

**Editorial Opinion**

- The editorial column of the Lansing Community News is available to all community members for the courteous expression of varying points of view.

**Flaws Affecting The Ambulance Committee Report**

[News coverage of the Ambulance Advisory Committee's report appears on page 6.]

Be aware that this editorial concerns an issue about which I had (and have) a personal as well as community stake. As a former Lansing Ambulance director I acknowledge my prejudice in favor of a local, volunteer ambulance corps. Having said this, I hope you will evaluate my respectful comments on the recent Ambulance Advisory Committee report.

Though I disagree with their process and results, I've reached the committee members before publication to express my appreciation for their efforts and to urge them to support their final recommendation: that the Town thoroughly review the status of emergency medical services (EMS) within the year. [This space is available to those with differing opinions.]

Despite the best of intentions, a combination of oversights, incomplete information and inconsistent communication within the Ambulance Advisory Committee have compromised its conclusion that the public desires no change in EMS service; that the best action is the *status quo*.

I] **Committee Composition** - It's regrettable that the 10-member committee did not contain a single Lansing Ambulance member. Such a perspective would have been useful to the committee. At least two former members had volunteered to serve.

II] **Incomplete information** in the public survey affected both the number of people who responded to the questionnaire and the content of those responses that were submitted.

[II-A] **EMS Statistics** - Data on the current number of EMS calls was not contrasted with the higher call volume served by Lansing Ambulance. Absence of this information meant that citizens could not see one of the "costs" of losing our volunteer service. The 35%+ decline in EMS calls reflects, in part, the unwillingness (or inability) of some residents to pay for non-emergency transports (e.g. for chemotherapy, elective surgery, etc.), for what they perceive to be "minor" emergencies and for calls to the Village that are now sometimes directly responded to by Bang's without Lansing's intervention.

[II-B] **Response time** - Survey data was

based on the entire town. This understated the problem. Response times to North Lansing, Lansingville and Lake Ridge are certainly greater than the 10% statistic the questionnaire's figures indicated.

[II-C] **Cost & Funding** - Cost figures appeared accurate, but the "Municipal Ambulance" option presented made it appear as if the only way to fund a service would be through 100% local taxation. You can organize a service that way, but it's the most expensive route. It's no coincidence that municipal ambulance corps are uncommon.

Far less expensive is the volunteer ambulance corps under municipal contract. Volunteer corps can collect insurance payments; municipal corps cannot. This type of structure can recover a major share of its operating costs from insurance transmittals. The failure to include this option led many people to reject a local solution.

III] **Internal Committee Communications**

[III-A] All that I've described (and more) was shared with the committee in a letter I hand delivered in late July. As far as they can recall, at least half the committee members (Jones, Gyrisco, Stevens, Baker and Supko) never saw this communication. Several have indicated to me that if this information had been available, it would have prompted them to ask additional questions.

[III-B] Several committee members said that though they'd participated in discussions about the survey questionnaire, they had not had an opportunity to review the questionnaire before it was distributed.

There is no doubt that EMS is a delicate topic in Lansing. Fortunately, the Town Board voted acceptance of the Committee's recommendation to review emergency medical services within the year. Inclusion of all community resources and a more rigorous procedure may yet yield a more accurate reading of public opinion.

- Matthew Shulman

**Mary Johnson Curry**

Mary Johnson Curry, 69, of 59 Armstrong Road died Friday, November 8 at the Cayuga Medical Center. She was born in the Isle of Pines, Cuba, daughter of the late Charles and Theresa McDoom Johnson.

Mary came to the Ithaca area in 1953 and had worked as a Lab Technician in the Physics Department at Cornell University for more than twenty-five years. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Ithaca.

She is survived by her husband, Albert O. Curry, of Lansing, her daughter Tracey J. Moison, of Los Altos, California, and her son Charles McFarlane of Yorktown as well as by sisters Beulah, Louise and Iva and brothers Vassel, Noel and Patrick. She is also survived by her three grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

A celebration of Mary's life was held on Thursday at the First Presbyterian Church with Rev. Anita Cummings officiating.

Memorials may be directed to the American Diabetes Association.

**Heard Around Town**

Each week, local correspondents will take turns covering local news from hamlets around Lansing and in our adjoining communities. If you'd like to share the comings and goings of your corner of the world, contact the correspondent nearest you:

**East Lansing:** Lorraine Groat 533-4156  
**King Ferry:** Joan Neill (315) 364-7784  
**Lake Ridge:** Tricia Torrey 533-7269  
**Ludlowville:** Wanda Brink (533-4672) and Katrina Greenley (533-8892)

**Lansing Station:** Donna Scott 533-7228  
**Lansingville:** Ruby Ferris 533-4969  
**So. Lansing:** Jo Ann Vliet 533-7043

**King Ferry**

Yes, winter IS still 5 weeks away, but several cars were seen gliding through the King Ferry intersection last Friday as the light snow glazed area roads. I suppose I should be grateful that we didn't get the huge lake-effect storm that seemed to get every where else in the mid-state area. A few roadways running toward the lake, like the one past the King Ferry Winery, are still not repaired from the downpour a few weeks ago, but the winery's Lake Road entrance is just fine.

I understand that a crew of local Phantom Fans have made yet another pilgrimage to Toronto to see the Andrew Lloyd Weber classic. This trip also included Beauty and the Beast. I've lost count of how many trips have been made. Ask Leah or Kathy at the King Ferry Winery when the next trip is planned.

All the cold weather is getting everyone here in the mood for the holidays, which brings us to "Christmas in Aurora" December 14 sponsored by the Aurora Arts and Merchants Association. Festivities begin at 11 am at the Morgan Opera House with the "Wild Washer Women" (Cynthia Defelice & Co.) who tell marvelous tales and adventures to all young-at-heart.

Merchants, area artisans and craftsmen will have their halls decked and the red carpet rolled out to welcome visitors to town. Local mustards, jams, baked goods, carved wildlife, handmade furniture, and jewelry will be on display with continuous music, street carolers and dancing all day long.

The Johnston School of Irish Dance will perform traditional Irish dances at the Aurora Inn at 4:00. David Kilpatrick will dazzle and amaze folks with his Magical presentation at 5:00. There will also be an evening

show at the Aurora Inn, including local talent like the musical quartet "Just For Fun" and much, much more. Some details are still being finalized. Look for a published event listing for the day in upcoming publications and make a note to drop by and visit your neighbors ...and ... find something special for friends or family.

The Christmas Concert at the Southern Cayuga High School will be held in the main auditorium December 5 at 7:30. Everyone is cordially invited to an evening of holiday vocal and instrumental music. Southern Cayuga School District is losing their High School principal, Maria Fragnoli-Ryan to the Cortland School District. I, for one, am very sorry to see this very accomplished, effective, and compassionate educator leave the district. We all wish her well in her new position and say that she will be missed. A search is currently underway for a replacement.

I'd also like to add a note of congratulations to both the Lansing Girls Volleyball team and the Union Springs Girls Volleyball team for making the playoffs. The Volleyball was great, the sportsmanship was even better.

Hunting season started Monday morning...EARLY. A lot of orange flashed through the trees and fields as hunters came out for the first day. Hunting season always brings us a lot of faces from outside the area. Welcome and good luck. While you're here, stop in and see Ithaca Gun Museum.

Thanksgiving is approaching fast. My daughter, Rebecca, (my first one off to school this year) will be home from college for the holiday, and I am very Thankful. I've missed her. I hope your Thanksgiving finds all of your loved ones with you.

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On 1.78 acres, this house is surrounded by apple, peach, cherry and other fruit trees! There are also new mechanicals, hardwood floors, a pond, a patio and pretty views.



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**Jerry Bass - Broker Associate**  
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