

GEAR UP TO SEE YES!BOT & SPARKY SEPTEMBER 16TH!



High Plains Library District

High Plains Library District
CommUNITY

AUGUST 2023



Specialty Checkout Welcomes



EXPERIENCE PASSES

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Odd Books

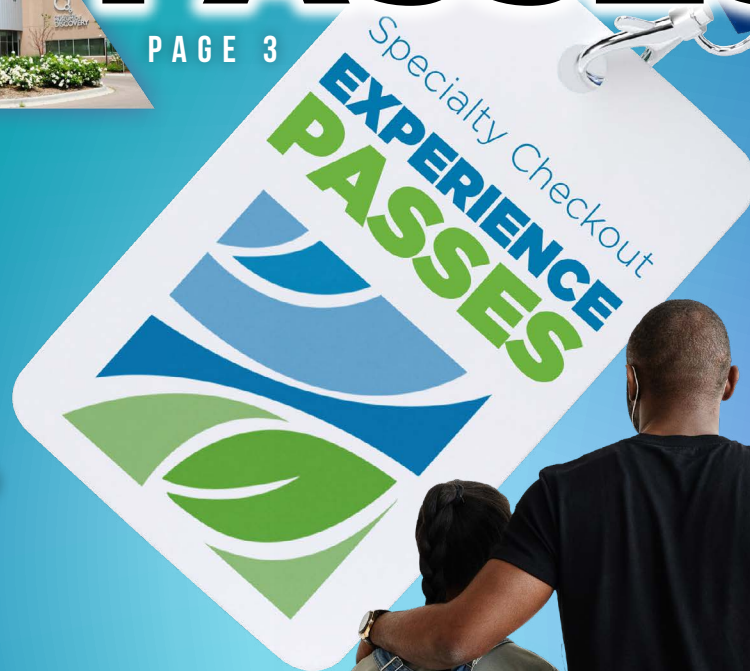
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Wonder Play Socialize
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What do you have to say about our newsletter? Think about this as our Letters to the Editor option. If you have something to say about our newsletter, head to mylibrary.us/letters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

EXPERIENCE PASSES

We've got Experience Passes as part of our collection now, which means you can visit a bunch of local attractions FOR FREE. All you need to do is [reserve a pass with your library card!](#)

And we got to thinking...what are some of the issues people are having with these attractions?

Can we look at some of the negative reviews and perhaps help some visitors have a better experience in the future?

Centennial Village Museum

Karen, 1-Star: *We enjoyed our time at the village. It was greatly entertaining for all ages. The Buffalo soldiers and the wagon ride were the highlight.*

I'm thinking perhaps Karen was confused and using "golf rules" to rate Centennial Village Museum? "Greatly entertaining" is 1 star?

Or perhaps Karen and her family enjoyed Centennial Village Museum: Greeley History From The Ground Up That's a Story Best Lived In (I'm not sure what the real slogan is, but this combines a whole bunch of Greeley slogans), but Karen and her family are the real-life basis for the *Fast & Furious* series of movies, so while "greatly entertaining" would please most of us, when you're





Specialty Checkout Welcomes

EXPERIENCE PASSES

Check out one of HPLD's Experience Passes and gain entry to local attractions, museums, and more!














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parachuting cars out of airplanes and then using giant magnets to have an awesome car chase—when that’s the vacation you’re used to, I guess “greatly entertaining” might still only warrant a single star.

Fort Collins Museum of Discovery

Julia, 1-Star: *Good food and service was great*

Er, food? Food service?

I’m suspicious that Julia has confused the Museum of Discovery with a restaurant in Fort Collins. There are many fine eateries there, and I’m trying to figure out which one has a name that’s kind of close to Fort Collins Museum of Discovery...is there a Fort Collins Museum of Sandwiches or something that I’m not aware of? I feel like I would definitely know if there was a museum of sandwiches, but perhaps I’m slipping in my middle age.

The Gardens at Spring Creek

Dustin, 1-Star: *Don't go during the cold season. Everything is dead and can be seen from outside the fence.*

Dustin, an experienced guide to the natural world, is suggesting that a garden MAY not be in top form in the dead of winter. This seems pretty fair, although judging a

garden in winter is kind of like creating an overall rating for the musical catalog of KISS based solely on Peter Criss’ solo album: no one is at their best.

Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Ronnie, 1-Star: *Even after eating mushrooms, the mezmérica was extremely boring. The first 5 mins and the last 5 min was the only really good parts. The seats at the Denver planetarium are old and very uncomfortable. Also, most of the visuals were blurry.*

Um...is it possible that the blurriness may have had something to do with EATING MUSHROOMS before watching the movie? I didn’t like the middle *Lord of the Rings* movie because when I saw it, I was kind of tired, so I can only imagine that using a hallucinogen might, perhaps, alter your opinion on a movie in a way that’s perhaps a bit unfair.

I’d say it’s high time we give these great places a fair chance to WOW us.

And you can do that FOR FREE with our Experience Passes.

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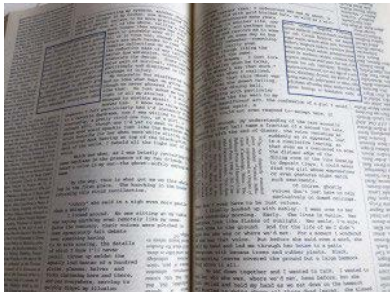
Odd Books

Lately I've been on a kick.

When I get on a kick, it can be a little dangerous. As a somewhat obsessive person, a "kick" can last several months, involve edging towards a personal financial crisis, and create a version of me that's very unfun to live with. See: The Ghost Fandom of 2023. See Also: The Attempt To Become a Rubik's Cube Speed Champion.

Fortunately, my latest kick has been not only WAY less damaging to my relationships than some of the others (turning everything in your life into Ghost lyrics is very fun, but your partner will not take it well when you sing "Spillways" lyrics as you make dinner and refer to her as "the cruel / beast / that you feed!"), it's been 100% cost-free thanks to the library.

For this kick, I bring you books with unusual structures.



[House of Leaves by Mark Z. Danielewski](#)

This is probably the best-known book that falls into the category of books with weird structures.

I started out this article calling them "unusual" structures,

but let's face it, these are weird.

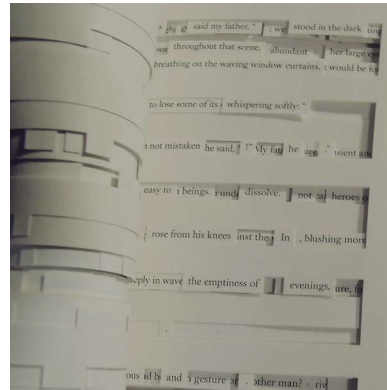
House of Leaves presents the reader with odd layouts, different colors, and pages that seem to lay multiple documents on top of each other.

The basic idea is that you, the reader, are looking through a trunk of documents related to a...haunted house?

If "haunted house" makes you think about Victorian ghosts slamming doors, think again.

This house is haunted in unsettling, subtle ways. For example, the interior of the house is, somehow, slightly larger than its exterior dimensions would allow. The house's owner becomes a little obsessed with proving this to be untrue (I can relate!), and things spiral from there.

Of recent note, someone has created a Doom mod called My House that plays with a lot of the tropes and ideas presented in *House of Leaves*. It's pretty creepy and cool. [Check out this walkthrough of it.](#)



Tree of Codes by Jonathan Safran Foer

Jonathan Safran Foer, probably best known for *Everything is Illuminated*, created this piece, which is sort of like blackout poetry, from an existing novel.

Even the title, *Tree of Codes*, is made by

taking the original title, *Street of Crocodiles*, and pulling out some of the letters: Street of Crocodiles.

The book itself is an interesting object. Each page is from *Street of Crocodiles*, but almost all of the words are cut out, tidy little boxes sitting where the words used to be.

It took me a minute to figure out how you're meant to read this. Are you supposed to look through the windows, or... what?

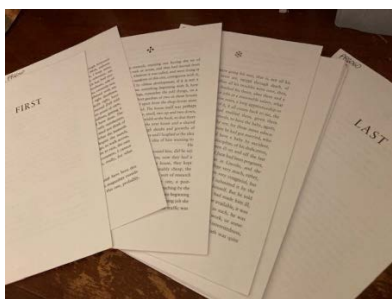
It turns out, you read it one page at a time, sort of like a normal book. It's kind of hard to do, and some people read this with an extra sheet of paper to put behind each page. So they slip in a blank sheet behind page 1, read it, then pull the paper out, flip to page two, slip the extra paper in, and so on.

It's not the easiest thing to read, and it's a bit of a hassle without a huge payoff. But the book definitely says something about stories within stories and how our favorite books can contain entire worlds.

The Unfortunates by B.S. Johnson

This has to be one of the weirdest ones:

When I got this on Prospectors, it came in a box. Inside the



box, 28 pamphlets.

One pamphlet is the introduction, another pamphlet says “First,” and another says, “Last.” The rest are unnumbered, they just have symbols at the top.

You can read the story in any order, so long as you read First first and Last last. The other sections are meant to be shuffled.

The basic story is that a guy is headed to a smallish town to cover a soccer game for a newspaper, and when he arrives, he realizes the town is one he’s visited before. It’s the place where a good friend slowly died over a period of a year or so, and our narrator walks through the town, remembering his friend, what his own life was like at the time, and various other things.

The idea with the shuffled sections is that the book works like memory: Maybe you’re walking along, and you remember a certain detail about a friendship. It doesn’t seem prompted by anything, it just kind of pops into your head. Then you have another thought. Then another.

And these thoughts, they don’t necessarily go in a tidy order the way they do in most books, right? Memories kind of come to you in whatever order they choose.

It’s a fascinating idea, and I have to say, this one really does work as a story as well. The narration is very emotionally resonant and strong.

Fun sidenote: The symbols at the top of the unnumbered sections are a holdover from a Hungarian printing of the book. The Hungarian publisher wasn’t able to print *The Unfortunates* in pamphlets the way the author intended, so instead, they printed them in order in one book. B.S. Johnson wasn’t pleased, and he came up with a workaround:

Each section in the Hungarian version had a symbol at the top. Then, in the back of the book, they printed the symbols on one page, in a grid. Hungarian readers were meant to tear that back page out, cut the symbols out, then put them all in a hat. Then, they could draw a symbol, find it, and read that section. Then they’d draw another symbol and read that section next.

This way, the book could still be read in a random order despite being printed in a non-random way.

[Multiple Choice by Alejandro Zambra](#)

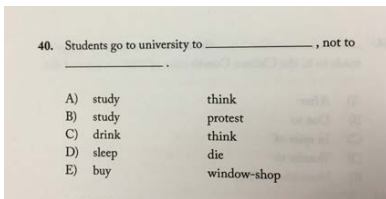
This book presents a series of vignettes in the form of a multiple-choice test, and the multiple-choice format is used in a lot of interesting ways to rewrite the same story.

For example, the reader might be presented with 5 paragraphs, and the question asks which order the paragraphs should go in: 1,2,3,4,5 -or- 5,4,3,2,1 -or- 1,3,5,4,2—you get the idea.

THANK YOU



For Supporting 2023 Summer Reading Adventure



Each change in the order changes the story a little bit, makes the reader ask which things caused which other things.

Some sections present a small story, and

afterward come questions about the meanings of the stories.

Some questions are simple, like, “Does the writer write in order to...?” with answers like, “Become famous, Impress his father,” and so on.

I gather that in Chile, the author’s home country, there used to be an aptitude test that everyone took, which deepens the parody aspect of this book. But even with no idea of that angle, it’s an awesome read.

Some of these books are not available in our catalog, and that’s okay!

We have Prospector and Interlibrary Loan, two usually-free services that can reach into libraries all over Colorado and the world to put books into your hands.

Always [check HPLD’s catalog first](#), and if you can’t find something, don’t hesitate to [make a Prospector or ILL request!](#)

Did YOU have a great library experience? Like, ever?

If you’re reading HPLD’s newsletter, we’re betting the answer is “Yes.” Or possibly even “YES!”

To let our staff know that they’re having an impact in your community, we’re proposing [a quick letter-writing campaign](#). Write your favorite HPLD staff member a letter, and if they’re up for it, we’ll ask them to read it out loud for the first time on video. That way, they can see how much you appreciate them, and you can see how much your words mean to them!

NOTICE

The High Plains Library District Board is seeking candidates to fill two vacancies on its Board of Trustees.



The areas needing representation are:

- *Region 3: Berthoud, Johnstown, Mead, Milliken, Platteville*
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Complete an online application at:

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Application deadline: **September 22, 2023 at 5 pm.**

Trustee Interviews: **October 20, 2023 from 1-5 pm.**

**For more information, contact Kim Parker at
kparker@highplains.us or 970-506-8569**

Cult Movie Vault:

M≡GAN

I'm just going to start this out with something that I both love and hate about this movie:

I HATE that the title is stylized as *M3gan*. When you look it up in our catalog, DO NOT type "Megan" unless you want to sort through a ton of other movies, including *Her*, which is in a similar, though less splatter-y, vein, and *The Phantom Thread*, which is one of those artsy movies, NOT a movie about a ghost who likes embroidery.

That's what I hate about *M3gan*.

I also LOVE that the filmmakers went with the silly idea of putting a number in the title and stuck to their guns.

Oftentimes, when movies do this, they don't really force the issue. For example, 2015's *FANT4STIC*, which...I guess a 4 is kind of close to an A, depending on the font. Or *S1m0ne*, which is just out of control.

M3gan's filmmakers have the courage of their convictions. They're like, "If you're going to watch this movie about a killer doll who dresses like a weird turn-of-the-century creepy Crackerjack mascot, you'd better stretch your fingers out, because you're going to need that top row of laptop keys."

I'm not exactly sure why it's "M3gan." They do lay it out in the movie, but who can remember nonsense like...Model 3 Girl...Abomination Nonsense-tech?

It's totally irrelevant because by the time you get the explanation, you've already had to search "M3gan" and

just sort of grow up and deal with the uncomfortable feelings.

M3gan is your classic scary doll movie, following in the footsteps left by Chucky's Keds, and of course some lesser dolls, such as Annabelle, Brahms from *The Boy*, the titular Dolls from *Dolls*, and who could forget the puppets from the *Puppetmaster* series? While technically puppets and not dolls, eh, close enough, and no Cult Movie Vault would be complete without mention of our favorite little mischievous puppets, such as Leech Woman, Decapitron, and Bonestripper (one of these is not a puppet, but is in fact a fictional ride from the movie *Nothing But Trouble*. See if you can spot the outlier!).

The twist, of course, is that *M3gan* uses AI to learn and to complete goals, such as "Keep this little girl safe at all costs."

Sure, there's no way that could go wrong...

Folks, if you're putting an AI together, maybe include some caveats. When you say, "Protect this child," maybe instead of "at all costs" or "no matter what," something like "within reason," might work out a little better.

Maybe: "If you, robot doll, are chopping off your hand and replacing it with a kitchen knife in order to complete your objective, you have gone too far."

Anyway, there's a lot to love about *M3gan*. For one thing, you might think I've already spoiled a good chunk of the movie, but you'd be totally wrong! We've covered less than



15 minutes. *M3gan* is like 90 minutes long in total, and it wastes VERY little time getting set up.

Finally. Finally, a modern horror movie that says, “We probably don’t need to have this go on for 2-and-a-half hours.”

I’m not here to say every movie must be 90 minutes, or that every movie is better that way, but when your movie can be summed up with the phrase “Killer robot doll,” maybe a 2.5-hour philosophical treatise isn’t exactly what viewers want.

Which get us to my favorite thing about *M3gan*: Although *M3gan* has somewhat of a message, somewhat of a tale about what it means to be human and trauma and so on, we’re allowed to mostly forget all about that before the end.

I’ve seen many a horror movie lately that, while good, leans heavy into the whole, “Maybe the real monster is SOCIETY,” or “The real monster is US,” or “This movie really holds up a mirror to...” kind of thing. Which, fine, but it’s refreshing that, in *M3gan*, the real monster is DEFINITELY M3gan.

It’s not you, it’s not society, it’s not the government, it’s not corporate greed. It’s the overly strong super creepy doll that runs like a crab.

M3gan is well-designed, she’s pretty creepy looking, and one of the most hilarious parts of the movie is that they put skin on her to make her look LESS creepy, and this has absolutely the opposite effect. Especially because, for some reason, while M3gan is recharging, she never closes her eyes. Why? Why on earth would you design a robot that is constantly staring into the middle distance?

Unfortunately, *M3gan* was released as a PG-13 movie with toned down violence and gore, and this is the version I saw. It was satisfactory, but who is this person asking for a less-bloody killer doll movie? Who is like, “I would love to see that movie about the murderous doll, but no killings”? Who is this person? Why do they have so much pull in

Hollywood? I want names.

Another plus for *M3gan*, the filmmakers were smart enough to use a good deal of practical effects. In fact, there were animatronic dolls created for some of the scenes.



This means that somewhere, out there, a M3gan actually exists!

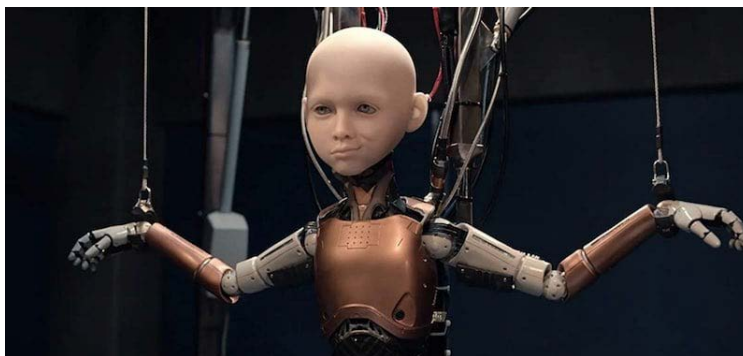
And therefore, my plot for *M3gan 2* (*M2gan*?) is as follows:

After wrapping filming on the movie *M3gan*, the animatronics are put into storage. Where they are, I don’t know, hit by lightning or something, who cares, the transformation part

is never important.

This M3gan animatronic is then brought out of storage because there’s an actors’ strike going on, so the crew is tasked with making the animatronic more lifelike. They can just shoot the doll scenes for now, no actors needed!

Of course, the techie who adds all this functionality to M3gan is unable to finish programming her to understand the difference between fiction and reality, and mayhem ensues.



I recommend *M3gan* wholeheartedly. It’s not a movie that someone is going to sell to you as a life-changing viewing experience or “the best horror movie in the last decade.”

It’s...a movie. It’s fun.

So sit down, invite your friends Mike & Ike to join you, [and enjoy M3gan](#). Especially the scene

where her face melts off and everyone in the movie is like, “...Should we be doing this?”

No.

I mean, YES, as a viewer of this movie, you should definitely be doing this.

But as a human being pretending this is a series of real events: Why aren’t you running yet?

Just When You Thought **the FUN Was Over...**

YES!fest!

Another incredible Summer Reading Adventure has come and gone. We've had mini-golf, escape rooms, and foam parties. Books were read, prizes were won, and joyful noises abounded with no shushing (We're not a *shushing* library district). The new Library Innovation Center launched in downtown Greeley with tremendous community support. And, as the new school year begins, you might think the High Plains Library staff has nothing left to do but sweep up the confetti.

You *might* think that, but you probably don't. Because you're clever, and you already read the title of this article. So, you know I'm about to tell you:

YES!fest IS COMING!

YES!fest, our annual Youth Engineering & Science Festival, is a massive interactive event for the whole family. It is free to attend, and this year's event is scheduled to take place in our beautiful new Library Innovation Center (LINC). After more than six hundred participants attended last year's festival, we realized we had outgrown the Greeley Rec Center. And this year's festival will be the biggest yet!

Get ready for hands-on activities and challenges from some of our area's best innovators. The High Plains Library District has invited a number of community partners and organizations representing a variety of STEM professions, and they're ready to bring you the best they've got. From technology to nature, aerospace to earth science, media production to weird phenomena, we have something for everyone.

The excitement takes place from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. Saturday, September 16th at [LINC](#). So, drop in, grab a science passport, and join YES!Bot and Sparky on their latest expedition. On the way, you'll discover mind-blowing presentations, incredible activities, and plenty of prizes and giveaways. It's more fun than you thought you were allowed to have in a library. (But then, we're not a *boring* library district, either.)

The end of summer doesn't have to be the end of fun. Why should it be? There is so much more to do and explore. [Join us for YES!fest](#) and keep the adventure going.

YES!fest

Youth Engineering & Science Festival

Festival Juvenil de Ingeniería y Ciencia



SPARKY

Sept. 16
10am-2pm

LINC Library
Innovation Center
501 8th Ave, Greeley

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

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Nantes Library

703 Birch Street
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Northern Plains Public Library

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

Outreach

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Platteville Public Library

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

Riverside Library & Cultural Center

3700 Golden Street
Evans, CO 80620
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Poudre Learning Center

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