

# Thank Goodness She's Off The Streets

I was sick of reading the horrible news stories on CNN, so I went to thesmokinggun.com in search of some comedic relief. The following story is more amazing than funny – it's amazing that they put this poor girl through this, and it's amazing that they wasted tax payers' dollars in doing so.

From thesmokinggun.com:

AUGUST 21–The next time you forget to return a couple of library books (and ignore those annoying letters about the overdue status of said volumes), think of Heidi Dalibor. The Wisconsin woman, 20, was arrested earlier this month in connection with a pair of books overdue for several months. Dalibor, who made the mistake of ignoring a court citation issued after she failed to respond to letters and phone calls from the Grafton library, was busted August 6 for failing to return copies of Janet Fitch's best-seller "White Oleander" (a 1999 Oprah Book Club selection) and "Angels & Demons," author Dan Brown's precursor to "The Da Vinci Code." According to a police report, Dalibor was apprehended at her family's home, cuffed and stuffed in a cruiser, and booked for violating the "overdue library materials" ordinance. Dalibor subsequently settled with the library by paying her overdue fines and reimbursing it for the cost of the two novels, which totaled around \$180. Dalibor's mother Patty said that her daughter was "a good kid" who works two jobs. She is also now the owner of the Fitch and Brown books, which Dalibor got to keep as a result of paying off her library levies.

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# Tunnel Vision

I got new glasses today, but I'm not sure I like them. I'm getting to an age (49+) where I need a bit more than reading glasses (Maybe). Since my first set of bifocals caused all sorts of problems for me (those dang lines were always in the way), I now have a set of progressive lenses. I will admit that they help my distance vision a bit, but I had to check a few times to make sure it was an improvement. I also don't need to cock my head at a funny angle to read or use the computer. All good things.

The problem I am having is a sense of tunnel vision while I read or do computer work. This is not quite as annoying as the bifocal lines, but it is annoying. Then there is a small little thing that I have to turn my head while reading on a computer, or any other semi-wide item (even the backs of DVD boxes). I may get used to this, but it may cause problems since at work I do a lot of glancing between two different screens. With my reading (non bifocal) glasses, I can just shift my eyes to where I want to look. The new glasses I have to turn my head to keep everything right in front of me. I get some time to check these out so I guess I will do that. I need to find out how long I get. I may end up trading these for a pair of reading glasses, and maybe some just for computer work. I'm not sure right now.

The one benefit to these glasses, if I get used to wearing them, I will never be without my reading glasses... I'm just not sure about the tunnel vision..

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# A long time ago in a galaxy far far way

Saw the latest addition to the Star Wars Saga yesterday with my family. Interesting movie, but I'm not sure it did much to fill in the story for me.

As a stand alone movie, without any Star Wars background, I don't think this movie would even be in the theaters. The animation and story line were direct to DVD quality, or maybe in line with some of the offerings on Cable. Not what I would consider for a theatrical release.

That being said, this was a Star Wars movie. And of course another story in the life of the Skywalker family. Supposedly the time line for this is sometime between Attack of the Clones and Revenge of the Sith (Star Wars II and III). In that I was hoping it would expand the story a bit. I was disappointed in that.

Good points, well the battle scenes (and there were a lot of them) were interesting to watch, and the interaction of various members of the Droid army were very funny. The voices behind Count Dooku (Christopher Lee), Mace Windu (Samuel L. Jackson) and C3P0 (Anthony Daniels) were well done, especially since they were all in the other movies as the same characters. The other voice work was ok, but the main characters lacked some zing. Maybe this is my "the original 3 shows were better" mentality, but this show needed work.

Is it worth going to see? Cheap theater, cheap seats (two for one day, or bring your own bag day) sure, but if you're not a Star Wars fan, save you're money – wait for the rental.

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# Spookybook Treats

Halloween is right around the corner... ok it's 2 months away! But Halloween stuff is out all over the stores already, and while we're planning our Haunted Tour for our community theater group, our other friends in the theater are getting ready to stage an hilarious (TANGENT ALERT: I HATE using the word "an" before words that start with h, but I guess that's proper English, so...) production of the play called Kitchen Witches! Someone had a great idea to sell a Halloween cookbook as a fundraiser for the theater. Being a stay-at-home-mom of 4, I have a few holiday-themed recipes in my vault that are fun for the kids *and* adults (to eat), so I'm going to contribute my favorite Halloween recipes. Since I have to type them up to submit to the cookbook anyway, I thought I'd put them on my blog, along with a recipe for one of my favorite desserts: peanut butter bars – YUM!

## Toasted Pumpkin Seeds

large pumpkins

salt

seasonings (your choice)

butter

Extract seeds from pumpkin, separate from pulp, and discard pulp. Put the seeds in a colander and run water over them to get rid of all the pulp. Drain on paper towels. Melt 1 Tablespoon of butter and toss pumpkin seeds in a bowl with the butter and salt and / or seasonings. Spread seeds out onto a cookie sheet. Toast seeds in an oven preheated to 350° for about 30 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes and adding salt occasionally. Check the seeds to see if they're done by taking a sample out, letting it cool, and tasting it. If the insides are dry, they're done. Be careful not to burn – you

want a nice golden brown color.

NOTES: I use a clean, thin dishcloth instead of paper towels since I've had problems in the past with the seeds sticking to the paper towels. Be creative with the seasonings; you can use popcorn seasoning, taco seasoning, garlic salt, onion powder, cayenne pepper, cajun seasoning, etc. Pumpkin seeds are high in iron, vitamin A, and zinc; if you want to make them even healthier use olive oil instead of butter.

### **Rice Krispies Treats Spiders**

*YIELD: 3-5 spiders*

3 Tablespoons margerine or butter

1 package (10 oz. or about 40) marshmallows or 4 cups mini marshmallows

6 cups rice krispies cereal

food coloring

prepared frosting

candy corn

string licorice

shredded coconut

In a large microwave-safe bowl, melt margerine and marshmallows on high for 2 minutes, stirring after 1 minute. Add a few drops of food coloring and stir mixture until smooth. Add rice krispies cereal, stirring until well coated. Let cereal mixture slightly cool until it is safe to touch. With buttered hands, shape cereal mixture into spider shape and place on wax paper. Let cool. Attach decorations to the spider with frosting using candy corn for eyes, licorice for the web, and coconut for the hair. You can color the coconut by soaking in warm water with a few drops of food coloring for about 30 minutes. Dry coconut on a paper towel before using.

### **Peanut Butter Bars**

1 lb. powdered sugar

2 cups graham cracker crumbs

2 sticks melted butter

12 oz. peanut butter

Mix all ingredients together in a 9×13 non-greased pan. Melt large bag of chocolate chips and spread on top. Cut into squares in pan and refrigerate until cold.

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## Now I Know It Is Around Here Somewhere

How many of us have ever walked around a retail store in search of an item, give up the search, and ask a store associate for assistance. Ok, admit it... everyone has (or else they are too ashamed to admit it). The other day, a customer approached me. She was not entirely sure if I was working (apparently, the huge cart with crates of milk did not convince her).

*“Excuse me, do you work here?”*

*“Well... I think so.” (I was a bit confused)*

She then asked the location of the rice. I tried to be as tactful as possible when I told her that she was standing right in front of it. I’ll give her the benefit of the doubt since her back was turned to it. However, I knew she just wanted to crawl in a hole as she turned around only to come face-to-face with bags of regular rice, boxes of Minute Rice, boxes of Rice-a-Roni, and other variations on a theme.

This reminded me of another incident involving a customer who was having difficulty while searching for an item. I will never forget the time my cousin (who does read my blog) came in and asked if we sold sun-dried tomatoes. I approached the

store manager at the time who looked at me with a bewildered expression and asked:

*“Why the heck would I carry sun-dried tomatoes? Those would be one of the deadeast items I could ever carry. I would be stuck with them for years.”*

What a guy, tactful to a fault. Personality though... wet blanket (is that a term?). He was probably right, though; I don't see sun-dried tomatoes being a big seller in our small store and they would probably sit on the shelf in danger of becoming outdated.

And from a personal observation... do they still make Spicy Guacamole Pringles (Potato CRISPS)? I asked the boss today if we could carry them. They are the best variety of the bunch (much better I am sure than the NEW DILL PICKLE variety). Unfortunately, she looked in her big ordering book and came up empty. Sorry game night fans. Verrry interrrresting... after searching on the [Pringles website](#), I have discovered that the spicy guacamole variety is still around.

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## **Now I REALLY Hate Walmart**

And my husband is on the bandwagon too. My husband is a clearance maniac – he loves finding good deals on stuff that's been marked down from its original price. He found he especially loved the clearance deals at the Defiance Ohio Walmart, which is not too far from us. But yesterday, that changed...

It turns out that the Defiance Walmart, which is only a few months old, by the way, changed their clearance prices

overnight! They used to have some really good discounts, and it was fun to go there and try to find them. But now, they haven't just changed the way they mark stuff down; they've taken actual clearance items that were already marked down and marked them back up!

Case in point: My husband had a Plantronics Headset that he bought last week for \$5. It broke, so he was going to return it, but he forgot it at home. No problem, he thought, I'll just buy a new one for \$5 and return the old one another time. WRONG – unless he wanted to spend \$21 on the new one! That's right, they took a \$5 clearance item and marked it up to \$21 – more than **quadruple** the price!!! So he asked the lady in electronics if they raised their clearance prices, and she said, "I'm not going to lie to you. We did raise the prices. They took away our clearance budget." Whatever that means. Not something I, the consumer, should be concerned with... except that they took all the fun out of clearance shopping at Walmart! And of course the people at customer service couldn't help us return our headset since we didn't have the broken one with us... their suggestion? Buy a new one for \$21, then return the broken one later for \$5 – thanks but no thanks! Here are some other examples of clearance items that they re-inflated: ATI Video Card from \$50 to \$115, Panasonic Cordless Phone from \$30 to \$69, and a US Robotics SkypePhone from \$5 to \$16. Each of these items had at least a 100% increase in price. I understand that the economy sucks and inflation and blah, blah, but I think Walmart should have kept these items on the clearance where they had them; then started their new clearance policy with new clearance items. I mean, come on, is Walmart really that worried about going broke?

The bottom line is, Walmart keeps finding ways to take away whatever fun is left in shopping. First it was by playing their little pricing games that get us to spend more and close down their competition, and now they've taken away their good clearance deals. Well, maybe their policies will bite them in

the you-know-what come Christmas time when they don't have any room on their shelves for the new Christmas products because no one wants to touch their crappy clearance items at their not-so-clearance prices!

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## MiRRors

Hmm, I couldn't figure out how to make one of the R's in [Mirrors](#) backward like they do for the movie title, but anyway, we saw the movie [Mirrors](#) with [Keifer Sutherland](#) yesterday. It was between [Mirrors](#), [Tropic Thunder](#), and [The Rocker](#). We eliminated [The Rocker](#) from the selection because it didn't look or sound very good, and the only reason we were interested in seeing it is because it stars [Rainn Wilson](#), none other than the hilarious character Dwight Shrute on our favorite show, [The Office](#). We ended up going with [Mirrors](#) over [Tropic Thunder](#) because we were at the nice theater, and we figured a horror movie would give us more bang for our buck so to speak – take advantage of the larger screen and the nicer sound.

[Mirrors](#) is kind of lengthy for a horror film; it runs about 2 hours. It didn't drag for me at all, well, maybe a little, but only because baby Christopher decided to poopie during the movie and he needed his diaper changed. So I was like, when is this going to be over so I can change him because I don't want to miss the movie. It was a cool premise: Keifer Sutherland plays an NYPD cop who accidentally shot and killed another cop, so he still has some psychological bruises and can no longer be a cop. He gets a job as a security guard at an abandoned department store that had had a fire and burned – right up my alley; I really like abandoned buildings, defunct amusement parks, etc. The department store was cool looking,

and throughout the movie, there were lots of shots of the outside as well as the inside. I kept wondering if it was an actual building they used for filming or rather a specially built facade... But anyway, the department store is haunted and the haunting ghoul uses mirrors to do its haunting and murdering. There is actually more to the plot, but I don't want to risk spilling any spoilers because it was a decent horror movie and worth seeing. We were alone in the theater, and when my husband left to go to the bathroom, I was pretty creeped out, so I'd say it was spookily successful. Before we saw the movie, I had read that the director, [Alexandre Aja](#), is one of a group of directors a horror movie magazine called, "The Splat Pack" for their affinity for blood and gore. The movie was not without blood and gore, but it was not over-used; something that gets on my nerves with many modern horror films – see #'s 1,2, and 5 on [my movie stinker list](#) – (The Devil's Rejects, Doomsday, and The Fun Park) – all terrible movies showcasing the over-usage of gore.

If you like horror movies, *Mirrors* is worth a try. We liked it and were entertained, despite it having a few obvious plot holes... but then again, what horror movie doesn't have plot holes?

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## Small Town Makes Good

It seems that the county fair just to our south will be getting some national attention. Chris Cuomo, who is the news anchor for ABC's morning program "[Good Morning America](#)," will be making an appearance at the Defiance County fair on Thursday August 21. While there, he will be taping a segment presumably on the Tractor Pulls or maybe it is to report on the sister cities Hicksville, OH and Hicksville, N. Y. But,

here is the full article for your enjoyment.



HICKSVILLE – The ABC News morning news program, “Good Morning America,” and anchor Chris Cuomo will arrive at the Defiance County Fairgrounds on Thursday to tape a news segment to be seen on GMA.

The program segment is expected to feature highlights of the fair, including Cuomo’s participation in an exhibition tractor or truck pull, to be held at the grandstand between 2 and 5 p.m. before the Kids Day bicycle raffle.

A fair board spokesman believed the segment will air next month, and “Good Morning America” officials could not be reached for confirmation.

Fair board president Pat Slattery said he believes the show is filming in Hicksville due to the National Tractor Pullers Association. “The pullers like our track,” he says. “We could probably hold a national pull with our track.

“I think it’s great the show is coming here. It may even help to bring in funds faster for our (new) grandstand (construction project).”

As Hicksville is the sister city to Hicksville, N.Y., the fair board looks forward to showing the town to the GMA crew.

“When Mr. Cuomo comes here, he’ll be ... right back in the country,” Slattery said.

While Cuomo is scheduled to be on the grounds only between 2 and 5 p.m., GMA camera crews will be seen throughout the fair, taping Thursday evening’s sanctioned tractor and truck pulls as well as conversations with attendees to be shown during the show.

According to the county fair board office, the National

Tractor Pullers Association set up the opportunity months ago, but the board could not alert the media until everything was confirmed this week.

Those wishing to see the sanctioned truck and tractor pulls may purchase tickets (infield, \$8; grandstand, \$7) from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. daily in the fair board secretary's office.

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## A 9 Foot WHAT?!?

A 9 foot *tapeworm*. Eww and ouch – enough said!

Here's the story:

A man who contends he got a 9-foot tapeworm after eating undercooked fish is suing a Chicago restaurant.

In a lawsuit filed Monday, Anthony Franz says he ordered salmon salad for lunch from Shaw's Crab House in 2006 and fell violently ill. He later passed the giant parasite, which a pathologist determined came from undercooked fish, such as salmon.

Franz's lawsuit seeks \$100,000 from Shaw's and its parent company, Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises.

Franz claims the restaurant's staff was negligent in serving him improperly cooked fish.

But Carrol Symank, vice president of food safety for Lettuce Entertain You, says the tapeworm didn't come from Shaw's Crab House.

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# Sleepwalkers

With the exception of [Thinner](#), I've liked most of the [Stephen King](#) movies I've seen. My favorite is [Storm of the Century](#), a Prime-Time Emmy Award winning made-for-tv mini-series that aired in 1999. Every winter when a big blizzard is predicted in our corner of Ohio, we plan on being snowed in watching our Storm of the Century dvd. It never happens though; I think it has to do with trying to watch a 240 minute movie that's not for kids when we have 4 of them. But anyway, if we ever get time to watch Storm of the Century in the near future, I'll definitely blog more about it – it's awesome!

One of Stephen King's lesser known films, [Sleepwalkers](#), is a movie I saw as a teenager. I liked it back then, so when I happened to see the dvd on the library's shelf the other day, that's what I quickly picked up since I was in a hurry. My husband and I watched it the other night, and we both had the same opinion. A fun little horror film, nothing great but still entertaining. It is Stephen King-creepy, as only he can do, and much of the movie's creepiness has to do with the mother-son relationship; I won't go into detail except to say that it's extremely disturbing. [Brian Krause](#) and [Alice Krige](#) play the mother and son monsters who need to feed on a human virgin in order to survive. They morph into strange cat-like creatures, which is even more strange because cats are drawn to their house, yet deadly to the monsters at the same time. The special effects are extremely cheesy by today's standards and even laughable, but sometimes I'm a sucker for that kind of thing and really enjoy bad special effects – my favorite example of this is [Jaws 3-D](#).

While we're on the subject of Stephen King, as I mentioned, I like most of his movies that I've seen. I tried to read the

book *Carrie* a really long time ago, but I found it hard to follow, either because I was a teen or because of the religious ramblings inserted throughout the book which were done in such a way that it's hard to follow because it's depicting Carrie's mother's craziness. But anyway, Stephen King is very talented, of course. He has a gift of making movies extremely creepy without stooping as low as many of today's horror movies do with the constant blood and gore.

An interesting event took place in his life that almost reads like one of his novels, well, actually it does since he wrote about it. On June 19, 1999, his life was changed forever when he was hit by a car while walking down a Maine road. There are two creepy coincidences about this incident. First, earlier that year, King had finished most of *From a Buick 8*, a novel in which a character dies after getting struck by a car. Second, the driver of the car, Bryan Smith, who was only 43, was found dead in his trailer just over a year later of an accidental overdose. He was found dead on Stephen King's birthday, September 21. The accident was inspiration for the *Dark Tower* series of books, and King is in talks with Lost co-creator J.J. Abrams to do an adaption of the series. Since I'm a fan of Lost *and* Stephen King, that might be something I'll have to check out. Until then, I'll probably be planning another snowy viewing of Storm of the Century this winter that won't come to fruition.