

CULT MOVIE VAULT: JINGLE ALL THE WAY



High Plains Library District

CommUNITY

NOVEMBER 2024

Black Friday ***Cult Movie*** ***Vault***

PAGE 7

**Creative
Expression**

PAGE 3

**Tech
Education**

PAGE 5

**And More
Inside!**



High Plains
Library District



Contents

Turning Your Holiday Stress into Creative Expression.....	3
Something to Rely On: Technology Education is More Important than Ever	5
Cult Movie Vault: Jingle All The Way.....	7
Locations.....	10



Wonder Play Socialize
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Explore
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Turning Your *Holiday Stress* into **Creative Expression**

by Mikayla Braden
Library Associate
Riverside Library & Cultural Center

It's the most wonderful time of the year...and the most stressful. For me the holidays are a combination of joy and anxiety as I attempt to juggle gifts, family, cold weather, and the sad fact that it is getting dark at four in the afternoon.

If you're experiencing some holiday stress this year, and need a creative outlet, I have the writing exercise for you. I call it an anxiety poem. The structure is based off the 5-4-3-2-1 anxiety grounding technique. It is separated out into five stanzas each focusing on one of the five senses with the number of lines decreasing in each new stanza. Five things you can see, four things you can feel, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste. You can be as descriptive or to the point as you want, feel free to mix up the order of the senses too.



The whole purpose of this exercise is to help soothe your stress, so do whatever feels right to you!

Here are couple poems inspired by some of my anxious moments simply titled Anxiety I and Anxiety II. The first is about a moment of procrastination on a college essay and the second is about attending a job fair.

Anxiety I

*Traces of fingerprints on a cracked black screen
Still images of loved ones strung up on Christmas lights
Books left in a stack half unread on a cluttered desk
Ink bleeds through pages in hard handwriting
A cluttered basket filled with unhung clothes near empty hangers*

*Sweating underneath three blankets each thicker than the last
Nails pressed gently into the skin of my palm
A light cool breeze hits my face from the cracked window
A slight sharp ache on the left side of my stomach*

*The cat's bell jingles back and forth in the hall
Low hum of a dying battery
Squirrels dance on the roof making the house creak*

*Aftermath of the blown-out ginger lemon candle
Nail polish remover stings stuffed nostrils*

Bland mint lingers on the tongue

Anxiety II

*Sharp rays of sun glisten from sky light windows on
Plastic combustible tables supporting slanted posters
With raindrop balloons tied to their wobbly legs
Bodies dressed in their absolute best greys and blues
Beneath the balcony ambition sits on ripped leather couches*

*The handrail at the top of the stairs gripped in my hand
Heartbeat in my throat, stomach, and thigh
A single strand of hair stuck in the corner of my mouth
Cemented by frigid sweat resting on a warm face*

*A gathering of voices skip like radio stations
Unbroken week-old loafers scuff the tile floor
Thunderous vents tremble above unceasing*

*Freshly printed resumes and applications mixed with
Aromas of complimentary ham subs and flat sprite*

Metallic gushes from gnawed cheeks

If you liked this exercise and are looking for more like it, come check out the next session of Pen Club at Riverside on December 9th from 5:30-6:30. After the new year you can catch us on the 1st Thursday of the month at the same time.

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SOMETHING TO RELY ON: **Technology** **Education** **is More Important Than Ever**

by Cynthia Grasso
Librarian
Erie Community Library

"Why do I need to learn this? I could just Google it." A tried and true snippy remark, meant to devalue the positive effects of teaching and education. You've heard it, I've heard it, and it doesn't look like Google is going anywhere, so we will probably continue to hear it ad nauseum, as a snide rebuttal from reluctant learners. Only, is it even accurate? Surely there is a benefit to attending person to person education over simply looking everything up on your phone, right? If you're reading a library newsletter, I probably don't need to tell you this, but of course there is.

Let's look at this through a lens of technology education, a constant in library programming. If an interested person looks up "How to protect my Facebook account from hackers," it is likely that they will find an article written by Facebook themselves, and perhaps a Wikihow article among the top few results. The top few results are often the only results that people click through, so it is very important that those results have helpful information. When examining these articles, one will find text directions of helpful ways to protect their Facebook accounts, with some static images.

The article is not tailored to their needs, and if they don't understand what the article is saying, there is no recourse other than to make another search and hope that this one will be clear.

An online article isn't able to give readers further context, guiding them through the actual process. It can only give static, unchanging directions, and if the reader needs additional guidance, they'll have to keep searching.

This does not even begin to account for the fact that much of the internet has begun to become less accessible. News articles require you to have a paid membership to read. Our search engines sell the option for higher search engine placement. Our search engines don't have ease of information access at heart anymore, and perhaps they never did. This is best showcased by Google's decision to display their own A.I. answers above all other search results, which often displays incorrect information quite confidently.

These problems are not all easily fixed by moving over to Google's competitor, Bing. Bing also sells search engine placement ads and prioritizes their news aggregator service, Microsoft Start, at the top of the results, which requires an account to even view.

One can argue that while the blockades to information accessibility on popular search engines aren't ideal, if you are aware of them, they aren't hard to work around. This is true to an extent, and one of the reasons why these search engines are not going anywhere. However, in the case of technology learning, this isn't a great answer. The patrons that struggle with technology are not the same patrons who are up to date and keeping aware of the changes in Google's search engine. Patrons who struggle with technology are some of the most vulnerable to misinformation. Search engines allowing for money to dictate which results appear first, and allowing for unreliable AI to provide the first answers these patrons will see, hurts these patrons the most. Those most vulnerable to misinformation benefit from attending technology education, as spotting misinformation is one of the many topics that can be covered in educational library programs. Learners that have gaps of knowledge in technology should absolutely rely on the library for technology education, because there are so many potential online pitfalls that may result in them not receiving the help that they need

otherwise. This isn't a risk with a librarian, who can offer personalized, trustworthy answers.

Accessibility of information is an ongoing struggle on the internet, and this article cannot begin to touch on what this may look like going forwards. However, there is an answer. Your friendly neighborhood public library!

Attending an educational program at your library is a great way to learn. Technology learning programs can be a life saver for patrons who would benefit from guidance on their tech problems. Unlike online articles, attending a program allows for clarification and context. If a patron is confused, they can ask a question. If a patron would benefit from one-on-one help, libraries can offer both one-on-one technology help programs, and Book A Librarian services, to make sure that patrons are receiving the

assistance that they need.

By attending technology learning programs, patrons can receive help from library professionals that care about open information access and want to see their patrons succeed in their educational pursuits, rather than an unfeeling A.I. (that is sometimes incorrect). All of this for the low, low cost of free.

The flexibility of tech programming, and trust that patrons can put in library professionals is a difference maker. When you're learning something, you want to learn it right. That is why patrons should rely on their local library, because unlike big corporations, libraries are dedicated to providing patrons with the information they need to succeed.

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!

Cult Movie Vault:

Jingle All The Way

What Black Friday would be complete without a holiday film, and what Cult Movie Vault would be complete without a holiday classic? Well, we're about to find out, because instead of a classic, we're bringing you 1997's *Jingle All The Way*.

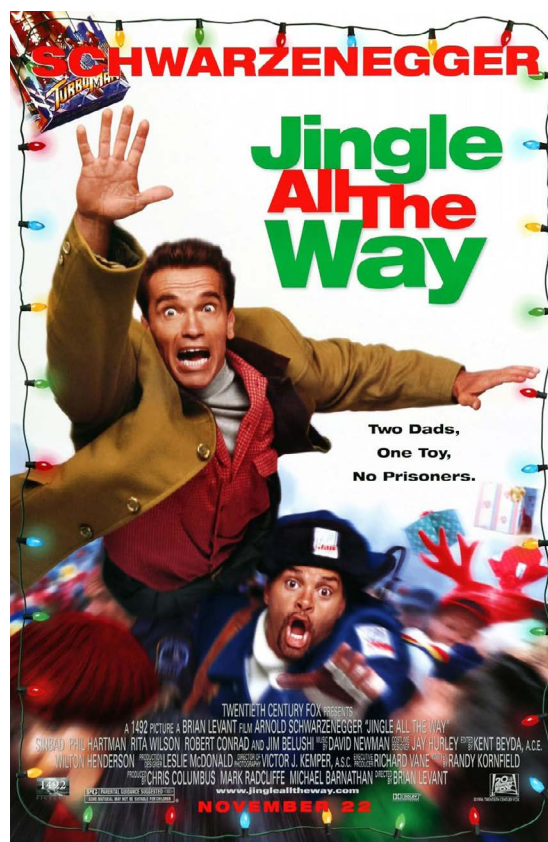
This cheerful, unusually bright entry into the Cult Movie Vault brings such weirdness as a Jake Lloyd starring role where he DIDN'T have access to The Force, a Phil Hartman wife-stealing subplot, and, my favorite thing, a movie where we, the audience, were expected to see a shirtsleeve-busting Arnold Schwarzenegger as a pretty average guy.

Before we get to talking about beefcake, though, let's move to holiday spice cake and talk about *Jingle All The Way* and its plot.

In *Jingle All The Way*, Arnold plays a bad dad who is always breaking promises to his son, but mostly because he can't help it due to his dedication to work in the fast-paced field of mattress sales.

So, Arnold is a bad dad, but a MOVIE bad dad. He's not a compulsive gambler rolling dice in an alley while his son sleeps under a pool table in a seedy bar, he's just kind of, you know, mildly disappointing. Which is the way most of us feel about some of our parents at some point. Half-ish of our parents, half of the time?

Arnold's bad dad-ing is made even worse by his neighbor,



Ted (Phil Hartman), who shows off what a good dad he is in a bid to win the affections of Schwarzenegger's wife (played by Rita Wilson). Do you think it's a holiday tradition at the Wilson/Hanks residence to spend every Christmas watching her off-putting Christmas movie, *Jingle All The Way*, and his off-putting Christmas movie, *Polar Express*, the finest explanation of the uncanny valley ever committed to film?).

Mostly, Ted attempts to woo Rita Wilson by being a smarmy jerk. He's about as smooth as a game of Monopoly when half the properties are missing and you make the least trustworthy family member the banker.

It's weird to see Arnold and Phil Hartman as romantic rivals. I'm not here to say that personality doesn't count in a relationship.

I am married, and the only explanation for this fact is that personality can overcome A LOT of visual shortcomings. But in *Jingle All The Way*, Phil Hartman is neither beefier than Arnold, nor is he more pleasant. He seems really unappealing to me, but, whatever, I've watched enough reality dating shows to know that people often make bad love choices based on criteria I cannot fathom.

In a bid to make up for a decade of being a bad dad, Arnold decides to get his son a TurboMan doll for Christmas. Excuse me, TurboMan ACTION FIGURE.

Unfortunately, Arnold came up with this scheme pretty late in the season, so he has to venture out into the mania that is last-minute holiday shopping.

Young people...youngish people who don't remember the pre-internet world: the conflict here is based on the ancient custom of going to a brick and mortar store and buying things that have been placed on store shelves, a barbaric practice we used to engage in. During these dark ages, you would roll on over to a department store, hope what your kid wanted was on the shelf, and when it wasn't, you had a couple options. An average parent would get you the next-best thing, which explains the existence of Go-Bots, a toy designed to be no one's first choice, but still a solid B+ gift when Transformers were not available. A super-dedicated parent, or possibly one who had blown it big time up to now and had something to prove, might discover the toy they needed was unavailable, and they might drive from store to store, even to a neighboring town or city, in hopes of finding that year's "it" toy.

This whole toy scarcity thing was made most famous in 1983 with Cabbage Patch Kids. These little gremlinous creeps were a staple of 1980s homes, and in 1983, there was a HUGE rush on them. They were a little hard to find due to the factory underproducing, this caused panic buying, and then the newsmedia picked up the story, which made everything worse to the point that you had newscasters interviewing moms in Wisconsin and sincerely asking questions like, "Are you prepared to fight for a Cabbage Patch Kid?"

Side note: The best part of the news coverage around Cabbage Patch dolls is hearing that the parents, universally, think Cabbage Patch dolls are hideous. One grandmother described them as "homely." Every single adult thinks they're unpleasant to look at, but they all shrug and then jump into a pile, tearing each other apart to get one, because that's what parenting is all about.

Okay, we've got our dad, we've got our kid, we've got our

TurboMan doll, we've got our mission.

What *Jingle All The Way* needs now is a villain...Enter: Sinbad.



No, not the sailor, Sinbad the comedian.

Again, youngish people: The popularity of Sinbad in the 90s can't be overstated. There was something in the air where producers all decided there was money in taking adult stand-up comedians and creating kid-friendly programming centered around them. See also: *Full House*. See also: *Bobby's World*. See also: *Life with Louie*. If this was still a practice today, there would absolutely be a cartoon based around an animated Jim Gaffigan

acting as a sort of Pooh Bear figure, constantly getting himself into a fix because of his love of snacking.

Sinbad plays a mailman who is also trying to get a TurboMan for his son. While Sinbad isn't as ripped as Arnold, he's a big guy, and his energy does bring a certain believability to what quickly devolves into a series of physical contests between the two.

Once we're into the Arnold V. Sinbad action, *Jingle All the Way* has all the makings of a modern holiday classic, like Kelly Clarkson's "Underneath the Tree" (I prefer this to Mariah Carey's hit, thank you very much).



The movie is rich with incident. There's an underground ring of toy-hustling Santas, including one Santa played by wrestler The Big Show, and when a wrestler is cast in a movie, you know someone is getting bodyslammed through a table.

There's a radio station bombing that is somehow played for laughs. It was the 90s.

And, eventually, we get Arnold dressed as TurboMan, flying around a huge parade with a jetpack, fighting a villainous Sinbad, who is also in costume as a guy named Dementor, a villain with an exposed brain.

It leaves me wondering: Why isn't this a holly jolly

Christmas classic? Why was this so poorly received in 1997?

My guess has to do with the world being unready for Arnold's Absurdist Period.

Arnold's career started with him playing larger-than-life roles where it made sense for him to be incredibly ripped. Conan is a role that absolutely requires a man who does not look like a real person. Am I supposed to believe a normal man could defeat a James Earl Jones snake monster man? Hah, hardly!

Terminator, stars Arnold as a killing machine from the future. If I was going to build a machine that was meant to "terminate" people, he would either look like Schwarzenegger or possibly an HR manager at a tech company during their 7th round of layoffs this year.

In *Commando*, Arnold opens the movie carrying an entire tree on his shoulder.

Predator features the most famous, biceps-based handshake of all time.

Sprinkled in here and there, we have Arnold movies where Arnold's size is fully acknowledged, and it's a part of the movie's core premise. *Twins* is a movie where Arnold being Danny DeVito's twin is not only the running joke, it's the premise. *Kindergarten Cop*: The whole point is that this tough-as-nails Mr. Universe cop would not be a kindergarten teacher.

True Lies is kind of an interesting one. In that movie, Arnold is supposed to be sort of an everyman, and we're supposed to be shocked to the core to find out he's a secret agent. Worst kept secret of all time if you ask me.

Then we have a pair of Absurdist Arnold movies:

Last Action Hero is one of the few movies that acknowledges that Arnold is a ridiculous figure, that his size and shape make his existence in the real world seem like a big gag. And the world was not ready for it. If you watch it today, you'll be baffled by the hate, but in 1997, we didn't want Arnold to be a joke.

Jingle All The Way also tries to walk that tightrope (tightgarland?). The movie knows it's silly to have Arnold be an everyman, and there are a few places where the well-woven fabric of *Jingle All The Way* starts to fray under the weight of maintaining the incredible farce of everyman Arnold.

One place comes about when Arnold punches a rampaging reindeer, knocking it to the floor. Reindeer are not on my Barefisted Animal Defeat-ability Chart due to the fact that I am unlikely to encounter them, but I have to believe they'd rank somewhere way above geese (the toughest animal I feel like I could probably defeat in a no-holds-barred throwdown. Probably.).

Two, Phil Hartman, antagonizing Arnold, says the line, "You can't bench press your way out of this one." Which is, honestly, perfect. It's not only a funny insult, it's factually accurate. There are very few situations, outside of a bench press, that you can bench press your way out of. Believe me, I've tried! Card declined at a restaurant? No, they will not let you do a pretty okay bench press in lieu of payment.

All this to say, one possible reason for *Jingle All The Way*'s disappointing reception is that the world wasn't ready for Absurd Arnold in the late 90s. We weren't prepared

to laugh at Arnold and the ridiculousness of him in *Last Action Hero*, and we weren't up for the hilarity of him being a suburban dad whose appearance occasionally stops the movie dead so someone can be like, "Are you, like, a murderous robot from the future or something? I've just never seen a guy who looks like you in real life."

So there you have it. Maybe *Jingle All The Way*, along with *Last Action Hero*, is a secret success of Arnold's Absurdist Period.

Maybe *Jingle All The Way* deserves another look, like *Eraser*, which for many people signaled the end of "good" Arnold movies, but is, honestly, pretty

fun. "You're luggage," the line delivered to an alligator Arnold shot, is possibly one of the greatest/dumbest action movie lines ever, especially considering that the alligator is A) Dead, and B) Even a living alligator has no capacity for understanding human speech, let alone a clever joke.

Maybe *Jingle All The Way* deserves another chance. And, what the heck, while we're at it, maybe *Junior* does as well. You remember *Junior*, right? The one where Arnold takes a miracle drug that allows him to carry a baby in his... stomach? Abs area?

You know what? *Junior* is taking this too far. *Junior* isn't a thoughtful film that has something to say. Plus, Arnold's face on a baby? Who saw this and decided it was an okay thing to put into the world?





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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

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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

3700 Golden Street
Evans, CO 80620
1-888-861-READ(7323)

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