

READCON: APRIL 11TH AT LINC LIBRARY INNOVATION CENTER!



High Plains Library District

CommUNITY

MARCH 2025



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Wonder Play Socialize
Bibliotecas Experience
Imagine
Laugh
Build Maktabaduhu Create Make Read
Explore
Share Games
Dream Connect Experience

What do **YOU** have to **SAY** about our newsletter?

What do you have to say about our newsletter? Think about this as our Letters to the Editor option. If you have something to say about our newsletter, head to mylibrary.us/letters to get your feedback in the right hands.

A **ReadCon** Q&A

There are two kinds of people I try to advertise events like ReadCon to.

Isn't that the perfect start to any article? Don't you want to know what the two types are? Even if only so that you can argue passionately about how wrong I am?

The first kind are what I uncharitably think of as fish who have, unfortunately, been confined to a barrel. This is not a slam at all, you all are just folks who don't need much of a hard sell. You hear that we've got a books/reading/writing event, and you're like, "When and where?" And I say, "LINC Library Innovation Center, Friday April 11th." And you say, "Cool, thanks!" and I say, "No problem, just part of my job!" and this goes on a long time because we're both too polite to just say, "Alright, enough already, let's put a period at the end and move on with our lives."

The other group I want to tell about ReadCon is made up of people who might want to go, but they don't know exactly how an event like this works. Do you dress up? Do you

bring candy (Yes, always)?

So let's do a quick guide to attending events like this. That way, all your fears should be addressed, and we can all have a great time on the 11th.

Q: What kind of preparation do I have to do?

A: You don't have to do anything. You can just show up. Nobody is going to give you a quiz, and it's not like going to a Metallica concert where "The Memory Remains" starts and James Hetfield takes the mic out into the crowd for the chorus, and you're horribly embarrassed because you don't know the words. Which, by the way, are: "Da da da da, da da da. Da da da da da." So you really should've known them.

If you want to, you can check out one of the books by our guests, [And the Wind Whispered by Dan Jorgensen](#), [Save Me, Stranger by Erika Krouse](#), and/or [Women's Art Wednesday by Paloma Barraza and Jane Thompson](#).



Q: Ah! I don't have time to read 3 books in the next month!

A: Yeah, me neither.

I'll give you a tip here: start with *Women's Art Wednesday*. It's a book you can get a lot out of in a short time, and you don't necessarily need to read the entire thing to get a good idea about where it's headed. Erika Krouse has a book of short stories out, *Save Me, Stranger*, so you could just read one or two of those and be all set. Dan Jorgensen's books do have intricate plots and casts of characters, but if you wanted to get started on *And the Wind Whispered*, it's okay to come to ReadCon even if you haven't finished (or started!).

This event is just as much about the authors minting new fans as it is about talking to their existing fans. Think of it like going to a comic book movie. Some of the people in the crowd (me) are superfans, constantly poking their neighbor and explaining how much of *Thor: Ragnarok* was ripped from the pages of *World War Hulk* and how annoying that is because it means we'll never get an MCU World War Hulk. But most people there can just sit back, relax, and enjoy, no prep work necessary.

Q: Okay, so what happens at these kinds of events!

A: You'll sit in a chair, an author will talk a little and probably read a little something. Then we'll switch to a different author, they'll talk a bit, probably read a little something, and you can just keep right on doing your sitting in the chair thing.

Someone's phone will probably have gone off by now because it's 2025 and everyone has a phone, and the chances of everyone remembering to turn their phone to silent is a statistical impossibility.

And then we'll make one more switch, and our third and fourth author will take the stage together. Then we'll bring all of the authors back on stage to have a panel discussion where they'll all answer questions together.

For your part, by the end of this, your candy stash will be mostly depleted, your chair will be JUST starting to get a tiny bit uncomfortable, you'll have that weird itchy feeling in your hands that you get when you clap a lot. All in all, a good time.

You don't have to do anything other than being polite and listening (or, at least, pretending to listen if you happen to space out, it's okay, it happens, just try and come back into focus without too much of a fuss). If you have a question, you'll definitely get the chance to ask it, but nobody is going to force you.

Q: If I did ask a question, what kind of question should I ask?

A: It's pretty wide open, within the bounds of being polite and so on. You can ask a question about the stories or the characters in the books, you can ask about the process of writing a book, you can ask about the process of publishing, you can ask about some good books the authors have read lately, you can ask them about how they balance living a human life with writing.



RETURNING APRIL 2025

READCON

April 11th • 5:30-8:30pm

highplains Library District **HPLD** Friends & Foundation

www.mylibrary.us/readcon

LINC Library Innovation Center 501 8th Ave, Greeley

Erika Krouse **Paloma Barraza & Jane Thompson** **Dan Jorgensen**

Books featured: *Tell Me Everything*, *Women's Art Wednesday*, *And the Wind Whispered*

YOU CAN ASK THEM WHAT IS BEST ABOUT THE LIBRARY. You know, just for example.

Q: Do I need tickets?

A: [You need to register. You won't get a paper ticket, but you will need to save your seat, so make sure to register right now!](#)

Q: Is Downtown Greeley safe at night?

A: We get this question here and there, and while it's not my favorite question, instead of pretending like we don't hear this whispered from time to time, I'll just answer: Yes. I lived downtown for many years, and it's pretty darn safe. I've spent many an evening across the street at Weldwerks, and I've never had any kind of problems other than my self-imposed, single cheeseburger-per-visit-limit. The library has security guards during open hours, and they will also be in and around the building during ReadCon as well. If you're still not sure, I suggest bringing a friend, maybe like 5 friends, along with you. That's a good way to feel a little more secure AND boost attendance. This is what's known as a classic win-win.

Q: What if I'm coming from outside Greeley and want to make a day of it before the event starts?

A: [Wow, that's actually a great idea!](#)

There's a bit of a gray area here, I'm not really supposed to endorse private businesses and whatnot in my capacity as

an HPLD employee, so tell you what: [Here's a guide to my personal recommendations](#). Not endorsed by High Plains Library District, just a guide to some of my favorite Greeley businesses and things to do for a day out on the town! It's something I made for another, unrelated thing, and we might as well get some use out of it.

Think of this as what I might suggest if you sidled up to the desk at the library and asked me where I like to eat lunch or take a walk.

Again, this is a very subjective look at Greeley and some things to do, not an all-encompassing or even fair tour guide.

Even if you're a longtime Greeley resident, check it out, you might find something you've never considered before. Like a giant wooden ape. A LOT LIKE a giant wooden ape.

Q: When is ReadCon again?

A: Friday, April 11th. Which is easy to remember because that was also the launch date of Apollo 13!

Wait, maybe that's not such a good one.

Birthday of Poet Laureate Mark Strand. There, that's better.

READ All Year Long

Challenge yourself to read 12 books in a year with the Adults Read On program and earn prizes along the way! Adults (16+) can participate by picking up a paper log at any branch, by downloading the Beanstack Tracker App and following the instructions, or by visiting highplains.beanstack.org/reader365. For more details, check out www.MyLibrary.us/aro.

ADULTS READ ON

Complete 12 books in 12 months. Redeem prizes at your local HPLD location, after you've read

Book No.	Title
1	
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ReadCon Interview with Paloma Barraza, Jane Thompson, & *Women's Art Wednesday*

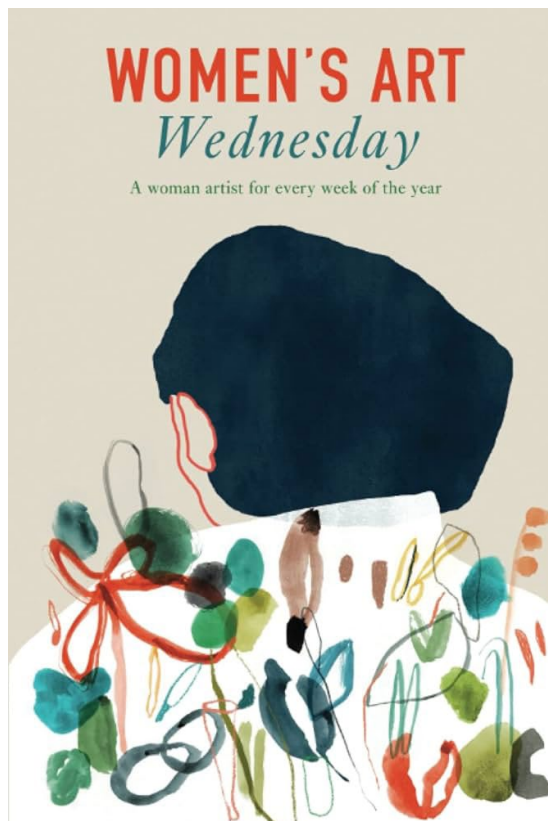
We have our final interview with ReadCon guests Paloma Barraza and Jane Thompson, co-authors of *Women's Art Wednesday*! The duo will be at this year's ReadCon to give everyone a little insight into the world of art as well as the world of publishing and putting a book together, which is NOT easy! It only took me three tries to wise up and ask the interviewees for bios within the interview, so I don't have to type them out here, we can just jump right in!

Aren't you lucky to be reading a newsletter that's so smartly put together?

~

High Plains Library District: First things first, let's do a quick bio for each of you:

Paloma Barraza: Paloma Barraza is the Librarian of History, Iberian, and Latin American Studies at the University of Minnesota. Paloma has a masters degree in Art of the Americas from the University of New Mexico, a masters degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Arizona, and two bachelor degrees in History and Art History from the University of Colorado. Paloma has worked in



art museums, natural history museums, archives, public libraries (S/O HPLD), and academic libraries.

Jane Thompson: Jane Thompson fell in love with art history in high school thanks to an AP Art History course at Greeley Central. She was inspired to start *Women's Art Wednesday* while earning a bachelor's degree in art history from Colorado State University in 2017 with a focus on women artists in history. While she continues to work in education today, her favorite thing remains nerding out about art history with her dear friend Paloma.

Paloma & Jane: Paloma and Jane became inseparable friends when they met on the soccer field back in high school (Go Wildcats). While life has taken them in different directions, they continue

to work together to share knowledge about women artists. They created *Women's Art Wednesday* (WAW) together as an internet platform to highlight women artists once a week, every week, in 2017. In 2022, they wrote and published a collection of WAW entries—one for every week of a year—which was promoted by bookstores, libraries, and museums, including the National Museum of Women

in the Arts. They continue their work on WAW by running workshops with high school and college classes, talks to art groups and collectives, and of course, weekly posts.

HPLD: When I saw the question that kind of kicked off the [Women's Art Wednesday project](#), asking if I could name 5 women artists, I have to admit, I couldn't. Do you think that's a pretty common thing, or am I outside the norm?

P&J: Yes! This is not an easy question to answer for most people, even those who work in the art world, believe it or not. The question derived from the #Name5WomenArtists campaign by The National Museum of Women in the Arts (based in Washington DC) that began in 2016. The question took social media by storm and still continues to impact the art world today—people are usually shocked to realize they can't name 5 women artists, but it's pretty easy for them to bring 5 male artists in history to mind, even if they're not an "art lover". All they have to do to get to 5 male artists is list the Ninja Turtles and add Van Gogh, for crying out loud. But when you ask about naming women artists, it really stumps most people. Our platform helps fill those gaps by providing weekly women artists—and their stories often reflect really interesting parts of world history, so it's a great lens to learn about the world through.

HPLD: I think this book is doing one of my favorite things a book can do: It's taking a lot of your experience and hard work and providing it to me in a form that I can understand and enjoy, even without knowing much about art. First of all, thanks for that! Second, how did you go about condensing all those years of education and practice into something that's really pleasant to consume?

Paloma: When we created *Women's Art Wednesday* (WAW) we wanted to assure that the information we provided was easily digestible for most readers. We wrote a book that can be picked up and enjoyed by anyone, without commitment of reading it front to back. While we could easily write in an academic voice about women artists, we understood that would limit who would enjoy our content. I will say it's not an easy feat! Jane is the mastermind behind editing our content to make it palatable and enjoyable for our audience.

Jane: We make a great team! Paloma is the research workhorse, and I love to tailor the copy to be something everyone can enjoy. I think people often feel like art/art history is unapproachable and pretentious (and to be honest, it can be!) but the history of art is the history of all of us. So it's actually a really fun exercise to work on how to convey that to people, especially through talking about women artists. Having Paloma do such thorough research on every topic gives me so much to work with, from there, I just like to think about why something matters, and why people should care about this part of history, and then write about it as though I was talking to a friend—I think

people generally just want to feel like they're hearing from a real person, and not getting talked-down-to by academia.

HPLD: You've both got a deep knowledge of art, and I wonder, is it frustrating to try and bring it down to, well, MY level? Rewarding because you get to lend a hand? Little bit of both?

Paloma: I always think about art in levels and I make sure I know my audience. If we are speaking to a college art history class, we easily resort to our academic voice. What's the point of having all this incredible art information if no one can understand what you are saying? We prioritize connecting our audience with information they can relate to.

Jane: For me it's not frustrating at all! In fact, I get more frustrated by the fact that academia so often does a poor job of making its expertise relatable. Don't get me wrong, I love higher education, but I think it needs to do a better job of making its subject matter accessible because like Paloma said, what's the use of having a really in-depth expertise if the majority of people can't connect with why it's important? That's not a problem with people, it's a problem with the institution not marketing its knowledge well enough.

READCON

HPLD: I really appreciated that, from the beginning, the book feels pretty welcoming, and it acknowledges

that I might not know much about art. As an outsider to the art world, it feels like there are some art books that are for artists and some that are for non-artists. Did you tilt your book towards one or the other (or both) from the outset, and did your goals ever change along the way?

Paloma: I enjoy both! As an avid reader, I pick up books based on the experience I want to have while reading. I ask myself, do I want a book that challenges me critically? Or do I want a book that presents information in a concise manner? Do I want a book that I can enjoy reading while waiting for my plane? Or do I want a book that will question my prior knowledge? It really depends on the day!

Jane: I think we wanted to make something that could be interesting for people who are artists and historians, and also for people who aren't! We tried to strike a balance by bringing some art history to people who maybe don't know about it already, but also engaging art-lovers with new artists they've never heard about. Like we said before, the interesting thing about the conversation around women artists is that even many art-lovers can't name 5 women artists. So I like to think this book can be useful to people who fall into either category of reader. In general, I think our goal was always to make a book that had a little something to offer anyone who picked it up by making each entry pretty bite-sized and having a variety of historical and contemporary entries.

HPLD: What were some of the challenges, and maybe the benefits, of translating this project into a book as opposed to doing it online?

Paloma: We wanted to commemorate our hard work into a long-lasting format. Social media platforms are ephemeral spaces that may disappear at any moment.

Jane: I won't lie to you, there were SO MANY challenges with converting our work into a book. So many. Did you know you have to copyright fonts?! And that there are like, a thousand different types of paper you can choose from? Let alone how to format everything for printing, write enough entries to fill up a book, cite everything properly, and work with illustrators, editors, and designers. The book was at times a lot more like project management than it was like writing. But it was also so rewarding to bring it all together and have this concrete product of our work. Online you basically just write, edit, and hit the post button. A lot more goes into the production of a book.

HPLD: Your names don't appear on the cover or anywhere near the front of the book, right? I think the only place your names appear is towards the very end, on page 90(?) Is that something that's common in the art world, or is this a choice you made for other reasons?

Paloma & Jane: Nice catch! It's actually not very common. We wanted to really shine light on the 52 women artists, rather than us. We like to take a different approach to history, which tends to highlight the historian over the subject. We wanted to really keep the focus on our subjects. Also, like we mentioned above, a lot of work goes into a book, and we had a lot of people who contributed from research, to design and illustration, to editing. We give credit to ourselves and everyone who contributed in the back of the book!

HPLD: Sometimes, if I go to an art museum, I feel like that's not a place for me. It feels too fancy or something, and it kind of feels like the other people there are going to know that I don't belong there and chase me out. I know that's not really going to happen, but why do you think the art world feels that way to outsiders? Why do I think that when I go into an art museum as opposed to a planetarium? It's not like I know ANYTHING about planets, either!

Paloma: Those white walls can be daunting! I didn't have the opportunity to visit art museums until I took AP Art History at Greeley Central High School. My teacher, Kevin Rohnke, opened a new world of opportunities for me and showed us that anyone belonged in a museum. We carry that same sentiment with our WAW collective. Art is meant to be enjoyed by all and many museums are working towards creating more welcoming spaces. You do not need prior knowledge to visit a museum! You can simply look and enjoy the spaces.

Jane: I personally think there are a lot of ways the art world gatekeeps, and what you are talking about is a common experience. Art museums can be expensive, are usually found in big cities farther away from folks who live in small or rural places, and even the language used

on the wall-text can be really unapproachable. I think in many museums basically the whole environment can come across as unwelcoming, and so much of that is because of the way we perceive "fine art" through the way history presents it. Which is crazy! Because what I love about art history is that it reflects the history of basically all humanity. But part of what motivated us to start WAW is that historical writing has created a narrative about art that places it outside of the general experience and makes it feel like this really big, unapproachable thing. The exclusion of women artists in a lot of "formal history" (museums, textbooks, etc.) is linked to what you're describing with feeling unwelcomed—there is a narrative about art that excludes a lot of people and experiences. That being said, I agree with Paloma that a lot of museums are working hard to change that these days.

HPLD: Can you give people like me, who have some discomfort in spaces like art museums, some advice that might make the experience more enjoyable?

Paloma: I always encourage people to attend a museum event, this helps alleviate any discomfort. Many art museums host fun evening events, movie screenings, music, artist talks, etc. These events are a great way to see the liveliness of a museum and they show you around the spaces so when you return on a regular day, you already know where to go! I also recommend any tour (typically free) that they provide! Here, you will learn about various exhibits and these tours provide knowledge about the art and the history of the space. Lastly, always ask and tell the museum staff that it's your first time, they will be very excited to show you around! Similar to libraries, museum staff are very happy to show you the cool stuff.

Jane: I would just second everything Paloma said, and add that the history of art is everyone's. Art reflects our human history and you have just as much of a right to engage with it as anyone else!

HPLD: I noticed some local (to HPLD) names in the book, Kim Desmond, Danyelle Butler. We live in an age where you can view and sometimes even buy art made by people all over the world, but local art and artists seem important. What do you think is the special appeal of something made close to home?

Paloma: We wanted to commemorate local artists as we are both born and raised in Northern Colorado. NoCo has a thriving art scene and all of the living artists that we featured have a unique trajectory tied to Colorado.

Jane: A beautiful thing about art is the way it engages with the human experience, and I think anything local (art, businesses, community spaces) can be a really special thing to connect to! I personally believe that everyone should consider how they can appreciate and contribute to the creativity, history, and connection of their local spaces. It makes life better! We were happy to celebrate artists we know from all over the place. We have some NoCo folks in the book, as well as international artists we've worked with, and I really see the book as a love-letter to art and culture created by women on every scale.

HPLD: Reading through the book, there's a mix in the profiles of artists: Some are a little more focused on describing their work, some are a little more biographical. Is that a balance that felt natural, or was it something you had to push one way or the other at times?

Paloma: You have a keen eye! The biographical entries are from women artists in history while the contemporary/living artists focused on their work since they are still creating art. We did this to show the various stages of life of an artist. We did this as a way to show the reader that there are many ways to talk about an artist.

Jane: Yes! One more thing to add that some folks might not know: For a lot of parts of history women were not allowed to enroll in formal art training/Academies, all across the world. Because of that, their work was often not included in formal shows, and therefore not included in the history books (keep in mind, for a vast chunk of human history when we didn't have mass-media and many people couldn't read, society relied on imagery to connect with learning, and art created by the Institution was a lot of what was recorded, forming what we understand about history both in the past and today). All of that to say, women were largely excluded from those records for a lot of history, which is part of why people have such a hard time bringing the work of women to mind. BUT! That doesn't mean that women weren't creating art all the while. It just means that often there's not great records of it, or you have to do quite a lot more digging. Where this becomes relevant to our book and your question above, is that we sometimes don't have as much information on lesser-known women artists in history, and we have to rely a little more on writing about the era they were working, their personal biographies, or other information to contextualize their lives/work ourselves. The records on women artists in history just aren't as robust as other artists.

HPLD: How did you decide the order the artists would appear in?

Paloma & Jane: We avoided creating a timeline of the 52 artists, we rearranged the entries by providing a nice blend of different art forms, time periods, and styles. This avoided any hierarchy or timeline, which is a more traditional (and restrictive) way of talking about history. We aimed for a variety in the artists we chose for the book and the order they appear in to give the reader less of a traditional art-viewing experience (which like we talked about above, can feel intimidating for a lot of people), and ideally be something that they could flip to literally any page and learn something cool and fun.

HPLD: I looked up Tatsu Hirota online after finding out about her in your book, and there's some information and a handful of images, but nowhere near as much as I expected. It seems like she's not the easiest artist to find out more about. Were there any artists you hadn't known about and discovered for yourself in the process of working on this project?

Paloma: This is where we use our academic art history research skills! We have a very organic way of finding

women artists. Some are recommendations by our colleagues or followers, some we find in books or articles, some we see in art museums. When we find these artists we do a quick preliminary search (good old Google) to see what information we can find. From here, we go in to our fave database JSTOR, and start searching. It's actually very time consuming, like Tatsu Hirota, there is little information out there, so we compiled all the information we could find.

Jane: This artist is a great example of what I mentioned above. She had such an impressive career, such an interesting style. But it's really hard to find information about her because of the way society and history have valued work by women in a lot of time periods. No one really recorded much about her, or elevated her life/career history at the time she was working, so the records are limited. I'll say this: Paloma is great at digging deep and finding information and context—she's an incredible researcher who has done so much to shine a light on artists even when it's difficult!

HPLD: It seems like the book could be read in a sitting, or you could piece it out over an entire year with one artist per week. You could read from beginning to end or skip around. I imagine there have been people who've done it a number of different ways: have you heard about anyone reading it in a way you didn't expect?

Paloma: We did this as a way to incite readers to return to our book as often as they would like. I've heard of people who flip through the pages without looking and whatever page they stop at, that is the artist they will read on.

Jane: There's no one-way to read this book, which I love about it. But I will say, one of my favorite things to hear is when folks share with me that they are reading it to their kids or people in their life who don't know much about art. I feel really stoked that we created something that can be easily enjoyed by a lot of people.

HPLD: We're really excited to have you at ReadCon in 2025, and for anyone who might attend, can you give us just a little preview of what you've got planned for that evening?

Paloma & Jane: We want to make this an enjoyable evening for everyone! We may do a fun little guessing game of 5 women artists (start studying now!) and giving the audience a little insight on how we conduct our research. We are also excited to share some knowledge with aspiring authors (even those who are working in fiction, or non-art-related works!) about the publishing process and sharing everything we learned during this crazy project!

HPLD: What's the best place for people to find *Women's Art Wednesday* online and support the project?

Paloma & Jane: Our Instagram page: [@womensartwednesday](https://www.instagram.com/womensartwednesday) and our website www.womensartwednesday.org. We have a patreon on there as well!

Anything for Selenas

by Evangelina A. Flores

April 4th and 5th, 2025, Linc Library Innovation Center is hosting an event called [“Bidi Bidi Bom Bom: Because Our Hearts Still Beat Anything for Selenas!”](#) to celebrate the life and music of Selena Quintanilla Pérez, the Texas born, Grammy winning, fashion superstar, reina of Tejano music. And I, for one, could not be more excited, because at the ripe old age of six, I knew I would do *anything* to be a singer like Selena Quintanilla.

The year was 1995. The comal was on the stove and my grandparents’ kitchen was heaven, laden with the scent of warming tortillas. Sequins from my favorite purple dress caught the sun’s

rays and cast a maroon shimmer on the tiles as my abuelito twirled me across our kitchen dance floor to the beat of “Ven Conmigo.” Made by my grandma and tía, my shimmery purple dress was a picturesque tribute to Selena’s iconic purple jumpsuit.

To me, Selena was the idol of all idols, and she was everywhere! Songs like “Como la Flor” and “Bidi Bidi Bom Bom” played continuously on the radio. Every little girl wanted to grow up to be Selena, and those of us with curly locks now bragged about our “Selena hair.” Mamás, abuelitas and tías got to work sewing glittering outfits to mimic Selena’s most famous looks.

PHOTO CREDIT: Title: Selena Quintanilla-Pérez performing at Guys & Dolls Ballroom
Creator: Cavazos, Andrew (Photographer) (CC BY-NC 4.0)

Bustiers sparkling from the confines of a jean jacket had every Mexican American father west of Texas shaking their head and massaging their temples. Selena y Los Dinos had become a cultural phenomenon.

Now fast forward almost thirty years. Let's skip the cute children's choirs, the agonizing piano lessons, the voice recitals, and the high school ensembles, which ignited a passion in me that would have given a certain *Glee* character a run for her money. Allow me to go even further, skipping my time studying music in college until now, January 2025. See, I've never moved on from my Selena obsession. I meant what I said about being a singer like Selena. Well, almost.

Six-year-old me might be surprised to learn she would one day land a super amazing job in a library and not on a glamorous stage, but before anyone can get too disappointed, I get to do a ton of awesome music programming! [I've even been invited to sing for a handful of library district events.](#) Whether it's [introducing the next generation of musicians to music production software](#) or hosting [a music appreciation program for teens](#), there's nothing more fulfilling!

Anyway, back to January 2025, where I am beating my head against the keyboard trying to get a newsletter article written about Selena Quintanilla! But where do I start? Selena shaped so much of my life.

Like me, Selena identified as Mexican American. She grew up speaking predominately English and, at her father's encouragement, learned to sing in Spanish. As she won the hearts of fans across the United States, one question remained. Would she be able to connect with her fans outside the country?

After her concert in Monterrey, Mexico, the answer was a resounding yes! Her performance in Monterrey shattered attendance expectations, and she often referred to the concert as one of her most memorable. In the end, the power of her music overshadowed any doubts about her ability to speak Spanish or her Texas roots.

The message of Selena's experience still resonates today, with many Mexican Americans grappling with losing their language, but still being expected to be fluent Spanish speakers in professional settings. As quoted Selena's father, played by Edward James Olmos in the 1997

biographical film, illustrates, "Being Mexican American is tough. ... We've gotta be twice as perfect as anybody else." While Selena's father made a point, through Selena we learned it's not about perfection. It's about being true to our authentic selves. Selena had conquered the Tejano music world with her Spanish songs and won the hearts of fans worldwide. Next, she would embark on recording songs in English. Songs like "Dreaming of You," "Missing My Baby," and "I Could Fall In Love," but Selena's career ended in tragedy.

On March 31st, 1995, Selena Quintanilla Pérez lost her life, but her legacy lives on. Her music is still passed from one generation to the next and, to my joyous surprise, clothing retailers still release Selena merchandise. So, at a library programming meeting back in 2024, my coworkers, fellow Selena fans, and I proposed an event to celebrate Selena Quintanilla. Well, griten con locura, because we got the green light!

We'll kick things off on April 4th with a screening of the 1997 film *Selena*. We'll enjoy movie quote-a-long games, Selena themed loteria and, of course, pizza!

The fun continues April 5th with music, dancing, crafts, and fashion pieces featuring local Latino artists, musicians, organizations and more.

[For more information, please visit our Events Calendar.](#)

To all the Selena fans out there! Come celebrate, reminisce and dance with us. To those of you not acquainted with Selena, I welcome you to this event as well, because we all deserve to chase our dreams and be accepted for who we are. It's artists like Selena Quintanilla who will keep reminding us of that fact for generations to come.

If you think about it, I kept my promise to my six-year-old self. Late at night when all the world is sleeping, I stay up and dream, just like my favorite singer.

And to this day I'd still do *anything* for Selenas!



10 Years & 10 Memories of ReadCon

In 2013, me and a bunch of other HPLD staff got a challenge.

For a few years, HPLD had been running a “One Book, One Community” type of program call The Common Read that was aimed to bring a lot of readers together around one book.

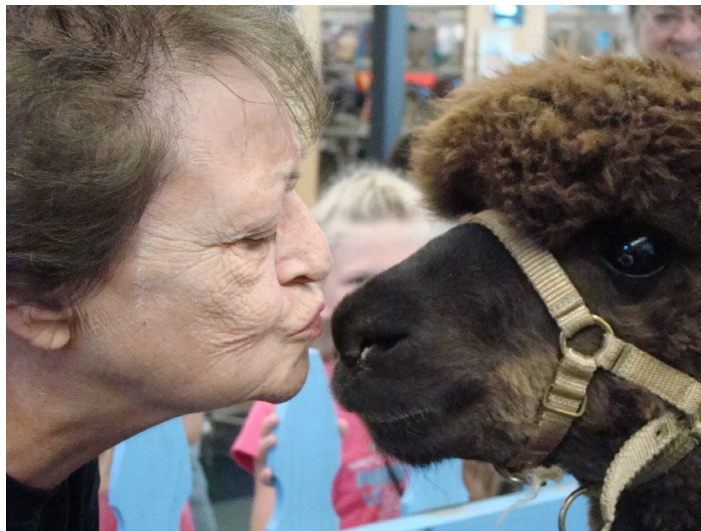
It was a good idea, lots of communities have done these sorts of area-wide reads (they were VERY hot at the time), and in HPLD’s case, we got mixed results.

The people who came out and read the books had a great time, that wasn’t an issue.

But it was a little tough to get a lot of people to come out.

I think, at times, book selection was a problem. We did lovely books like *Fahrenheit 451*, a book that... well, look, I think Ray Bradbury is amazing, and any book that gets made into a terrible video game with an incredibly tenuous connection to the original source material has a special

place in my heart. But...well, if I’m being real with you, *Fahrenheit 451* absolutely reeks of required reading. Give me a *Martian Chronicles* any day of the week, know what I mean?



But it’s not very librarian-esque of me to blame the books, so let’s move on.

After a couple years of diminishing returns with the Common Read program, we changed things up and decided we needed to do something different.

ReadCon is what came out of those decisions.

I could bore you with long tales of how we put it together and how the budgeting worked and why I preferred the first round

of posters themed to look like propaganda posters.

But instead, I’m giving you 10 memories of ReadCon that do a better job of explaining the event’s appeal than any chronological rundown ever could.

~

Memory 1: There was an afternoon when we needed to move some very heavy shelving near the fireplace at Farr (the location of the first ReadCon).

A bunch of staff lined up, and we shoved and pushed, and we got one shelf moved without too much trouble.

Then we went to move a second shelf, and what we didn't know was that underneath there was some kind of junction box or something, and, long story short, we tore the ever-loving crap out of the carpet.

One of the beautiful things about carpet tiles is that you can just replace any damaged parts without replacing the whole thing, and nobody's the wiser. ;-)

Memory 2: To make a commercial for ReadCon, I printed "ReadCon Bumper Stickers."

You probably noticed that I put that in quotes. That's because the "bumper stickers" were standard-label-sized, maybe 3" inches long and 1" inch wide. I acted in front of the camera, pretended to be super excited that the bumper stickers I'd ordered had finally come in, and then there was a hard cut to me applying several of these ridiculously small stickers to my car's bumper.

It's been well over a decade since I spent maybe an hour shooting that commercial, and the sticky outlines from those labels are on my car's bumper (and trunk and side) TODAY.

Memory 3: I had a friend who was working at Farr during the first ReadCon. A friend at the time. It's 12 years later, and we're married.

She was working on ReadCon day, and when I took one of my 1,000 trips through the back of the library, she asked me, with excitement, "Are you having fun?" And I said, "Absolutely not."

I still remember what her face looked like when it fell, the corners of her mouth plunging straight down, like Beaker from the Muppets.

She was sad for me, and it's a face I've come to know quite well over the last 10 or so years, the same face I saw when

our freezer iced up, and water ended up dripping into the fridge, and I had to text her to tell her that the leftover pizza was no longer edible, a victim of a truly cursed appliance.

Memory 4: Craig Johnson was there at the first one, and he's just about the nicest guy you'll ever meet, and he made the entire year for a coworker's mom, who was just enamored, or dare I say "smitten?" I do, I daresay she was ready to jump in the pickup with him and head back to Absaroka County to live out the rest of her days in rustic tranquility,

interrupted only occasionally by a little gunplay.

Memory 5: There was beer, our first ever Books and Brews, and I got to see my manager take a sip of a beer, in the library, and man did that bring a smile to my face.

Memory 6: We closed everything down that first night, and I pretended to leave the library so I could force everyone else to go home. Then I went back in and for 2 or 3 hours moved furniture back to where it belonged. It was one of very few times I was in the building solo, and if you've never been in a library completely alone, at night, it's SUPER weird. They do not prepare you for this in library school.

Memory 7: I woke up early to take Mary Doria Russell to the airport the next morning, a trip during which she gave me all the dirt on what a bad deal eBooks were for authors at the time. It was very intimidating to take her to the airport, only topped by

the time I drove Gene Luen Yang from DIA in the middle of a blizzard and was completely panicked that I was going to fly off the road, and if I did, it wasn't concerning that I'd die, it was concerning that I'd go down in history as the dum-dum who killed Gene Yang. That's what would be in



my obituary, and probably on my headstone. “Pete: Dum-Dum Who Killed Gene Luen Yang, celebrated author of American Born Chinese (available for \$11.49 in hardcover on Amazon).

Memory 8: We brought in audiobook narrator George Guidall one year, and because his travel was a little delayed, he called and left a message in my voicemail, which I never deleted because it’s pretty rare to hear Walt Longmire himself say your name and tell you some details about a delayed flight or whatever.

Memory 9: We did our last ReadCon in 2015, and in early 2016, I got an email from some library users who asked what the plans were for 2016. I told them that, unfortunately, the program was being warehoused for a bit. I didn’t necessarily expect to hear back from them, but later on one of them messaged me and told me that a few people got together in the fall and had their own ReadCon, which included hitting a bookstore, doing some reading together, and just having a great, book-centric time. If there is one thing that spells “success” for me when it comes to events, it’s throwing them and then seeing how another group will pick up the idea and make it their own. It means the idea was good, it was viable. It meant something to someone.

Memory 10: Well, I don’t have anything here yet. I’m keeping this space open for this year’s ReadCon. Because I just can’t see how it wouldn’t bring me a new, awesome memory that I’ll have to try and file in with all the other library memories I’ve built over the years.

Resurrecting an event that’s been dead for a decade is not easy. It’s probably even harder than doing it for the first time. You not only have to put

on an event, you have to deal with a legacy of opinions on what should and shouldn’t be a part of it, what the posters should look like, who the guests should be.

The guests, by the way, are amazing. I’ve interviewed all four of them for these newsletters, and they’re all

thoughtful, fascinating people with strong local ties. I think you’re really going to like them.

They’re committed. Everyone has committed.

Except for you.

Commit to coming to ReadCon.

Commit to a Weld County that can host fine events like this, just like a Fort Collins or a Denver.

Commit to getting to work on that book you’ve been meaning to write, and start by showing up and getting some inspiration.

Or, if you started that book a long time ago and kind of pattered out, commit to ReadCon, see if that brings you back online.

For each ReadCon we did, I’ve got 3 or more treasured memories. I’m betting that if you come to this one, you’ll be right up there with me.

And if you’ve enjoyed the works of Gene Luen Yang or Mary Doria Russell, just know that the teeniest, tiniest sliver of that is thanks to me not killing any of us. I haven’t been thanked in any of their books yet, but I’m sure they’ll get around to me pretty soon.



LOCATIONS

LIBRARIES Visit www.MyLibrary.us/locations-and-hours for library hours

Administration & Support Services

2650 West 29th Street
Greeley, CO 80631
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Carbon Valley Regional Library

7 Park Avenue
Firestone, CO 80504
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Centennial Park Library

2227 23rd Avenue
Greeley, CO 80634
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Eaton Public Library

132 Maple Avenue
Eaton, CO 80615
(970) 454-2189

Erie Community Library

400 Powers Street
Erie, CO 80516
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Farr Regional Library

1939 61st Avenue
Greeley, CO 80634
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Fort Lupton Public & School Library

370 S. Rollie Avenue
Fort Lupton, CO 80621
(303) 339-4089

Glenn A. Jones, M.D. Memorial Library

400 S. Parish Avenue
Johnstown, CO 80534
(970) 587-2459

Grover Library

402 Chatoga Avenue
Grover, CO 80729
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Milliken Location of the Glenn A. Jones, M.D. Memorial Library

1109 Broad Street
Milliken, CO 80543
(970) 660-5039

Hudson Public Library

100 S. Beech Street
Hudson, CO 80642
(303) 536-4550

Kersey Library

332 3rd Street
Kersey, CO 80644
1-888-861-READ(7323)

LINC Library Innovation Center

501 8th Avenue
Greeley, CO 80631
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Nantes Library

703 Birch Street
Gilcrest, CO 80623
(970) 737-1035

Northern Plains Public Library

216 2nd Street
Ault, CO 80610
(970) 834-1259

Outreach

2650 W. 29th Street
Greeley, CO 80631
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Platteville Public Library

504 Marion Avenue
Platteville, CO 80651
(970) 785-2231

Riverside Library & Cultural Center

3700 Golden Street
Evans, CO 80620
1-888-861-READ(7323)

AFFILIATED LOCATIONS

Hazel E. Johnson Research Center at the City of Greeley Museum

714 8th Street, Greeley, CO 80631
(970) 350-9220

Poudre Learning Center

8313 West F Street, Greeley, CO 80631
(970) 352-1267

PUBLIC COMPUTER CENTERS

Briggsdale Community Library

210 Main Street, Briggsdale, CO 80611

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