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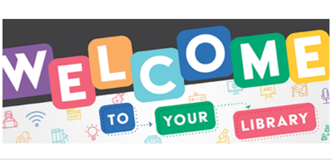
FRIENDS OF THE LARKSPUR LIBRARY

Among Friends

Winter 2022



A press release from The Commons Foundation

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

$1 MILLION CHALLENGE FROM LARKSPUR RESIDENTS DRIVES FUNDRAISING TO 80% OF NEW LIBRARY GOAL

Lori Lerner and Terry Berkemeier Accelerate Fundraising Momentum

Challenge Doubles New Funds and State Grant Could Double Them Again

Larkspur, Calif. (January 5, 2022) – The Commons Foundation (TCF), a non-profit with a charter to raise funds to build a new public library in Larkspur, today announced the receipt of a $1 million challenge from Larkspur residents Lori Lerner and Terry Berkemeier. The Lerner-Berkemeier Challenge matches new major gift contributions of $50,000 or more to TCF through December 31, 2022. If fully matched, the challenge has the potential to bring library fundraising to 80% of its Phase 1 goal. Funds matched before February 15, 2022, will be included in the City of Larkspur state library grant application, and could be doubled again.

With a goal of raising $2 million in new donations for the TCF Capital Campaign in 2022, the Lerner-Berkemeier Challenge offers the campaign a significant boost. **"We strongly believe in the importance of funding and building the best new modern library possible," said Lori Lerner. "We hope our challenge will encourage others to support this important community project."**

Gifts or pledges received prior to the City's state matching grant application on February 15, 2022, could be doubled again if the state grant for libraries is awarded. **"We appreciate Lori and Terry's generosity and the unique timing relative to the state matching grant opportunity," said Joe Jennings, President, The Commons Foundation. "It is rare that we can offer donors the potential to have their gifts increased by 4X.** If the community responds quickly, and funds are matched a second time by the state grant, it's possible we could exceed our $5 million Phase 1 fundraising goal. Funds in excess of $5M would enable Phase 2, which could allow us to build a larger library, add a public square, and increase onsite parking while significantly reducing construction time."

To date, $200,000 in new pledges from private citizens have been made to the Lerner-Berkemeier Challenge including contributions from Larkspur residents Tina McArthur and Richard Rubenstein, and Larkspur City Council member and former mayor Catherine Way. "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to create a new library and community center that will be a vibrant gathering place and cultural hub for generations to come," said Way.

Earlier this year, the City of Larkspur announced it will be vacating City Hall and will permanently move the Larkspur Library to The Commons. But with competing needs for city and state support, Jennings says the Foundation cannot rely on City funds alone. "The City will build what it can afford, so it's imperative that we all come together to financially support this transformational project," said Jennings.

As of December 31, 2021, the TCF Capital Campaign had raised $2.5M toward its $5 million Phase 1 goal (not including $800,000 of the $1 million Lerner-Berkemeier Challenge). For more information or to participate in the Lerner-Berkemeier Challenge, visit thecommonsatlarkspur.org or email joejennings@thecommonsatlarkspur.org.

Library Update

Franklin Escobedo, Community Services Director, Larkspur Library

After the holiday closures at the end of December, a few things have changed. While we were closed, a lot of our spots on the carpet were expertly removed by Barry's Professional Upholstery Cleaning. Many thanks to the Friends of the Library for helping us get the carpets clean. Another big change came with the departure of our Circulation Supervisor Ari Mahrer, who also just graduated from Library School attaining their Master's degree in Library and Information Science. Ari is off to a new adventure in research.

We're currently assessing our staffing levels and our ability to maintain services. We are hoping to get the Library's locker, funded by the Larkspur Library Foundation, up and running. The locker will allow patrons to stop by after hours and pick up material. It's the new blue box behind City Hall.

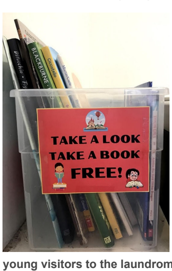
Here's library aide Alison Wilson demonstrating how to retrieve a book. Stay tuned for more information.

"A Triumph at Book Passage"

That was Friends president Barbara Friday's post-event description of the Friends 2021 Holiday Tea at Book Passage on November 27. She also called the Tea "smashing." More from Barbara: "I think that this was my favorite of the Teas because it was so smooth and welcoming," and she went on to thank the Friends "for your baking, your arranging, your registering, and your amazing company. We are a strong group and do amazing work."

Plus, News was made! Wendy Evje, a library lover who was inspired to make a gift, pledged $25,000 to the Commons Foundation at the tea. Thank you, Wendy! The library loves you back.

Mini Libraries Update



The creation and opening of the Friends of Larkspur Library's mini library at iDoLaundry was announced in the Summer 2021 issue of this newsletter. FOL board member Diana Saint James had noticed a set of unused shelves next to a washing machine and received permission to convert them into a treasure trove of Spanish and English children's books.

The top shelf features a bin of easy reader picture books, and the two middle shelves offer young adult books and graphic novels. The bottom shelf is filled with colorful board books designed for toddlers. With signage in English and Spanish that reads "TAKE A LOOK - TAKE A BOOK - FREE!", young visitors to the laundromat are encouraged to select a book to read then and there, and either return the book to the shelves or take it home.

Laundromats are ideal places to find busy families who may appreciate exposure to additional educational resources. Parents generally return weekly to their local laundromats and their children often wait an average of 90 minutes as the family laundry is washed, dried, and folded. Books are the ideal alternative to boredom or electronic phone games.

The mini library is restocked with books twice monthly by FOL volunteers. Board member Diana Saint James reported in after a restocking visit: "The books were all jumbled which made me happy because it meant kids were looking at them. All the Harry Potter books were gone from the YA shelves. There were also no board books, so those had all gone home to families. But there are plenty of fresh books now, and I added a selection of donated Christmas books."

New books have been generously donated by Joanne Vosmek, manager of Copperfield's Books in San Rafael and Larkspur. Gently used books are donated by the Friends or purchased using funds donated to the Friends of the Larkspur Library. A special thank you goes to iDoLaundry, 469 Magnolia Avenue in downtown Larkspur, for generously donating the space for the mini library.

Also in 2021, Friends started a mini library in the Emergency Department at Marin Health Medical Center. Children ages 4-7 are offered a book to read and take home, adding a bit of comfort to their visit. This collection is regularly restocked by Friends Board President Barbara Friday. Next on the ideas list of mini libraries to start is the family visitation area at San Quentin Prison.

Let us know at friendsoflarkspurlibrary@gmail.com what you think of this project, if you have donations of children's books, or other mini library sites to recommend.

Closeup: Librarian Jessica Brandi

Jessica Brandi's path to becoming a librarian was not a straight line.

After graduating from college in Southern California, Jessica Brandi thought she would go back to school to get a teaching credential. She ended up studying and spending time with the academic librarian, a relationship that resulted in Jessica applying to library school at San Jose State University ("that and UCLA were my only options then"). Since then, she has spent ten years in libraries, including school and public libraries in Southern California.

"Every library and community is different," she says. "The challenge is to tailor resources. But everyone wants connection, a sense of community. They want to see their interests represented."

The best thing about library work, she says, are the patrons. "I love meeting people in the community, developing new relationships, enriching their intellectual experiences." The worst? "Budgetary limitations that challenge you to be more creative with your resources."

She finds Larkspur Library patrons "very well read, curious, vocal, with eclectic tastes." Her taste in reading runs toward non-fiction and memoirs. Robert McFarland (*The Old Ways, Landmarks, The Lost Words, and Underland*) is a current favorite author.

When she is asked to recommend a book to a patron, "it opens a larger conversation involving that patron's interests and past reading experiences. Those conversations usually end up with the patron recommending something to me. It is a collaborative situation, not one-sided."

The last few years — the pandemic years — have caused the library to "shift our services — pivot," not once but several times. "People are reentering the public space," she says, but maybe not everyone. A Larkspur Library book group, run by Teresa Capasso, "enjoyed their at-home participation," preferring to meet virtually "from the comfort of their homes." Can some services become/remain virtual? "We try to help non-tech savvy patrons take advantage of our online resources."

The goal? "To keep people connected and help them advance to a new age."

Meet Serena D'Arcy Fisher, Fund Raiser for The Commons Foundation

Serena D'Arcy-Fisher, CFRE, joined The Commons Foundation (TCF) team in January of 2021. Serena has decades of non-profit development experience both abroad and in the US, including multiple-million-dollar capital campaigns. Most recently, Serena was part of the capital campaign consulting team for Vivalon's (AKA Whistlestop) planned new Healthy Aging Campus in downtown San Rafael.

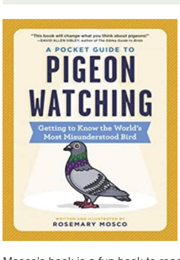
She enjoys working with donors to help them realize a collective vision that provides significant benefit to the communities they care about. She is very excited about the terrific vision for the new modern Larkspur Library and Community Center at The Commons. "This vital community asset at The Commons will provide a significant benefit to Larkspur residents of all ages, as well as neighboring communities in the Ross Valley, for many generations."

Currently, The Commons Foundation has raised $2.4 million in private funds toward its goal of $5 million to build a new modern library at The Commons on the corner of Rose Lane and Doherty Drive. Several exciting matching opportunities by generous donors will accelerate support. A major gifts challenge is underway, and a community campaign will be launched in January 2022. Every dollar raised by February 14, 2022 has the potential of being matched by a donor and doubled again when the City applies for a State matching grant in February. This rare opportunity leverages gifts four times! As a registered non-profit, all donations made to TCF are fully tax-deductible as permitted by law. Gifts made through DAFS, IRA distributions, cash, and stocks, and even some crypto, are welcome.

Please watch your mailbox for the campaign appeal in mid to late-January. TCF welcomes your financial support for this important community asset. There will be acknowledgement and naming opportunities at different levels of support.

Please email Serena if you have any questions about supporting the new library. serena@thecommonsatlarkspur.org.

What the Friends are Reading and Recommending



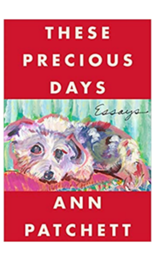
Jim

A Pocket Guide to Pigeon Watching by Rosemary Mosco

I'm guessing that readers who have given any thought to pigeons fall into one of two groups: the "likers" and the "dislikers." Mosco's book will encourage the "likers" and hopeful entice a few "dislikers" into taking a different attitude. Until the end of World WAR II, pigeons were important, beneficial, valued, respected, appreciated members of our bird society, but since then have declined precipitously in appreciation. Mosco's book is a fun book to read, almost childlike in its physical manifestation, and you may learn more about pigeons than you want to know.

Dyan

These Precious Days by Ann Patchett

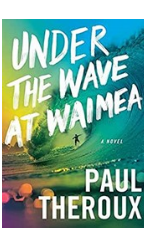


What a perfect book for these times, containing short, reflective, thoughtful, and often humorous essays. I looked forward to reading each one, not wanting the book to end.

Patchett knew from an early age that she intended to be a writer, despite her father discouraging her. "Having someone who believed in my failure more that my success kept me alert. It made me fierce. Without ever meaning to, my father taught me at a very early age to give up on the idea of approval. I wish I could bottle that freedom now and give it to every young writer I meet, with an extra bottle for the women."

As she has said in an interview, Patchett appreciates writing essays, which require her to think deeply about her experiences. From reflecting on the influence of Charles Schulz's Snoopy as a writer, or on the importance of knitting, or about how her three fathers shaped her, to the significance of special friends, she writes about life with clarity, wit, and insight.

Sit down with a cup of tea or a glass of wine, open the book, and enjoy.



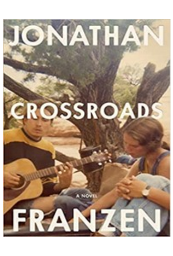
Barbara

Under the Wave at Waimea by Paul Theroux

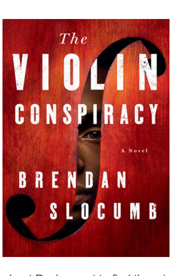
If you love big wave surfing, Hawaiian culture, spending time on Oahu's North Shore, or a bruising redemption story, I highly recommend this juicy read by Paul Theroux. Although this is my first book by travel writer and author of *The Mosquito Coast*, I'll be sure to read his others. I felt like I too surfed Joe Sharkey's water-bound journey from haole boy growing up in a hostile environment to world-class waterman scarred by his high-risk choices. It's the best kind of Hawaiian escape.

Barbara

Crossroads by Jonathan Franzen



As a child growing up in the Seventies, I relished reliving the era depicted by the incomparable Jonathan Franzen in Crossroads. Franzen is known for weaving a complex plot held firmly together by wholly believable characters and their life circumstances. Whether the subject is faith, marriage, parenthood, teenage dynamics, forgiveness, or mental illness, Franzen manages to portray fragile humanity and human connection like no other. Supposedly this is the first book of a trilogy. If so, sign me up for the next two.



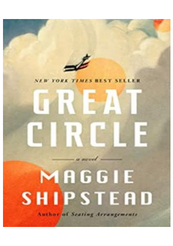
Diana

The Violin Conspiracy by Brendan Slocomb

Though not due out until February 2022, I was fortunate to receive an advance copy of this mystery/thriller from a friend in the book trade. Ray McMillan, a black violin protégé, can stop using a rental violin when he is gifted with an old family instrument handed down from his great, great grandfather who was once a slave. His playing soars with this violin. Taking it in for repairs, he is shocked to learn his violin is a Stradivarius valued at 10 million dollars. Prior to a big competition, the violin is stolen and held for ransom. While much of the book is about Ray's quest to find the missing instrument, it also painfully highlights the racism he experiences as a black teenager in the classical music world and lack of family/school support until a mentor encourages him to pursue his musical dreams. Slocomb, the author, is a classical musician and educator who writes authentically as someone who has walked this path. This was a fast, fascinating, insightful read and I predict we'll be seeing the movie version one day.

Dulcy

The Great Circle by Maggie Shipstead



The Great Circle is subtitled "A Novel." It's a good thing because this wide-as-the-sky story rings with truth on every page and delivers characters who will live with you like friends you grew up with. In 1914, infants Marian Graves and her brother Jamie are saved from an ocean liner sinking in the Atlantic and are raised in Montana with their artist uncle. A pair of dust cropper/ daredevil pilots come to town and Marian discovers the passion that will determine the course of her life: she will fly planes. She does, from an early age, supported by a bootlegger whose interest in her ends up in their marriage. Later Marian will fly in Alaska as a bush pilot and then, with a small group of women pilots, on missions in WWII and then on her final effort to circumnavigate the globe from pole to pole. Interspersed with Marian's storyline is that of Hadley Baxter, a contemporary movie celeb who's cast as Marian in a film. Shipstead's handling of these two disparate lives—and those of the people around them—is completely authoritative and compelling. It's a long book (610 pp in the print edition) but has the depth and breadth of the horizons Marian pushes toward. It's a classic American story of self-determination—and it's about two women. Read it.

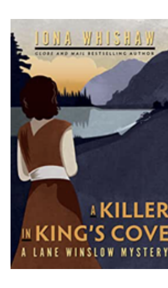
Catherine

The Chancellor by Kati Marton

I've been reading The Chancellor, the Remarkable Odyssey of Angela Merkel by Kati Marton. I haven't quite finished it. I'm savoring it because, just like Merkel's steady and calm leadership, I don't want it to end. Who knew that while living in East Germany, a pastor's daughter who worked as a research chemist, and entered politics after the fall of the Berlin Wall, that she longed to drive through the Rocky Mountains listening to American rock music? Her admiration for Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, and friendship with Barack Obama as well as the way she attempted to work with Donald Trump are awe inspiring. Merkel is highly protective of her privacy, but with access to the former chancellor's inner circle and travel records, author Kati Marton has written a fascinating profile of this extraordinary world leader.

Alice

A Killer in King's Cove by Iona Whishaw



Written in 2016, this is the first Lane Winslow mystery, with several sequels available at the library. Lane is wonderful — a super-smart former World War II British spy who moves to extremely rural British Columbia (she liked the look of it on a travel poster) to start a new life. But her neighbors have decades-old secrets, leading to a mysterious murder (the victim seemed to be stranger to the area but has Lane's name on a piece of paper in his pocket), and Lane becomes the chief suspect. She also tries to solve the crime, and in the process of suspect-detecting, she falls in with an appealing police detective. They are, of course, perfect for each other, and I imagine they will come to realize this in subsequent Lane Winslow mysteries.

Barbara Friday: Thank You to All of Our Generous 2021 Season of Giving Supporters

Some things are certain: The Larkspur Library has an essential place in our community fabric. Also certain are the kind and generous supporters of our community treasure who provide financial support year after year. Although donations are still flowing in, listed below are the names of those amazing individuals who have given thus far to the 2021 Season of Giving campaign. Many thanks for your support which goes to fund both the day-to-day needs of the library as well as a one-time donation to The Commons Foundation building fund. In this way, your investment supports our library now and in the future.
Thank you for being a library hero!

Ablon, Joan	Janin, Matthew & Susan
Apfel, Brigitte	Jaquet, Kate
Azen, Jeanne	Johnson, Elisa
Baney, Jim	Jones, Katherine
Batmale, Louis	Kaufman, Frank Gold & Alice
Belli, Leon	Kaye, Ian & Julie
Benet, Mr. and Mrs. Charles	Kellerman, Bob & Nancy
Berreman, Jacquelyn	Legallet, Gail
Blauvelt, Gerrit	Leland, Lamar & Mardi
Boero, Emagene	Levi, Vic & Linda
Bogardus, Andrew	Lundstrom, Joan
Bogin, James & Holly	Mayer, Bob & Robin
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Bryson, Susan	Melka, Marie
Burroughs, Jim & Carrie	Mellott, Richard
Busch, David	Miller, Hank
Chu, Larry	Mullin, Robin
Collins, Richard & Idres	Munro, Julie
Cooper, Jack	Murphy, Aileen
Cunningham, Richard & Susan	Nash, Steven & Ruth
De Sanna, Rosemary	Nirenstein, Allen & Dorothy
Deandreis, Kendall	Noily, Samuel
Donohue, Gloria	O'Brien, Patricia
Duffy, Mary	Papastefan, Angeline
Dunn, Daniel & Karen	Pharis, Ron & Mary
Eisinger, Mary	Pike, Peter & Dyan
Errante, Lois	Poninski, Donna
Feidler, Katharine Kirk & Arthur	Praetzel, Robert
Feigenbaum, Laurel	Purkey, Jane
Fletcher, John and Judith	Raven, Charles & Patricia
Fragakis, Chris and Allison	Revell, Andy
Freid, Marvin & Marsha	Robertson, Elizabeth Cayen
Frender, Linda & Michael	Roumiguiere, Barbara
Freytag, Baerbel	Rude, William
Friday, Barbara	Ryerson, Richard & Patricia
Futterman, Michael & Armelle	Saint James, Diana
Gale, Anna Graham	Scheller, James & Mary Dale
Gattone, Toni	Schopplein, Jane
Gehrman, Norah Frei & Paul	Scott, Evan
Ginsberg, Robert & Jan	Simmonds, Harris F
Girton, John	Solari, Bill
Glynn, Edith	Southgate, Susan

Goepp, Marian
Gormley, James
Green, Brendhan & Katherine
Greenwald, Ellen
Gregory, George & Ann
Griffin, Chris
Grossman, Robert and Wendy
Haggerty, Bill & Carol
Halvorsen, Karen
Hansen, Arlene
Harrison, Laura
Harter, Margaret Ann
Hoffman, John & Lynne
Hollander, Fred & Helyse
Holmes, James
Hunt-Heinlein, Marj
Husen, Herbert & Donna
Spolter, Barbara
Stein, Gabriella Rilleau & Steven
Swan, Harriet
Tedesco, Pamela Tibbitts & Stephen
Terry, Phil & Patricia
Van Voorhees, Mary
Wagstaff, Mary
Walling, Sherille
Way, Larry & Catherine
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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 are 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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