

Staff

Library Director
Pam Sandlian Smith
psmith@anythinklibraries.org

Communications Manager
Stacie Ledden
sledden@anythinklibraries.org

Editor
Ken Devine
kdevine@anythinklibraries.org

Graphic Designer
Mary Thelen
mthelen@anythinklibraries.org

Spark is what's created when Anythink customers walk into our libraries – it's a spark of creativity, of imagination and interest. Anythinkers offer the fuel.

On the cover: A storage building on the Muegge Farms property. Photo by John Bellina

How to Reach Us
303.288.2001

Questions? Comments?
Email us at iThink@anythinklibraries.org.

Find Your Local Anythink

Anythink Bennett
495 7th Street • Bennett, CO 80102
303.644.3303

Anythink Brighton
327 E. Bridge Street • Brighton, CO 80601
303.405.3230

Anythink Commerce City
7185 Monaco Street • Commerce City, CO 80022
303.287.0063

Anythink Huron Street
9417 Huron Street • Thornton, CO 80260
303.452.7534

Anythink Perl Mack
7611 Hilltop Circle • Denver, CO 80221
303.428.3576

Anythink Washington Street
8992 Washington Street • Thornton, CO 80229
303.287.2514

Anythink Wright Farms
5877 E. 120th Avenue • Thornton, CO 80602
303.405.3200

Outreach/Anythink in Motion
8992 Washington Street • Thornton, CO 80229
303.288.2018

Visit us at Anythinklibraries.org.

A Letter from the Director

"I would ask you to remember only this one thing," said Badger. "The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. If stories come to you, care for them. And learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive. That is why we put these stories in each other's memory. This is how people care for themselves. One day you will be good storytellers. Never forget these obligations."

- Barry Lopez, *The Crow and the Weasel*



I have been carrying this quote around in my head for years, and every once in a while it surfaces to the top of my memory. I dust it off and remind myself of the hundreds and thousands of stories I've heard, some of them funny, some poignant.

We were having lunch last fall with our grandson, who was 3 at the time. One of Owen's favorite games is Remember When. "Remember when I had my birthday party at Nana's? Remember when I lost my car and it fell down my shirt?" And, of course, Owen's favorite pastime, Hop on Pop Pop, which entails body-slamming his grandfather. It's the small moments, the silly stories, and then remembering these stories that hold our family together.

Stories are the emotional connective tissue in all of our lives. Every day

in our libraries, we actively help our children and adults create their own stories.

This week we had our certification visit from Family Place Libraries. Rangeview Library District is the first library in Colorado to implement FPL. This program was started over 25 years ago at the Middle Country Public Library in Centereach, New York. This Long Island library discovered the value of integrating play for preschoolers with parental support from community experts, including nutritionists, child development and speech therapists.

All of our libraries are participating in this program, which supports the families in our communities. One of the basic premises is children need to have a strong support system as their

see page 8

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Anythink Bennett Art Project.....3
 NewBooks: Check 'Em Out5
 Faces of Anythink.....6
 Events Not To Miss.....8

Celebrating the Plains Through Art



Life on the eastern plains will be captured in “This is Who We Are” Anythink’s collaborative art project.

.....

“You have to know how to look at this country. You have to slow down. It isn’t pretty, but it’s beautiful.”

– Kent Haruf, *West of Last Chance*

When it comes to public artwork, no two libraries are the same. Some display drawings created by kids. Others post paintings from local artists. Some even boast collections that rival those of certain art museums.

At Anythink, collaboration with the community is the focus. Rather than commissioning static works from artists who otherwise have no association with Anythink, each branch will feature community-inspired artwork for “This is Who We Are,” the district’s collaborative public art project.

Local artists will work with Anythink customers to create art that will be displayed at each of Anythink’s seven locations in Adams County. All

exhibits will represent the character of the communities in which they’re created and the identities of the people involved. Most importantly, these projects will provide a living, transformative experience that gives customers a unique opportunity to discover their own creativity.

“Collaborative art speaks to who we are at Anythink,” says Anythink Director Pam Sandlian Smith. “We believe that people are inherently creative. They might not think as themselves as being creative, but the library’s role is to bring out and nurture that sense of creativity.”

Leading the way is Anythink Bennett, a library located 30 miles east of Denver that primarily serves the rural communities of Bennett, Strasburg and Watkins. The theme of the project is “Life on the Eastern Plains.” In a July 11 meeting, residents of all ages will learn how they can share their stories about the region and how

their lives have been shaped by it. Colorado mixed-media artist Deidre Adams will be on hand to listen and help people understand how the essence of their narratives and contributions will be distilled in her artwork.

On July 18 participants record their stories as part of the oral history portion of the project. Residents will bring relevant scraps of fabric and photos that are connected with their life experiences to aid in the storytelling process. Adams will then incorporate the spirit of these elements into an eight-square-foot, museum-quality quilt that expresses the identity of Bennett and reflects the personal accounts of its residents.

Adams, an Albuquerque native and longtime Highlands Ranch resident, was selected from a pool of 20 quilt artists.

“She exhibits a real interest in the history of the area,” says Kaye Barnes, children’s guide at Bennett. “She’s eager to get involved with the people here to find out what would be the best reflection of us.”

Adams uses mixed media in her textile work, and possesses an abstract style that evokes the ethos of prairie living, with its simplicity, textures and moods. The quilt that Adams produces promises to be an uplifting, daring work of art that creates an emotional space of meaningful expression for the Bennett community.

Originally, the concept for the Bennett project was a family tree that raised awareness about family roots and interaction. Materials were to consist of magnetic wood shapes, paint and markers. Quilts were

see page 4



Anythink Bennett will house the district's first collaborative public art project.

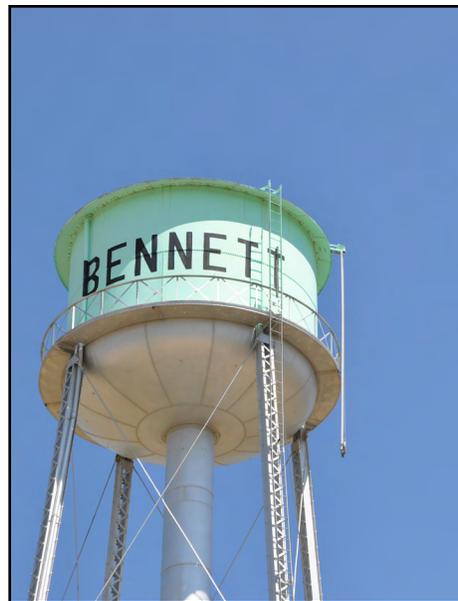
from page 3

nowhere in the plans – the project was targeting a 3-D artist and a local woodworker.

But logistics became more and more complicated, according to Mary Thelen, Anythink's Visual Arts Manager and creative force behind the project. And after continued discussions about what memorabilia customers could bring in, more traditional crafts aligned with the history of the I-70 corridor sprang to mind. Citing a host of sewing circles, knitting groups and quilters in the area, Thelen says they found a better fit for the patchwork-style art form that a quilt could provide, with all its individual stories that communicated a larger message.

"We realized that quilting would be something that people could contribute to better than something that involved carving wood or soldering metal, or something that would be dangerous. And it just had that homey kind of feel to it," says Thelen.

Inspiration for the Bennett project comes from the architecture by Humphries Poli. The design itself was inspired by images and ideas found in *West of Last Chance*, a photobook



The quilt will capture all aspects of life on the plains.

that describes the spare and unique beauty of the prairie setting, and evokes the character of the people who are molded by it.

Still. Quiet. Open. Refreshing. All

words that people use to describe Bennett, a 3.1-square-mile town with stop signs but no stoplight. Words that also resonate with Adams and her vision for the project.

If the helpfulness of the community is any indication of the participation for the art project, all signs are positive.

"Everybody helps everybody," says Kathy Hurley, concierge at Anythink Bennett. "You can call a friend and say 'Hey, I broke a part on my tractor,' and you'll have people over there helping you fix it. And then you'll go and do the same thing for them."

Anythink Bennett Manager Frances Swallows seconds the notion, believing that the community endeavor will draw in quite a few people and make the library an even more central place to visit.

Adds Thelen, "I think they're going to be really happy with it. One of the things I hope we're able to convey to them is that, even where their contributions are intangible in a way, their story – all of that spiritual content and emotion – will be woven into the quilt as the artist works on it."

"There's almost kind of a mystical feeling, like it's full of secrets," she continues. "The story might not be spoken aloud, but you know it's in there. Every time they look at the piece, it'll have more dimension for them."

"This is Who We Are" was made possible by the proceeds from the Rangeview Library Friends Foundation's 2010 fundraising event, Spar-kopolis. Because Anythink operates independently from Adams County, it's not eligible to receive taxpayer

see page 5

funding for public art via the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District, as most Denver libraries do. But Anythink was no less determined to ensure that public art makes its way into its facilities.



All ages are welcome to share their stories about the community.

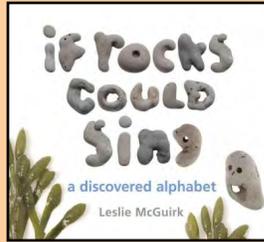
“It’s important to see art as part of everyday life – not as an ivory-tower kind of thing that only special people or rich people get to have,” says Thelen. “They need to know that there are endeavors of the mind and heart that are worth pursuing. I think they need it for the growth of their soul.”

Interested in participating in Anythink Bennett’s collaborative public art project? Join us on Monday, July 11, from 6-7:30 pm in the Anythink Bennett community room. Call 303-644-3303 for more information.

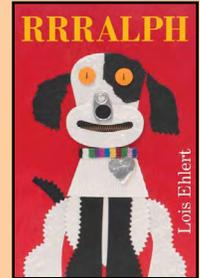
New Books: Check 'Em Out

We’ve got great new titles for children and adults as the summer heats up in July.

CHILDREN



**If Rocks Could Sing:
A Discovered Alphabet**
by Leslie McGuirk

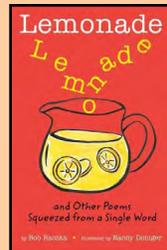
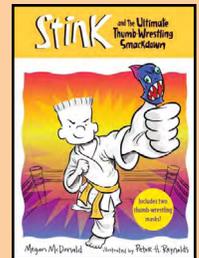


Rrralph
by Lois Ehlert

**Judy Moody and
the Not Bummer
Summer**
by Megan
McDonald

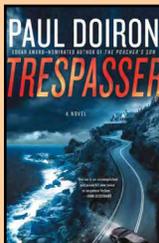


**Stink and the
Ultimate
Thumb-Wrestling
Smackdown**
by Megan
McDonald



**Lemonade
and Other Poems
Squeezed from
a Single Word**
by Bob Raczka

ADULTS



Trespasser
by Paul Doiron

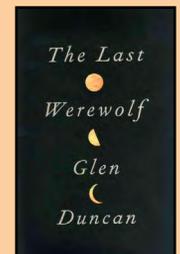


**Original Sin:
A Sally Sin
Adventure**
by Beth McMullen

Turn of Mind
by Alice LaPlante



**The Last
Werewolf**
by Glen Duncan



**Once Upon a
River**
by Bonnie Jo
Campbell

mySummer runs from June 4-July 31, 2011, and Anythink Brighton has fabulous programs for all ages. Visit anythinklibraries.org for details.



Mixed-media artist Deidre Adams in her home studio. Photo by Joe Adams.

For the Love of Grain Elevators

.....

For mixed-media artist Deidre Adams, true beauty is in ugly things. At least, that's how most people would see a decaying street sign, dilapidated barn or graffiti-laced railroad car.

But Adams is drawn to the transformation of places and objects that have felt the effects of time – particularly, abandoned buildings and virtual ghost towns. To Adams, an old brick warehouse with a faded advertisement on its walls is a structure that the elements have sculpted over a very long time.

“I like places that have crumbling things,” she admits. “I see it as art that was created between nature and man in concert.”

It's this unique historical perspective that helped push Adams to the top of Anythink's list as the quilt artist for Bennett's collaborative art project, whose theme is “Life on the eastern plains.” Her open-endedness combined with a certain passion also worked in her favor.

“She didn't have a preconceived idea of how the quilt was going to look,” says Pam Sandlian Smith, Anythink's director. “Her process relies on gathering stories from the community and translating their heart and soul to the quilt, which I think is really powerful.”

For Mary Thelen, Anythink's visual arts manager, their leading candidate was confirmed in a special way.

“Deidre told us that she loves grain elevators,” she recalls with a chuckle. “I don't think that's the usual response to grain elevators, but I think it's pretty cool that she has a personal connection with them.”

When Adams, a Highlands Ranch resident since 1994, confirms that she's crazy for the “concrete cathedrals,” she traces her penchant to two other loves: road trips and photography.

Adams had a standard suburban upbringing in Albuquerque, New Mexico, but always had an inclination

for exploration. As a kid, she spent a lot of time out on the mesa and biking around. As an adult, she's gone everywhere from Kansas City to Cleveland to South Dakota, often in pursuit of random roadside attractions like Cadillac Ranch or the Big Texan. The urban explorationist in her and her husband Joe have taken them to Cisco, Utah, multiple times, a ghost town with nothing to show but abandoned vehicles



Artist Deidre Adams is inspired by the rustic textures of old grain elevators.

and ramshackle dwellings. But for the photographer in Adams, there's always something to observe and capture on film.

“I like watching the chronology of things happening,” she says. “There used to be this trailer in Cisco with a fantastic peeled-paint surface, but last time I came though, it had collapsed. I didn't even recognize it.”

It's Adams' roaming spirit that brought her to Colorado in the first place. Looking to move away from Albuquerque after high school, she followed her best friend out to Denver, where she went on to do various office jobs until she got a degree in computer informa-

see page 7

from page 6

tion systems & management science from Metropolitan State College in 1990. Last year, she added a BFA from Metro State.

Although Adams has always regarded herself as an artist at heart, she didn't consider art as a career until she got a Macintosh SE in the early '90s, which piqued her interest in graphic design and led to an associate's degree in the field from Arapahoe Community College.

When her son Max was born in 1992, she was introduced to the world of quilting. First she made baby quilts, then quilts from patterns. Eventually she grew tired of copying the work of others. One day in 2004 when she was ready to trash a quilt she was unhappy with, a spurt of inspiration led her to suddenly paint over it.



Horizon VIII

And with that, her style of mixed media was born.

"Most people are really, really surprised to learn that I put the paint on after I quilt," she says, "because that just isn't done."

Adams starts on a new quilt by piecing together various shapes and patterns, some planned, some not. Once she's stitched it together by machine, she focuses on layers – a word she uses often when speaking about everything she sees. Because the fabric isn't a typi-

cal canvas prepped for paint, she has to use many more layers of paint than is customary. It's a process she terms "reverse archaeology," where layers are continually added and "destroyed" until she has a richly textured surface she's happy with, and a fully realized piece that's informed by her subconscious.



Horizon V

"Her artwork is stunning," says Sandlian Smith. "One of the samples she brought to the interview was so beautiful that I was ready to buy it and put it in my house."

Adams' work, which is both vibrant and reminiscent, has been shown in numerous juried exhibitions and galleries, and is included in several corporate and private collections. She also has pieces at Lone Tree Library and Louisville Free Public Library.

The Bennett art project seems to be a perfect fit for her, since her inspiration comes from observations of landscapes, mostly in the Southwest. Playing into the environmental theme is Adams' tendency to use horizon lines ("very much a part of my DNA"). And as an admirer of the humanity behind handwriting, she'd also like to incorporate fragments from original letters that detail aspects of plains living.

Adams expects to finish the quilt in a few months after she starts. Beyond that, she's unable to offer many details about the finished product, which is the status quo for her.

"When I sit down, I don't know what the end result is going to look like," she says. "I work intuitively. It's a process of conversation with the piece as I go."

Adams cites her prime influences from abstract expressionist artists like Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns and Robert Ryman. Some have even compared her work to Jackson Pollock, an influential American painter and a major figure in the abstract expressionist movement. Adams is also an active painter with around 60 paintings to her name.

With an impressive body of work, Adams is now considering a shift in what she wants to communicate. She talks about how there are two basic kinds of art: the kind that everyone can enjoy, and the kind meant to spark a reaction. Although her work falls in the former, she says "I want to be a part of improving the world instead of just taking up space."



Horizon IV

To see more of Deidre's art, please visit www.deidreadams.com.

Interested in participating in Anythink Bennett's collaborative public art project? Join us on Monday, July 11, from 6-7:30 pm in the Anythink Bennett community room.

Events Not to Miss



Sharing Stories

Saturday, July 9, 2-4 pm

An intergenerational program, teens and kids partner with older adults to interview and record their stories. Participants work together to create their very own movie to take home and share with family and friends. Bring your own interview subject or be paired with a new friend. Space is limited; registration required.

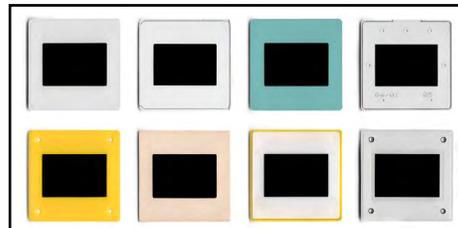
Anythink Wright Farms
5877 E. 120th Avenue
Thornton, CO 80602
303-405-3200

Butterfly Gardening

Monday, July 11, 1 pm

Learn about our local butterflies and discover the step-by-step process for creating your own butterfly garden. Presented by the Butterfly Pavilion. Appropriate for adults.

Anythink Commerce City
7185 Monaco Street
Commerce City, CO 80022
303-287-0063



Creative Writing Gone Retro

Wednesday, July 20, 6-7:30 pm

Have fun with other folks exploring photos with an old throwback – the slide machine – and be inspired through creative writing. Participants will share a slice of their personal history in the form of old slides. The group will then write short creative pieces about the photos displayed. Bring your favorite old slides and your imagination for this fun, stimulating program. Appropriate for adults.

Anythink Perl Mack
7611 Hilltop Circle
Denver, CO 80221
303-428-3576

For a complete listing of Anythink events, visit anythinklibraries.org.

from page 2

young brains develop. They need language development, which is as simple as talking with your babies as you feed them, dress them, play with them. Of course, reading wonderful age-appropriate books from an early age is an essential ingredient in language development and pre-literacy skills.

Children's work is to explore their world through play. Playing with water, sand, rice, pots and pans, blocks and boxes are all simple but essential

ways that children learn about their world. These simple steps are easy to take for granted, but they are important elements in helping our children be healthy and happy.

Watching the children explore our libraries is always fascinating. From moving the chairs and tables to constructing LEGO towers, our children find the library to be a welcoming environment that provides a constant adventure and sense of discovery. Our children's guides have

developed programs that range from robot races to creating an orchestra to exploring the outdoors to making bread. Check out mySummer: READ THINK DO. It's an intergenerational program, so everyone gets to play this summer.

The experiences people have in the library and the stories associated with them bind the community with the library in a heartfelt way. That is just one reason why people say, "I love this library."

- Pam Sandlian Smith



When you're done reading SPARK, share with a friend, give back to your librarian, or recycle.