

COME TO YES!FEST SEPTEMBER 14TH FOR SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FUN!



High Plains Library District

Community

SEPTEMBER 2024

YES! fest



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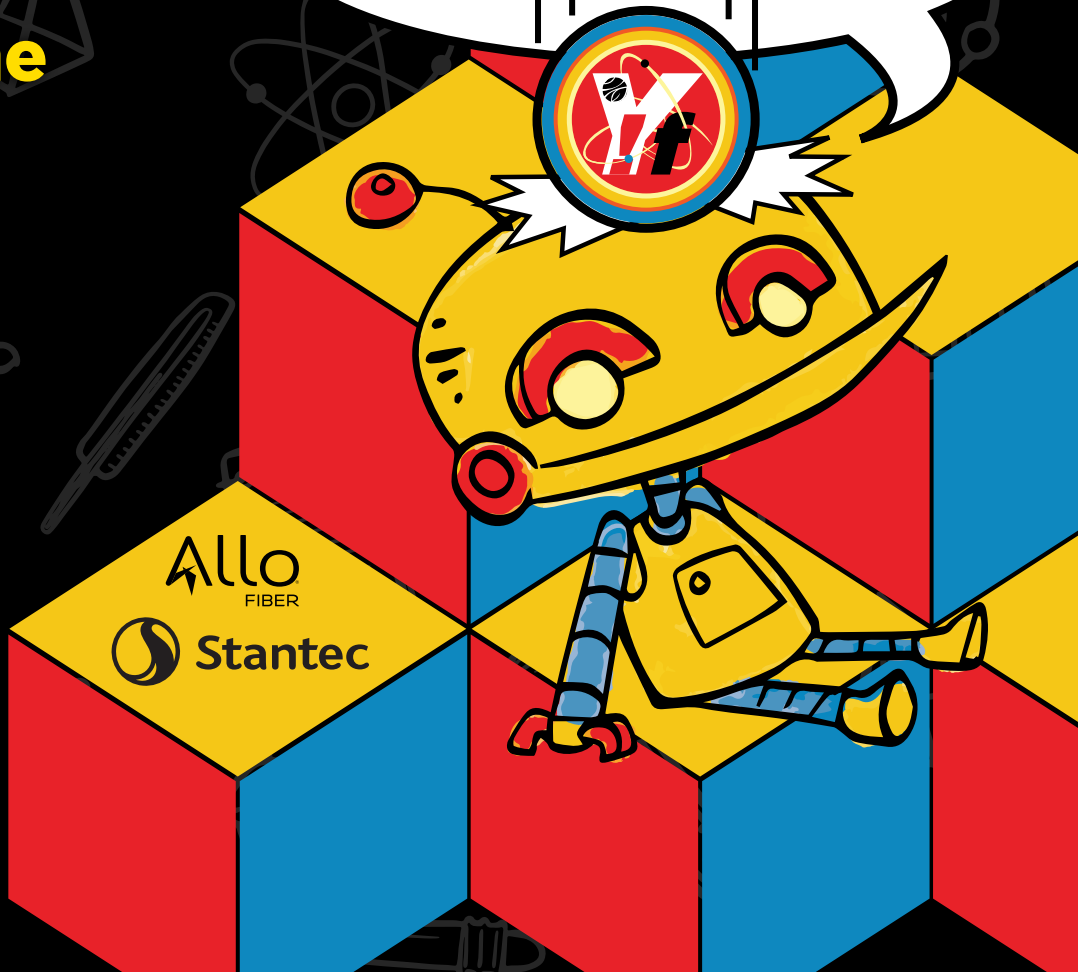
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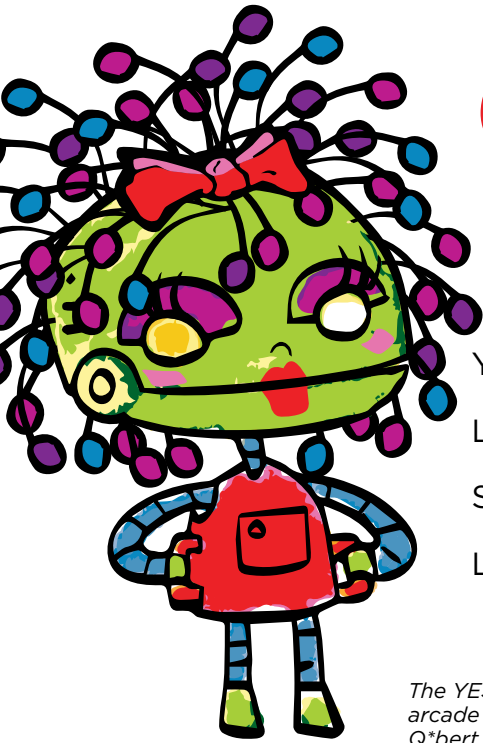


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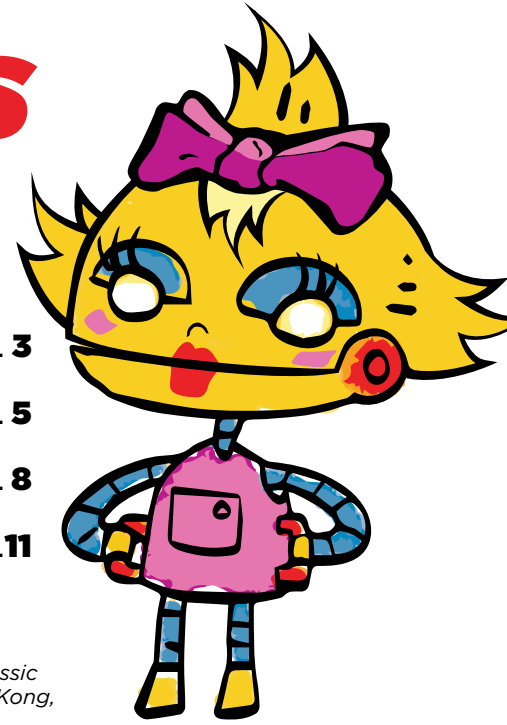
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*The YES!fest ads in this newsletter are inspired parodies of these classic arcade game marquees: Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man, Centipede, Donkey Kong, Q*bert, and Robotron: 2084.*

Wonder
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Socialize
Bibliotecas
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Laugh
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Explore
Dream
Connect
Experience
Create
Share
Make
Games
Read

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.

YES!fest

Yes Indeed!

by an Anonymous Informant

You there. Thanks for meeting me here. Grab a latte. You ready to hear my story? It's a good one.

It all began five years ago with a dream, a little yellow robot, and a whole lot of YES! The High Plains Library District hosted a humble grant-funded Youth Engineering and Science Festival (YES!fest)—a wild idea from a bunch of wild librarians.

Poor fools.

They didn't know what they had in their hands. If thirty people showed up, they would have patted themselves on the backs and celebrated with a round of juice boxes. But they set some gears in motion that reached farther than their wildest dreams.

"I don't know," they said. "Will our community really get excited about science and engineering?" YES!Bot, their little mechanical friend, replied with a nod and a knowing

Youth Engineering & Science Festival
Free STEM festival with hands-on activities, prizes, and giveaways for all ages.

Festival Juvenil de Ingeniería y Ciencia
Festival STEM gratuito con actividades prácticas, premios y regalos para todas las edades.

YES!BOT

Sept. 14
10am-3pm

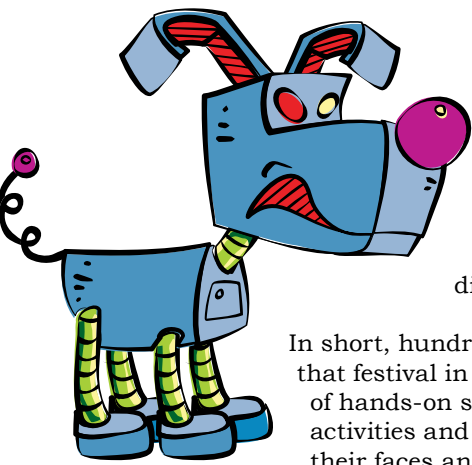
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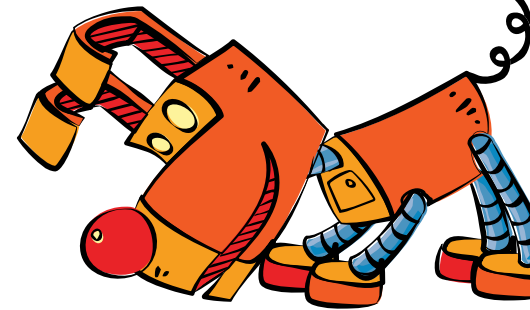


smile. That little robot must have known something nobody else had realized yet. Something the whole community was soon to discover.

In short, hundreds of people attended that festival in 2019, participating in tons of hands-on science and engineering activities and displays. With smiles on their faces and a lot of YES! in their hearts, they showed the library staff that science, engineering, and family fun hold an important place in this community. YES!Bot was right.

Fast Forward to 2024. The dream has exploded, that little yellow robot has a robot dog, and YES!Fest draws numbers in the thousands. Every September, community partners in the science and engineering fields come together, from Aims and UNC, to Society of Women Engineers and the Space Science Institute, to 4-H and Cool Science, and many others with a shared dream: To give their community a chance to get excited about science and engineering.

This year's festival will take place at the LINC Library Innovation Center. Over 60,000 square feet of brilliant architecture will be bursting with activities and demonstrations from every corner of science. Try your hand at flying drones, operating robots, and filming



yourself on a green screen. Experiment with light, sound, space, and nature. Every corner holds new surprises, new discoveries, and everything you need for an unforgettable day. According to the rumors, YES!Bot may even make an in-person appearance sometime during the event.

The best part?

This incredible event comes at the low, low cost of totally free! Libraries, am I right? Always putting books in our hands, resources in our reach, and smiles on our faces. And all of these generous community partners participate in this amazing event every year simply because they want to share their passion for science. It's a fast-paced, mind-blowing, family-friendly day of fun, and you don't want to miss it! Take it from me. I've got the inside scoop.

YES!Fest is coming Saturday, September 14th from 10 AM to 3 PM at LINC Library Innovation Center, 501 8th Ave, Greeley, CO 80631.

Say, "YES!" and be part of the adventure in 2024. Just don't tell them you heard it from me. Who am I? Just another science-lover with a story to tell. We'll leave it at that. I'll see you at YES!Fest.

Youth Engineering & Science Festival **Festival Juvenil de Ingeniería y Ciencia**

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Free STEM festival with hands-on activities, prizes, and giveaways for all ages.

YES!fest

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Festival STEM gratuito con actividades prácticas, premios y regalos para todas las edades.

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Letters to the Editor: AI Artwork



Hello,

Generally, I'm always pleased to see the High Plains Library District's newsletter in my inbox. It's a fun check-in on the events happening at the libraries I care about and a way to feel connected to the community. But this past month's newsletter almost immediately left me dismayed by the cover of the June issue. It is very clearly using artwork that is AI-generated, based on the distorted composition of the figures and the fact that the "books" shown on the shelves aren't actually in the shapes of books at all.

This is so disappointing. AI-generated images are produced through the theft of original artwork by legitimate artists, scraped from internet sites without their permission. It's a problem that is also true of any written works generated by an AI chatbot, which lifts the creative and intellectual property of authors to produce content. Art communities of all types have been outspoken about the harm done by AI Bots and have denounced its use. I would think it'd be something that greatly concerns a Library District seeking to promote the arts.

Going forward, I encourage the team to think critically about the images and content they utilize for the newsletter, taking into consideration the potential harm done by normalizing the use of tools like AI. I'm sure many, many real artists would be excited and willing to provide artwork for the cover of the publication.



Many Thanks.

I totally get you, and, yes, there are definitely some issues with using AI Artwork.

I think the first thing here is to talk about how and why this specific instance happened, and to be clear that we weren't trying to be sneaky or underhanded in using an AI-generated image, and

certainly weren't trying to cheat anyone out of a job.

Then we can talk a little more about AI in general and what the future looks like for HPLD.

I chatted with the graphic designer who creates and lays out the newsletter each month, and here's the situation: He pulled an image from a popular stock image website



without realizing that it was AI-generated (but once it was pointed out to him, he could definitely see it, and we were both surprised we didn't catch it earlier).

The original stock image he used (the AI-generated part) looked like the image above:

And then our graphic designer used that image as a base to build the image to the left:

This is pretty normal practice for us: We use free or licensed (for-pay) stock images as the basis for event artwork or newsletter artwork, and we'll do things like altering the colors and shapes, adding a rad snake, and so on, until the image serves our need for a program, service, web

graphic, or what have you.

Up to pretty recently, it's been easy to avoid AI-generated art because as long as you didn't ask an AI to generate it, you wouldn't have to keep an eye out for it. We didn't have much interaction with AI art because we were never generating it. We still don't generate AI art in-house.

However, in just the last couple of months, there's been a change.

The way most stock image sites work, artists upload their work to a marketplace, and (ideally, in most cases) when a subscriber (like HPLD) downloads that artwork, the artist is compensated by the marketplace that is hosting the file. It's a win for us because we get access to lots of options in high-quality formats that we're able to alter as-needed, the marketplace takes a cut, and the artist gets paid. While the money is probably not as tilted towards the original artist as we'd like, it's pretty standard practice these days, operating the same way that things like music and ebook marketplaces do.

Here's the wrinkle: Recently, artists (or perhaps "artists") have been uploading AI or AI-assisted artwork to these marketplaces, and it's not

always possible for us, as users, to filter out AI-generated works.

Different sites have different standards and relationships to AI art. Some DO let us filter out AI art, although these filters are pretty imperfect and usually rely on the uploader to designate their art as AI-created. Some sites do not let you filter out AI works. Some say that they do pay artists whose works are used to generate AI artwork. All of them pay the people who upload the AI art, and whether or not AI-generated art, or AI-assisted art, should be considered "art" is a totally valid conversation, but "What is art?" is something that we're not going to be able to determine at this time. This newsletter can't be 250 pages. I've begged my boss to let me go on that long, but he has imposed some reasonable limits such as, "Less than 50,000 words, please," and "You can only write a full dissertation on *Demolition Man* every other year."

I'll just be totally honest, the explosion of AI artwork is a relatively new development in our corner of the art world, and it ballooned quickly, so we've been caught unprepared. We looked back through the last couple months of work, and we've

definitely used some AI-generated art as backgrounds or building blocks for some programs we've hosted this summer.

Let's take a brief break from everything burning down around us to talk about a positive.

Your letter has prompted our department to have a discussion and start working on an AI artwork policy, something we didn't think we needed to do yet, but it turns out, we absolutely do. Those darn tech bros move so fast...

We don't have this policy yet, and I have my doubts that we'll come up with definitive answers that make everyone happy. But I think it's likely that our plans will be oriented towards minimizing our use of AI artwork...with a "however."

Here's where it gets complicated again.

The truth of the matter here is that there are situations when we have time or budget constraints, or a need for something super specific, that make it necessary or beneficial to use AI-generated or AI-assisted artwork pulled from stock image sites.

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And/Or it's possible that the world of stock images will become primarily AI artwork of this type, and we might not have a lot of choice in the matter.

AND it may be the case that AI images become so close to real artwork that we're no longer able to tell the difference.

I'd like to stand here and say that we'll never use AI. However, I think the reality is that we'll develop something more like a hierarchy of preference with AI at the bottom, but not off the list entirely.

There will be times when we use AI artwork, after we've looked at other options and decided that the AI piece serves the need best or is the only realistic option.

That's probably where we'll have to settle for now. None of us working in marketing love using AI images, and none of us prefer it.

The last thing I want to say is something on the more personal side.

My personal feelings on AI were best expressed by Joanna Maciejewska on X: *I want AI to do my laundry and*

dishes so that I can do art and writing, not for AI to do my art and writing so that I can do my laundry and dishes.

My hope is that we can find a way to push AI tech into doing things that make our lives better. My fear is that AI artwork will take over, and I'm like the person railing against the typewriter because it doesn't imbue work with a soul the way handwriting does, or the person who saw the printing press as a lazy, unethical way to make multiple copies of written works because hand-copying "builds character."

If those folks who hated the printing press had their way, there would BE no mass production of literature, and there would BE no library, and I wouldn't be able to read the novelization of *Demolition Man*, an experience that no one should be denied.

Most times, it seems like things turn out somewhere between my highest hopes where I'm sitting on a climate-controlled future beanbag chair while an AI handles all my emails and I'm free to write future poetry, which probably has a lot to do with space travel—most times, things fall a little

short of those high hopes, but they rarely end up as bad as my worst fears where I'm shouting at children on a playground, rattling a chain link fence, before we're all annihilated by Skynet and my charred skeleton is powderized.

There's quite a bit of room between those two poles, if I'm honest. Writing future poetry and turning into irradiated dust, those are two VERY different outcomes.

So while we're not totally throwing our hands in the air and saying, "Well, nothing we can do!" we're also trying to be realistic about the fact that AI artwork is something that is going to be legislated, lawsuit-ed, and probably argued and debated by HUGE companies and GIANT tech concerns, and the needs of a library district fall fairly low on that hierarchy.

We'll do our part to push in the direction of my highest hopes and minimizing the use of AI art. That seems like the right thing for us to do, on the right level.

But I'm not thinking I'll convince the world to go the future poetry, beanbag route. Not today, anyway.

Youth Engineering & Science Festival
Festival Juvenil de Ingeniería y Ciencia

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MURDOCK

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SOUPING UP Books

Last week I completed a repair job myself, changing out a window motor on my car.

It's been a revolution!

No longer is the process of rolling up my window a half-hour affair that involves a pretty serious level of strength and an equal amount of patience. Now, I press a button, and boom, the window goes up—ALL THE WAY up (people who've experienced failing window motors know this is a very important distinction).

When you drive a 2000 Corolla, making your windows functional counts as souping up your car. I am now a car soup-er up-er.

Where did the term "souped up" come from, anyway? Hold on a second. Librarian-ing...librarian-ing...

Okay, it turns out that the original meaning was to inject something into a horse to either make it run faster or change its temperament. You'd give it "soup," and that was slang for go-go-juice, which I'm guessing was NOT in the best interest of the horse, NOT as pleasant as a nice potato leek soup on a cold winter's day.

I guess it sort of makes sense to call making improvements to cars "souping them up." Cars are kind of the modern-day equivalent of horses(?) AND, you could do a lot worse than naming your car after a famous racehorse, such

as Smarty Jones, Zippy Chippy, or, who could forget, Potoooooo (pronounced like "potato." Get it? "pot" and then eight O's Pot-Eight O? Potato?).

Well, anyway, I had some ideas for souping up books, injecting a little more speed and power and general excitement into the reading process.

Because book people should cross over with car people more. There are a ton of people who modify their cars to be faster, louder, taller, cooler. I want those things in my life! But through books, my friends. Through books.



Page Turn Amplifier

If people can make their exhaust louder to show off their cars and impress those ladies who hold up checkered flags at drag races (Right? That's how that works? Unless...no, there's no way the *Fast & Furious* franchise is lying to me) then why can't I add a speaker to my books that makes the page turns SUPER loud? That's right, every time I turn the page,

sonic boom. The walls shake, bank vault alarms go off. Everyone's hair is blasted back. Miles away, people know I'm reading. "Wow, what speed!" They'll say. "SUPER annoying!"

Lifted Books

Nobody informed me of this in an official way, but I've learned that the height of a person's truck is super

important. I'm not sure why, exactly. I mostly endeavor to not drive over anything taller than, well, I mostly try to not drive over anything if I can help it, but maybe I'm missing out on a lovely life experience, rolling over a big log or, I don't know, that one shoe you always see in the road, all by itself, forlorn and forgotten.

I think the book equivalent is really thick, fat paper so that each page is huge and the book is overall gigantic, much, much taller than it would be with a more typical paper type. As a bonus, I bet you'd get stronger from turning the pages. This could be a revolutionary idea for workout books... "By the time you finish this book, you will have lifted thousands of pounds..."

Nobody steal that one! Copyright: me!

Fins

My car has a spoiler on it. It's a 2000 Corolla. I think I mentioned that. 4 cylinders of raw power, baby. Not of power windows, those are shot, but of DRIVING power!

Supposedly my car had 125 horsepower when it rolled off the line, which seems pretty good! That's 125 Potooooooos all hitched up and pulling with all their starchy might!

It seems some of those 125 horses may have wandered off over the past 25 years, perhaps distracted by a shiny apple or delicious oat bag, but still, I have enough spuds to get the job done.

And I can say, without question, that I am extremely fortunate to have a rear spoiler on my car, because otherwise all that horsepower would probably have caused

me to flip over by now. I can't imagine trying to contain the sheer ferocity of my vehicle without the assistance of that piece of bodywork that is definitely not losing its paint.

To bring this level of safety and performance into the book world, I've designed a spoiler bookmark. You just place it in your book, boom, you can be confident that you're generating downforce and really getting great grip on those...book covers.

Impractical? Sure. More impractical than a spoiler on a 4-cylinder car that rarely sees speeds above 40 MPH and takes corners slowly in an effort to hang onto its one remaining hubcap [editor's update: in between the time this was written and the time it was published, the final hubcap also vanished]? Not likely!

Racing Stripes

This is easy: You just put a library stamp on the book, usually on the top edge. Everyone knows that, much the way a racing stripe makes a car go faster, a library stamp makes a book's checkout period fly by MUCH faster.

Underbody Lighting Kits

Uh, actually, this is where things turn around. Readers have been using booklights forever. Car people just figured this one out in the last couple decades. Get it together, gearheads!

Sport Seats

Ah, yes, the (un)humble sports seat! Nothing makes you feel more like a racing driver than a body-contoured

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Sparky

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chair with the name of something you assume is a racing products manufacturer emblazoned on it.

Can I just share an experience with these?

I once drove cross-country in a car that had racing-ish seats, from northern Colorado to Fredericksburg, Texas. 15 hours or so. This was not my idea, the drive nor the seats.

I was a young man then, and what emerged from the car after 15 hours in a racing seat was a husk, a stooped man, aged beyond his years, more battered than the chicken fried steak I ate at some place in Fredericksburg that makes the dubious claim that they invented the dish. It's possible that the food was invented there, but, you know, the same way it's POSSIBLE for me to write a newsletter article that's NOT too long and NOT too self-indulgent.

Anyway, for the "sport" of reading, I think the seat design is all about long term comfort, more the road trip chair than the racing seat, which is more an ultralight, right angle of metal meant to keep you alive for just long enough to drive up to the start of a drag race, complete the race, and then immediately drive home before you are permanently injured.

Giant bean bag chair? Is there anything more souped up for reading than that?

Spinners

Some pioneering car embellisher thought, "Why should my rims have to stop just because the rest of the car does? Why should the fun come to a complete halt for everyone?"

Thus, spinners were born, and we could all marvel at the principle of inertia, which you might think would make spinners popular amongst physics professors, but I'm not sure if that market has caught onto spinners yet.

Spinners for books?

I'm going to say that this effect is best achieved by drinking a little too much coffee when you read. The pages seem to sort of FLY by, the words jump off the page. Definitely consult your doctor before trying this.

By the by, if you ask your doctor whether it's okay to drink "way too much" coffee in order to have more fun reading, and your doctor shrugs and says, "Sure," I might consider finding a new doctor.

Project Cars

Everyone who messes around with cars knows what this is about: That car you've got, maybe up on blocks, maybe in the yard, maybe hastily covered with a tarp. The one you've been "getting around to" for the last...holy moley, 7 years!?

The book equivalent is definitely, absolutely the super-long classic book. *Infinite Jest*, *Atlas Shrugged*, *The Power Broker*, basically any Russian novel about how terrible life is and that features 47 different characters.

There it sits on the bookshelf. You're always "getting around to it." And yet, somehow, magically, you never quite manage to finish the job...

Free STEM Festival All Ages

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ROBOGAL 2084

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LOCATIONS

LIBRARIES [Visit www.MyLibrary.us/locations-and-hours](http://www.MyLibrary.us/locations-and-hours) for library hours

Administration & Support Services

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

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

AFFILIATED LOCATIONS

Hazel E. Johnson Research Center at the City of Greeley Museum

714 8th Street, Greeley, CO 80631
(970) 350-9220

Poudre Learning Center

8313 West F Street, Greeley, CO 80631
(970) 352-1267

PUBLIC COMPUTER CENTERS

Briggsdale Community Library

210 Main Street, Briggsdale, CO 80611

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