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FRIENDS OF THE LARKSPUR LIBRARY

# Among Friends

## Winter 2021

**_The New York Times_ asked its readers "What's the first thing you are planning to do when the pandemic ends?" Among the answers, published on January 3: "I can't wait to get back to my local library…, browse the new books without feeling rushed, and checkout a big pile of books without worrying about germs."**

## A conversation with Mary Van Dyke and Kathy Green, mother and daughter, who work to advance a new library and community space in Larkspur

Mary Van Dyke and Kathy Green

### How did you first get involved in creating a new library?

***Mary:*** When I first moved to Larkspur in 2012, I talked with Kathy (who lived here) about the first proposals for the new Larkspur Library and Community Center and the public showing of drawings and programs to be evaluated. I was immediately excited about the proposals for a Community Center and Library and followed closely the ensuing steps.

***Kathy:*** Libraries have always been dear to me. They are the center of any community for good reason – they are multi-faceted centers of engagement for groups and individuals. Volunteering in schools and libraries has always been important.

### Working together

***Mary:*** Kathy and I worked together on the historic restoration of Camp Richardson Resort at South Lake Tahoe from the initial remodel and reconstruction to operations and services. Through the years she has helped with other projects including management and supervision of new construction and remodel projects.

***Kathy:*** Before the pandemic, Mary and I regularly met to walk, talk, share meals, celebrate, discuss books, and plan for travel. All of that has been severely curtailed as we navigate the regulations that are in place to keep us healthy. It has been challenging, as it has been for everyone. Having Mary close by and having a project to share is a productive way to be together. The appreciation of what we have -- our relationships, our city, our location and environment, our time, our work, and our capacity for giving of ourselves -- has been paramount during this time.

### Why the library?

***Mary:*** Through my Mother's love of reading and the stories she read to me, my own university studies led me to want to be a librarian -- to be able to order the books, to share them with others, and to encourage reading. Exploration of the worlds and histories within those books became my goal.

### What is your history with The Commons project? How do you envision the project's future?

***Kathy:*** When I was accepted to the LARC (Library and Recreation Community Planning Committee) in 2012-13, I was pleased to help determine the use of the City's 2.4 acre parcel. Through extensive guided meetings and outreach, the committee proposed a plan that eventually became the City of Larkspur's 2013 Master Plan for a library and community facility to be built at the Rose Lane property. In 2016, a group from the Friends of the Library and The Library Foundation, plus a few interested people, met to discuss the reinvigoration of the effort to build the library and community gathering space on the City's parcel, now called "The Commons." A smaller group volunteered to come together solely for this purpose, and from that group, three of us joined The Larkspur Library and Community Center Foundation, which is now called The Commons Foundation. After two-and-a-half years of planning, working with the City, holding group meetings, and commissioning a feasibility study, we have grown to 6 Board members, and are beginning our major donor fundraising program. In October, The Commons Foundation and The City of Larkspur entered into a Letter of Intent, which agrees that The Commons Foundation will raise $5 million in the next two years for the purpose of building the first phase of the project.

## How to Get a Larkspur Library Card

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**At Larkspur Library:** Fill out an application online at the check-out desk.

**At Home:** https://www.ci.larkspur.ca.us/629/Get-a-Library-Card to Register online NOW for an immediate full access library card available for Marin County residents aged 16 years or older. A valid credit card with a Marin County billing address is required for address verification purposes only. Your credit card will not be charged.

**For Kids:** Under age 16 may get a library card at the library if they are accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. The parent or legal guardian must present identification. The parent or guardian is responsible for any lost or damaged materials on the card.

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

## January 2021
## Update from Joe Jennings

### Developments at TCF include:

- **Jon Ellenzweig** has joined our Board of Directors. Jon and his wife, Kristi, are donors to our Seedling Campaign, the Capital Campaign, and the recent Annual Campaign. They are members of the TCF Champions and believe in the transformative capacity of public libraries. Jon is an active member in our community and is focused on expanding TCF's relationships in the K-12 education communities.

- **Serena Darcy-Fisher** is our new fundraising advisor for the major donor stage of fundraising. Serena has assisted successful local capital campaign fundraising for Vivalon (formerly known as Whistlestop), Healthy Aging Campus, and Spirit Rock Meditation Center.

- **M. Scott Lockard** of Lockard Creative in Kentfield, and Chris Hartzell of our board are working to update the conceptual drawings of the new library to match the City Council's approved $5 million first phase project.

## Welcome to Our Newest FOL Board Member

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Welcome Mary Van Dyke to the Friends of the Library board. For more about Mary, see the story about Mary and her daughter, Kathy Green, in this issue.

## What the Friends are Reading and Recommending

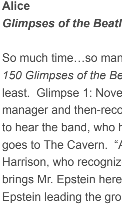
**Dyan**
***Hamnet*, Maggie O'Farrell**

Astonishingly imagined and beautifully written, O'Farrell creates a believable world set in Shakespeare's day. Told largely thorough his son's and wife's eyes, we see Shakespeare as a young, restless man who falls in love with Anne (referred to as Agnes in the book), a woman whose healing and prescient powers are forceful. Their lives are realistically imagined as they bear their first child and Will works unsuccessfully for his glove-making father, once a prestigious businessman and City Alderman, but now disgraced. O'Farrell's research into the era is expressed in lyrically fine detail, and she fully inhabits her characters so that we experience their world as they did.

As the young couple and their first child unhappily live with Shakespeare's family early in their marriage, Will grows discontent and leaves for London, eager to carve out his own place in the world. Agnes bears twins in his absence and he visits intermittently over the next ten years. The story focuses on Agnes and the three children within her husband's family. When the plague strikes, both twins are struck down, and their only son, Hamnet, dies. We feel the overpowering sense of grief and loss experienced by all the family members, especially his twin and mother.

Four years after this tragic death, Shakespeare's writes the play, *Hamlet*, which O'Farrell imagines Agnes coming to London to see. Her reaction and his are remarkable. A wondrous read.

**Jim**
***West with the Night*, Beryl Markham**




Beryl Markham's memoir, *West with the Night,* was first published in 1942, but because World War II overshadowed the news, it wasn't popular at the time. How it was republished in the early 1980's thanks to the owner of the Sausalito restaurant, Ondine's -- is a story in itself that I would read. I first read *West with the Night* when it was republished and had become a #1 best seller. I loved the writing and the story telling.

The story is about Markham as a young girl coming of age in British West Africa (Kenya) in the early 1900s who became a successful racehorse trainer, then a bush pilot, and finally the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean — east to west. Her writing is vivid, and I felt I was beside her as she told her story. Her use of clauses to enhance her sentences is wonderful. She's the only author I like who can write a long sentence and I don't get tired before the end of the sentence.

Recently, I had occasion to read *The Splendid Outcast*, a collection of Beryl Markham's short stories, edited by the British author Mary S. Lovell. Then I learned that Lovell also wrote a biography of Markham, titled *Straight On til Morning*. This book goes into great detail, not only about Markham's life but also how the republishing of *West* came about and the Marin connection: great biography and great history. I've re-read *West with the Night* and like it even better now than the first time I read it, maybe because I know more about Markham's life and her book. Any one of these books is a good read, but absolutely read *West with the Night!*

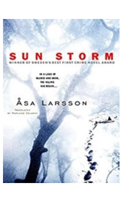
**Alice**
***Glimpses of the Beatles*, Craig Brown**




So much time…so many books…so many favorites. I'll list three: *150 Glimpses of the Beatles* is enormous fun — for a while at least. Glimpse 1: November 1961, Liverpool — future-Beatles manager and then-record store manager Brian Epstein is curious to hear the band, who have become popular with local teens. He goes to The Cavern. "Awful but fabulous" is his verdict. George Harrison, who recognizes him from the record shop, says, "What brings Mr. Epstein here?" The next group of glimpses shows Epstein leading the group through minimal struggle to previously unheard-of heights of creativity, cultural change, fame, and financial success.

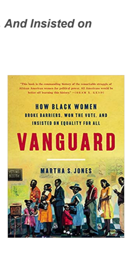
But by Glimpse 111, author Craig Brown (who also wrote *99 Glimpses of Princess Margaret*, a previous pick of mine) writes, "Compare their first and last press conferences in America. In the first, they are outgoing and full of *joie de vivre*; in the last, self-absorbed, and world-weary. Yet barely four years separate the two." Another quote, this from Queen Elizabeth celebrating her 50th wedding anniversary in 1997: "What a remarkable 50 years they have been for the world…Think what we would have missed if we had never heard The Beatles."

***Troubled Blood*, Robert Galbraith**



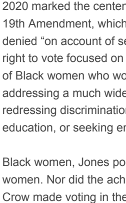

My second pick is *Troubled Blood* by Robert Galbraith (pen name of J.K. Rowling), the fifth Cormoran Strike mystery. It is huge — I had the library's Large Print edition that had 1489 pages. I wish it had been twice as long and can't wait for the next. For Strike and Robin fans, this book is a true gift. No spoilers here — fans will love it and Strike newbies should start with *Cuckoo's Calling*, the first, ASAP.

***The Uncommon Reader*, Alan Bennet**



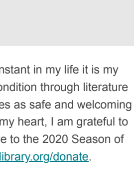

Book #3: a novella of 120 pages. The plot: Two of the Queen's corgis run into a mobile library van. She must go in to get them out. While there, to be polite, she picks up a book. Reading ensues, serious, distracting reading. In the royal carriage, Philip waves out of one window, she out the other, a book hidden in her lap. No one but Her is amused.

**Dulcy**
***Sun Storm*, Asa Larsson**




With travel limited to getting away by book, Asa Larsson's series about Stockholm lawyer Rebecka Martinsson offers a good ticket out of town. In the first entry, *Sun Storm*, nose-to-the-grindstone Rebecka reluctantly returns to her small northern hometown to help an old friend whose charismatic brother has been gruesomely murdered. The murder investigation unravels tangled relationships among the church-going townspeople, including Rebecka. Against the northern lights, Larsson's equally colorful, complex characters, including a police detective who will bring to mind Frances McDormand in the movie *Fargo*, all deal with recognizable relationships in a setting far different from ours.

**Catherine**
***Vanguard – How Black Women Broke Barriers. Won the Vote. And Insisted on Equality for All*, Martha S. Jones**




Most agree that Black women like Stacey Abrams exercised an outsized influence in the 2020 Elections and in the recent special election for Senate in Georgia. Historian and John Hopkins University Professor Martha S. Jones's new book shows us that Abrams and other powerful Black women come from a very long tradition of strong and community minded women. Many of these women began as leaders in their churches, becoming powerful and celebrated speakers.

2020 marked the centennial celebration of the enactment of the 19th Amendment, which states that a citizen's suffrage can't be denied "on account of sex." But most of the celebrations of the achievement of a woman's right to vote focused on white women suffragists. Jones's book reveals the fascinating role of Black women who worked equally hard to achieve suffrage, while at the same time addressing a much wider range of civil rights concerns, including anti-lynching efforts, redressing discrimination and segregation when using public street cars, gaining access to education, or seeking employment opportunities.

Black women, Jones points out, fought for rights for all of humanity, not exclusively for women. Nor did the achievement of Suffrage assure Black women the right to vote. Jim Crow made voting in the South as fraught and impossible for Black women as it long had for Black men. Because issues of voting suppression and contested election results continue to incite controversy and spark discussion, Jones's book makes for essential, thoughtful reading.

## Thank you to our Season of Giving Donors

Happy New Year to our Larkspur Library family. If there is one constant in my life it is my love of reading. Great story telling and the study of the human condition through literature is what I live for. Running a close second is my passion for libraries as safe and welcoming places for all and especially readers like me. From the bottom of my heart, I am grateful to those generous individuals and foundations listed below who gave to the 2020 Season of Giving to make our library stronger, https://www.friendsoflarkspurlibrary.org/donate.

On behalf of The Commons Foundation and my team at the Friends of the Larkspur Library, we gratefully acknowledge your support.

Barbara Friday, President

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## Mission Statement

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.

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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