

# Promoting Lansing's Birthday Bash

by Tamera McBride.

The news of a down economy, down times, down market, and well just about down everything seems to bombard us at every turn. No matter how down things may seem, it is time to celebrate! Lansing's 150th birthday is here—all year—and we have much to celebrate.

We could look back at how we got our start “back in the day,” or reminisce about the “good times.” Or, we could look up, look around, and look at what we have right now, right today, moving forward. This is the concept that Camron Gnass, founder and owner of Vision Creative had in mind when he created the branding effort for Lansing's sesquicentennial celebration.

Approached along with his fellow Rotarians by

Mayor Bernero, Gnass was appointed to conceive the branding effort for our big birthday. Gnass and his company are known for branding. They see the unseen. Gnass attended numerous strategic planning meetings, along with many Lansing volunteers, both individuals and organizations, all working together to make this year a celebration to excite, entice and embrace our community.

During the branding process, it became clear that people's knowledge of Lansing history might be five months, five years or 50 years. So, each person's view may be vastly different from another's. We would exclude the newcomers if we just looked back, so let's put the focus on the contributions today.

Gnass and his team skillfully anchored Lansing's three main symbols, the Stadium District's Lignum Tower, the historic Clock Tower, and of course the landmark Capitol Building into a logo bursting with enthusiasm, fun, approachability and a celebratory feel. “This celebration is for

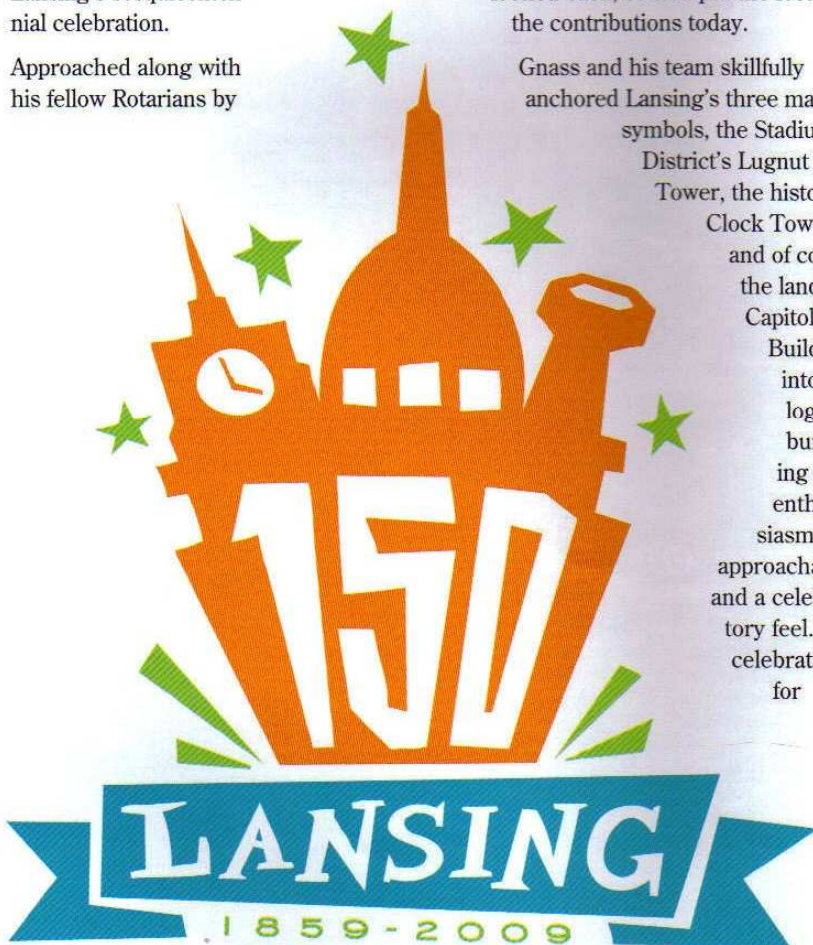
everyone, not a select few downtowners or a party for the city government. This celebration is about the pocket communities who have made Downtown Lansing successful,” says Gnass.

Gnass and company went through painstaking efforts to conceive and direct the brand for this sesquicentennial celebration to be a timeless celebration, energetic and sustaining. Creating the logo and the cohesive message was the first step. Implementing the brand throughout the various vehicles and to the people is the responsibility of the hundreds of volunteers steering the marketing efforts for our 150th birthday bash.

The message is being presented through a variety of vehicles, including radio, TV, billboards, eNewsletters, the Web, flyers and more. Gnass says, “My hope is that the message remains consistent, because we created the brand for this celebration to be about and for everyone in the Lansing community. I truly hope it is delivered and received by the people in the way it was originally intended.”

There are five signature events throughout the year including an ice sculpture, which took place on February 15, culminating in the Grand Finale during Silver Bells in the City in November, which usually brings out over 100,000 Lansing community residents. “We want everyone to be part of this celebration,” says Gnass. “I was born and raised in Dimondale, and I have my business in Downtown Lansing, so I represent a pocket community.”

Looking at this celebration and moving forward, Gnass has poured his passion into this branding effort, and shared a vision he hopes will resonate with every Lansing community resident. “We all need to collectively move toward the same goal of celebrating who we are and what we can become, and the key element of this statement is that we must act as a cohesive unit.” ■



Graphic courtesy of Lansing 150 Office.