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love your library
FRIENDS OF THE LARKSPUR LIBRARY

Among Friends

Fall 2019

Farewell to Janice Akel, Library Director Extraordinaire

Steve and Rosine Stein hosted a lovely farewell party honoring Library Director Janice Akel, who retired from Larkspur Library at the end of September. Many toasts were offered, celebrating the contributions Janice has made to the Larkspur Library, including more than doubling the programming at the library and expanding the reach of the library in to TED talks and tech assistance at the Tamalpais.

Many attendees made memorable toasts to Janice, such as Barbara Friday:

"Janice has made us all better people: more intelligent, more committed, more compassionate, more collaborative. She had always been a step ahead of us knowing what's right for our community. We are so grateful to her for showing us the way."

And Joe Jennings:

“Janice Akel inspired me to start the LLCC Foundation and to partner with the City of Larkspur to fund, build and sustain a new library community center at Rose Lane.

“I learned three things from Janice:

- persevere – she is excellent at making forward progress despite the environment;
- view the Library as an ever-evolving institution, not a museum trapped in amber; and
- serve everyone – where they are, how they interact, and where they are going.

“It has been my great pleasure, and an inspiration, to have known and worked with Janice. I will miss her deeply.

“I will close with a quote from Henri Amiel, the 19th century French philosopher who wrote:

‘Life is short. We do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us. So, be quick to love; make haste to be kind.’”

All of us will miss Janice’s warmth and intelligence in creating a more community-centered, family-friendly space. She has helped to unite the Larkspur Library Trustees, the Larkspur Library Foundation, the Larkspur Friends of the Library, and The LLCC Foundation. Here’s to success in her new ventures!

The Commons at Larkspur

THE COMMONS AT LARKSPUR
Future Home of
The Larkspur Library
A Center for our Communities

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A Center for our Communities
TheCommonsAtLarkspur.org
The Larkspur Library Community Center Foundation

On September 30, residents gathered to celebrate the new sign at the site of the future Larkspur Library. Joe Jennings rallied those who came, reminding them of our commitment to make this a reality for young and old alike. Among the supporters were Ann Morrison, Larkspur Mayor, and Kevin Haroff, Larkspur City Council member, Kathy Green and Jeanne Friedel from the Larkspur Library Community Center Foundation (LLCCF) Board, Armelle Futterman, Community Outreach Lead for LLCCF, Barbara Friday, President of the Larkspur Friends of Library, Dick Whitley and Nick Stone, Parks and Recreation Department, many LLCCF local supporters, and an enthusiastic Redwood High running team that joined us

Joe recounted a story of a young mother with her baby in a stroller who walked by earlier as the sign was being erected. “When will this be built?” she asked. “How old is your baby?” Joe replied. “Six months.” “By the time he’s in Kindergarten,” Joe assured her.

Let’s make this happen!

The Commons Update

Marin Community Foundation and the LLCC Foundation

The LLCC Center Foundation is proud to have established an Organization Fund managed by the Marin Community Foundation. Marin Community Foundation provides the LLCC Foundation with world class fund services at a competitive cost, and deep local knowledge and relationships.

The Fundraising Feasibility Study is Complete

The major findings of our Fundraising Feasibility Study were: the City needed to have 60% or more investment in the cost of the new Library; that there was sufficient local support and interest to raise $5 million privately; and that, as a result the first phase of construction, there could be a 10,000 SF building with 30 parking spaces and a new city square for the total cost of $12.5 million. Under this scenario the city will provide $7.5 million and the LLCC Foundation $5 million of the $12.5 million budget.

City of Larkspur Progress

The City is evaluating how to fund their $7.5 Million portion of the new Library Cost. In City Council workshop and council meetings in August and September, the City decided to explore bond financing, other government agency partnerships, and mixed-use developer options for funding the City’s portion of the $12.5 million cost of the new building. The City also agreed to send out a request for proposal for architectural services to develop new designs for The Commons and the new Library.

Small Group Meetings Continue

Armelle Futterman continues to organize and manage small group meetings for the LLCC Foundation to reach out and talk with people about the status of the project. If you are interested in attending or hosting a small group meeting please contact Armelle Futterman at www.thecommonsatlarkspur.org/contact.

New Gallery on Website

We have begun collecting pictures of award winning, regional, and interesting libraries and city squares on our website. This is designed to promote creative insights into what we might want for our new facility when it is built. Please go to Galleries on the website to see.

Hats off to Joe Jennings, Jeanne Friedel, and Kathy Green, and everyone who contributes to the new library.

What's It Worth?
Saturday, November 9, 9 AM - 4 PM

For the second year, curious collectors are invited to bring their treasures to the Larkspur Library. Sacramento appraiser/ auctioneer Brian Witherell will give verbal appraisals for paintings, sculpture, silver, collectibles, luxury goods, watches, Mid-Century Modern furniture, decorative arts, arms, and Militaria. Two items per person limit, first come, first served. Photographs are accepted for fragile or oversize items.

What’s It Worth?

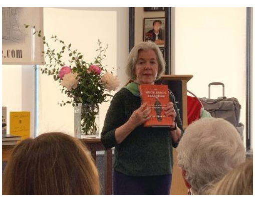
Early Entry: 9 AM - 10 PM $40 for up to two items

10 AM - 4 PM $25 for up to two items

The event is a fundraiser for the Friends of the Larkspur Library. Free parking is across the street at the St. Patrick's lot. For more information, visit friendsoflarkspurlibrary.org or call (415) 927-5005.

Friends of the Library Annual Holiday Book Talk and Tea Saturday, December 7, Noon - 2 PM

Enjoy coffee, tea, and cookies with members and friends as Book Passage's Elaine Petrocelli shares her recommendations for great gift books this year. A portion of the proceeds goes to the Larkspur Library. Seating is limited, so please call (415) 927-5005 to reserve a spot in advance.



Friends Close-up: Barbara Friday

It's a long journey from majoring in Forestry at the University of Maine to chairing the Friends of the Larkspur Library, but it is a trip Barbara Friday has made, fueled by her passion for words and her love for people.

At college, "I thought I would become a forestry major until I realized that I'd be trained to cut trees down instead of to hug them. I left the major within three weeks to pursue my love of literature and became an English major. Knowing that I did not want to teach, I added a double major in Business Administration and went on to get an MBA."

Barbara has always loved libraries. "All my life, I have been happiest in a library. It has always been my 'safe place' starting in second grade, sharing my favorite books with my lifetime best friend Mary Hadlock." Barbara and Mary still travel and read together every summer. This summer they spent two weeks exploring the coast of Maine, where Barbara spent a wonderful afternoon this past summer visiting the Portland Public Library.

Barbara was born in Pennsylvania, the granddaughter of coal miners who migrated from northern Italy, and she remains very proud of her Italian heritage. "My grandmother inspired my love of cooking and of feeding family. I clearly remember the happiness she created around her table every Sunday and the good food that made it indelible."

An explorer at heart, Barbara relocated her life and career from New England to Marin in 1984 and has lived in Larkspur since 1986. "It's been my great delight to live in Larkspur for 30-plus years. Back then, it was a sleepy little town and a bit of a secret garden where only the locals came. Now it's no longer a secret, but to me, it remains a garden or perhaps in my mind, a beautiful forest."

Barbara spent her career in telecommunications sales and retired after 27 years from what used to be known as the Bell System. "I sold very large phone systems both in New England and San Francisco to companies like Levi Strauss & Co. and the Bank of America. I was a sales manager or a global account manager, always leading a team of technology professionals. My job was to sell directly to these large companies or manage a team of salespeople who were responsible for enterprise data networks.” Barbara participated in the evolution of business communications from analog to digital and can still draw and describe the OSI model. "I think that I'm most proud of the fact that I was able to juggle raising a daughter with this challenging career. I had two big jobs which I loved, with each inspiring excellence in the other."

How did she get involved with the Friends? "Janice recruited me," she says. And Janice —

Janice Akel, Larkspur's much-beloved and much-missed former library director — can be very persuasive. "It was Janice's commitment to the Larkspur Library which inspired my involvement with the Friends of the Larkspur Library and to raise the 'Friends' profile in the community. My team and I are committed to funding and supporting the best library Larkspur can have Please renew your membership every year and ***Love Your Library***!"

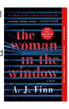
Barbara is thrilled with the progress her partners Joe Jennings and the Larkspur Library Community Center Foundation has made. She envisions a future when "the entire community has access to a safe, well-lit, vibrant library." Barbara believes that although everyone loves our charming Larkspur "reading room," the building is not as safe nor accessible as it needs to be. "I see a well-designed, flexible, new building as the library our Larkspur community deserves."

Story Time at the Library

THE LOST BOOK

What We've Been Reading...

Carrie
***The Woman in the Window* by A.J. Finn**



This was a summer read recommendation and wow, was it a fast read and super engaging. Numerous twists in the story made me think about the plot and try to figure it all out up until the very end. I was also intrigued by Stephen King's endorsement that he "could not put the book down." I liked learning about agoraphobia as the lead character has not left her NYC home for 10 months. Clearly this book will be made into a movie but do read it first!

Alice

***Fleishman is in Trouble* by Taffy Brodesser-Akner**

This is a very New York book, as well as a very funny and sometimes sad and touching book.

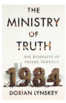
Toby Fleishman is a 40-something doctor who tries to be a mensch. He is married to Rachel, who has turned into an overachieving workaholic with aspirations of forming alliances among and possibly becoming part of Upper East Side royalty. When the family moved to a new UES apartment, Rachel chose an apartment in a building built to look like the pre-war buildings the other school moms lived in instead of a new-looking building with "amenities" — a swimming pool, a gym, etc.   Luckily, she is the breadwinner, as a doctor's salary can't provide the financial muscle Rachel's lifestyle demands.

The couple's widely divergent values lead to divorce, which leads to Toby Fleishman's experiences with Internet dating. Online, New York seems to be a cornucopia of very, very available women, who send Toby pictures of everybody part except their faces. He explains his time with these women to his children as "playdates."

Toby Fleishman is a man floundering in a life he never imagined or wanted. A very New York story, sometimes sad, sometimes laugh-out-loud funny.

Jim

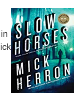
***The Ministry of Truth: The Biography of George Orwell's 1984* by Dorian Lynskey**



With fake news, alternative facts and Two Minute Hates, with chants of "lock her up" and " send her home," we have entered into the world George Orwell describes in his book, *Nineteen Eight Four* (the British always spell out the title). Who and what life experiences played a role in Orwell's writing this book (which has even been on the New York Times best seller list decades after it's initial release) is described in great detail in Dorian Lynskey's book, *The Ministry of Truth: The Biography of George Orwell's 1984*. The book is a mother lode of information about Orwell's life as well as people, places and events of the early 20th century.

Dulcy

Slow Horses by Mick Herron

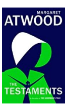


While Slow Horses (2014), isn't new, it's a find and, delightfully, the first in a series. This 21st-century British spy novel by prolific, award-winning Mick Herron, revolves around a cadre of variously disgraced intelligence operatives in the British secret service who have been dispatched to Slough House—hence their nickname—and minor, mindless duties. The very likable River Cartwright, whose failure to thwart a terrorist attack in the London subway may have been a set-up, tries to figure out his Slough House colleagues, in particular the director, Jackson Lamb, whose rude and irascible ways cover sharp wit and a deep-throat knowledge of the politics that rule M15 and, ultimately, the government. Videos of a Pakistani boy, kidnapped and threatened with beheading, go viral, mobilizing all of M15 and eventually involving even the slow horses.

If you're thinking John Le Carre, you're right on target. The story is layered and involving and shot through with dark wit and intelligence. And while it didn't grab me by the throat at the outset, I thoroughly enjoyed the writing and the company of its distinctive characters. As of this writing, all copies in our library system are in use, so word must have gotten around. I must confess that I listened to the book on Audible—superbly read by Gerald Doyle. Read it or hear it, you're likely to put a hold on the second title, Dead Lions. And then there are five more….

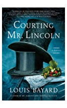
Catherine

***The Testaments* by Margaret Atwood**



If you were haunted by *The Handmaid's Tale* Margaret Atwood's blockbuster dystopian novel of 1985 that became a successful television series and a phenomenon of feminist resistance to the presidency of Donald Trump in 2016, don't miss Atwood's sequel, *The Testaments.* Broadening the narration beyond the first-person narration in *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Testaments* utilizes three narrators – Aunt Lydia, the most senior of the Aunts in the first novel, who trains the handmaids in Gilead, and two young women who seek to escape the restrictions imposed upon them by the patriarchal totalitarian state. The action of *The Testaments* takes place 15 years following the events of *The Handmaid's Tale and* offers a glimmer of hope for the future of women, following the demise of the Gilead regime. You will be richly rewarded by this extraordinary writer who has recently been awarded the Booker Prize (which she shares with Bernardine Evaristo, author of *Girl, Woman, Other*).

Dyan



***Courting Mr. Lincoln,* by Louis Bayard**

This book reveals a tender and thoughtful understanding of Abraham Lincoln, Mary Todd, and Joshua Speed (who becomes Lincoln's best friend) as they meet and are drawn to one another. Based on diaries and letters, Bayard recreates imagined conversations between and among them to give an intimate portrait of each. The book's sections alternate between the voices of Mary and Joshua as they come to know and love Lincoln.

Mary is a liberated woman for her day, deeply interested in politics and conversant in current affairs. She has a biting wit that she is unafraid to use in both male and female company, making her a rare woman. Lincoln, shy and socially awkward, recognizes her intelligence and matches her wit for wit, ofttimes talking in metaphor to the bafflement of others, but the meaning is clear between them. Both are highly knowledgeable and passionate about politics, their conversations initially centering on that shared interest but gradually deepening into a more personal relationship.

Lincoln meets Speed when he first arrives in Springfield as an adult, working as a young lawyer. He admits to being a hayseed and unfamiliar with which knife to use, which vest to wear, how to dance, and which manner of address is called for in polite society. Speed gives Lincoln lessons in social graces which are quite comical. They're often invited to dinner parties, where they tell amusing stories together in alternating voices, to the delight of the guests. Lincoln and Speed also enjoy a close, private bond that appears to threaten other relationships.

Courting Mr. Lincoln is an engaging study of three distinct persons.

Top Nine Most Requested Books (and one DVD) in Marin County as of mid-October

The Dutch House by Ann Patchett

The Water Dancer by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Guts by Raina Telgemeier

The Night Fire by Michael Connelly

Talking to Strangers by Malcolm   Gladwell

The Overstory by Richard Powers

The Testaments by Margaret Atwood

Yesterday (DVD)

A Better Man by Louise Penny

City of Girls by Elizabeth Gilbert

Media File: Focus on Libraries

The lead story in a recent Sunday Opinion section was "In the Land of Self-Defeat," which starts as a story about the author's hometown in rural Arkansas unwilling to pay their librarian $25 per hour ("If you want to make $25 an hour, please go to a city that can afford it").   The story demonstrates Donald Trump's hold on rural poor people, and how it is as strong as ever. Sample quote: "People like my neighbors hate that the government is spending money on those who don't look like them and don't live like them — but what I've learned since I came home is that they remain opposed even when they themselves stand to benefit." https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/04/opinion/sunday/trump-arkansas.html?searchResultPosition=1

"Libraries are having a moment. In the past few years dozens have opened across the world, resembling nothing like the book-depot versions from the past." So opens "Where Libraries Are Tourist Attractions" the headline for the *New York Times* story published in the Travel section on August 11, 2019. The story featured libraries in Denmark, Finland, Dublin, and more.

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/10/travel/libraries-are-the-tourist-attractions.html

From "Dogs Will Fix Our Broken Democracy," a September 1 *New York Times* op-ed by Frank Bruni in praise of parks and other spaces where people can meet and interact. "The more parks, the better, though let's be careful not to concentrate them in relatively affluent neighborhoods. And let's throw public libraries into the mix. I'm elated to read about renewed attention to them and the reimagining of them as community centers that can draw heterogeneous crowds with a mix of needs. We need more vigorous pushes in this direction, as the sociologist Eric Klinenberg discussed in his recent book *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life*. They're one road out of a tribalism that's tearing us apart.

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/31/opinion/dogs-democracy.html

Public places matter is the theme of Portside's story, "Why Public Places like Libraries and Parks are Critical for Bringing People Together."

https://portside.org/2019-10-01/why-public-places-libraries-and-parks-are-critical-bringing-people-together

America's best library…in Tucson? "After 137 Years of Service, Bisbee's Library is Declared Best in America" by Henry Brean was the headline for the Arizona Daily Star's story on October 8, 2019. The Copper Queen Library was singled out because of its "innovative efforts to expand services to the community, including early literacy programs, a seed library for gardeners, and a slate of unconventional items available for checkout, such as sports equipment and Wi-Fi internet hot spots."
https://tucson.com/news/local/after-years-of-service-bisbee-s-library-is-declared-best/article_eff07c76-c7ff-506e-af51-398e26fff0bc.html

The headline in the URL says it all: https://www.wsj.com/articles/finally-feel-free-to-return-that-library-book-you-checked-out-in-1981-11570113861 *Wall Street Journal,* October 6, 2019

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. To learn more about joining, click here.

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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