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love your library
FRIENDS OF THE LARKSPUR LIBRARY
Among Friends

April 2020

From Library Director Franklin Escobedo

These are difficult times for the Library and for those who love holding and reading physical books. When we first closed, we thought we would be reopening at the end of March. However, soon after closing, the State issued its shelter in place order with no end date. While some have disagreed with the closing of public places, I believe this was best for the public and the staff. Our library is small, and we couldn’t maintain the social distancing required to keep people safe. I want to reassure patrons who have material at home to hang on to it until we reopen; we've extended due dates and library card expiration dates. We renew library cards every five years electronically. We're working with our speakers and performers to reschedule the programming we had planned for March and April.

These are strange times that we find ourselves in. The library continues to provide services virtually. Once this crisis has passed, we are eager to return to our normal operations. I hope all of you are keeping safe and healthy, and we'll see you again once this is all over. Thank you for your continued support; we couldn't provide all the virtual services without it.

Franklin Escobedo

Library Director

From Friends the Larkspur Library Board President Barbara Friday

In this time of great uncertainty, the board members of the Friends of the Larkspur Library and I would like to send our best wishes to you and your family. Here at the Friends, we strive to be the best possible "friend" to the Larkspur Library by providing funding for programming, purchasing new materials, supporting the library staff with our volunteer efforts, and reaching out to the community to represent the Larkspur Library. We continue to plan library activities even during this quiet time. Since we've been sheltering in place as you have over the past weeks, please forgive us for not acknowledging your donation as our City Hall mailbox has been inaccessible. But accept our sincerest thanks for your generous support of “Season of Giving” last fall and your membership in the Friends of the Larkspur Library during our “Love Your Library” annual membership drive which coincides with Valentine's Day. Your donations are profoundly appreciated by the library, staff, and by all who love our library.

With great appreciation and resolve,

Barbara Friday

President, Friends of the Larkspur Library

Meet Franklin Escobedo, Larkspur's New Library Director

The Larkspur Library's new director, Franklin Escobedo, moved to Larkspur in December from Southern California, where he had a long association with libraries in Chula Vista, Oceanside, and Coronado. The first things that appealed to him about Larkspur were the geography and topography. “Marin reminds me of Sky Ranch, a little community just outside of Yosemite where I used to visit family as a kid. But there's no snow here.” Like Sky Ranch, Larkspur is small, “but on the edge of big things.”

He grew up in Madera, CA, in the Central Valley, just north of Fresno, “the heart of California. My family has lived there since 1909.” Franklin's father was a fireman, and his mother was a librarian, which proved to be life-shaping for her son. “As a little kid, I went to Storytime all the time, and I started helping my mother shelve books in the fifth grade.” By the sixth grade, and after a series of staff cuts at her library, he did even more, including working with the card catalog (the cards were typed by his mother in those pre-internet days) and making new covers for worn books. Until his mother moved to Southern California, he went to the library every day. And when he moved to Chula Vista to be with her in 1994, he became a library page. Thus continued the rise of his library career.

After two months as a page in Chula Vista, Franklin was promoted to circulation assistant, and then, in 1996, to senior circulation assistant. At that point, he also started working at the library at Coronado and continued to work at both libraries for seven days a week for 11 years —even while attending college. And then “my boss told me to go to library school,” and although Franklin had studied art in college and hoped to become a museum curator, he succumbed to his almost pre-destined fate — which must have been obvious to everyone but him — and began to study library work seriously.

While he was working at the libraries — while in school — he noticed there was a lack of library services for teens, and that was a niche he decided he would try to fill. He organized outreach to attract young volunteers, dreamt up and produced programming that would appeal to teens of all ages and keep them coming in, and became “very active” in the Young Adult Library Service Association. In Larkspur, he is aiming to amp up the focus on teen readers and is starting to recruit tech-savvy teen volunteers to help library patrons while fulfilling community service requirements. “We know how over-scheduled some of these high school kids are, so we will be very flexible in our scheduling,” he said. “And once we get the first few, we hope they will spread the word.” He also plans to form a teen advisory board.

Franklin continued his education, working all the while, and now has his Master’s in Library Science. He worked in Chula Vista for 13 years, in Coronado for 11 years, and finally in Oceanside for seven years, “running a branch, a bookmobile, and a teen program.” He returned to Coronado in 2014 as their Principal Librarian and worked there for another five years.

Franklin lives in an apartment in Larkspur and spends his spare time reading (Tolkien is a favorite), watching movies (he prefers sci-fi, independent films, and documentaries), and listening to music (“I'm all over the place from Dolly Parton to Russian pop to Indian sitar and have been accused of having too many CDs at home”). In addition, “if you see me walking while I'm staring at my phone, I'm probably playing the Harry Potter game.” And if you are a regular visitor to the library, you will probably see him walking around, talking to people, helping where needed. He believes he should be a regular presence in the library.

In Oceanside, he was the organizer of a mystery book club. “We read all over the genre, hard-boiled, noir, cozies, etc.” A poll of his club members named Edgar Award-winning author William Kruger as their favorite. (Kruger wrote a series starring detective Cork O'Conner as well as some stand-alones.) As word spread among other book clubs, reading Kruger turned out to be an impromptu One Author, One Coronado event. And, as he did at Coronado, he is posting his own newsletter through the City’s newsletter service. To sign up for the newsletter, email library@cityoflarkspur.org or, when shelter in place ends, stop by the library to pick up a postcard.

Thinking about the future, Franklin says Larkspur “will always need a place like the library” —and one day The Commons as well — “where people can access books and materials, where they can meet and socialize. And libraries give a better browsing experience than the Internet. Libraries are not the quiet places of my childhood.” Although technology is ever-more important to the library experience, Franklin believe that books will always be at the core of a library's collection. He also plans, however, to curate a “better” digital collection, although he says that can be "very expensive."

Looking even further into the future, Franklin envisions a time when he has moved on; when that happens, he'd like to be remembered in Larkspur for the collections and programming he left behind. For now, however, he will “always be there to help people find what they came for.”

Dulcy Brainard

One of the newest members of the Friends board of directors, Dulcy Brainard moved to the Bay Area from the East Coast just over three years ago to follow her children. Years before, one of her daughters came here to attend USF and never looked back, then another daughter came with her family to work on the Peninsula. They both started having babies, which, she says, resulted in “flying back and forth a lot.”

Back and forth meant from Darien, Connecticut, a suburb of New York City near Greenwich and Westport. Prior to that, Dulcy and her husband Spencer were “pioneers,” gentrifying Park Slope, the now textbook gentrified Brooklyn neighborhood. But there came a time, as it does to many urban pioneers, when Spencer, an avid golfer, couldn't find enough places to play near home, and their seven-year-old was convinced she could walk to Prospect Park by herself to play. “Also, alternate side of the street parking drove us out.”

Dulcy grew up in Winnetka, Illinois, a suburb along Chicago's North Shore that wasn't all that different from Darien and now Larkspur. “They are similar in so many ways,” she says, “socio-economically and in terms of education level. Larkspur is not a foreign country. But the topography feels very different—I love this coastline, the rolling hills and vast expanses of sky.” The politics are also different. “California is so blue! Darien has many more Republicans.”

She worked in educational publishing for SRA in Chicago and then wrote test materials and textbooks in New York City for Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. She also worked for the publishing industry trade publication Publisher's Weekly for 15 years, first as a reviewer, then as a Forecasts editor, covering pre-publication reviews for mysteries, cookbooks, health and home books, and poetry. After reading mysteries professionally for so many years (“I covered the first books from Jonathan Kellerman, Harlan Coben, Sue Grafton”), her favorites include “the British ladies,” James Lee Burke, George Pelicanos, S.J. Rozan, Denise Mina, J. Robert Janes, and Marcia Mueller. (“I'm more interested in character than plot.”) Dulcy adds: “The marketing of mysteries changed in the 1990s when most new writers had to market their own books and arrange and often pay for their own book tours. Elaine Petrocelli was a big supporter of these writers, always welcoming them to Book Passage.”

Dulcy and Spencer have been married for more than 50 years. They have three children and five grandchildren. Dulcy is a product of “16 years of Catholic education,” including graduating from Manhattanville College in Westchester County, just north of New York City, where she got a “classic liberal arts education.” She continued her education at Northwestern, where she received an M.A. in English, and then, after retiring, earned an MFA in Poetry at Sarah Lawrence. “I started out at Columbia but my classmates there were all younger than my children.”

How did she get involved with the Larkspur Library? “How not the library?” she replies. She was on the library board in Darien, and when her neighbor and now fellow board member Dyan Pike invited her to join, “I was ready.” In addition to her library work, she and her rescue springer spaniel, Prince, visit the skilled nursing center each week at The Tamalpais.

Along with being a dedicated reader (“reading will never be dead”), Dulcy is also a writer. She says she's “not working on much now,” but does have two and a half unpublished novels in her drawer, along with “a good bit of poetry,” some of which has been published.

Her vision for The Commons: “to have a larger space with more light where the community's various energies can work together. A larger accessible space will encourage greater use of the library by community residents.” She would also like the Larkspur Library to follow the county library's lead: “No fines!”

The Library of the Future: A Note and News from Joe Jennings

The Commons Foundation
Fund, Build and Sustain A New Larkspur Library

It is ironic that a global pandemic and economic recession gives you the time and space to consider why we are we doing things in our lives.

The things we don't know are significant: when the shelter in place will end; the depth and duration of the economic recession; the impact of both on the City of Larkspur government and local communities; and the availability of future federal and state funds for new social infrastructure projects.

What we do know is also significant: we have a growing community of citizens working together to raise the funds to build the new library; the shelter in place has heightened the awareness of the importance of public institutions and gathering places for our communities; and with patience, pragmatism, and effort we will succeed at funding, building, and sustaining a new library and public square for all of our communities.

Please stay safe, in touch, and open to how we can move forward in these difficult times.

As the first three months of 2020 ends, we can look back to accomplishing these milestones:

New Board Members

In February we welcomed Terry Berkemeier, Tamara Hull and Chris Hartzell as new members of our Board of Directors.

Champions Formed

The Champions is a small team of local community and business leaders who are working together to run the Leadership Gifts Campaign, which is the first phase of our $5M capital campaign. The Champions include: Terry Berkemeier, Lori Lerner, Laurie Dubin, Kristi Ellenzweig, Jonathan Ellenzweig, Jeanne Friedel, Kathy Green, Chris Hartzell and Joe Jennings.

Capital Campaign

TCF has raised cash and pledges of $998,463 and has cash on hand of $206,272. A complete list of donors can be found at thecommonsatlarkspur.org.

Support our Local Bookstores

Let's support our local bookstores and read some great books — shout out to Book Passage! Here's some direction from The New York Times:

The Pandemic Book Club

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/opinion/reading-self-isolation-covid.html?referringSource=articleShare

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Good Reading and Viewing

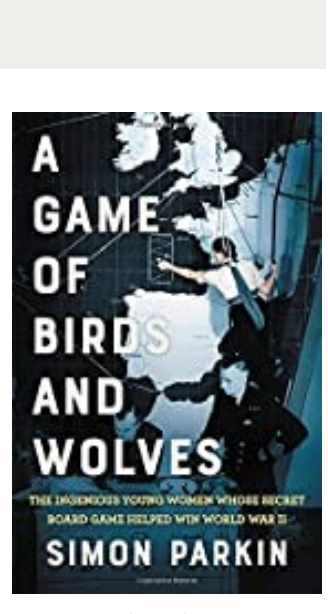
***Information Hunters* Review: Librarians at War**

During World War II, librarians and archivists were eagerly recruited not only to gather intelligence from enemy media but also to collect and catalogue manuals and documents while embedded with units on the front lines. Here is a review of a book about that time: https://www.wsj.com/articles/information-hunters-review-librarians-at-war-11582303187?mod=searchresults&page=1&pos=2

Received from a friend involved with the Library of Congress:

As a dedicated book lover, I want you to explore dozens of National Book Festival presentations by the likes of U.S. Supreme Court Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, David McCullough, Joyce Carol Oates, Billy Collins and so many more. Watch the videos at https://www.loc.gov/programs/national-book-festival/videos/. Keep reading and learning with us.

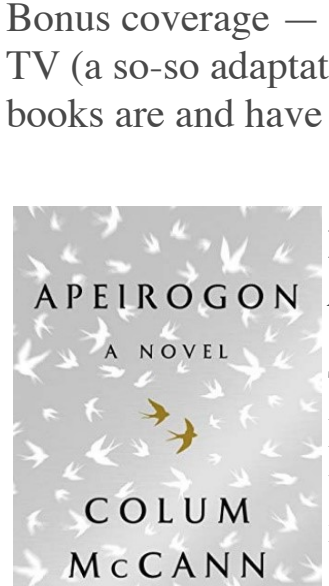
What the Friends are Reading and Recommending



Alice
A Game of Birds and Wolves: The Ingenious Young Women Whose Secret Board Game Helped Win World War II by Simon Parkin

This book is made for the movies: a group of specially selected 20-something WRENs (the Women's Royal Naval Service, the female arm of the British Navy, whose uniforms were designed by Parisian couturier Molyneux) became proficient in a war game designed to simulate World War II U-boat warfare. The Wrens then taught the games to allied Naval officers (not always willing students), who took what they learned and went on to win the all-important Battle of the North Atlantic. Life, death, romance, strategy, high-stakes naval battles —it’s all here. Made for the movies? Steven Spielberg agrees — his company, Amblin Entertainment, bought the film rights.

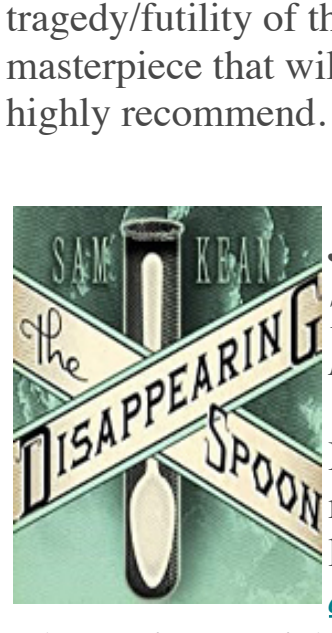
Bonus coverage — more books I'm reading: After watching *Briarpatch* on TV (a so-so adaptation), I am reminded how marvelous Ross Thomas's books are and have started to re-read them all.



Dyan
Apeirogon by Colum McCann

This is the heartbreaking story of a Palestinian and an Israeli father who both lost their young daughters to violence perpetrated by the other side. McCann’s style is distinctive and highly unusual: like the geometric shape of the apeirogon, “a polygon with a countable infinite number of sides,” the book contains 1,001 entries. They range from a line to several pages. Each reflects different aspects of this tragedy, from the meaning of each of their daughters’ names, to an account of the five hundred million birds who fly over the world’s second busiest migratory highway in the region, to how a slingshot is made and the specific stones to use. It’s a profound, essential story for our times.

The two fathers today work together for the Parents Circle Family Forum and Combatants for Peace, speaking around the world to promote peace. I often had to put the book down mid-read, overcome by sadness and the tragedy/futility of the Israel-Palestine conflict. McCann has written a masterpiece that will remain in my heart and head for a long time. A book I highly recommend.



Jim
The Disappearing Spoon: and Other Tales…from the Periodic Table of Elements by Sam Kean

I usually don't read short stories. However, since I majored in chemistry in college, I thought I should at least give Sam Kean's book, *The Disappearing Spoon: and Other Tales…from the Periodic Table of Elements*. The stories are richly written and take a while to digest. But the reader is rewarded with history, biography, culture and a host of other good information. And the titles of some of the stories are interesting, such as “Take Two Elements and Call Me in the Morning, ” “Elements as Money,” “An Element of Madness,” etc.

I've since started his current book, *The Bastard Brigade*, (2019) about the Allies’ plan to sabotage the Nazi atomic bomb program. After reading the early chapters in order, I now find myself reading in disorder almost as if they are stand-alone short stories. Go figure.

Catherine

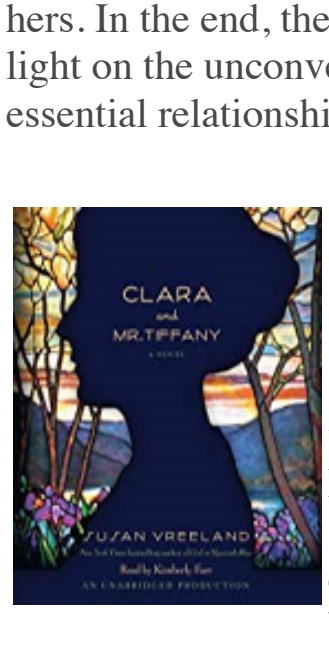
Trailblazer, The Power of Business as the Greatest Platform for Change by Marc Benioff, founder and co-CEO of Salesforce, with Monica Langley

In his memoir, Benioff writes about how his successful Jewish family laid the bedrock for his own values-based business. An early mentor was his maternal grandfather, San Francisco Supervisor Marvin Lewis, a founder of Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART). His book provides readers a rare look at the inner workings of one of the Bay Area’s most admired companies and reveals how a company’s core values (for Salesforce: trust, customer success, innovation, equality, and commitment to giving back) have become his company’s greatest competitive advantage.

Catherine

The Dutch House by Ann Patchett

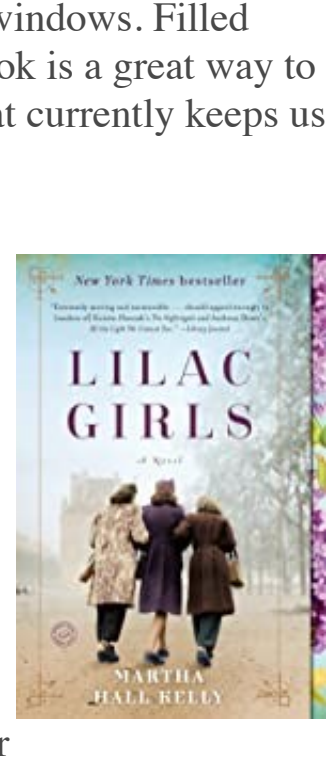
Ann Patchett’s eighth novel is a book about how two young siblings, Maeve and Danny Conroy, are cast out of their family home, a grand mansion outside of Philadelphia, that had been built in 1922 by a Dutch couple who’d made their fortune in cigarettes. This occurs after their mother flees her husband and children to look after the poor in India. The story includes a wicked stepmother, the young widow Andrea, who entices the children’s father, Cyril, to turn his back on his children’s needs and devote himself to hers. In the end, the mansion is regained, in a way that sheds important light on the unconventional families that people cobble together when essential relationships are lost.



Catherine

Clara and Mr. Tiffany by Susan Vreeland

Susan Vreeland’s novel features Clara Driscoll, a young widow in gilded era New York, who goes to work for Louis Comfort Tiffany. She becomes the creative force (largely uncredited) behind Tiffany’s luminous exhibition at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair of beautiful, innovative stained-glass windows. Filled with lavish details and unforgettable characters, this book is a great way to add color and beauty to the bleak era of coronavirus that currently keeps us sheltering in place.



Carrie

Lilac Girls by Martha Hall Kelly

A compelling story about WWII and actions (based on true story) of an American socialite who raises money and helps women after the war who had been imprisoned in the concentration camps. A fast paced novel that is yet another look at WWII. Although this book came out in 2016, I had been reluctant to read as it talks about young women in the camps being used for horrifying medical experiments. Despite this dreadful subject matter, the book is surprisingly upbeat and positive.

PBS.ORG

If you have made a donation to PBS in the past year, you can then create a “Passport” account and access all the great programs online.

Carrie also recommends this podcast, https://www.wbur.org/modernlove: How Bibliophiles Flirt with Uzo Aduba

There's something wonderful about sharing your favorite books with the person you're falling in love with. And Karla Derus was a longtime book lover, dating a man who was also a big reader. But Karla also had a secret. Emmy-winning actress Uzo Aduba ("Mrs. America") reads Karla's essay.

What We are Watching

Alice

Giri/Haji (Japanese for Honor/Shame), Netflix, in English and Japanese with English subtitles, is the story of a Japanese policeman who is sent to London to bring his gangster brother back to Tokyo. Every character is interesting, the story is complex, the actors, writing, and direction are terrific.

Dyan

Zoey’s Extraordinary Playlist, NBC, Mondays at 9 pm, 12 Episodes (able to record but not stream) If you love musicals and a bit of fun, try this series. Jane Levy, the lead, is an actress I was unfamiliar with, but who’s funny, smart, and has a lovely voice. Skylar Astin, the terrific singer from the movie, *Pitch Perfect*, is part of this lively cast, which also includes Alex Newell and John Clarence Stewart, with Peter Gallagher and Mary Steenburgen. Lauren Graham is a special guest star.

Dulcy

1987’s *Moonstruck*. I watched it at the beginning of our sequestering, and it kept my spirits up for a full day.

Barbara

I recently re-watched *Band of Brothers* and *John Adams*, both miniseries available on HBO On Demand. I loved both series the first time I watched them years ago but particularly enjoyed watching them again now. Each series depicted ordinary people meeting the challenges of their extraordinary times. For me, each series reaffirmed my belief that character is destiny. We can do this!

What We are Hoping to Read and See:
Marin's Top 10 Most Requested as of April 3

1. *American Dirt*
2. Parasite (DVD)
3. Little Women (DVD)
4. Ford v. Ferrari (DVD)
5. Knives Out (DVD)
6. Jojo Rabbit (DVD)
7. Once Upon a Time in Hollywood (DVD)
8. *The Dutch House*
9. *A Very Stable Genius: Donald J. Trump's Testing of America*
10. Bombshell (DVD)

The Friends of the Larkspur Library Board of Directors

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The Friends are a dedicated group of members who raise money for library programs, plan events, and work as ambassadors to the community for the Larkspur Library.

Mission Statement

The Friends of the Larkspur Library is committed to supporting the library’s programs, cultural events, books, and materials. We strive to instill the love of reading and the excitement of learning in library patrons of all ages.

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