

## **How does Larkspur Library Choose Books?**

Larkspur Library selects about 5000 books, DVDs and audiobooks for the collection each year. Items are chosen based upon a number of different criteria, first among them being what our community wants. This is not to say that we buy everything that our patrons request, but that we select items based upon what we believe will best serve the community at large.

Upcoming titles are advertised by publishers well in advance of their release, allowing patrons and librarians the opportunity to review upcoming titles. Titles and series by authors that have been consistently popular are automatically purchased and added; this list of popular authors is reviewed annually to make sure that they are still popular, and to add newly popular authors or book series. The most popular subject areas that appeal to Larkspur patrons are fiction, mysteries, politics, economics, cooking, travel, health, self-improvement and gardening/home care. The librarians continuously read reviews for all materials from a variety of sources, from Entertainment Weekly to the New York Times Book Review, and make additional selection choices based upon reviews. Our patrons are also a great source of recommendations for purchases, walking them in daily or submitting requests through the library catalog. Trends in popular culture drive surges in interest areas such as new political figures, economic downturns, new diets, Minecraft, movies inspired by books, spiralizing, or Insta-potting, and purchases in popular subject areas increase during those phases. We also select items of local interest, such as books by local authors, subjects of regional interest (Bay Area hiking, politics, restaurants) and local history.

The quieter side of selection includes the regular analysis of the collection for areas which need development, or reduction. For

example, as our Hispanic population in Larkspur has increased, so has our desire to serve their needs, prompting increased purchasing in the children's collection in Spanish and Bilingual materials, and a newly purchased Spanish adult collection. Purchasing as a whole is balanced between collection areas; the largest percentage of purchasing is done in new adult fiction and nonfiction books, then children's materials, followed by audio and visual materials. Priorities are adjusted throughout the year when demand surges in one area, or falls in another. Collection development is as much about weeding as it is selection of new materials; the library is regularly weeded of items that patrons no longer check out, or are in very poor condition. Classics and core non-fiction (such as "how to write a resume," or the history of Spain) are replaced as worn or updated materials are needed. Very popular items may need to be purchased several times over, to have multiple copies for high demand or to replace worn out copies.

We don't have everything, and we don't try to be everything for everyone. We try to buy items that will fill the general wants and needs of the Larkspur Community, which is a constantly moving target as the demographics of our community change. We are fortunate, however to be able to borrow nearly anything that anybody may want through our MARINet Consortium. This flexibility does impact our buying choices. Because we have close access to the College of Marin and Dominican Library collections through MARINet we don't need to buy as much academic material as we might otherwise. A DVD or book series that is popular in Novato may not have as much appeal to Larkspur patrons, but is still easily borrowed (We may buy the MHZ Mysteries and PBS shows, while Novato will carry more Network TV Series). And because we have access to 10,000,000 items through the Public and Academic libraries that share

LINK+, we can bring a broader range of materials to our patrons within a week.