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FRIENDS OF THE LARKSPUR LIBRARY

Among Friends

Winter 2020

New Library Director Hired

Franklin Escobedo

The City has hired a new Library Director. Franklin Escobedo will be joining us on January 6, 2020. Franklin is leaving the position of Principal Librarian for the Coronado Public Library, where he has worked for the past five years. He spent several years with the Oceanside Library before that. A graduate of UC San Diego, Franklin has an MLS from San Jose State. Franklin is active in a number of trade associations, most notably the American Library Association and the Young Adult Library Services Association, where he sits on the Board of Directors. He has over twenty-five years of experience in public libraries, starting his career as a Library Page after high school and working several positions in public libraries before becoming a professional librarian. He has extensive experience leading outreach programs to help energize the public about the evolving role of libraries in communities.

Welcome! Look for more about Franklin in the next issue.

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

Towards a New Library: Wrap-up from Joe Jennings The Commons 2019

2019 has been a very important year for building consensus and making progress toward funding, building and sustaining a new library at The Commons in Larkspur. Larkspur support has had a huge impact this year and we are very thankful for it. Our end of year news includes:

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Introducing The Commons Foundation
As a result of our Feasibility Study and discussions with community members we have decided to rename the Larkspur Library Community Center Foundation. The new name is The Commons Foundation. The reasons for the change are:

- The Commons is the whole project name and incorporates the new Library.
- The previous name was too long and easily confused with other groups.
- The Commons points to the shared benefit of the new project creating common spaces for everyone to enjoy and build community.

The Commons Foundation and Friends of the Library Launch Season of Giving Campaign
We launched our first joint fundraising effort with the Friends of the Library to support the annual operating needs of the current Larkspur Library. We emailed and mailed over 900 people in Larkspur, Corte Madera, Kentfield, Greenbrae and Ross and funds received to date is $10,000. This is a first step toward creating a sustaining annual fund structure to support our library today and into the future.

Major Donor Program Launched
The Commons Foundation has launched the next phase of the Capital Campaign. We have begun the major donor program to identify and solicit input and support from major donors.

City Architect Progress
The City has received proposals from 8 architectural firms for doing initial architectural work for The Commons and the new library. The City expects to initiate their review process in January.

City Developer Statement of Qualifications Status
The City completed the Developer Statement of Qualifications and sent them out in December.

City Releases Library Statistics
The City has released program and user statistics for the 2018-19 fiscal year. The total number of programs conducted increased over the previous fiscal year by 82% to 420 programs.

Related News: Belvedere-Tiburon new Library Addition Groundbreaking January 31, 2020
The $17 million renovation to the Belvedere Tiburon Library is underway, and the official groundbreaking is scheduled for January 31, 2020.

Current Activities sponsored by the Larkspur Library

Read to a Dog

Share a book with a dog: children read to specially trained dogs from the Humane Society, January 13 and 27 at 4 pm.

TED Talks at the Tamalpais

Several times monthly, TED Talks are offered at the Tamalpais in Greenbrae as part of the Library's community outreach.

Story Times

Babies & Books – Infants and toddlers to 24 months
Wednesdays, two sessions at 9:00 and 9:30 am

Toddler Storytime - Children ages 2 to 4 years old
Thursdays and Fridays, two sessions at 9:00 and 9:30 am

Close Up: Alice Kaufman

By Catherine Pyke

F. Scott Fitzgerald wasn't thinking of Alice Kaufman when he said, "There are no second acts in American lives."

"I'm more Shakespearean," Alice says. "He had five acts." And Alice is just beginning. She joined Friends of the Larkspur Library just two years ago, and immediately launched its vibrant newsletter, *Among Friends.* A few months later, she proposed an idea for a fundraising appraisal event, a local version of PBS' *Antiques Roadshow,* and *made it happen*. Friends' second *What's it Worth*? event took place in November.

Alice's varied and diverse passions, reflected in her Renaissance career as a writer, editor, shop owner, entrepreneur, lecturer, and teacher, prepared her well to shake up Friends in all the best ways.

A native New Yorker, Alice grew up in Brooklyn "before it was cool." She studied English Literature at Skidmore College, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree. Jobs in advertising in New York City were swiftly followed by marriage and motherhood, and Alice was a stay-at-home mom until her daughter, Sarah, and son, Nicholas, were in school.

Alice's passion for Southwest art began during a trip to Santa Fe in 1980. Back home in New York, she worked for more than a year at the only place she could find that sold American Indian art — the museum shop of the Museum of the American Indian ("once again, before it was cool, when it was still at Broadway and 155th Street"). From there, she was hired to be a receptionist at a gallery opening on New York's Upper East Side — quite a change from upper, upper Manhattan. But when the gallery opened, the owner overheard her describing a Pueblo pot to a customer and decided on the spot that Alice would be a salesperson instead. "It was my Lana Turner at Schwab's moment," she says. The gallery's director was Christopher Selser, and while they were working together, they became co-authors, writing *The Navajo Weaving Tradition* (E.P. Dutton, Council Oak Books). They also taught a course together at The New School in New York City called "Collecting Southwest Indian Art."

It was American Indian art that inspired her to move to Albuquerque, but she ended up working there as the director of a city-wide arts festival. She returned to her passion for the Southwest when she moved to San Francisco in 1987 and opened Santa Fe, a store in Presidio Heights featuring Navajo rugs, turquoise and silver jewelry, Indian baskets, Pueblo pottery, and lots of books.

After two years at the store, she met the publisher of the *Nob Hill Gazette* ("not an address, an attitude"), and succumbed to her life-long love for magazines by accepting the job of editor. From there, she became founding editor of Menlo Park-based *Gentry Magazine*.

After wo years of commuting to Menlo Park from her apartment on Buena Vista Park in San Francisco, a job offer at the auction house Butterfield & Butterflied (now Bonhams) made a 15-minute drive from home irresistible. But while she was at *Gentry* and then Butterfields, she also had some side hustles: for 15 years, she was executive director of the Antique Tribal Art Dealers Association — 200-plus dealers based all over the country and abroad — for whom she wrote and edited a newsletter. And while she was still at Butterfields, she also co-founded High Desert Concepts, designers/sellers of cashmere blankets, cotton quilts, and silk scarves inspired by 19th century Navajo blanket design and sold in San Francisco, New York, Santa Fe, Tucson, and Tokyo. "There is still some HDC inventory out there," she says. "I got a check a week before Christmas for a scarf sold in Santa Fe."

Alice emphasizes she is "still working" as a freelance writer and editor, as if anyone could be surprised that this firebrand would be content to retire. She had two stories published in *Marin Magazine* in the last two years, and she is the Bay Area stringer for the Maine Antique Digest ("the Bible of American Antiques"), covering Northern California shows and auctions, as well the August Indian art shows in Santa Fe. She also volunteers at the Marin Humane Thrift Shop in San Anselmo.

In 2010, Alice married long-time Larkspur resident Frank Gold, who had been a math teacher, then principal of Tamalpais High School. But this mother of two and grandmother of three is not likely to slow down soon. Watch out Larkspur – Alice Kaufman has only just begun her latest act. And for all of us who care about the future of our library, this can only be a very good thing!

Holiday Book Tea

A full house of book fans (all them women) braved a wet atmospheric river to celebrate the season with finger sandwiches, cookies, tea and coffee at the Friends of the Larkspur Library's annual Holiday Tea at Book Passage on December 7.

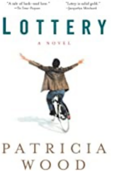
Store owner Elaine Petrocelli and the children's book buyer at Book Passage played show and tell with 40 books, explaining why one or more them would be perfect for a seasonal gift.

The food — prepared by the Friends — was delicious and plentiful for both the Book Passage staff and tea guests alike.

What's it Worth?

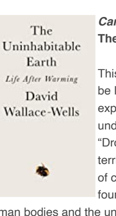
The second What's it Worth appraisal event was held upstairs at the library in the City Council chambers on November 9. Sacramento auction house owner Brian Witherell was the sole appraiser, and more than 80 curious collectors brought their treasures to be looked at and stories to be shared. As a fundraiser for the Friends of the Larkspur Library, the event was a success, and we hope to make What's it Worth an annual event.

What the Friends are Reading and Recommending



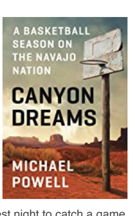
Helyse Hollander
Lottery by Patricia Wood

Perry's IQ is only 76, but he's not stupid. His grandmother taught him everything he needs to know to survive. Most important, she taught him whom to trust. Then his weekly Washington State Lottery ticket wins him the multimillion-dollar jackpot. He finds he has more family than he knows what to do with. Wicked and heroic characters present a deeply satisfying novel about trust, loyalty, and what distinguishes us as capable.



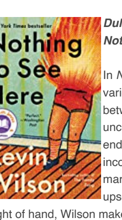
Carrie Burroughs
The Uninhabitable Earth by David Wallace Wells

This non-fiction book is not for the faint of heart and perhaps should be listed as a horror story. Although entirely grim and unreal, it explains succinctly the future on earth, chapter by chapter, in easy to understand scenarios. Sections such as "Heat Death," "Hunger," "Drowning," "Wildfire," and "Unbreathable Air." All are shocking and terrifying to read, demonstrating how the overlapping consequences of climate change impact every detail of life on earth. The section I found most intense was about the internal bacteria that reside in human bodies and the unknown consequences of rising temperature on that bacteria. The author mentions the case of an Asian antelope herd in 2015 that suddenly died in a "mega-death" episode linked to a simple bacteria residing in the antelope (normally without issue) but with a hotter climate the bacteria proliferated and emigrated to the bloodstream and internal organs of the animals killing them all.



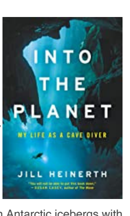
Alice Kaufman
Canyon Dreams: A Basketball Season on the Navajo Nation
by Michael Powell

In a Venn diagram representing the intersection of Navajo Indians and basketball, *Canyon Dreams* exhibits maximum overlap. Author/New York Times sports columnist Michael Powell has a deep understanding of Navajos, their traditions, religion, geography ("this achingly beautiful land"), and difficult life choices. He also has and a deep love for "rez ball," shared by seemingly the entire tribe. On game night, sold-out gyms and auditoriums across the reservation are the norm. ("Which is the best night to catch a game on the rez?" "Every night.") Powell believes that basketball combines "millennia-long native passion for endurance running with a cultural emphasis on group rather than individual accomplishment." The book finds its hero in Chinle High's basketball coach as the team competes for a state championship. If *Among Friends* readers would like to listen to Navajo high school basketball, tune to KTTN (the Voice of the Navaho Nation) at 660 AM and 101.5 FM, Window Rock, AZ.



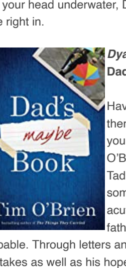
Dulcy Brainard
***Nothing to See Here* by Kevin Wilson**

In *Nothing to See Here*, novelist Kevin Wilson examines the varieties of love (and its absence) between parents and children, between friends, and within the self of its likable, bright, and uncertain narrator. Lillian, a near 30-something adult at loose ends, is summoned by a high-school frenemy to care for the inconvenient children of her politically prominent husband's first marriage. Why are the the ten year-old twins inconvenient? When upset, they break into fire. Sounds crazy, but with some subtle sleight of hand, Wilson makes their affliction utterly believable. The characters are memorably human, for the most part likable, and oh, there's basketball too. Highly entertaining.



Jim Scheller
Into the Planet: My Life as a Cave Diver by Jill Heinerth

When I was in college in middle Tennessee, I explored caves nestled in the Cumberland Plateau. When I moved to California in 1970, I became a certified scuba diver. But I never combined both activities. However, Jill Heinerth, in her memoir, *Into the Planet: My Life as a Cave Dive*r, writes how events in her life guided her into this profession, a profession that includes working with the National Geographic Society and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. She has explored and filmed remote locations as different as the base of a volcano in Mexico to caves in Antarctic icebergs with water that is 28 degrees. Because each chapter contains descriptions of harrowing adventures and frequent encounters with death, she writes in a style that is easily readable, thus giving the reader time to check their own breathing. An interesting chapter looks at a possible genetic reason for the need of such extreme adventures; a single gene, DRO 4-79 has been found in many people who lead exciting lives.
REVIEWER'S CAUTIONARY NOTE: If you are claustrophobic, afraid of the dark or don't like your head underwater, DO NOT read this book. But if none of these apply to you, then dive right in.



Dyan Pike
Dad's Maybe Book by Tim O'Brien

Have you ever written a letter to your child or grandchild, telling them how much they mean to you or sharing important thoughts you want to share? At age 58 with his second son on the way, Tim O'Brien starts to write letters to his young sons "to give Timmy and Tad what I have often wished my own father had given me — some scraps of paper signed 'Love, Dad.' " At his age, O'Brien is acutely aware that he won't be around when his boys become fathers themselves, so his writing has a sense of urgency that is palpable. Through letters and anecdotes, O'Brien shares what he's learned from his own mistakes as well as his hopes for his sons.

The title comes from his youngest son, Tad, who saw a stack of papers on his dad's desk and asked if they were going to become a book. O'Brien told him that sometimes books end up in trash cans because they're not good enough. "Well, what if the book is good enough?" Tad asked. "Maybe", his dad replied. "Well, you have to call it that. You've got to call it your maybe book."

As a Vietnam veteran and author of several novels based on his military experiences (*The Things They Carried* and *Going After Cacciato*, among others), war has been O'Brien's most profound teacher. Often his words focus on what he's learned about the unpredictability of life as well as man's inhumanity to man. Several chapters are devoted to "Home School," in which he tells his boys lessons he wants to pass onto them. He reminds us, as parents, of the wisdom we hope to pass onto our children about how the world works and what we've learned through the challenges we've faced. He holds a high personal standard of ethics and imparts these to his sons in a voice of love and urgency.

This is a must read for any parent or grandparent who'd like to pass on words of love and experience to their offspring. Like O'Brien and his sons, sharing them in letters may initiate significant conversations.

Media File

From *Literary Hub* (lithub.com), a ranking of fictional librarians, including Stan Lee in *The Amazing Spider-Man*, Ali MacGraw in *Love Story*, and Claire Bloom in *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*. https://lithub.com/50-fictional-librarians-ranked/

"Idaho Library report political books are frequently hidden," was the headline in the *Idaho Press* on October 17, 2019. "Books promoting LGBTQ rights, discussing gun control policies, and criticizing President Donald Trump were found hidden in spaces throughout the Coeur d'Alene Public Library, the *Coeur d'Alene Press* reported Wednesday. The librarian received a card saying, " 'I noticed a large volume of Books attacking our President…I am going to continue hiding these books in the most obscure places I can find to keep this propaganda out of the hands of young minds. Your liberal angst gives me great pleasure.' " *The New York Times* also noticed this story and ran a story of their own on November 10.

https://www.idahopress.com/news/state/idaho-library-reports-political-books-are-frequently-hidden/article_931dcaf6-b954-58ec-99fb-5a0ee33f1a56.html

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/10/us/idaho-coeur-dalene-books-library.html?searchResultPosition=1

From *Literary Hub*, October 24, 2019, "Libraries Are Even More Important to Contemporary Community Than We Thought And They Should Be Funded Accordingly" by Eric Klinenberg says "the library is among the most critical forms of social infrastructure that we have…It's also one of the most undervalued. In recent years, modest declines in the circulation of bound books in some parts of the country have led some critics to argue that the library is no longer serving its historic function as a place for public education and social uplift." Klinenberg goes on to point out why this is not true, reasons the Larkspur Commons crew know well.
https://lithub.com/libraries-are-even-more-important-to-contemporary-community-than-we-thought/

From *The Baffler* via *Literary Hub*: The main branch of the Brooklyn Public Library hosted an evening of learning and more.
https://thebaffler.com/latest/a-night-at-the-library-schwartz

From *The Spectator*, a British magazine, a travel story on hotels for book lovers. The intro: "These six hotels are steeped in literary history, from Agatha Christie to James Joyce." https://life.spectator.co.uk/articles/the-best-hotels-for-book-lovers/

Another from *The Spectator,* this time a different look at children's books. "Children's literature has become horribly right-on: See "Woke books risk killing the pleasure of reading" by Melanie McDonagh at
https://www.spectator.co.uk/2019/11/childrens-literature-has-become-horribly-right-on/

A cautionary tale — this is a follow-up story about the new library in Queens, New York City, that ran in the last issue. The headlines online for this story were "New Library Is a $41.5 Million Masterpiece. But About Those Stairs. 'It's chaos,' said one of the children's librarians." In the print edition, the headline was "Queens Library's Stunning Form Draws Ire Over Function."
https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/05/nyregion/long-island-city-library.html?action=click&module=Editors%20Picks&pgtype=Homepage

In November, the *New York Times* listed its Ten Best Books of the year. How many have you read?
https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/22/books/review/best-books.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage

E-books at libraries are a huge hit, leading to long waits, reader hacks, and worried publishers.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/11/26/e-books-libraries-are-huge-hit-leading-long-waits-reader-hacks-worried-publishers/

On December 10, a full-page ad in *The New York Times* headlined "I Love My Librarian Award!" and featured the winners. For more about both, go to www.ilovelibraries.org/ilovemylibrarian.

Ten Marin Country Library Holds as of December 26, 2019

The Dutch House by Ann Patchett
Olive, Again by Elizabeth Strout
The Overstory: A Novel by Richard Powers
The Night Fire by Michael Connelly
Once Upon a Time in Hollywood DVD
The Water Dancer by Ta-Nehisi Coates
Blue Moon: A Jack Reacher Novel by Lee Child
The Giver of Stars by Jojo Motes
Catch and Kill: Lies, Spies, and a Conspiracy to Protect Predators by Ronan Farrow
The Guardians by John Grisham

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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