

MY LIBRARY STORY

2014

written by supporters
of the Poudre River
Public Library District



POUDRE RIVER
PUBLIC LIBRARY
DISTRICT

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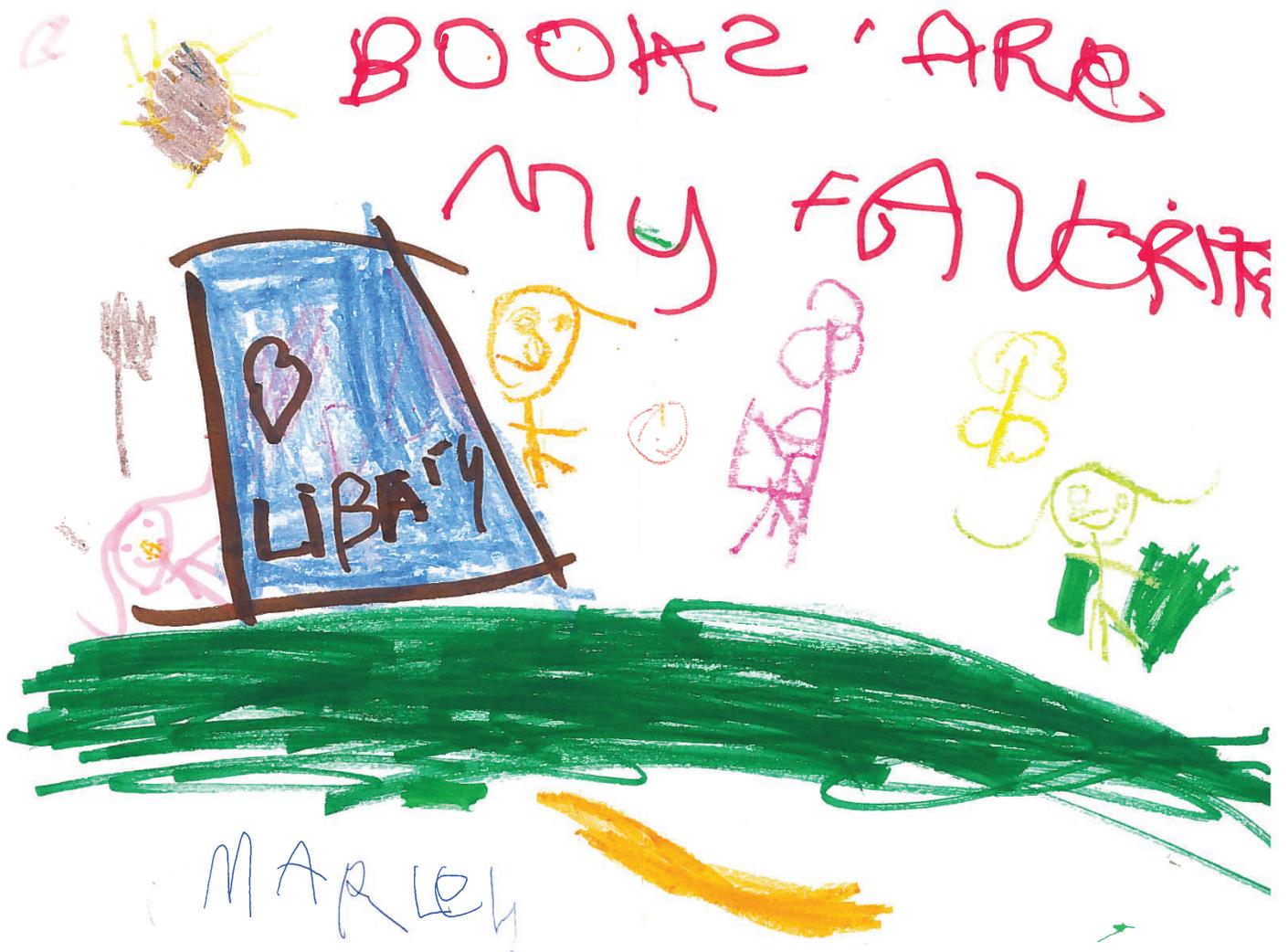
**POUDRE RIVER
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AGES 5 AND UNDER



POUDRE RIVER
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MARLEY GEBHARDT



AGES 6 - 12



POUDRE RIVER
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FIRST PLACE: RITA FEDEWA

The Wonderful Library

Once you see a silver door, walk quite close and open the door. Right in front you will see three big trails flying like a flea. Listen carefully, this is what you will say, “Hickory, Dickory, bop, bop, bob.” If you follow these directions, you will find a beautiful sight. A sight where there are no humans, only books. You will think it is just a dream and smack yourself, or blink a million times, but once you are through the door you are stuck forever, unless you find the golden mushroom. The golden mushroom is hidden in the sand of a red river that is only 10 feet deep and 1 foot wide. Go 10 feet under the water in all your clothes. This will keep the poisonous octopus away that guards the library where the golden mushroom awaits. When you are in the library, in a room full of books organized by the first letter of the author’s last name, choose a book. Open the book up and you will find a piece of paper that you will write on. You will write three reasons why you like to read. If you do not like to read, then read the book that you found the paper in and write about what you read. Then place the paper back in the book. Put your book back in its place and a door will open. When you are in the secret room you will see a hidden red lever hidden in the red wall. When you pull the lever a poster will appear. The poster should say, “you will see a paper on the ground and on that paper you will write at least two reasons why you like the library even if you don’t like it.” Here are my ideas why I like to read at the library:

1. You can look into your imagination and wonder.
2. Sometimes when you read it can make you laugh.
3. I love to read because I can learn about my favorite animals.

After you write at least two reasons on the paper, place the paper on top of the poster and an invisible door will open. In that door you will find a great big room full of papers. You will pick up the closest paper and read it. If you think it has good reasons why that person who wrote it likes to read by themselves or why they like to read with other people, put a check, but if you do not think they have good reasons put an x on the paper. Then drop the paper on the ground. Next a window will appear. Climb through the window and you will land on a soft bed. Climb out of the bed and you will see a shiny mushroom. You have found the golden mushroom! Pick up the mushroom and you will find yourself right back at the same door you started at. The next day when you go to school you will be a great writer and a great reader because of the wonderful library. Hope you enjoy being smart!

SECOND PLACE: AUBREY PETERSEN

Marvelous Library

I love the library because it is peaceful and fun.

There are so many different kinds of books in the library. If you need a book for school, to read at home, or for education the library is the place to go.

The library has many books by my favorite authors such as: Artsy Fartsy by Karla Oceanak, Where the Mountain Meets the Moon by Grace Lin, Daisy Meadows who wrote the Fairy Magic series, and Dragon Kiss by E.D. Baker. I would recommend these books if you have not read them.

Each time I visit the library my first stop is the Lucky Day section. Sometimes luck is on my side and I find an excellent book there.

In the summer my family goes biking to the library. After we get books we make a stop for a frozen yogurt treat. We have made great memories going to the library.

When I am at home I love to download books to my I-touch. In the summer I was even able to download books while we were in Europe! Super Cool! It was fun to read on my small device while we were traveling.

I love to go to the library. There are books, movies, and much more. Without the library there would be so many books I never would have been able to read. There is no place like the library.

AGES 13 - 18



POUDRE RIVER
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FIRST PLACE: CASSIE FAZIO

My Library Story

I pushed into the doors of the library and took a moment to inhale the familiar scent of books and rows upon rows of knowledge. The quiet atmosphere and almost inaudible hum of people moseying around is what brought me back again and again. This is where I could relax and delve into a different world; different from the one I trudged through every day. I had had a difficult day at school, the teachers had been extraordinarily cantankerous and had loaded us with homework. We had been given an essay to write. The topic was to choose a poem and write a meaning on it. Being an avid reader of mostly fiction, I grumbled with the rest of my class about this looming task. Ergo, I would use as much time as I could get away with by cornering myself away in my comfy chair at the end of the library, nose in a Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It was so much easier to read about Holmes' latest adventures than live mine. On my way to the back of the library I stumbled (literally) on a book lying in the path. Mumbling something, I'm sure, to the effect of how people should be less careless I happened to look at the title. It was a collection of poems. It was a collection of Robert Frost poems. Eyeing the poems bit of the title at the bottom, I stuck the book under my arm and continued to my usual chair. After I had gotten settled, I leafed through the Frost book. There was a dog-eared page that I stopped upon, and looking at the title "The Road Not Taken," I decided it might be worth a read. I had heard it was a famous poem anyways. It seems like "The Road Not Taken" is common school poetry for teachers. I read the poem. Not getting some of it, I looked an explanation up and read it a second time. This poem was good! I read it a third time before I had a light bulb moment: this poem would be perfect to do my report on! Not only was it interesting and had great and carefully written wording, but it also brought up something that I would remember even to this day. The poem shows a choice the narrator has. He can go one of two paths. I can go one of two paths. I can choose to either hide myself away with my love of books or I can choose to put my knowledge of descriptive sentences and interesting word choice to use and start writing. I definitely wouldn't have to give up on my love of books, but I could instead start towards a future of helping other love books. Maybe someday even my books. By stumbling on literature that day in my library, I got some serious realization of carpe diem and sparked the match that would light my love of writing to this day.

SECOND PLACE: DENNIS SHI

READ

READ. Almost everyone knows what these signs are. These signs were commonplace in all public libraries and served as an encouragement for everyone to read. Yet recently, these signs have slowly disappeared because libraries are not receiving sufficient funding and some are forced to cut back on their operations. While these paper signs were mainly used for decoration, they are symbolic of the things that some libraries have been forced to cut. This budget cutback for public libraries is a personal as well as a national issue that greatly concerns me.

For me, the library is not just a quiet place filled with books, it is an area vibrant with experience and recollection. From the start of my childhood, the library has been of great importance to me and this passion has not waned as I grew older. Ever since I was young, the house I lived in was within walking distance from the Harmony Library in Fort Collins and almost every Saturday I would walk to the library. Due to the close proximity of the library, I became connected to the library. As I grew up, the library provided me with various educational opportunities. Up until last summer, I participated in the library's summer reading program. This reading program encouraged students of all ages to read fiction, nonfiction, comics, and in return the library gave small prizes for reading certain hours. The diverse materials that I read allowed me to learn many interesting, some trivial, things. Trivial or not, the library provided me with access to all kinds of informative materials and I greatly enjoyed reading for leisure to gain more knowledge. My favorite place to read was the beanbags in the teen section that were perfectly placed under a window. Not only did the library help me further my learning and education, it also provided me with a lot of social opportunities. The public library that I constantly went to had board games of all sorts in addition to books. When I was in middle school, my friends and I would frequently walk to the library and play these board games. For us, this was a kind of social event and we always looked forward to going to the library.

I describe in detail the importance of the local public library on my life to show why this issue of budget cutback has a large meaning and impact for me. It saddens me to realize that some children or teenagers will never have the opportunity that I had of experiencing the many facets of the public library. I am concerned in this issue personally because of my connection with the library; I would never wish to see that the public library in Fort Collins would have to significantly scale back operations. The library is a place of quiet and relaxing atmosphere with a myriad of resources that everyone can take advantage of. A loss of such a place would be a great shame.

ANONYMOUS

All Purpose Reader

In J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Ron Weasley says "when in doubt, go to the library;" the quintessential statement embodying what libraries mean to me. No matter what I need, libraries always have what I am looking for. Whether it is information for a history project or a classic for English class, libraries have it all when it comes to school. There is such a wealth of information on one shelf alone that I never have to worry about meeting the sources-consulted requirement for a research paper because I surpass it in my first visit. I could sit at a table for hours, pouring over only their encyclopedias, and still have a week's worth of books to read! Apart from the academic portion, a great deal of creativity is also contained in a library. There are hundreds of books continuously waiting to be read; thousands of new and potent ideas to stimulate my imagination, broadening my mind to horizons I have never considered before. Libraries are a place of solace, too. I can escape the stress and activity of everyday life in a quiet corner, transporting myself at whim into an entirely new world: a figment of an author's dreams caught and preserved within the pages of a book. Flitting between shelves of history and science fiction, fantasies and adventures, I can disappear for hours at a time. In brief, libraries have been an influential institution to me: a versatile establishment offering anything from research and knowledge to stress-relief to creative inspiration. They are the perfect "go-to" place where I can spend my time.

MADY CARROLL

Mental Manipulation

A Wall of Glass

A wall of glass separates us. All I can see is my own reflection. Thus, my own interpretation. Of the person I perceive you to be, my vision has become foggy. Tricks, your greatness makes me fly, I ignore your beautiful lies. “You want me, you need me, you adore me. So unreachable, you are untouchable”. Who are you to me? The person I need you to be? You hurt me, you destroyed me, and you abused me. Like an addiction, I can’t keep you from me. I want you near me. Back to where we used to be. I had you once before and you were a whore. So why now are you the one I adore? A stone cold stare says it all, as I race to the bathroom stall. My stomach falls out, and yet again you are what I’m thinking about. If only I was smaller you wouldn’t have called her. Maybe, once I’m thinner, I can be the lucky winner. The addiction begins again. A relapse I can’t unclasp. Here we go again. Let the rain begin.

Hollow

Ana holds on tight, her grip suffocating. My breathing stops. Then starts again. I peer down to the feast placed before me, aware of both of the shallow, hollow, bellowing cries sounding from my desperate stomach, and the lump of nausea that has developed in the back of my throat. I choke it down. I choke down the empty acid that burns my esophagus and push away the much needed nourishment. Fatigue, light headedness, and bitter chills overwhelm my body causing my vision to darken, and my body to jitter. Blackness. I smile.

I lay in my soft bed. This is my sanctuary. Wrapped in a comforting, safe cocoon of blankets attempting desperately to raise my body temperature. A thought. No. A fantasy, enters my mind. What would it be like if my body, my bare skeletal structure made of merely flesh and bones melted in to the mattress? My body begins fusing with the fibers, the springs, the stitching allowing myself to disappear into nothingness. Slowly, silently, slithering, sounds, that no one is around to hear. My hand grazes my naked concave belly. My fingertips memorize everything they glide across. Pressing on the protruding ribs, hips. Bones. I smile. The thought of my now beautiful body, slim, sultry, sick, and fall into a dreamless sleep. I’m left with no one. Nothing but comforting emptiness surrounds me, and resides in side me. I smile.

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The Event

I sit at the table. A pink lemonade plastic cloth conceals the unsightly stale gray table that shamefully hides away. I, like the bland tables, want to conceal myself, cover my face with a sheet and stand in the corner. An invisible ghost who watches as time goes by, observing and taking in everything I see. I don't belong here. An outcast of failure among the intellectuals who will one day own their own businesses and live a life of forbidden luxury. The prude, poised, perfect girls create parallel lines that lead to a string of food. Nutrients. Deceptive platters of tiny bread covered in a maroon sauce, better known as spaghetti, waits for me to pile it onto my plate. I hesitate, a heap on the serving spoon hovers over my empty saucer. If I don't take the flavorless meal people will know. The food drops on my plate like garbage being moved by a dump truck. The lump starts forming and I feel myself choke it down, and quickly walk past the strawberry pink cake that reads "Girls Night!". My eyes roll at the swirly script and I walk back to my table where one of the "glorified speakers" waits to offer us life changing advice. My life will change. Almost by chance, I sit a table with a Life Coach who specializes in eating disorders, and the human psychological relationship with food consumption. Of all the tables I could have sat at I choose this one. I stop cutting up my food into teeny, tiny, toddler bites, when I catch her stare at my plate. Silently, I listen. Her smooth voice makes an impact. This is not chance. We make eye contact. She knows. My life will change. I speak with her privately and tell her my secret she already knows. She gives me her card. My life will change.

NATALIE FREEMAN

Silence

Silence. It wasn't a bad silence that greeted my ears like you would find if you made someone mad and they were trying to desperately trying to hold it in. It was more like a silence that gives your ears a respite from the rest of the deafening world. It was a sanctuary, where I could actually think without cars honking, people talking on their phones, dogs barking, and a myriad of other noises that separate me from silent bliss.

The noise level or lack thereof, wasn't the only reason I loved this place, it also had my favorite things in it: books. So many books filled shelf after shelf, some new, some old, some long, some short, and some even covered with smears of jelly and other unidentifiable substances put there by toddlers who only understand the pictures in them. I would love to go into this place often, despite the complaints of my younger brother. I would go up and down the aisles, running my hands over the bindings of the books, covered with colorful pictures and interesting titles. Once in a while, a picture or title would stand out to me. I would gently pull it off the shelf, barely making a sound as I did so, and read the back. Most of the time, the story wouldn't be as interesting as the title made it out to be, and I would put it back on the shelf, disappointed. If I loved the storyline or concept, I would open up the book, feel the pages and even see if the book smelled new or old.

New books have a crisp, clean smell, like biting into the skin of a freshly picked apple. Its pages were stiff, smooth, and white. Older books, however, had more worn, malleable pages, yellowed with age, and it smelled so sickly sweet that it would make me slightly light-headed. After these observations were taken into account, I would begin to read the prologue or first chapter. After a short amount of time, the book would not usually hold my attention, and I would put it back reluctantly. After a while of looking, feeling, and smelling, I would find it. A book that entranced me, much like when I look at something I shouldn't stare at, but I can't take my eyes off it because it's so alien and different.

I would sit on the floor, cross-legged, and the story would envelope me until my mother poked and prodded me to get up. I hurriedly went to check out, trying to read as I walked, bumping into various things and people, who I muttered a quick "sorry" to. I pulled my card out and scanned the book, throwing the receipt away as I walked out, my hand lingered on the door handle as I looked back wistfully, wanting nothing more than to spend the rest of the day, or week in there, but then the door closed, and I walked away from the library.

AGES 19 - 60



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FIRST PLACE: AMANDA ROSE ADAMS

My Library Story

The first library I loved was nothing more than a narrow room separated by a large shelf in my tiny Lutheran School. With room only for an 8 foot table and six folding chairs, the books began on the left-most shelf with Curious George, jumped to beloved junior biographies and Bible stories, and wrapped their way around to Nancy Drew and more robust biographies like that of Florence Nightingale. The collection slid into classics by Mark Twain and Daniel Dafoe. At the far end of the small collection, ordered not by Dewey's decimals, but by their appropriateness for readers' ages 5 to 14, was Bullfinches' mythology, which I devoured in the eighth grade with an intensity I'd never felt for a book before.

In high school I attended the Laboratory school on the campus of the University of Northern Colorado with full access to the Michener stacks as well as our cozy school library. Our new home was also just blocks from the Weld County public library.

When my home life began to crumble into violence, estrangement, and the felony crime and incarceration of a family member, I cleaved to the library. Rather than go home after school to anger and tension, I hid in the stacks paging through bound copies of women's magazines from the days when my grandmothers were little girls. I felt so blessed to touch and smell the pages of publications my great-grandmothers consulted for recipes that became family legend, and hoped for calmer days ahead.

In college, libraries were familiar friends, places where I knew my way around with such comfort and ease that research papers were a delight that kept me on the hunt for refined and inspired resources. I completed a work-study job at Michener Library during my undergraduate years, preparing acquisitions for shelving. One day, the service elevator stalled, and I spent ninety minutes waiting for the repairman to release me. Yet, I never felt alone or scared accompanied, as I was, by a truck full of brand new books with un-cracked spines inviting me to read.

A library is the springboard for upward mobility in our culture and in my own life. Now, as a mother, my children have spent as much time in libraries in their earliest years than as I did in my entire childhood. In our home books are respected, librarians revered, and the institution is a sacred covenant of community. Libraries inspire and sustain intelligent growth and imagination. The library is at once a refuge and a Launchpad.

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One of my happiest library memories is walking by the biography shelf I ransacked for two years while writing my own book, and seeing my published book labeled and shelved. Spine bent, pages dog-eared, cover crimped – all signs of a true library book. When I see my book in the library it's a symbolic realization of my greatest childhood dream to live in the library. With my own story on the shelves, I never have to leave the place I love.

SECOND PLACE: VICKI SISKA

What Libraries Mean to Me

When the “My Library Story” contest email arrives in my inbox, a Colorado January snow is falling and my driveway is covered in a good six inches of white fluff.

This peaceful winter scene is a far cry from my younger years in San Diego. There, each week under a hot summer sun my friend Gayle and I would make the two and a half mile round trip walk to our local branch library and load up on as many Enid Blyton and Nancy Drew mysteries as we could carry, always eager to get back home so that we could delve into the adventurous antics of other children.

Our own lives were challenging and we needed this escape. Gayle’s father, a Navy sailor, was frequently out to sea, and her flirtatious mother didn’t hesitate to spend her nights with other men. My house wasn’t much better, what with a dad who was abusive and a mom who spent long hours at a low-paying warehouse job.

Immersed in our library books, Gayle and I could inhabit a kinder, more honest world. Propping ourselves up with pillows and lying on the couch, through the act of reading we saw ourselves as clever and competent young girls. And when the imaginations unleashed by our books-on-loan followed us into our real lives, they helped us cope and taught us to dream.

I don’t read mysteries anymore. These days, my tastes mostly find a home in thick books on politics or religion. Still, I haven’t outgrown the urge to lose myself in an alternative world, which accounts for the numerous trips I make to the library to pick up the latest biographies and memoirs and books on travel that are stacked by my bed.

When I moved to Fort Collins twenty-two years ago, the town’s library served another valued purpose by making art prints available for check-out. Van Gogh and Monet and Matisse adorned our shabby apartment walls, and my children gained an early education on the beauty that can live on canvass.

Later, when storage became a pressing issue and the library could no longer offer this service, my family turned its attention to the wealth of CDs and VHS tapes (which later morphed into DVDs) that Fort Collins library shelves provided. Our Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons became

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filled with British comedies and Walt Disney flicks, documentaries and dramas, and my husband and I laughed and cried with our children, creating a family much healthier than the one I knew growing-up.

It's hard to fully capture how impoverished I would have been, and still would be, without libraries. Like snow that turns to water and nourishes gardens and trees, it's clear these public institutions have a powerful role to fill. And I should know. Because years ago a pig-tailed little girl was fortunate enough to discover at her free public library the touch and the smell and the sheer pleasure of books, and those books helped her find a life worth living.

CANDACE MARTIN-O'CONNOR

Fairies Converge

Reading, books and libraries have always been a part of my life, but when did that begin? How did my relationship with reading and subsequently libraries become solidified? I believe that most every human child loves picture books and snuggling with someone who will read it to them. We are social creatures. There is a moment, however, in the lives of most children when they make a decision to carry on alone. It is a critical moment. It is the moment in which they make a decision to engage independently with words in the absence of a human companion. Indeed the words themselves become the companion. It's a big deal. For those children who choose not to engage because it is difficult, because the t.v. is more engaging, because they do not have access to books that speak to them...they are excluded from a breadth and depth of the universe that only reading can provide.

Enter Candace and Lily Dale. That's me and my daughter. We read every night without fail. I always said that I had a kid so I could read children's books with them, so I was delighted that she was enthusiastic. Kindergarten came and went and Lily had all the decoding skills she needed to be an independent reader, but she still wanted to read all her books with me. No worries! That's why I had a kid, right?

The summer after Kindergarten began and we signed Lily up for the summer reading program at the library. We filled out her form together and turned it in. "We are going to read chapter books this summer!" Lily told the librarian. This was momentous news shared by a five-year old and the librarian responded with just the right balance of delight, surprise and seriousness. "Would you like some help in picking out a couple to start?" asked the librarian. Behind Lily Dale, I was nodding vigorously as I looked at the aisles and aisles of books. Off they went chatting about this and that as the nice librarian pulled books off the shelf for Lily's inspection.

In less than ten minutes they found it. The Rainbow Fairy series. This was Lily's moment. The moment when she was so interested in the contents of a book that she was determined to do the work of reading it herself. She read all the Rainbow Fairy books that summer along with the Holiday Fairy books, the Pet Fairy books, the Sports Fairy books: more than forty chapter books in all. She read every single fairy book contained in that library.

Fairies consumed our lives. My husband and I began to brainstorm fairy books for grownups: Melissa, the Margarita Fairy for example. Lily began to argue that fairies must be real because there was a Guide to Fairies in the non-fiction section of the library. Lily's moment was brought to us by one talented librarian and a building full of books. Thank you library fairy!

REBECCA KURI

Libraries Change Lives

To say that my local library changed my life for good is no understatement. I was spending days in bed with little to no energy for life. I was cycling through one sinus infection after another and battling headaches daily. Depression was looming but my curiosity for what could be ailing me was stronger. I had been seeing local doctors and getting no relief or answers. I was feeling helpless and frustrated and after several days, a memory from long ago came to the forefront of my thinking. The memory, when released, produced the name of a book that was suggested to me in the mid 80's by a random meeting with a woman I was to never see again; *The Yeast Syndrome*. Wanting information quickly, I logged into the library's website and started reserving books. I poured over information for several days and felt fairly certain that systemic yeast was in fact the force I was facing. Wondering where I would find support, I went back to the library and checked out a book, *Yeast Success Stories*. It was within that book that I found the name of a doctor in Denver who held the keys to drastic change in my life.

My new doctor, a woman in her early 50's, who reaches a mere five feet tall, Korean born and practicing in Obstetrics and Gynecology attended to me that day and concluded without a doubt that I had systemic yeast. Unlike most doctors, this doctor had nutritionists on staff who use biofeedback to help diagnose and generate recovery programs. Through this office and over many months I made major changes in my life and all with the assistance of the library. I did blood work and genetic testing that expressed a gluten sensitivity, having turned to my library for a book on diets designed to help kill off candida I was back again for more information on gluten free eating. When my allergy tests came back with multiple food sensitivities I was then told I have leaky gut and had to start a new program of avoidance and restriction. By this time the candida was under control but my mind was still reeling over all the foods I had to avoid. Back to the library and a few books later, I was making more changes. This time it was Natalia Rose's book *The Raw Detox Diet* that became my coach and companion. I went raw for an entire summer and lost 25 pounds, regained lost energy and was back to celebrating life.

Long ago, before having health issues, I was a huge believer in western medicine and taking pills for ailments. Years later, my family is gluten, dairy, and soy free. We purchase organic almost exclusively, we filter our water, we meditate, we explore. I still see my nutritionist and if there is one thing this experience and my library offers up is; there is so much more out there that we are able to embrace if we can remain open in our hearts and minds.

SUSAN WIEDERHOLD

Growing Up

When I was growing up, my family moved frequently. Usually around 12-24 months, if not more often. Not military, corporate gypsies.

When we moved to a new town, the first thing we did after unpacking basics & stocking the kitchen, was to get mom a new driver's license. Armed with a new license, we could find the library and get cards. It was always exciting to go to a new library...and comforting. The familiar smells and books, mixed with new sights and sounds of a different library.

The one thing that never changed were the books. Old friends, familiar friends. They were willing to introduce me to new friends, new authors, new places to 'visit' and new things to learn. All these things were wrapped in the familiar, comforting presence of the librarians.

I remember one in particular. We had moved to the outskirts of Atlanta, in Decatur, GA. We made a weekly visit to the library and the librarian noticed that I was checking out stacks of books and I was getting them all read. She introduced me to the next 'level'. There weren't really any 'young adult' books out, so she set about finding me authors that were age appropriate, but somewhat of a challenge...she introduced me to Phyllis Whitney, Madeline L'Engle and others....and I read L'Engle's books every few years even now.

Even when I was the 'new kid' almost every year in school, I still had my friends at the library.

AGES 61+



POUDRE RIVER
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FIRST PLACE: HAROLD L. SMITH

Love Blossoms in the Library

“Will you marry me?” Reference librarians are trained to handle off-the-wall questions, but who would be prepared to answer this at 9 am on a Tuesday morning?

His questions seemed innocent at first. “Could you help me find the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*?” They evolved into mildly challenging ones: “Could you show me how to use the Social Science Citation Index?” But when he began to pop into her office (she was also the Acquisitions Librarian) to ask if the library could order a copy of *Love in a Cold Climate* by Nancy Mitford, the first flicker of suspicion emerged: “Why does he need something so far out of his field?” Which immediately set off internal alarm bells: “Are his interests purely academic?” But she firmly suppressed such thoughts as reality regained control of her reflections: “Who has ever heard of the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* opening the door to love?”

Nevertheless, he kept returning to her office. She tried being polite and made every effort to ensure that their encounters were on a professional level. He, however, was undeterred. “May I have your permission to compliment you?” he asked. Startled, she cautiously conceded: “Well, I suppose so.” No man had ever asked her permission to compliment her and she was vaguely aware that she was starting down the slippery slope. “I am extremely impressed with the way you handle questions from patrons” he replied in his most sincere voice, but with a trace of a smile as he guided her down the initial steps in the slippery slope. The slope ended at the altar followed by two decades of marriage notable both for the intensity of the relationship and for the absence of further inquiries about the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. His questions answered, he was a happy patron who will always remember that libraries can be more than sources of information!

SECOND PLACE: STAN WOLF

Memories of Mom

Memories of my Mom often include books. A favorite photo shows her seated in the glorious brass-studded heavy leather arm chair bought just for reading, shelved books massed border-to-border in the background. More than once, when we moved into a new home, I remember my Dad being enlisted to construct a wall of bookshelves to contain her collection.

But books owned were not sufficient to satisfy her curiosity about the world and ideas, and my siblings and I were off to the library with her from an early age. This made sense from my youthful perspective, as the library and Bookmobile offered more age-appropriate books meaningful to me in ways I still recall with wonder. They influenced my choice of several careers in later years, where I chose to live, my emotional and social development, political awareness, and artistic sensibilities in ways that are still evolving as I arrive at the beginning of my seventh decade.

Those early family library exploits set the stage for early accumulation of books for my own shelves. Were other boys actually pleased to receive books for birthdays and other holidays? These gift-wrapped introductions to mental adventure and understanding led me back to the public library shelves where new and unexpected expansions of imagination and knowledge waited to be discovered and explored.

I learned at the library that ideas and frontiers might only be hinted at in one place, and gloriously realized in another. There were also disappointments, as it became apparent that not everyone who could produce a book (and be honored with a place on the library shelf) could be entrusted with my time and attention. It was a surprise to realize that books could invoke humor beyond what television could contrive, and that suspense and drama were sometimes more intense and satisfying when delivered by the library than a movie theater.

As the years have passed, my journey through libraries has paralleled transitions from house to house, town to town, state to state, and coast to coast. My public libraries ranged from small ancient dusty structures with creaking floors and drafty windows, to gleaming architectural showplaces with brilliant spaces. They evolved from no-tech, with dates rubber-stamped in cards pocketed inside the cover and paper card indexes pawed through in deep narrow oak cabinet drawers, to the high-tech of laser and microchip scanned checkouts and searching the collection with a few keystrokes. Occasionally, I check things out from home.

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Today, there are five mismatched overflowing bookshelves in my home, and numerous individual and stacked books arrayed on any available flat surface in disordered splendor. A librarian would probably not approve of the disorganization, but might share my affection for the rich potential of such a literary mess. I find myself visiting their world at the library often, where I appreciate the good order and limitless diversity, just as my Mom did.

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