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love your library
FRIENDS OF THE LARKSPUR LIBRARY

Among Friends

Winter 2024

THANK YOU

Thank you to all of our generous 2023 Season of Giving supporters. We are so grateful for your recent end-of-the-year contributions. Your kindness constantly helps with the daily operation of the library. You helped buy the beanbag chairs and Lego table in the Children's Room, new lamps and tables for the Reading Room as well as covering the costs of fun children's and adult programming. You also just helped to pay for the library carpets cleaned over the holidays. Donations are still flowing in, so if you have not yet contributed or have a bit more to share, you can do so with the click of a button below. Thank you for being such great supportive citizens of Larkspur.

My Very Best,

Diana

Diana Saint James
President, Friends of Larkspur Library

Donate Today

Meet Librarian Jess Roesch

Jess Roesch grew up in Ventura County in Southern California, studied at the University of Redlands in Redlands, CA, and then, like many Marin librarians, got her M.A. in Library Information and Science at San Jose State University. She is part of the linked chain of local librarians who studied at San Jose State, where Jess says, "It's really nice to know people and get new ideas."

And ideas are a specialty. Innovations since Jess started working at the Larkspur Library (her first public library job!) include arranging for puzzles and games to be available for checkout for card holders; starting a seed library; creating unique crafts programs (mosaic design class, for instance); and starting the Book Spotlight, "a nook at the library where lesser-known titles and undiscovered authors are featured."
Before the Larkspur Library, Jess worked at Book Passage and Barnes and Noble. Books are, she says "my favorite topic. I will normally read about 50 per year." Recent favorites include *Lessons in Chemistry* (she hasn't seen the TV show yet but plans to) and *Remarkably Bright Creatures* ("a woman and an octopus story, with characters you can really root for and a bittersweet ending").

The *House in the Cerulean Sea* is an all-time favorite. She says she also reads YA books, and among her favorites are books by author Stephanie Garber and the Caraval series.

Jess's father was a Foley artist at Warner Brothers, then retired last year at Lucas Films (Wikipedia defining Foley artists' work: "the reproduction of everyday sound effects that are added to films, videos, and other media in post-production to enhance audio quality."). "I watched him live his dreams. I wanted to take him as an example and find something I really loved, to have that joy in my life."

A friend who knew about Jess's love for books suggested she become a librarian, and her first library job is at the Larkspur Library. "I love the community, love our regulars. Larkspur is unique because the library feels like a home. I get to talk to all our regulars about their lives, share stories with them, and bring the joy of books to the community. It is so exciting to look forward to a new library and all the services we will be able to offer there."

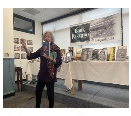
Jess and Stefan Dolan, her fiancé of eight years, plan to marry this spring and honeymoon in Italy, a busman's holiday of sorts, as Stefan is sous-chef at SPQR, a San Francisco Michelin-starred Italian restaurant, and plans to explore Italian food. The couple met in Portland, where he was a chef at Departure. She moved to Portland with a friend after college for a year to experience a new state and city. "I loved Portland for the people, the food, and the beautiful environment, but ultimately found that my California heart prefers the weather here!

"Stefan is very talented, and I really believe in him," she says. Among his specialties: gnocchi, harissa and carrots, and ramen. Jess has ideas (of course) about food-related library activities. Recipe swaps? Cooking demonstrations? "I have lots of ideas," she says.

Ideas and optimism. Says Jess, "I believe every year will be the best year, and they all are!"

'Tis the Season for Our Annual Book Passage Holiday Tea

By Dyan Pike



On a sunny Sunday in December, Friends of Larkspur Library hosted their Annual Holiday Tea at Book Passage to thank our members for their support. Elaine Petrocelli, owner of the store, in a remarkable feat of memory, described characters and plots from dozens of fiction, non-fiction, memoirs, children's, and YA books. Each sounded more intriguing than the last.

Elaine also told a charming personal story of spending Saturdays in her hometown library with the librarian's encouragement. How many of us grew up in hometown libraries that supported checking out as many books as we could carry? And what worlds were we introduced to through the magic of books!

We thank Book Passage and those of you who came out. Your support means the world to us.

How a Bay Area librarian became an Instagram star

By Julie Johnson
Dec 24, 2023

A remarkable Solano County librarian with 450,000 Instagram followers, whose online presence is more popular than San Francisco mayor London Breed.

https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/tiktok-librarian-mychal-threets-18564358.php

Library News from Ann Morrison, The Commons Foundation

We hope you're having a joy-filled holiday season so far.

New Library Project Update

WE HAVE A WINNER! Congratulations to Alten Construction and Noll & Tam.

As we wrap up another year in our campaign for a new Larkspur Library at The Commons, we're thrilled to share that Alten Construction, Inc. (ACI), in partnership with Noll & Tam Architects, was chosen to design and build the new library. The announcement was made during the December 13 Larkspur City Council meeting.

Among the three finalists, ACI's submission was recognized by the Request for Proposal (RFP) scoring team as the best value proposal. City Manager Dan Schwarz is now authorized to negotiate final terms with ACI for a design-build contract, which will later be presented to the City Council for approval, including necessary budget amendments.

ACI and the Noll & Tam team have submitted sketches of a proposed building, but these are not necessarily final representations of the architecture. Per the specifications of the RFP, the sum for the design-build of the library and community space is $12,765,000. Construction of the new library will begin in 2024 and must be completed by the end of 2025.

Since 1995, Robert (Bob) Alten's company has constructed and modernized over 100 facilities across the San Francisco Bay Area, including K-12 public schools, universities, community colleges, city halls, courtrooms, and libraries.

You can read more about the city's selection process on their website:
https://cityoflarkspur.org/DocumentCenter/View/18615/82-Award-Alten-Design-Build-Contract
We very much look forward to the next phase in the building of the new library and will keep you updated as it unfolds.

Donor Highlight: Elda Phillips Memorial Gift

TCF recently received memorial gifts toward the new library in memory of Elda Phillips. Elda's daughter, Laurie Dubin, kindly provided the photo and some interesting background information about her late mother's passion for reading:

Elda Maria Phillips' love of reading and public libraries was lifelong: from perfecting her English through books checked out from New York City libraries after emigrating to the US from Havana, Cuba at age 13, to serving on the Board of the Washington, D.C. Public Library System after years of teaching Spanish literature at the university level.

With three children and eight grandchildren all living in Larkspur, Elda moved to Marin County with her husband Richard in 2000. The Commons Foundation mission to raise funds to build a new Larkspur Library couldn't be a more perfect way to honor Elda's memory. Elda passed away this past July, just two weeks shy of her 90th birthday.

Making a Difference with a Memorial Gift and Estate Gifts

If you are passionate about supporting vital community resources like our new public library and wish to honor someone who has passed with a memorial gift, please consider The Commons Foundation.
Likewise, if you would like to continue to support the new library beyond your lifetime, please consider making a gift to TCF in your estate plans through your will or trust. Kindly contact us at admin@thecommonsatlarkspur.org if you would like additional information. Thank you.

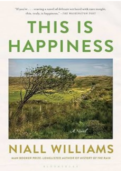
Piper Park Holiday Lights: TCF Shines Bright for the Community

On Friday, December 22, the TCF team offered the community another opportunity to enjoy the lights at Piper Park with hot chocolate, whipped cream, marshmallows, and chocolates. Thank you to everyone who stopped by to say hello and share in the good cheer.

Friends' Book Recommendations

Serena

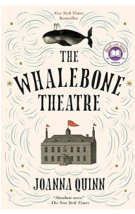
This is Happiness
by Niall Williams



My husband and I loved this book. We got it out of the library and then bought it as a keeper!

It is a beautifully written coming-of-age story with terrific character development set in rural western Ireland at the time of the expansion of the electric service. The anticipation of the arrival of electricity and how electrification transforms village life plays a key role in the novel. Irish music and love are also themes. The skill of the writer makes the everyday happenings so wonderful to read with lots of humor and also poignancy.

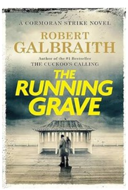
Coreen
The Whalebone Theatre
by Joanna Quinn



I am finishing up a terrific read: *The Whalebone Theatre*. Set in England before and through WWII, the novel follows the lives of three children who grow up together in a country mansion outside London and into their young adulthoods during wartime. Touching, endearing, original, also heart-breaking—the adventure begins with the children creating a theatre out of whale bones that wash up on the estate's beach, and the themes of theater and creative endeavor wind through the novel. Two of them end up as undercover agents in France, working with the Resistance. "Absolute Aces," writes *The NY Times*. It's a page turner.

Alice
The Running Grave
by Robert Galbraith

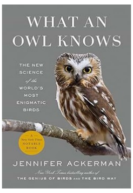
(J.K. Rowling's *nom de mystere*)



Almost any new Cameron Strike/Robin Ellicott mystery will be my choice for favorite read. Galbraith has hit the jackpot with every book but one — *The Ink Black Heart*, unreadable by me. The others — unputdownable. Which is saying something, as I had the Large Print 1300-plus pages edition out from the library. And yet both my husband and I carved out big parts of our lives to read/finish it. This book is an engrossing, terrific, substantial read.

Jim

What an Owl Knows
by Jennifer Ackerman

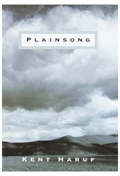

WHAT AN OWL KNOWS
THE NEW SCIENCE of the WORLD'S MOST ENIGMATIC BIRDS
A New York Times NOTABLE BOOK
JENNIFER ACKERMAN
New York Times bestselling author of
THE GENIUS OF BIRDS AND THE BIRD WAY

Any of you readers who are curious about, interested in, or just like owls need to jump into this book. Ackerman takes the reader with her when she details her experiences with owl experts or when she's looking at owls in person. She takes the reader all over the world (except Antarctica). While her writing is easy to follow, sometimes I felt the information was too much.

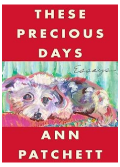
Mary
Plainsong
by Kent Haruf

I have just finished reading (for the second time) *Plainsong*, a masterpiece of people and place and simile and metaphor — it reads like poetry and wisdom. It belongs in a list that includes Ivan Doig (another of my favorite authors).

It is a joy to be in the company of others who love great authors and stories and to share their favorites. I have been a book lover since my 8-year-old self read by flashlight under the covers after bedtime.

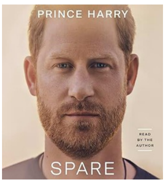


Susan
These Precious Days
by Ann Patchett



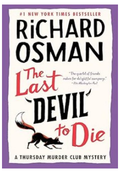
I decided to pick up a book of essays since the holidays are such a busy time. I chose *These Precious Days*, a collection of personal essays written by Ann Patchett. The book is an honest and emotionally satisfying exploration of everyday life. Her stories are filled with friendship and love while looking back at her own experiences as a daughter, wife, friend, and writer. These are moving essays that make one look at their own life with fresh eyes.

Carrie
Spare
by Prince Harry



Spare was a fascinating peek into the Royal Family. So many details about Prince Harry's life were interesting to read, particularly about his military service, physically challenging African and North Pole adventures, and his nonprofit work. The Monarchy's conservative viewpoint on mental health and trauma response seems like something from the Victorian era and surprisingly close- minded. Reading this book along with Britney Spears's memoir demonstrates the grueling aspects of life under the glare of paparazzies. If for no other reason, reading *Spare* provides stimulating conversation with any English friends you may have or the vast number of people with intensely strong feelings about Harry and Meghan.

Dulcy
The Last Devil to Die
by Richard Osman

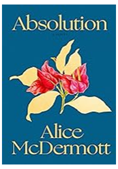


This is Richard Osman's fourth entry into his mystery series named after the first book, The *Thursday Murder Club*, a very good place to start for those who haven't yet had the pleasure. This time around, the group of intelligent, recognizable friends, residents of a retirement home in Kent, England, investigate the murder of a local small business owner. Well-plotted and full of wit and grace, the beating heart of this story is nevertheless the toll taken by aging and loss, particularly that of dementia. Osman, who says he's taking a break from this series to work on another, promises a return. However long that takes, this story and its people with their humor, warmth, and grit, will stay with you.

Dyan
Absolution
by Alice McDermott

Definition: absolution – forgiveness for a sinful act, release from consequences of guilt)

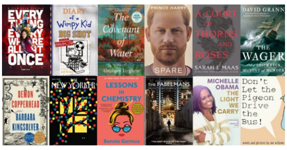
McDermott's book explores the lives of American wives of the engineers and businessmen sent early to Vietnam to prepare for the war and future relationships between the countries. Since the women have Vietnamese servants to cook and clean, they spend their days bathing, getting dressed, napping, shopping, and meeting together for lunches to plan how to help the hospitalized and orphaned Vietnamese children.



To raise money for toys and candy for these children, one wife recognizes that there's an American market among her friends for Vietnamese-styled clothing for Barbie dolls. She employs a skilled Vietnamese seamstress to make these garments, which they sell to buy treats for Vietnamese orphans and young children.

That altruistic impulse, trying to "do good" in a world where women have little agency or power – how effective is it? McDermott shares a perspective of benevolence we don't often consider about those suffering due to America's presence in Vietnam.

Marin County's 2023 Top Ten most requested books, DVDs, etc.



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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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