

For Immediate Release  
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## **AMELIA EARHART--LIVE!**

The search for Amelia Earhart can finally be called off! The famed aviator will be talking about her thrilling flights in the Haysville Community Library at 6:30pm on Saturday January 28<sup>th</sup>. The event is free and open to the public, and will be held in conjunction with the library's annual Ham n' Beans Pot Luck supper. Scholar/performer Ann Birney of Ride into History will take the audience back to 1937, just before Earhart's disappearance over the Pacific Ocean. Birney's performance is being sponsored by the Haysville Community Library Friends.

Most people do not know that Earhart twice set out to fly around the world at the equator before she disappeared. The first time, heading west from California, she wrecked her twin-engine Lockheed Electra taking off from Hawaii. Birney, as Earhart, will take the audience to April 14, 1937. Earhart is waiting for her airplane, her silver "flying laboratory," to be repaired so that she can try again. This time, she tells the audience, she will go east instead of west, hoping to reverse her luck with the reversal in direction.

Earhart came into the public eye when she became the first woman to cross the Atlantic Ocean by air in 1928. The young social worker presumed that after the flight she would resume working with children at a Boston settlement house, but one book and innumerable speaking engagements later, she was instead planning more record-setting flights, and yet more speaking tours, books, and articles. Among her other records, she became the first woman and second person to solo across the Atlantic, the first person to solo over the Pacific, the first person to fly from Hawaii to California, and the fastest woman to fly non-stop across the U.S. And now, Earhart feels she has one last record-setting flight left in her . . . .

Ann Birney is a member of Ride into History, a historical performance touring troupe that has performed throughout the U.S., from the Smithsonian to Saipan. Made up of scholars who are also scriptwriters and performers, Ride into History is one of few "cross-over" groups whose members have been on both humanities council and

arts commission rosters. In addition to their performances, which include six other first person narratives, the troupe conducts adult workshops, school residencies, and summer camps, guiding other people in becoming “Historian/Researcher/Scriptwriter/Actor!”s.

Scholar/performer Ann Birney’s interpretation of Amelia Earhart is based on extensive research. She holds a doctorate in American Studies from the University of Kansas and, like Earhart, is a native Kansan. Birney has been doing her Chautauqua-style performances of Amelia Earhart since 1995. In March of 2000 she became the first person to do a historical performance for the Smithsonian’s National Air and Space Museum, whose education curator described her performance as “what living history should be—accurate, natural, evocative, and accessible.” Barbara Aliprantis of the American Center for the Theatre and Storytelling said of another of Birney’s performances, “Your telling of Amelia's story was nothing less than brilliant. I was transported to another time and place.” Audiences of all ages have praised Ride into History's performances for being both “entertaining and intelligent.” Dramatist Jean-Ellen Jantzen wrote, "Their energetic first-person narrative style, combined with authentic costuming and properties, makes this an enjoyable offering for virtually all . . . audiences.” David Downing of the NASA Kansas Space Grant Consortium wrote of Birney’s after-lunch performance for the National Conference of Space Grant Consortium Directors: “I think you understand that this was a tough audience. Many of us have been everywhere more than once and have seen everything more than once. This was a group, many of whom routinely carry on conversations when the NASA brass are presenting. *You* on the other hand had their undivided attention. . . .”

Two of the historic figures Ride into History interprets, Amelia Earhart and Calamity Jane, are integral to the myth of American individualism. According to the scholar/performers, one of the most fascinating things is discovering the point at which an ordinary, lively, independent girl becomes the woman who makes a choice which leads her to become an American symbol, a mythic figure. They ask, "What do these people have in common with each of us?"

Contact Ride into History for an interview: (620) 528-3580, (620) 344-0314, or [ridehist@satelephone.com](mailto:ridehist@satelephone.com) .