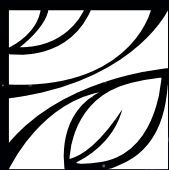


CAGEMAS RETURNS TO HPLD THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!



High Plains Library District

CommUNITY

DECEMBER 2023

Ghosts of Cagemas

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Inside!**



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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.

Right a Wrong with **LinkedIn Learning**

Alright, enough is enough. It's time for me to learn how to draw.

Let me tell you a tragic story that makes this more meaningful. Unless you're heartless. I'm not sure if LinkedIn Learning can help with that or not...

When I was in 4th grade, I had a gerbil. I'm not 100% sure on the difference between gerbils and hamsters other than gerbils having tails, but lack of knowledge about pets was never a barrier to me wanting to HAVE pets, as is the case for most little kids. Especially those like me who caught about half of their pets in ponds, heard somewhere that crawdads will eat oatmeal, and had no inkling that they can die of iodine deficiency during molting.

Me and my brother both got gerbils. He named his "Sunburn" because at the time, my brother had a horrendous sunburn. I named mine "Streak" because he was fast. He seemed fast to me at the time, anyway. Again, I don't have enough gerbil knowledge to accurately say whether Streak was particularly fast for a gerbil, but it's possible he was the speediest gerbil who ever lived. Let's not rule it out.

Streak lived inside a hamster enclosure, which was like a big aquarium thing with tubes all over the place. He spent most of his life there while Sunburn escaped quite frequently and for months at a time, the only signs of life being a chewed up t-shirt in a bottom dresser drawer.

One morning, Streak, for reasons I still don't know, jumped hard and smashed his head on the top of his cage. He had a lump on his head, poking through his fur, almost like on a cartoon, and even with my limited gerbil knowledge I could tell he was moving slow and didn't seem quite right.

I ran downstairs and asked my mom if we could rush him to the vet.

Now, I'm not sure what gerbil ownership is like in 2023, but in the early 90s, gerbils were not the sorts of pets you took to the vet, ever. Or, at least, gerbils were not the sorts of pets that our family, who kept the house at a balmy 60-ish degrees in winter to save on heating bills, would take to the vet. And my mom tried to explain this to me in a way I understood, but ultimately it didn't matter because Streak was dead before I left for school.

So I'm in class, crying, and the teacher said I could go sit in the library for a little while.

You might be thinking this is where a helpful librarian swoops in and I fall in love with libraries and decide to work in one, but you'd be wrong. The only things I liked about that library were *The Oregon Trail* and a book of monsters that told you how to make a powder that would repel werewolves. The rest of it could take a walk.

The school counselor came in, and he sat at the table with me. I don't remember him much, but he was a nice guy, and he asked me what happened. I explained that my beloved gerbil was dead, and he suggested if I drew a picture of Streak, I might feel better.

I tried, reader. I tried to draw Streak. But I was a terrible artist then, and I'm a terrible artist now. There's just something about drawing that feels unnatural to me, like my brain can't take something real and make it into lines on a piece of paper.

The drawing ended up making me feel worse, but on the plus, I felt bad in a way that I was used to dealing with. I didn't lose a pet every day, but I did pretty frequently



confront my own lack of artistic talent. Is transferring sorrow into a more common kind of sorrow a therapeutic practice? Maybe that counselor was onto something...

Anyway, cut to all these years later, and I STILL cannot draw to save my life. Seriously, if I was trapped in a SAW scenario, and the game I had to play was drawing a decent-looking chair, I'd be like, "You might as well put me in the eyeball-sucking-out machine now because that's where this is headed."

Which is where LinkedIn Learning comes in.

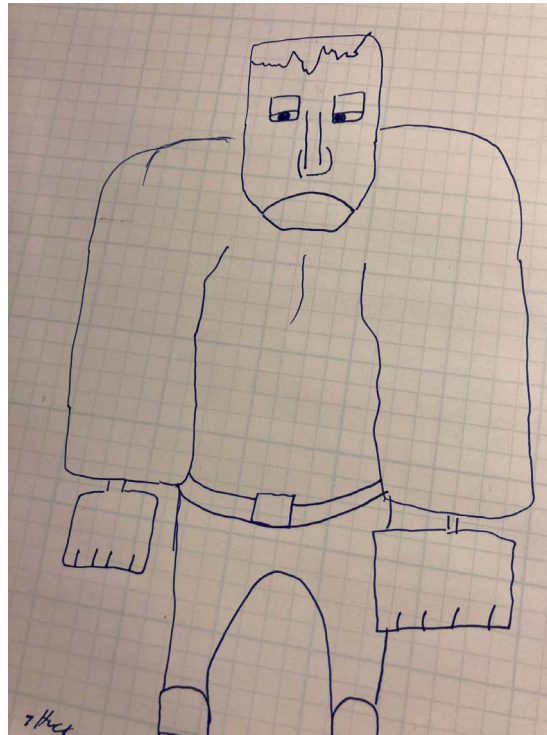
With your library card, [you've got access to LinkedIn Learning](#), 100% cost-free.

I also have access to it with MY library card! I probably didn't need to specify that part, right? You assumed that if your library card gave you access, an HPLD employee's certainly would as well?

I've taken a few classes on it, and they helped me learn Adobe InDesign, Wordpress Elementor, Project Management, and a whole ton of other

technical, business-y things.

But there are some less technical, more creative sides to LIL as well, including a [Drawing Fundamentals class](#).



To keep me honest, here's a drawing of Frankenstein:

By the way, I know that in the book, this character is called The Creature. But in the Halloween store, he's called Frankenstein. I'm drawing the Halloween character, not the literary figure. So save your corrections for someone else!

Once I finish the LinkedIn Learning course, I'll try again, and we'll post it in a later newsletter.

Let's see how this goes!

And when you get a minute, take a look at the classes available. They really are great, they cover a HUGE variety of topics, and they often come with a certificate that you can add to your LinkedIn

profile, which certainly helps if you're on the hunt for a new gig.

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Stocking Stuffers *from Your Library*

Being the holiday season, we figured we'd give you some little reminders for a small number of the things we have going on at your library.

1. Experience Passes

With a little time off of school coming up, now is a great time to [reserve an Experience Pass](#) for free entry into awesome spots like the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery or the Colorado Model Railroad Museum.

2. Specialty Checkout

GoPros? Projectors? What do you need to add a little extra oomph to a holiday party? What if you projected that fireplace video into an INFERNO!? What if you strapped a GoPro to your kiddos for a first-person POV when they open a gift? Or, what if you're not sure about whether you want to get a telescope or GoPro of your own? [Try one of ours, see if you like it!](#)

3. ARO

[Adults Read On](#) is our ever-on-going reading challenge for adults. You can sign up at any time. Right now, for instance.

4. Meeting Rooms

You know how you have some people over, and it's a huge hassle because you have to pre-clean so they don't judge you, then you have to figure out how to make a bathroom

that's normally used by one or two people into a bathroom for like 10 people, and you're in the garage, looking for camping chairs when you're like, "There HAS to be a better way"!? [Reserve one of our meeting spaces](#). We've got a bunch of different ones, all different sizes, they're clean and ready for use when you walk in, and all you have to do is put it back the way it was when you leave.

5. Mobile App

[Just look up HPLD2Go](#) in the store of your choice, download and use it totally free, and now you'll have even better access to everything your library has to offer. This comes in really handy when you remember out of nowhere that you want to watch a certain movie, or when someone tells you about a great book, you can easily put it on hold right then and there.

6. Personalized Reading List

If you [get a request in now](#), our experts will do their best to give you a list of potential books to gift your loved ones. Just fill out the form with as much detail as possible (this one for kids, this one for adults), and we'll get back to you with a human-hand-selected list of similar options sure to please.

7. CHNC

[This collection of Colorado Historic Newspapers](#) is pretty incredible, and we have Greeley Tribunes going back to the 1920's! Look up local history, maybe see if you can

find a relative or two in these archives. What better gift than a printed scan of a birth announcement, athletic achievement, or even the premiere of a favorite movie from the past?

8. Woodshop Certification Training

With our new woodshop at LINC, you can [attend a single session and walk away with the basics](#) you'll need to use the woodshop. This is your ticket to handmade gifts this holiday season.

9. Prospector and Interlibrary Loan

If there's [a book or DVD or CD or even other type of](#)

[material you've had a hard time getting your hands on](#), try Prospector, and if that doesn't work, Interlibrary Loan. Prospector is awesome because it's a little more local, so while the options aren't AS vast, you usually get your item pretty quickly. Interlibrary Loan is great because it turns the entire world into your personal library.

10. Stream and Download

[This page](#) is your gateway to movies, music, comics, books, and audiobooks. Nothing makes wrapping gifts go faster than listening to a riveting audiobook.

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!



The **Ghosts of Cage**mas

Past, Present, & Future!

The other night some friends invited me to go out to the movies.

“A Nic Cage movie?!” I asked.

They said “No, it’s—” and that’s all I heard because I hung up the phone. And I mean I really hung it up. I created a pretty advanced phone cradle that I use to hang up my cell whenever I’m particularly unhappy. Nothing helps a feeling of betrayal like slamming a phone down, you really should try it.

Then I crossed my arms, turned on the TV, and went through my Nic Cage DVDs.

Yes, I still have DVDs. Did you think someone with a phone that can be hung up on the wall wouldn’t have DVDs?

And as I scanned the titles, something caught my eye.

Superman...Lives?

I opened the case, and -WHOOSH- out flew a ghost. At least, I was pretty sure it was a ghost. It was a lady in an old-timey dress, and she was bright and fuzzy around the edges, and her clothes were all wispy and stuff. And when she talked, she taaaaaalked liiiiiiike thiiiiiiiiiiiis, which is a thing only ghosts do constantly. The living get bored trying to keep up that whole ghost accent pretty quickly, so they drop it unless they’re saying words like, “Boooooo” or “Halloweeeee!”

I said, “Greetings, ghost.”

The ghost said, “Aren’t you frightened by my appearance?”

I said, "I guess not. I thought I would be, but conveniently enough to keep this plot moving, I'm not. So, what are you here for? You want me to lay your body to rest or something? Some kind of revenge against my great-grandfather? Ancient ritual to let you pass to the afterlife, but then it turns out you suckered me in and I doomed the entirety of existence with my buffoonery?"

The ghost looked a little confused, then said, "I am The Ghost of Cagemas Past, and I bring you to a Nicolas Cage movie from the past that was never made!"

Which explained *Superman Lives*.

The ghost said, "You must watch this DVD, and you must not tell a soul what you see here today."

I said, "Rad, will do." Then I looked off to the side and winked. Because from the very first second, I was TOTALLY planning to tell you all about *Superman Lives*, but the Ghost didn't need to know that.

~

As is now fairly common knowledge, Nicolas Cage was set to play Superman in the ill-fated *Superman Lives*, which was loosely based on *The Death of Superman*, an event that happened in the 90s, sold a billion comics, and is for sure responsible for the 90s comics bubble.

I guess *Superman Lives* is kind of a weird title for a movie about Superman's death, but it was the late 90s, and we weren't ready for a grim Superman movie that was hopeless. You know, the kind where him and Zod fight and destroy all of Metropolis, Superman's adopted father dies in a completely preventable way, and Lois Lane is kind of sad and moody for valid reasons, but still, sad.

Superman would have been a pretty monumental Cage role, maybe the pinnacle of his action career. It would've released pretty shortly after the back-to-back hits of *Face/Off* and *Con Air*, and before the 3-movie slump of *Snake Eyes*, *8mm*, and *Bringing Out The Dead* (all have their charms, but none can beat *Con Air* in a "Cage" match).

With a script written by Kevin Smith, the DVD I saw was a bit unusual, but at the same time, kind of delightful. You can tell Kevin Smith is a big fan of comics, and he goes to great lengths to have cameos with characters like Deadshot, a very underrated and underused (until recently) DC villain.

Before we go any further, anyone want to take a shot at Cage's first line as Superman from the script?

Take, I don't know, 1,000 guesses, you won't get it.

Because it's a very Homer Simpson, "Mmm...spaghetti." It mostly makes sense in the scene, but it's still a pretty strange first line from The Man of Steel after such a long hiatus from the big screen.

ESPECIALLY unusual is, Sandra Bullock cast as Lois Lane, and she's Cage's SAME AGE!

Since when is the romantic lead age-appropriate? This truly is an alternate-universe movie.

By the way, I'll just say it now, late-90s Sandra Bullock

is perfect Lois Lane casting. Snooping reporter, constantly getting in over her head, battling verbally with Lex Luthor. This is truly a loss to be mourned, but save those tears for Sandra Bullock Tins Day, the day when we eat chocolate and watch *Speed* on repeat.

It's hard for me to describe this Superman movie, the feel of it, but Cage has said that if you want to know what his performance as The Man of Steel would've been like, you can just watch *City of Angels*:



I was supposed [to play] Clark Kent after [City of Angels] and I was already developing this alien otherness playing this angel. That is a perfect example of the tonality you would've gotten for Kal-El and for Clark Kent: Clark would've been a little more amusing but Kal-El had the sensitivity and the goodness and the vulnerability and all those feelings that were kind of angelic and also terrifying.

Now, unless you're visited by a weird analog-format-loving ghost like I was, you'll never get to see this movie, and that's for a variety of speculated reasons. But a lot of fingers seemed to eventually point back to Jon Peters, producer, who had some of his own ideas for the film, including:

- Brainiac (Superman's enemy) fighting Polar Bears
- Brainiac giving Lex Luthor some kind of "space dog" companion
- Giving Brainiac a sassy R2D2-like sidekick/assistant
- And, of course, the movie's third act would NEED to have a fight between Superman and a giant mechanical spider, spiders being, as Peters put it, the ultimate predator.

However misguided some of his ideas may have been, Peters recognized one fundamental truth: He believed Nicolas Cage was the perfect actor to convince audiences that Superman was, in fact, from outer space.

And on that note, I must agree.

~

As the ghost opened the DVD tray and took out the *Superman Lives* DVD, she made me promise to not tell anyone about the movie I'd just seen.

"Oh, totally," I said. "Your secret is safe with me!"

And then that ghost disappeared.

Before I could figure out how to write a great IMDB review of a movie that didn't exist, a second, new ghost popped into my living room.

This ghost looked a lot like the first ghost, except she wore a pair of mom jeans and had some sort of ghost phone that she never once looked up from the whole time she was talking to me.

"I'm The Ghost of Cagemas Present," she said. "Here. You're supposed to watch this Nicolas Cage movie from the present that was never made."

And I was handed a DVD called, "*Joe Exotic: King of Tigers*"

~

In our world, Cage was reportedly offered the role of Joe Exotic in a *Tiger King* movie.

If you haven't seen *Tiger King*, it mostly follows a man named Joe Exotic who ran a...let's call it a zoo where he kept a bunch of wild cats in big cages in one of those states where that's still something people are allowed to do for some reason. I'm a pretty "live and let live" kind of person who doesn't like to tread upon the freedoms of others, but I suspect that line would get very blurry for me if a dozen tigers lived next door.

And that's the thing: each person who owns tigers seems to own multiple tigers. This isn't a one-and-done pet thing, you either have zero tigers or like 15.

The show *Tiger King* takes a lot of twists and turns, there's an alleged murder, which was allegedly covered up by HAVING A CORPSE DEVoured BY TIGERS, which I suppose is the only way a person could say

there's a reasonable use for large cats as pets (although this presumes that murder is a reasonable thing, which it isn't, but we're dealing with a pretty unusual set of circumstances here, shortcuts in logic must be taken).

As I watched Nicolas Cage play Joe Exotic and run through several of the scenes from the documentary, I was stunned by a weird feeling.

This was a movie I didn't think we needed. The *Tiger King* show was pretty compelling, and I didn't think Cage would add any weirdness to it that wasn't already there.

However.

HOWEVER.

A small portion of the TV documentary focused on Joe Exotic's career as a country music singer. I won't impugn the man by saying anything about his songs. Just...listen for yourself.

And as a DVD extra, there were several music videos where Cage sang Joe Exotic's songs AS Joe Exotic.

And then, another bonus feature, a live concert where Cage performed all of Joe Exotic's songs, AS Joe Exotic.

This concert film, my friends, was far better than *Primal*, the Cage movie we DID get where Cage plays a big game hunter

or something and gets stuck on a boat with a bunch of his captured animals that, of course, get loose. This movie took a wrong turn from the start because there's an obvious Noah's Ark parallel here, except instead of saving two of each animal, he has to kill two of each. Missed opportunity.

~

The Ghost of Christmas Present said something about her phone being almost out of battery and disappeared.

Then Robocop showed up.

This resulted in a very long, very drawn-out conversation between the two of us.

Why was Robocop there? Nic Cage wasn't in *Robocop*, right? Did the makers of *Robocop* meet this ghost and create Robocop to resemble him, or...what?

I'll spare you all of this because the answers were all



ridiculous and really throw off the believability of an already unbelievable story here, suffice to say The RoboGhost of Christmas Future used his data spike thing to stab into my DVD player and start playing a Cagemas movie from the near future.

~

Slated for 2024, *Longlegs* is a movie with very little info out there, but Cage did share some details:

It's about a character who's hearing voices. It's kind of like a possessed Geppetto, who's making these dolls

As an aficionado of doll-based horror (of which there is TONS), I was already in. *M3gan* is my Movie of 2023, even though it came out in 2022. *Dolls* is an underrated classic. And the novel *Toy Cemetery* has to be the most bonkers thing I've ever read.

Plus, *Longlegs* is directed by Oz Perkins, who's made some pretty solid horror flicks over the last few years.

What can I say? I don't want to ruin it for you. But if you, like me, and like anyone of taste, look forward to a movie where Cage plays an energetic, bizarre creep, then I

suggest purchasing your shades now, because your future is about to get pret-ty bright.

~

Once the credits on *Longlegs* rolled, I was back in the present with you, you normals who don't hop around through time or dimensions or whatever it is I did.



I checked my DVD rack, and sure enough, *Superman*, *Tiger King*, and *Longlegs* were all gone. Although there was still a huge hole in my DVD player where Robocop stabbed it with his data

spike thingy. I wish he'd just played the DVD. I mean, this was my moment, like when the kid in *Polar Express* has the bell at the end, so he knows it really happened. But couldn't I have a bell or something instead of a destroyed piece of electronic equipment?

But I calmed down after I realized, hey, I'd just seen 3 Nicolas Cage movies that nobody else on Earth had seen. This was something I could call up my friends and tell them about, and they would SEETHE with jealousy.

And isn't that the true spirit of Cagemas?

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