

DEAR READER:

I hope you enjoy HOLLER LOUDLY! It's a celebration of my love of public libraries, small towns, and the southwest.

When I was growing up, my mama took me to the public library every Saturday morning. First, I'd go the "new" section, so I could see what had come in. My goal was to read every single book in the whole building, so I had to keep up with those new ones.

I loved books about magic so much that my mama and daddy gave me a magic kit. I would read the directions in the book and then practice my tricks in the basement.

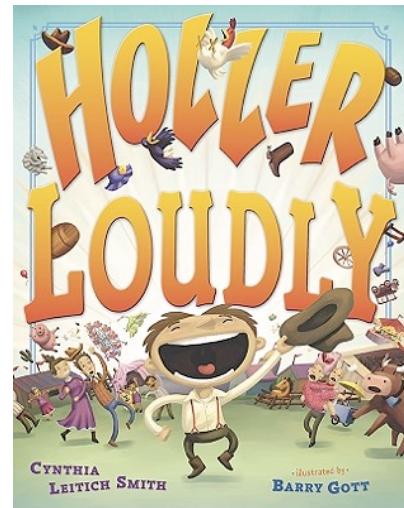
I also loved to play teacher. Next door lived a little girl named Kathy, who was a couple of years younger than me. We set up a pretend classroom, and I helped teach her to read using workbooks and library books. Back then, I loved her like a little sister, and I still feel the same way about her today.

My house was in a newer suburb, but most of my family lived in older houses in small towns that were slowly being swallowed up by Kansas City. I spent most of my holidays in places like Belton, Missouri; and Raytown, Missouri; at the homes of my grandparents and my Aunt Gail.

What I love about small towns is that they have a strong sense of history. Everybody knows each other. And they pull together in hard times.

Now I live in the southwest. In Austin, Texas. It's sunny, hot, and the people are really nice. The story of HOLLER LOUDLY takes place time ago.

Today fewer folks hereabouts wear hats and boots than they did in the old days. But I always keep my eyes out for cowboys.



Have fun with HOLLER LOUDLY! Read the quiet parts quietly, and the LOUD parts LOUDLY! That's what Holler himself would do.

And then when you're done, go to your public library and find another book to read!

Your Friend,

Cynthia Leitich Smith

