'Keeffe and Alex Katz have chosen to use landscape to express a more complex emotional state.

### Art Behind the Scientist

This series of exhibits inaugurated in 2010 showcases **the work of local artists more normally known for their scientific work.** Sculpture by Francis Charles Moon, a professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering at Cornell, launched the series. Using mainly local wood, Moon creates pieces frequently inspired by mathematical concepts, most notably Chaos Theory. The second in the series was photo portraits by Richard Robinson, an assistant professor of material science and engineering at Cornell.



## SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

**Storytimes for babies, toddlers and preschoolers** have seen tremendous growth in attendance in the past year, as more and more parents look for enriching experiences to develop early literacy and to get to know other families.

**Kids Discover the Trail**, a partnership with the Ithaca City School District, Ithaca Public Education Initiative and the Discovery Trail, drew 227 kindergarteners from all 8 schools in the district for a library field trip replete with a tour, storytime, scavenger hunt and kids' very own library card and copy of *The Library Lion*. This year, a similar initiative was launched for children in the Trumansburg school district, **Kids Explore and Discover**; 85 children visited through the program.

Each year the **summer reading program** encourages elementary and middle school students to read during the school break, as studies show children who continue to read during the summer perform better when school resumes. **Stories in the Park** brings storytime outdoors to Dewitt Park, giving as many as 100 children and their caregivers a weekly dose of read-aloud fun.

A program cosponsored by the Cornell University Latin American Studies Program, the Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County and TCPL, the new **Cultura! Storyteller Series** was offered in early 2010. Each monthly session featured a guest storyteller representing a different Latin American country sharing a historic, folkloric, or personal tale from that country, in a mix of English and Spanish, as well as an artistic activity related to the story.

**Reading and writing activities for tweens and teens** help them find their voice and celebrate the books they love. The **Mother/Daughter Book Club**, run by acclaimed author Emily Rhoads Johnson, offers girls and moms the chance to explore ideas and feelings, to discuss each other's lives, and to establish a "bridge of sharing" that involves both mother and daughter listening to each other. Teens requested a **graphic novel book club**, which was launched to delve into the latest releases, and **Irene Zahava's creative writing workshops for teens and intergenerational participants** help writers find their voice.

A new **venture in conjunction with the Family Reading Partnership's Books at Birth** program aims to encourage parents with newborns to bring them to the library. Every new baby born at Cayuga Medical Center gets a bright red canvas book bag with a congratulations card and a new board book. For the next year, the bag, which will have the new tag line, "Love Me, Feed Me, Read to Me, Bring Me to the Library!", will also contain a special kids library card, a list of recommended books, and a book-and-CD set to help parents and their little ones share in the wonder of words, rhymes, pictures and music from the very beginning.

*"The library has changed my life by introducing new types of literature, ideas, and stories to me. I have found that the stories that I read can lead me anywhere, and there's no limit to the magical things that happen on their pages. Thanks!"*

*- Library patron, age 12*



## VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

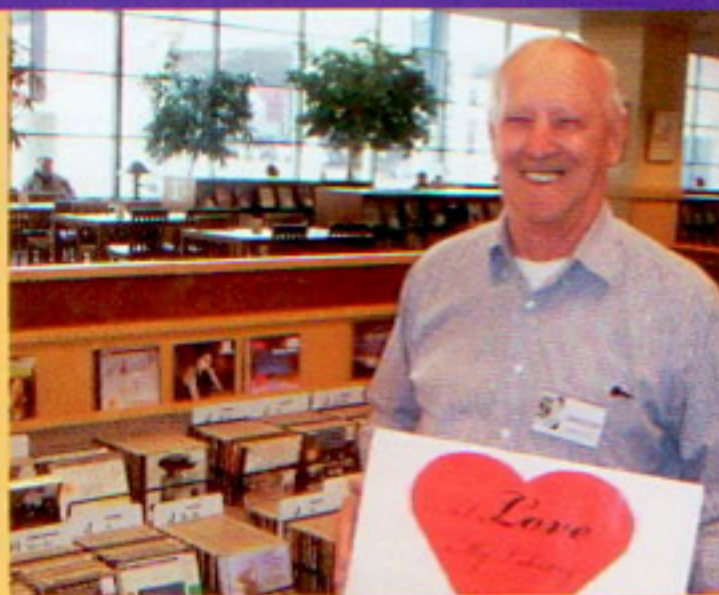
Our volunteers are among our greatest resources, contributing their time and talent to serve the library's patrons. In 2009, 172 volunteers served 8,821 hours, an increase of 23% over the previous year.

Those hours translate into enormous value: using the figure calculated by leading research and advocacy organization Independent Sector, the estimated dollar value of volunteer time given to TCPL in 2009 is nearly \$185,000.

And that figure does not even take into account the hundreds of hours given by board and committee members who work in policy, governance, advocacy and fundraising. Taken together, these efforts represent a marked commitment on the part of active citizens to engage in the work of the library.

**College students, professionals, retirees and individuals new to our community provide hands-on, essential services.**

They make our library a more welcoming, efficient environment. Volunteers shelve DVDs and CDs, empty the never-ending stream of returned items from the bins, answer phones, provide administrative support and work on special projects and events.



In the past year, the volunteer position of "greeter" was re-cast as "welcome ambassador" to reflect more accurately the volunteers' role in helping patrons feel at ease and comfortable that they will be able to find what they seek.

**A new volunteer program, "The Reader Is In", was created in 2010** connecting volunteer readers with toddlers and preschoolers to read books together while parents avail themselves of the library's resources.

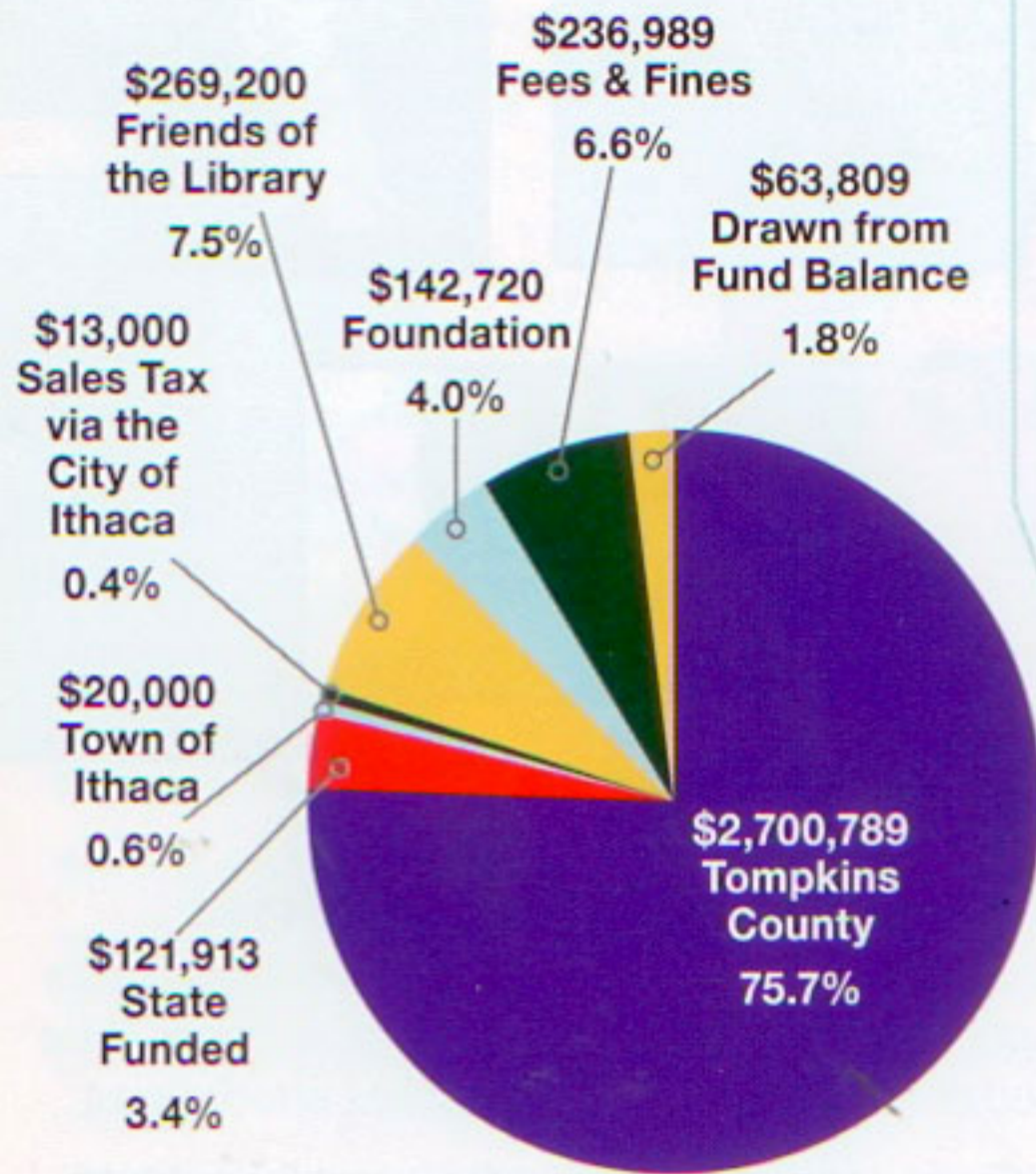
### Did You Know

*Every month volunteers provide more than 700 hours helping to clear book return bins, answer telephones, organize shelves, shelve audio-visual materials and assist with programs.*

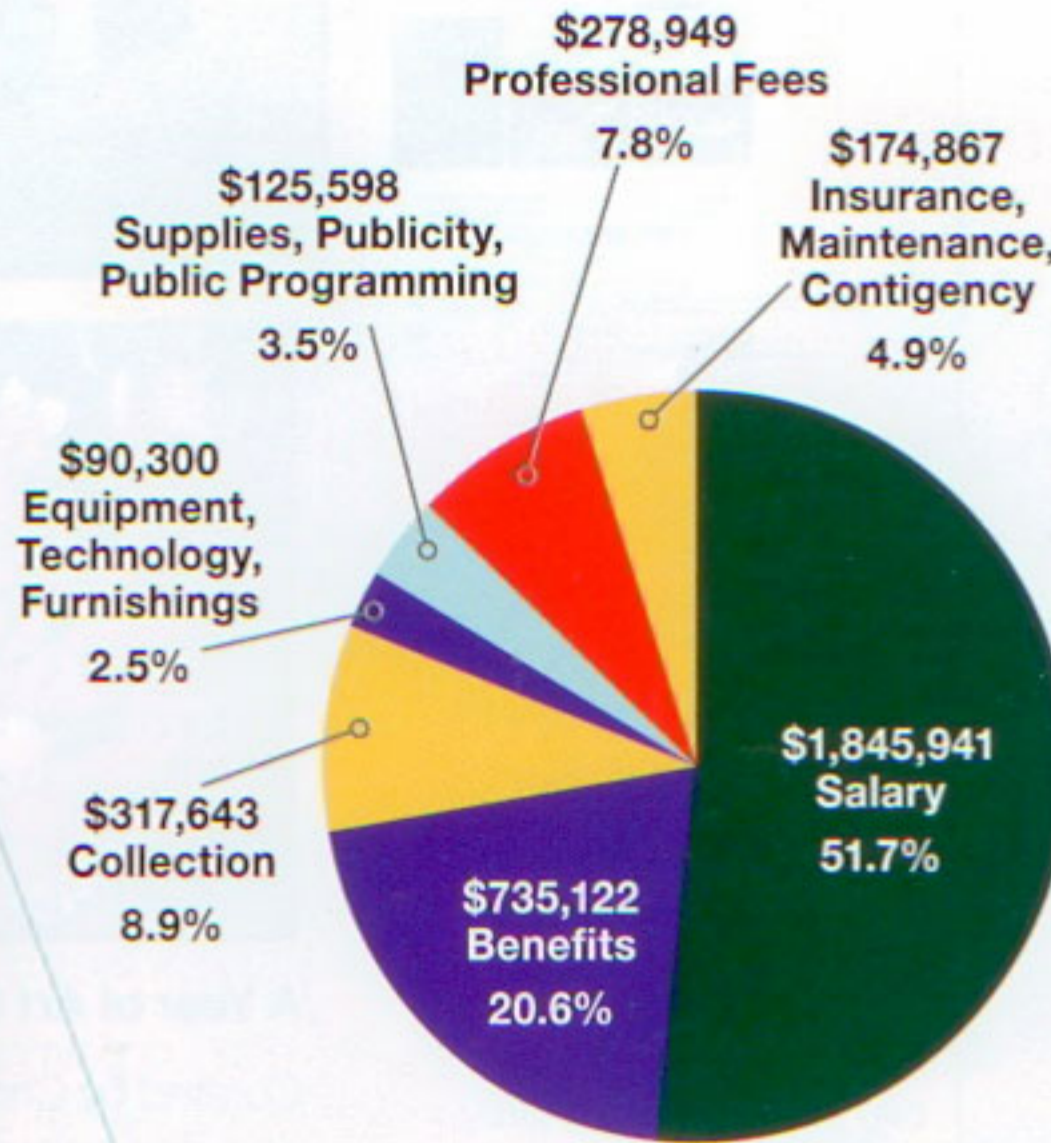


# 2009 LIBRARY OPERATING BUDGET

2009 TOTAL REVENUE = \$3,568,420



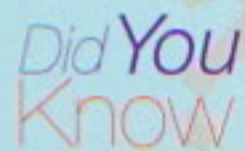
2009 TOTAL EXPENSES = \$3,568,420



## TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

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- Michael Stamm, Secretary
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We are your gateway to government resources, tax forms, testing and career information.

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