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FRIENDS OF THE LARKSPUR LIBRARY

Among Friends

July 2020

Toward a New Digital Library? The Commons Foundation (TFC) Update from Joe Jennings

Larkspur Library Curbside Pickup

Summary

The City has reduced the Public Library 2020-21 budget by $284,768 to $634,095. We believe that libraries are essential social infrastructure that are needed now more than ever in our times of Covid-19 pandemic, economic recession, and the Black Lives Matter movement. The Commons Foundation (TCF) has launched a new TCF Annual Campaign and received $35,100, including a $25,000 gift from the Friends of the Library, to fund the physical and virtual library. At the same time, we are continuing to drive the TCF Capital Campaign to build the new Library.

City of Larkspur Operating Budget

On Monday, June 8, the City Council approved the new 2020-2021 operating budget that decreases the Library budget by $284,768 to $634,095. This action was taken to help address the $2.7M budget revenue shortfall the city faced and recognizes that due to Covid-19 the library must operate under restricted rules for public safety.

City of Larkspur Decommitting from the new Library Building Funding

The City Council also approved the new Capital Improvement Plan, which effectively formalized that they do not intend to invest funds in building a new library at this time. This decision was announced by Mayor Way at an earlier budget meeting.

Image for Discussion Purposes Only

The Commons, Public Square
The Commons Foundation © 2020

The Commons Foundation was formed to fund, build, and sustain a new library community center for Larkspur, Greenbrae, and Kentfield because the current library is unsafe, too small, and has inadequate access and parking.

In the Covid-19 reality of shelter in place, social distancing, and significant budget cuts, we need to rethink what the first phase of the new library can and should be.

In the May Library Board of Trustees meeting, we recommended focusing on a new Virtual Library strategy to respond to service cuts due to Covid-19 safety measures and the budget cuts.

Since that meeting, we have developed with Jonathan Shambroom (Library Board of Trustees member) and Franklin Escobedo (City Community Services Director/Librarian) a two concurrent phase approach to funding the current and future library.

Phase 1: Annual Campaign, Raise Private Funds for the Physical and Virtual Library

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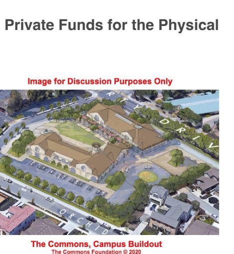

The Commons, Campus Buildout
The Commons Foundation © 2020

Raise private funds to support the City Library's physical and virtual library services and operations during this economic recession and Covid-19 pandemic.

Phase 2: Capital Campaign, Raise Private Funds to Build our new Library

Raise private funds to build a new 5-10,000sf building and community square at Rose Lane.

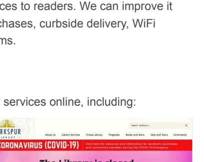
What can the Physical Library do?

The Larkspur Library has opened curbside pickup and delivery of physical books and media. This is a safe means of delivering library services to readers. We can improve it with selected funding increases to increase book purchases, curbside delivery, WiFi access at the building, and class and speaker programs.

What is a Virtual Library?

The Virtual Library is how we provide essential library services online, including:

- eBooks, eMagazines
- Online public programs
- Online services
- Classes/Meetings
- Circulation Desk, Help Desk, Chat, Email



The new Virtual Library will require a new website to serve as the hub, social media for service delivery and communications, an online community, and marketing resources to make people aware of new content and how to access and enjoy it.

Virtual Services are a National Library Trend

Libraries across the US are shifting to virtual services for content delivery, programs and community services. This just makes sense in a world of Covid-19 precautions and increasing demand for programs. Recent articles include:

New York Times: Libraries Must Change
To stay true to their mission during the coronavirus pandemic, libraries should offer more digital services.
By Anthony W. Marx (President of the New York Public Library)
May 28, 2020, 5:00 a.m. ET

American Libraries: Coping in the Time of COVID-19
Librarians and health professionals discuss experiences and best practices
June 1, 2020

Why now and why us?

The demand for library and community gathering space services has increased due to the dislocations caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic recession. More parents are home schooling their children. Nearly all summer programs have been canceled for all age groups in our Parks and Recreation and library departments. Seniors are more isolated than ever because of their heightened health risk.

In addition, the Larkspur City Hall building is not safe, and we do not at this time have a safe alternative physical place.

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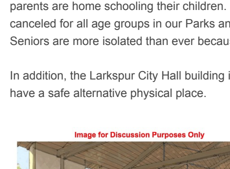

The Commons, Interior
The Commons Foundation © 2020

The Commons Foundation is stepping up with the new Physical and Virtual Library strategy because we recognize it is the new Phase One of funding, building, and sustaining a new library. We think we can significantly improve the Larkspur Library now, and any funds raised and invested in the new Virtual Library can be leveraged when we build the new building in the future. We expect to work with our existing partners in the community and form new ones to make this first phase work while not overlooking or delaying any further our fundraising for the new building.

We are responding to the times with these words in mind: If not us, who? If not now, when?

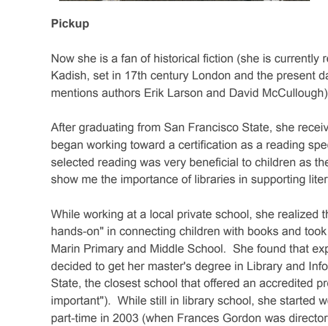
From Friends of the Library President Barbara Friday

Celebrating the 4th of July in Larkspur during this challenging 2020 is so different from our traditional Independence Day holidays of years past. While we miss the parade, the fair, and traditional fireworks, we rise to the challenge of keeping ourselves and our neighbors safe by celebrating in our hearts this year. You may remember seeing your Larkspur Library support groups marching together in the parade in years past. Please know that we continue to work diligently on behalf of your beloved library even though you won't see us marching this year.
You may have noticed that enrichment programs sponsored by the Friends of the Larkspur Library have moved online during shelter in place. These online programs have been well-received and well-attended. Yet we know that you, like us, long for days when we can visit the library for a new book, use the computer, or attend an interesting program. Although we are forced to interact with library services digitally at this time, your generous support will continue to enrich our library's offerings whether online or in person.

We will never lose sight of the importance of this essential community service - our Larkspur Library. Thank you most sincerely for your contributions to Friends of the Larkspur Library this year and in years past. Your support makes all the difference. On behalf of the Friends of the Larkspur Library board, I'm wishing you and your family good health and a safe and satisfying 4th of July celebration.

Barbara Friday
President, Friends of the Larkspur Library

Close-up: Teresa Capasso


Teresa Capasso, Curbside Pickup

Teresa Capasso, Librarian II at Larkspur Library, has "always been a reader and lover of libraries. My father was in the Air Force, and we moved around a lot, but we always went to the library wherever we lived. When he retired, the family moved to the Sacramento area, then the Salinas Valley."

Teresa has especially fond memories of the library in Coos Bay, Oregon, one of her father's postings. "We lived there for three years, and it rained a lot. The children's librarian there welcomed me and my sister so warmly. We'd stay there for hours on end." What might she and her sister be reading then? "I read all of the Nancy Drew books at the library, and *The Secret Garden* was also a favorite."

Now she is a fan of historical fiction (she is currently reading *The Weight of Ink* by Rachel Kadish, set in 17th century London and the present day) as well as non-fiction (she mentions authors Erik Larson and David McCullough).

After graduating from San Francisco State, she received a teaching credential and began working toward a certification as a reading specialist when she learned that self-selected reading was very beneficial to children as they learned to read. "It helped show me the importance of libraries in supporting literacy in a community."

While working at a local private school, she realized that she "wanted to be more hands-on" in connecting children with books and took a job in the school library at Marin Primary and Middle School. She found that experience "so positive" that she decided to get her master's degree in Library and Information Science at San Jose State, the closest school that offered an accredited program ("accreditation is very important"). While still in library school, she started working at the Larkspur Library part-time in 2003 (when Frances Gordon was director). Once she graduated with her master's, she was hired full-time. Working at the Larkspur Library was a natural transition as she was familiar with the community, and "I already knew a lot of Larkspur families from Marin Primary."

Her husband, Jon Capasso, works in the insurance industry in San Francisco's Financial District as a Senior Technology Analyst. They have two adult children, Alex, and Julia, who both live in the Bay Area.

There have been big changes since the coronavirus became a factor in everyone's lives. Virtual programming is the Larkspur Library's answer to a full slate of reader participation activities. Along with online toddler and babies story times ("It's so different without kids, but I'm getting better at it."), the Book Club still meets. "It's easy for our members to use Zoom, and our meetings seem more intimate. We can be with people in their homes and still have good discussions. The joy of book club is a good open discussion, and we have that. And several former members and Tamalpais residents are able to participate. Libraries are adapting slowly, and so is the public."

Since the stay-at-home order, the use of eBooks has "surged," and Teresa is sold on the idea of digital magazines. "What do you do with the old magazines anyway?" she asked. "We keep up with the newest formats, but we still keep the old formats too for those who love them." So yes, the library will continue to purchase actual books as well as electronic versions. The proportions may change though.

"Larkspur Library is able to tailor our collection to the needs and interests of the community," Teresa says. How so? "This is a very educated community, and we buy with that in mind. People here are very well read, well read, she said. "They see a good review in The New York Times, for example, and they expect us to have the book available to check out." Scandinavian mysteries and travel books are especially popular with Larkspur readers.

Looking to the past, Teresa points out that the library was started in the early 1900s by a woman's improvement group who wanted a library for the community. "It was a private library to start, and its growth was so organic. The collection was given to the City and the Larkspur Library and is still serving the town all these years later. A pretty cool heritage."

Teresa envisions a future where the library is a crossroads of the community, continuing to serve as a place for people of all ages and for different generations of readers. A place for cultural events, for education, and leisure. The Commons "has a great location " near two schools and in the heart of the community. It's nice to see people working toward that goal."

Library Assistant Rob Gordon Retiring

Rob Gordon

Library assistant Rob Gordon will be retiring from the Larkspur Library after 25 years on July 26. And he is on sick leave until then, so perhaps the next time we see him, he will be a library patron (he plans to stay connected to the Larkspur Library).

He is looking for a new job and has had a few interviews "just to see what that's like.

It's all a new experience for me." He was brought in to work at the Larkspur library by his late twin sister, head librarian Frances Gordon, so he never had to go through the job-seeking process.

"Eventually, I'd like to do something around books," he told *Among Friends*. "Perhaps working at a bookstore or at a library that needs extra help."

Rob plans to resume his coast-to-coast travels when we can travel again, but his friend Jeanette, whom he visited regularly in New York City, has come to Larkspur for the quarantine and may eventually move here full time.

He is sorry he didn't get to spend more time working with new library director Franklin Escobedo. But based on the little time they did spend together, "he will be great" Rob predicts.

Rob will miss "all the people. After a quarter of a century, I've become attached. I know everybody. I can't go shopping without seeing people I know."

A message for library staff: Rob says that he is still available for Larky duty.

We'll miss you Rob!

2020 Frances Gordon Archer Scholarship

This year's scholarship has been awarded to **Lena Hill**, a student at Redwood High. Frances Gordon was director of the Larkspur Library for 27 years. The $1600 scholarship is funded by the Friends of the Library, through a request from Mark Archer, who set up the program in his late wife's name.

Media File

https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/What-Bay-Area-libraries-will-look-like-when-they-15290120.php
The present and future of our libraries...

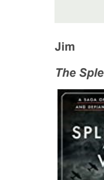
https://www.wbur.org/modernlove/2020/03/25/books-uzo-aduba
A podcast: How Bibliophiles Flirt | With Uzo Aduba
There's something wonderful about sharing your favorite books with the person you're falling in love with. And Karla Derus was a longtime book lover, dating a man who was also a big reader. But Karla also had a secret. Emmy-winning actress Uzo Aduba ("Mrs. America") reads Karla's essay.

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/11/books/coronavirus-library-reopening.html
"Libraries Strive to Stay" Community Living Rooms' as They Reopen."
Safely lending books is just the beginning. Libraries are figuring out everything from how to remain welcoming spaces to how to respond to changing reader behavior.

What the Friends are Reading and Recommending

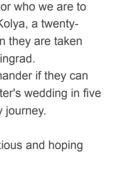
Jim

***The Splendid and the Vile* by Eric Larson**



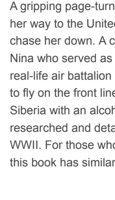
After I read Eric Larson's book, *In the Garden of Beasts*, I've been a fan of his, reading most of his books. Thus, I was delighted several weeks ago when I saw he had a #1 best seller, *The Splendid and the Vile*, which I knew I would read it even before knowing what it was about. I was even more delighted when I learned it was about Winston Churchill and Adolph Hitler during Churchill's first year as PM, from May 1940 to May 1941. The book has great detail in both biography, culture, and history. An unusual feature is that some chapters are only one page long while other chapters run longer. I especially liked reading about Churchill's family, including his wife, daughter, and son. Another VERY interesting character is Lord Beaverbrook. The best thing I got from the book is an elevated opinion of Churchill. I've been critical of his behavior toward trying to maintain the Empire and his contempt for Gandhi. But now I can forgive this. After reading this book I came away thinking that Churchill might have been the most remarkable man of the 20th century. I realized that as bad as our situation is now, it is nothing like living in London during the Blitz. And Churchill's action during that time filled me with resilience, determination, and hope for our present situation.

Barbara
***American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins**



I loved and recommend *American Dirt*, a story so gripping and so emotional that it could only be told as a novel. Yet it's realistic as a non-fiction account of refugees' struggles to travel by their wits and fortitude to a place of safety. The book is as much an adventure thriller as a expose' of our border troubles. Don't miss it.

Dyan
***City of Thieves* by David Benioff**

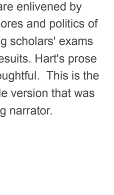


Written in 2008 before he adapted *The Kite Runner* for film and became head writer and show runner for *Game of Thrones*, David Benioff wrote this engaging page-turner. He frames the tale as a true story told to him by his Russian grandfather, a soldier in WWII.

The gawky seventeen-year old Lev (the narrator who we are to believe is the grandfather in the story) meets Kolya, a twenty-something tall, blond, confident Cossack, when they are taken prisoners by the Nazis during the siege of Leningrad.
They are promised freedom by the Nazi commander if they can find a dozen eggs for the commander's daughter's wedding in five days. What follows is a harrowing and hilarious account of their unlikely journey.

Benioff is a skilled storyteller who kept me on the edge of my chair, anxious and hoping that this unusual pair would survive. A great read.

Carrie
***The Huntress* by Kate Quinn**



A gripping page-turner about a callous Nazi war criminal who finds her way to the United States and a pair of Nazi-hunters who chase her down. A compelling character in the book is a woman Nina who served as a bomber pilot in the Soviet Red Air Force, a real-life air battalion that alone among the Allies recruited women to fly on the front lines. Her early life on the edge of a forest in Siberia with an alcoholic, abusive father is intense. It is a well-researched and detailed historical fiction and yet another look at WWII. For those who enjoyed Kate Quinn's *The Alice Network*, this book has similar pacing and intrigue.

Dulcy
***City of Ink* by Elsa Hart**

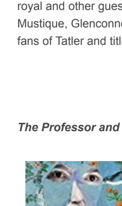
In 18th century China, the scholar Li Du has returned from exile to work in Beijing as a lowly assistant to a local magistrate. Investigating a double murder leads him and his friend, the storyteller Hamza, deep into palace intrigues both past and present. The elements of traditional mysteries - the paired protagonists, twisting plotlines, red herrings - are enlivened by Hart's smart, warm characterization and the mores and politics of imperial China, including details of the grueling scholars' exams and the uneasy presence of a community of Jesuits. Hart's prose is as intelligent as her hero, measured and thoughtful. This is the third book in the series. I listened to the Audible version that was read superbly by David Shih, an award-winning narrator.

Alice

I've read so many books - all purchased on Kindle while the library was completely closed - that it is hard to pick just one. None of them were outstanding, but many of them were fun to read. Some of the highlights in no order:

***We Ride Upon Sticks* by Quan Barry**
Witchcraft meets field hockey and teenage hormones at a Salem, MA, high school.

***The Last Hunt* by Deon Meyer**

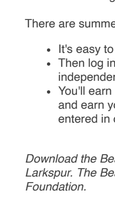


Satisfying mystery in a series about policemen in South Africa. I've read them all. One (or more) of Meyer's mysteries made in Africa will be on Netflix this summer.

***Lady in Waiting: My Extraordinary Life in the Shadow of the Crown* by Anne Glenconner**

From a walk-on role in Queen Elizabeth's coronation to an official role as Princess Margaret's Lady in Waiting to riding herd over royal and other guests at her husband's Caribbean island of Mustique, Glenconner's often-enviable, often-not life is a must for fans of Tatler and titled Brits.

***The Professor and Other Writings* by Terry Castle**



My favorite: I originally read it because someone called it funny, which it is, but it's much more: a love song to jazz great Art Pepper, a very personal look at the life academic (Castle and her wife teach English at Stanford), and the star of the show: "Desperately Seeking Susan" about her relationship with Susan Sontag.

Summer Reading is Going Virtual!

Summer Reading began on Monday, June 1st. Children and Teens can sign up for Summer Reading through Beanstack: **larkspur.beanstack.org**

There are summer reading challenges for children ages 0-5, and ages 5-12.

- It's easy to participate! Start by signing up with Beanstack HERE.
- Then log in often to track your time spent reading together, or reading independently, and participating in fun activities.
- You'll earn virtual badges in order to complete your summer reading challenge and earn your Summer Reading Award. Plus, everyone who finishes will be entered in our summer prize raffle!

Download the Beanstack Mobile App from your favorite App Store and search for Larkspur. The Beanstack app was made possible by the Larkspur Library Foundation.

Adult Summer Reading Bingo

Why should the kids have all the fun? Adults can participate in Summer Reading with Summer Reading Bingo. Two ways to play, fill out one line, or challenge yourself to blackout the card. **Download the Bingo Card Here**.

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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