

LET THE ADVENTURE BEGIN!

High Plains Library District

Community

MAY SRA 2024

Summer is HERE!

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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.

Summer IS HERE!

You've worked hard all year, and now you are ready to enjoy your well-earned summer.

But with all the excellent summer options, maybe you're not sure where to begin.

Good news: The High Plains Library District is here to give you a great starting point with this year's Summer Reading Adventure!

This year's theme is "Adventure Begins at Your Library," and we had so much fun creating a calendar full of events for adventurers of all ages.

Performers, foam parties, robot competitions, stick horse rodeos, mystery parties, laser tag adventures — just to name a few exciting options to explore.

Keep an eye on our calendar of events and pick up a list of Summer Reading Adventure events at your local library.

But events are just a part of it!

You can embark on new adventures every time you open a book, and the best part is that you can earn points as you read!

All you need to do is stop by your local library and pick up a Summer Reading Adventure Log or [click here to register online](#).

You can also earn points by completing fun activities such as playing a game or building a blanket fort. Simply fill in the boxes on your Summer Reading Adventure log to keep track of completed activities and how much time you are reading.

Everything kicks off TODAY!

Go to your local library branch to pick up your Summer Reading Adventure Log and grab a calendar of our amazing events, or [visit our website for all your Summer Reading needs](#), plus some bonus reading lists and registration help.

Don't delay! [Take the first step to a summer full of adventure right now!](#)



Summer Reading *for Adults*

Being an adult isn't always fun. It's rarely fun, let's be real. I'm typing this right now on a computer while the school next door is having recess. Picture me, at a desk, typing, and just to my right, kids running, screaming, hanging upside-down from things.

One group is having a blast. The other group is me. But, haha, we should be focused on what IS fun about being an adult, right? Why focus on my plight?

For example, I can just go buy like 50 Twix right now and have them for dinner. Not WITH dinner, FOR dinner. Because I'm an adult.

I mean, I absolutely can't because my aged tummy would revolt, betrayed for the last time. I've put my digestive system through some trials over the years, and I think this

would be the last chocolate-covered, vaguely-straw-shaped straw.

Or, okay, I could stay up all night watching TV if I wanted. I mean, I can't because I will 100% fall asleep, possibly before we're in the double-digits of the PM.

Man, I thought I swerved this back into how being an adult is fun, but that car drifted right into the oncoming traffic of responsibility and exhaustion.

But there's a theme we can work with here: As an adult, you can make your own choices! Good or bad! Pile of Twix or maybe a reasonable amount of Twix? Which, for me, is like one Twick? Is "Twick" the singular form of "Twix?"

Whatever the number of Twix, I DECIDE. Please do not tell



my dentist.

Look, what I'm getting at is that just because HPLD doesn't have a summer reading prize for you adults doesn't mean there cannot be a summer reading prize for you at all. You just have to make it your own, give yourself a choice. It's called being an adult!

Prize One for Adults

For the kids, prize one is a book.

This is pretty easy for you to replicate: You can pick a book you've been meaning to buy and go ahead and buy it for yourself.

Now, I would encourage you to buy something...how to put this delicately...foolish.

I'm recommending *Planet X*, an X-Men/Star Trek novel. Because I just got this for myself, and I haven't managed

to dive in yet, but, c'mon, how does this happen? Who thought this was a great idea?

And I want other people in this community to read it as well. I have a feeling there is stuff to talk about here. Warf DEFINITELY fights Wolverine at some point, right? Geordi and Cyclops bond over their eyewear? Picard and Professor X are both bald and both played by Patrick Stewart.

Okay, I'm starting to see how this snowballed.

Prize Two for Adults

The second prize for kids is a whistle and compass, a book, and a pizza or ice cream coupon.

So, obviously, you get some pizza or an ice cream.

But what about that fancy whistle?

Here's the thing: I think kids will probably use that whistle to annoy people. Not intentionally, but when a parent takes this away from a kid, I think it'll be because they are relentlessly blowing the whistle, not because they are inaccurately reading the compass.

What is the adult version of something like this?

My first suggestion is an acoustic guitar. Do you, as a middle-aged person, want to annoy others with sound? Try to learn the acoustic guitar. How many times can the people you live with hear the opening cords of "Smoke on the Water?" How many very slow, choppy renditions of "Sweet Home Alabama" can they endure?

Prize Three for Adults

Last prize for kids is a water bottle.

Which is convenient because we are in the dawn of a new age of water containers.

What began as humble clay jars, or even just putting your two hands next to each other, has evolved into double-walled, metallic, powder-coated drinking vessels that seem like they could double as a bomb shelter for rodents so large that I wouldn't necessarily be happy they'd survived.

So you COULD get yourselves one of those fancy bottles, but I'd encourage you to find any sort of water vessel that suits you.

And if you're lost, here's your answer.

This is the Eleiko Heavy Mug, and there are several other versions of this mug around the internet. These are super expensive, and it's because they are standard mugs that weigh about 22 lbs.



Never again will you be thirsty, and never again will you be weak.

~

Look, overall, I want to encourage you, as an adult, to try out Summer Reading Adventure this year. If for no other reason than

to give yourself some prizes. You had a long year already, and, bad news, bro, it's only like halfway over. You deserve a prize, especially if you do some reading.

This is the place where I'm supposed to say, "Besides, even if you skip the prizes, reading is its own reward."

But we can be honest with each other, we're all adults here.

Reading IS its own reward, but that doesn't mean you can't enjoy a ridiculously heavy mug. Which my dentist probably ALSO wouldn't love.



Summer Reading for **TEENS**

Teens? Hello? Are you reading this?

Of course you aren't. It's a library newsletter. This is the sort of thing you pick up once you're a bit...more seasoned. When you start being shocked by fashion and noticing that birds are interesting.

But some of you are probably the parents of teens, and I'm guessing some of you have teens that we traditionally refer to as "reluctant readers."

Which is a term I've come to dislike. Mostly because it was applied to me as a teen, and as a teen, I didn't want anything applied to me that I didn't select, no matter how accurate it may be.

But it IS a useful term because it described how I felt about reading. Sort of. "Reluctant" and "Violently opposed" are in the same ballpark, right?

There are MANY exceptions, many teens who love to read. Some of them probably live in many of your homes, readers. I mean, you subscribe to a library newsletter, there's a good chance books play a pretty big role in your life.

That said, I'm sympathetic. Having been a teen, and then having worked as a teen librarian for over 10 years, you start to figure out that teens have A LOT going on in their lives, and A LOT of it is happening for the first time.

So I want to give you some tips that might help you encourage your teenager to read a little bit this summer. Now, don't take this as me trying to tell you how to parent your kids. I would never do that. Unless you were teaching your kids to sprint in the library. Then I would consider stepping in because what are you thinking?

Modify Prizes: The most useful SRA hack for teens is to go ahead and create your own prizes for your teen. The prize books are great, the selection is wonderful, and when it comes to teens who aren't super hot on reading, getting a book as a reward for reading is like giving me a new plunger as a reward for unclogging a toilet.

An hour later curfew, another hour of video game time for the week, a trip to a concert — all things you could offer as a prize for your teen, provided they finish different levels of the program.

Now, some will say, “You shouldn't have to bribe your teenagers to do things,” and they're not wrong, but maybe that's the wrong way to look at it. Maybe you kind of want to take your kids to a concert this summer, and this is a way they can feel like they earned it instead of just getting it. Maybe you'd have a good time taking them to a double-feature at the movie theater this summer, and maybe this is a good excuse.

Get Creative About What Counts: Do you want to count audiobooks in your house? Maybe even podcasts of a certain value? Do you want to count reading the subtitles on anime? Super long reddit posts? Hey, this is your place, you make the rules.

Think of the reading log as a guideline if you'd like. A starting point from which you can customize to suit your needs.

Same goes for the activities. They're probably most suited

to the younger kids, so come up with some different stuff to throw in there instead.

Get a Personalized Reading List: A lot of “reluctant” readers just haven't found the right book yet. And you know what's a lot less horrendous than sitting at the computer together, scrolling through everything the library has in hopes that something just jumps out at you?

It won't, by the way. That's a website feature we don't have...yet.

It's a lot easier and a lot more fun to fill out a quick form and have library staff recommend some good books for you.

Just “Happen To” Bring Home Some Books: It's not unusual that when you head to the library, your teenager isn't pumped to come along. But that's fine! Your card lets you check out 50 items, so why not just grab a dozen books that you think might be interesting or fun for your teenager? I know, you'll have to bravely venture into the teen section, but trust me, it's fine. Intimidating because the books are very thick and HOW DO TEENAGERS FINISH THESE SUPER LONG TOMES!?, but you'll manage.

Bring them home, stack them on the table, and just nonchalantly let your teen know, “I happened to come across the teen section and sort of got out of hand with all this great stuff and checked them all out, so here they are, if you're interested.”

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Colorado Author James Mitchell Presents:

Musical Chairs:

A 76-year-old's quest to learn every instrument in the Orchestra

Coming right up on May 30th, Colorado Author James Mitchell Presents his book *Musical Chairs* at Carbon Valley Regional Library.

At the age of 76, James Mitchell (a self-proclaimed nonmusician), embarked on an ambitious quest to learn how to play every instrument in a symphony orchestra – and then wrote a book chronicling his remarkable journey.

Mitchell's book, *Musical Chairs*, is humorous, inspiring, and full of surprises.

We'd love to have a huge crowd to give James Mitchell a warm welcome on the 30th, and in the interest of enticing you a bit further, we did a short interview with him about his quest, about writing a book, and, as it turns out, about playing a 12-foot horn.

HPLD: *Sometimes it seems like people are held back because, when we're adults, we're embarrassed to be amateurs again. Do you have any tips for someone who's interested in trying something new and needs to overcome that reluctance to be an amateur again?*

James Mitchell: That's absolutely right, but maybe we should substitute "beginners" for "amateurs" because most of us were only amateurs when we were younger, even on our best days. There is such a gulf between even a good amateur musician and true professional.

But that's not an acceptable reason not to take on something new at any age. The fear of not being good at something, the embarrassment of being a beginner again, is a powerful deterrent to doing something that can give you enormous satisfaction and joy. The two keys are to have realistic expectations and to really want

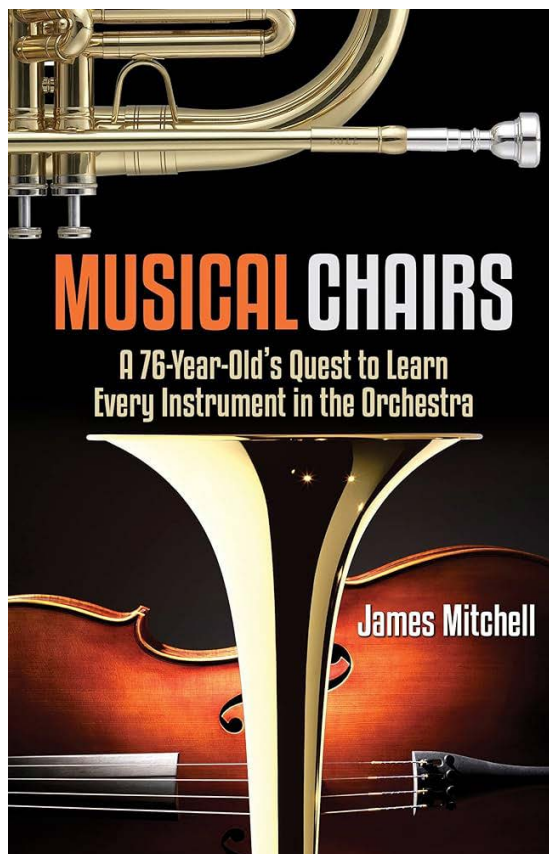
to do it. If you really want to play the flute and expect to be able to play in ensembles with similarly skilled players, you are going to be fulfilled in a way you may not have ever experienced. It is marvelous. There are so many arrangements of great classical pieces for all manner of ensembles scored for beginners, intermediates, and advanced students, that you can be making real music early on in your lessons.

HPLD: *Tell me about an instrument that surprised you, either in a good way or a bad way.*

JM: The French Horn does battle with the oboe in the conventional wisdom department as to which is the most difficult orchestral instrument to play. Neither one gave me as much trouble as the bassoon.

After only my third lesson on the French Horn, when I played an excerpt from Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 that I had found online and worked up by myself,

my teacher stared at me for a moment and then said, "Jim, that's not normal."



The bassoon, on the other hand is a quietly deceptive instrument. What we see from the audience side in the concert hall is four fingers on each hand pressing keys and covering holes just as they do on the oboe or clarinet. What we don't see is the nine keys on the opposite side that are controlled by your two thumbs. It is the ultimate tap your head and rub your belly challenge.

HPLD: *When you're learning something new but you're also very busy, do you think it's better to practice a little bit each day or to have less regular, longer practice sessions?*

JM: Rather than deciding to practice depending on time, I think we get the best results when we bring a good attitude toward our practice sessions, regardless of the duration. To get something worthwhile from practicing you need you be as fully present with your instrument as possible.

If you're squeezing it in between other things you have to do, and putting pressure on yourself to get through those four études no matter what, it may not be worth the time.

Most of us notice early on that there is a better time of day to practice, and if we can make that a routine, we kind of train ourselves unconsciously to be ready to play at that time.

Another tip is to try to play even the simplest, dullest, most unmusical exercise with the best tone you can produce.

HPLD: *You've led an interesting life that sounds incredibly rich with experiences. I saw from your website that you gave a shot at acting in New York City, worked in the ski industry, started a wilderness outfitting business, and even took trips along The Oregon Trail in a covered wagon. What strikes me is the variety. What is it about variety that excites and interests you?*

JM: Variety keeps me fresh and engaged. I like to travel, try new restaurants, make new friends, read different genres of books.

Most of us try different things when we are young because we don't know what we cannot do. Anything and

everything seems possible so we go ahead and do it.

I think what is really happening, at any age, is that sometimes, not often, when we hear about an idea, or we try something new, it resonates with us in a very gut level, unintellectual way. Whatever it is, it may not resonate with

anyone else, but it does to you, and if you are not afraid to fail, you cannot help but respond to that resonance. And the odds are good that you won't fail, because the added piece is that you really have a strong desire to do it. That desire lets you put in the hours of learning, gaining experience and acquiring the skills to succeed.

In addition to what you mentioned above, I also ran a national advertising agency and co-founded an NGO aiding women in Afghanistan. Of all those careers, the only one I had any training for was acting. The point is, you don't

have to have all the answers before you start.

The journey brings as much satisfaction as the results.

HPLD: *I read on your website that your initial retirement wasn't very successful, in terms of relaxing and being fully retired. I've known quite a few people who are that way. What do you think it is about retirement that just doesn't suit some people?*

JM: Timing is an important component. It is nice to retire before you have to retire due to health or loss of skills. Retirement can be very hard if there are financial concerns. So many people devote so much of their lives to work and family that when their career ends and the kids are gone, they have few other interests. In a way, it is the perfect time to take up something new.

HPLD: *You started writing your first book at age 76. Do you think writing a book would be easiest at 26, 46, or 76?*

JM: Those are interesting age choices, with each one being at a very different life stage. A specific age probably doesn't make writing

easier or harder, but the perspectives are vastly different.

It is fascinating to listen to a recording of the same piece of music, say a well-known symphony like Beethoven's



5th, conducted by the same conductor at those different ages. The notes are the same, but the interpretation changes as the maestro brings all that he has lived to his understanding of the music. (S)he could not possibly conduct that work at 26 the way (S)he does at 76.

HPLD: *What's the most unusual instrument you've had the chance to play on this journey?*

JM: Ha! The Alphorn. It's that 12' long instrument you see on Swiss travel posters played by men wearing lederhosen and little green hats. My horn teacher has a big collection of all kinds of horns, including Alphorns. We became friends and he brought two of them when he and his wife visited us at Grand Lake and we stood on top of the boat house and serenaded the boater, bathers, and fish with Brahms and Amazing Grace.

HPLD: *Kirkus said about your book:*

"An engaging account of embracing goals and enjoying the voyage as much as the destination. The book's resounding message is that individuals don't need to be remarkable to lead exciting lives."

And on your website, your book's blurb contains this part: There are few things in life more uplifting and inspiring than witnessing someone seemingly quite ordinary do something quite extraordinary.

Do you see yourself as an unremarkable or ordinary person, despite all of your accomplishments?

JM: Absolutley. In fact, I sincerely believe that if I can do something, almost anyone can. The caveats are that they also have to have a strong desire, be persistent, not be afraid to fail, and have reasonable expectations.

HPLD: *Having done so many things so successfully at different times in your life, is there anything that you would say is a "young person's game," or do you feel like the door is always open on most things?*

JM: Good ideas know no age. If you're eighty-something, as I am now, you can still have a nimble mind and problem-solve along with people of any age. What makes a lot of things in the 21st Century a young person's game is the way, and the speed of how things are done. It is rare for a septuagenarian or an octogenarian to have the technical skills of the digitally native generations.

HPLD: *After playing so many instruments, if you could pick*

one to stick with and really work on, which would it be and why?

JM: Not only could I pick one, but I have. After finishing the book I took up the clarinet again, since I had played it in middle school and thought I could make more rapid progress with it. But as the months went by, I kept hearing French Horn phrases and excerpts in my head. It was kind of like dating one person and finding yourself thinking about someone else. So I dropped the clarinet and think I have found my true love in the French horn.

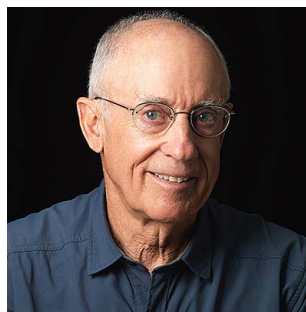
HPLD: *I saw almost 20 stops on the tour you did in support of this book's launch, which is very impressive and a lot more than most authors can put together. What was your favorite part about doing the book tour?*

JM: When I started the book project, I had no preconceived idea of what it would be about, other than an honest chronicle of what happens when an older man without much of a music background decides to learn to

play all the instruments in the orchestra. During the book tour, people told me that what I had done was inspiring, that it made them see that maybe they could take up woodworking, or painting, or playing the guitar. And I think that resonated (there's that word again) with them because they saw that I was not an extraordinary person.

HPLD: *If people are reading this and thinking about coming to your author talk at the library, what would you add to convince them to get up off the couch and come out to see you?*

JM: The book is pretty funny. Its main theme is, of course, learning all those instruments, but I do channel Tarzan and Jane, falling in love with a cello, doing surgery on a double bass, and spy games between Italian violin makers in 17th century Tuscany. So it is not a technical, scholarly tome. It's a breezy read and I think they'll have a good time. Especially if there is food and drink.



~
James Mitchell will present his book at the Carbon Valley Regional Library on May 30th, 6 PM. Seating is limited, so please register here. (<https://highplains.libcal.com/event/12282754>)

A Look Back at **Book It!**

Pizza Hut is one of our sponsors for this year's Summer Reading Adventure, and although technically all we needed to do was throw their logo into our newsletter a couple times, once I started thinking about where to add it, I, of course, thought about one of the greater motivators of my reading youth: Book It!

Yes, Book It! The program that tempted kids like me, who hated reading, to read through the magic of pizza.

Did I love pizza more than I hated reading? Yes.
By a wide margin? No.

But, hey, good enough is good enough.

There's very little in the reading world as nostalgic for me as the Book It! buttons, and I thought it was worth everyone's time to take a closer look at some of those iconic designs.



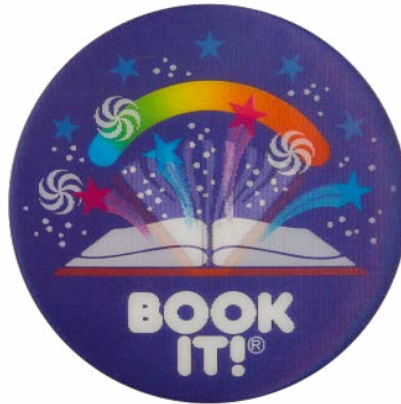
Let's start with The Classic.

Yes, the purple button, puffy font, and open rainbow book with the spots for the stickers around the perimeter.

This was followed closely by The Lenticular.

Lenticular designs were SUPER popular in the

80's and 80's on things like trading cards and comic book covers. "Lenticular" is the fancy name for something that,



when tilted, appears to move.

These were often mislabeled as "Holograms," by those of us who didn't understand the complex lenticular printing process, which required interlacing two images and covering them with a ridged, transparent coating that...

You know what? I wrote out a whole explanation of how these work, but you and I both know a science-y explanation can never express the sensation of running your fingernail across the ridges of one of these and pretending you were a DJ scratching records.



Next, a lot of you are probably familiar with these illustrated versions:

I tried DESPERATELY to find out who illustrated these because their aesthetic was EVERYWHERE in the 90's, including, I think, in some

McDonald's "McWorld" ads, and perhaps on the packaging of YIKES! brand school supplies, which manufactured the best-looking and WORST-WRITING pencils of all time.

I could not find the artist, try as I might, but I did find that this style has a name: Memphis Jr. or sometimes Wacky Pomo, styles characterized by bright colors, zigzags, and squiggly lines.

Basically drawings that made you feel like you were inside Nickelodeon.

Most memorable for me of these was the red one with the teeny tiny little star stickers that you were meant to place on the button.

Look at this button, which someone actually owned. You can see some poor kid did their level best to center the star

sticker EXACTLY on the star in the illustration, and unfortunately you had to be perfect to get these on right. This button was always a testament to my frustration and a rare exhibition of perfectionism on my part. If I'd spent a fraction of the energy on, say, math, I wouldn't even be writing this right now,

I'd be mocking Einstein and his crude understanding of mathematics.

Then there were some rarities I found online, most notably medals made of ACTUAL METAL.

HOW DID YOU GET THESE!? How much reading did you have to do? Why didn't I get one? I want one!

Sorry, I reverted to being 10 years old there for a second. I won't bother you with further whining. I'll just waste my hard-earned money buying one on eBay to wear around the house every night and weekend for the next month. Like a mature adult.

None of you know Cassie, but we live together, and she is in for a very long couple of weeks of me and my new Book It! medal. "Oh, what's that clinking against the mug every time I finish taking a sip of coffee? Ah, silly me, just my Book It! medal that I keep accidentally striking as I set my coffee back down on the table."

"Oh, that hard thing in your pillowcase? Oh, geez, that's just my Book It! medal. Now, how did THAT get there?"



Perhaps the most interesting thing I found in my search of Book It!, er, stuff, was a research study from 1999 that sought to answer a question: Did rewards for reading, like pizza, or perhaps our Summer Reading prizes, improve the reading habits of participants later in life, or did they read less as the rewards dropped off?

What did they find?

The results provide no support for the myth that extrinsic rewards for reading undermine intrinsic interest in reading. Rather, extrinsic rewards for reading set the conditions where intrinsic motivation for reading may develop. Any concerns that reinforcement programs for reading will decrease later reading behaviors are unfounded.

Fancy way of saying, "Nope! All good, keep them prizes coming!"



Whew! That's good news for us seeing as we give out prizes for Summer Reading.

I really should've looked at these results before writing this article. But I like to live dangerously. "Dangerously" as far as writing newsletter articles on the fly, not

"dangerously" like driving while trying to eat an entire large pizza in my lap.

Haha, who would EVER do something as ridiculous as that?



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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

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

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(970) 350-9220

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