



volume xiii, issue 1, january, february, march 2013



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message from the ceo

news in brief

library membership drives

To celebrate our 25th Anniversary Shortgrass HQ is sponsoring an iPad Mini contest for new memberships or renewals to any Shortgrass member library. Redcliff Public Library has created a similar initiative offering a chance to win a Kobo Mini for any new or renewed RPL memberships.

end of an era at mhpl

On April 30, 2013 MHPL will lose a significant portion of its organizational knowledge as Pauline Fitzgerald and Mary Ellen Watkins retire. Both are among the longest tenured staff at MHPL with Pauline starting at MHPL on April 9, 1983 and Mary Ellen beginning on January 2, 1978. They will be greatly missed by customers and their fellow staff. We wish them well in their future endeavours!

space-use study at mhpl

Beginning in March, MHPL will be conducting a research project that studies how their customers use the physical space of the library. This information will be gathered through observational sweeps of the library. MHPL will be recording things such as the size of groups using the library, age, what possessions they have with them, and what activities customers are engaged in. This information will help inform future facilities planning at MHPL.

cover photo credit: hamilton greenwood

SPRING has sprung and 2013 kicks off the 25th Anniversary of Shortgrass Library System. A quarter century ago public libraries in South East Alberta began a partnership that has helped provide all the residents of our region with great library services. It's amazing to think how far our libraries have come in that time. I look forward to celebrating our local library partnerships all year!

While winter seems to be winding down we are actively preparing getting ready for the upcoming year. Currently I am busy amending the 2013 budget. We continue to review Shortgrass services and resources to find ways to provide more flexible services to our members and partners in the most fiscally responsible way.

We are always looking to improve our operations and help our member libraries find ways to improve the patron experience. Our new phone system at Shortgrass HQ makes use of 21st Century technology saving us significant money and creating a better system for us and people contacting our office.

Shortgrass is in the process of acquiring another service for member libraries: library patron notifications via text message. Smartphones have become ubiquitous and text

notification provides the information patrons need right where and when it's most convenient.

We continue to be engaged in advocacy for our libraries as well as marketing our online resources at a local level. Our joint library booth with Medicine Hat Public Library at the Sunshine Home and Garden Show was a great success. It gave us numerous opportunities to talk to people from across the region and resulted in about 100 new memberships and renewals – signed up right there at the trade show! We have placed advertisements in local publications throughout the region, such as the Brooks Bulletin and the Natural Health & Healing Directory, as we continue to promote the awesome value of Consumer Reports Online. We will be changing the ads throughout the year to promote other library resources.

This summer we are working with Medicine Hat College's work placement program and will host a Visual Communications student to help us update various promotional materials from Shortgrass HQ along with those from our member libraries.

Please let us know if there's anything we can do to serve you better. We are always happy to listen to new ideas and try new things. I look forward to many more years of fruitful partnerships!

shortgrass library system // w: shortgrass.ca // p: 403.529.0550 // f: 403.528.2473

- Bassano Memorial Library
- Bow Island Municipal Library
- Brooks Public Library
- Duchess & District Public Library
- Foremost Municipal Library
- Medicine Hat Public Library
- Alcoma Community Library (Rainier)
- Tilley Public Library
- Graham Community Library (Ralston)
- Redcliff Public Library
- Rolling Hills Public Library
- Rosemary Community Library

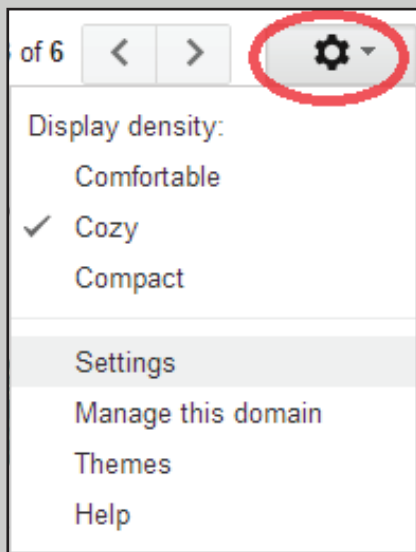
Gmail Tip - UNDO SEND

Have you ever quickly typed out an email and hit Send only to notice an embarrassing spelling mistake a little too late?

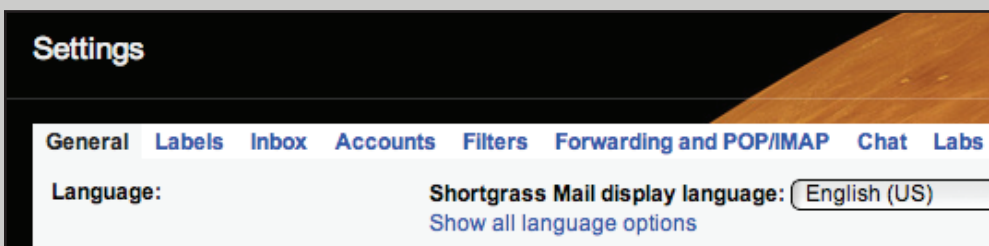
Undo Send is a brilliant feature that turns those embarrassing mistakes into correctable mishaps! After you click the 'Send' button, Gmail gives you a set amount of time - 5, 10, 20, or 30 seconds - to turn that message back into a draft so you can correct that typo or change your message entirely.

To enable the Undo Send feature:

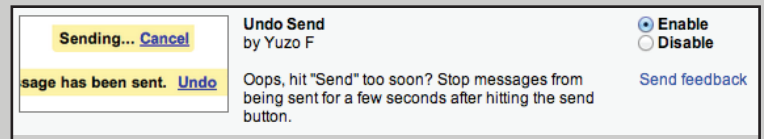
- Click the Gear button in the top-right corner, and click Settings.



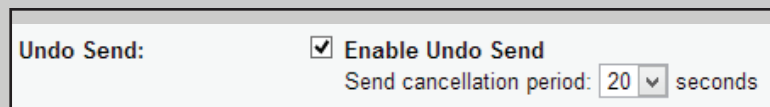
- From the row of tabs along the top select and click 'Labs'.



- Then Scroll down to find 'Undo Send' and enable it.



- Make sure you click the 'Save Changes' button at the bottom.
- Click the Gear button again and under the 'General' tab and scroll down to the Undo Send section.



- Make sure 'Enable Undo Send' is checked, and choose your Send cancellation period.
- Don't forget to click 'Save Changes' at the bottom.

From now on, after you click the 'Send' button, you'll see this message at the top of your screen:

Your message has been sent. [Undo](#) [View message](#)

Click Undo and your message will be reverted to a draft, ready to edit! This feature can save you a lot of grief. Try it out - you won't regret it!



LEVI MILLINGTON
SLS SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATOR

BY LEVI MILLINGTON

NEW PHONE SYSTEM!

If you've phoned Shortgrass HQ in the past year, you know that our old phone system was tough to deal with. Believe me, it was tough for us too! So we've put a lot of thought, ingenuity and a little bit of magic into our brand new Voice over IP (VoIP) phone system.

While VoIP is a common term these days, Shortgrass is putting a new spin on it. Most VoIP systems use computer networks to communicate internally, but still use plain old telephone lines to call out. Our phone system uses a technology called SIP trunking, which allows us to place calls using our internet connection. The biggest benefits are ease of management, scalability, and cost savings - nearly 75% monthly savings compared to our old system! Our phone server runs on free, open-source software which allows our IT staff to add, change, or remove extensions, phones, even phone lines without technicians or electricians. These benefits translate to savings, and ultimately to enhanced services for our members, partner libraries, and their patrons.



Some phone extensions have changed, so give us a call or check out shortgrass.ca/staff.

Local children build new creations out of LEGO at redcliff public library



LEGO TIME

*to fee
or not to fee
that is the question!*

Shannon Vanderloh on why the Dutchess & District Public Library is a 'No Fee' library.

The Dutchess & District Public Library was thrilled to join the Shortgrass Library System in May 2011. All of our members in the Village of Dutchess as well as our members in Division 3 and 8 are very happy with the wide variety of services and materials that being a member of Shortgrass Library System provides!

When first approaching library members with the idea of joining Shortgrass Library System, prior to its actual commencement, one of the main concerns was that we would have to start charging membership fees and/or overdue fees. We felt strongly that because we were already going to have to ask the Village and the County to supply more funding in order for us to join Shortgrass that we could not ask individuals to also dig deeper into their pockets, for membership fees and overdue charges, to help fund a service that they were already paying for.

We also knew that along with charging membership fees and overdue fees would come more staff time – making bank deposits, keeping financial records and extra training on the computer. We have found that most members are very good about returning their materials on time and with a little prompting and encouragement (and at times, not allowing any more materials to go out until items are returned) the majority of materials are returned promptly. And, again, we did not feel comfortable charging membership fees when members were already paying for this service through their taxes.

We are happy as a small community library to be able to offer all our services, including membership, overdue charges, story times, book clubs, after school programs, and summer reading programs on a NO FEE basis and hope to be able to continue this policy for as long as possible!

SHORTGRASS KINDLE LENDING LIBRARY

SHORTGRASS LIBRARY SYSTEM is launching a new eReader collection starting with six Kindles in circulation. This collection of eReaders is slightly different than the eReader collections of Brooks Public Library and Medicine Hat Public Library. Each of these Kindles comes pre-loaded with high interest titles along with a protective case and charging cable. Shortgrass HQ is able to purchase a single title from Amazon that can then be shared across 6 devices. This greatly multiplies our buying power.

The five initial titles on the Kindles are:

1. *The Diner* by Herman Koch
2. *Proof of Heaven* by Eben Alexander
3. *The Storyteller* by Jodi Picoult
4. *Drinking and Tweeting* by Brandi Glanville
5. *The Silver Linings Playbook* by Matthew Quirk

This pilot project gives our customers a chance to try out an eReader and see how they like reading an eBook while also increasing the availability of popular new titles. Our objective is to offer customers different ways to read with the aim of growing the overall reading pie! Please tell your customers about this new program.

Kris Samraj



for storytime

new stories

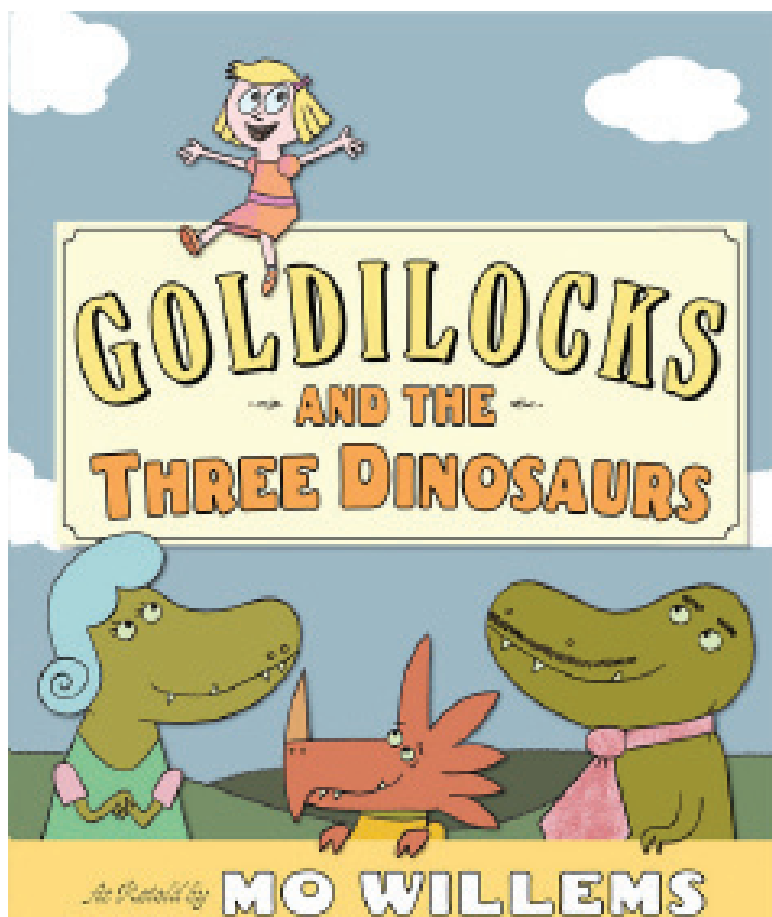


I'M BORED

Michael Ian Black and Debbie Ridpath Ohi
2012

As the title suggests, this little girl is struggling to entertain herself. She protests her discontentment to the world until she finds a flamingo-enthralled talking potato... and that's when this story really gets cooking!

I'm Bored is a wildly imaginative story best suited for those with terrific... uh... imaginations, (say children between 4-8 years old - definitely no wild & crazy children's programmers). Try it out at your next story time & watch this magical story unfold.



GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE DINOSAURS
Mo Willems
2012

A slight departure from the usual version, Goldilocks wanders gleefully into an empty house with oversized chairs and beds and three bowls of chocolate pudding (at varying temperatures).

Complete with wonderful illustrations and surprises at every twist and turn (including a visitor from Norway), Goldilocks is a terrific read for the older children in your life. I'd recommend it for 5 years and up (not read it for five years, but five-year-olds... aww, you know what I mean!).

try these two books at your next storytime!

by Andrew Plait, Children's Services MHPL.

FOOD FOR FINES

Many public libraries offer a 'Food-for-Fines' program that gives customers an alternative option to settle late fines. However, these days are usually offered only during special limited periods during the year. Redcliff Public Library runs a 'Food-for-Fines' program as well, but for the last five years has offered this option year-round to its customers.

Redcliff's 'Food-for-Fines' started out running only one day a month. Redcliff keeps track of the money collected from late fines and when they studied the numbers they did not notice any drop off in the amount collected due to the 'Food-for-Fines' program. This information made it easier for the Redcliff Board to agree to the program's expansion.

Even with the expanded program Redcliff has not seen a depreciable drop off in the amount of late fines collected. Money is often an easier way to settle late fines than remembering to bring in food, but the program gives those patrons with large fines another option if needed.

RPL Staff inform customers of this option of settling fines at the circulation desk, especially for those customers with fines of \$15 or more. Additionally, information about 'Food-

for-Fines' accompanies any overdue notices mailed out to customers.

Only unopened and non-expired food donations are accepted and the collected food goes to the Salvation Army Family Centre for most of the year. The Centre arranges for someone to pick up the food from the library once a month. The exception comes during the fall when Redcliff participates in CHAT radio's food drive. During CHAT's food drive the collected food is split between CHAT and the Salvation Army.

Redcliff recognizes that while fine payment is generally not an issue for most customers it can be an issue for some and 'Food-for-Fines' mitigates this potential obstacle to continued library use. Plus the food donations are appreciated by the local community and builds great relationships with local organizations.

Children and teenagers also use the 'Food-for-Fines' to settle their late fines and rid their family homes of hated vegetables – we get a lot of green beans.

as told to Kris Samraj.



GRAHAM COMMUNITY LIBRARY

The new furniture at the Graham Community Library has arrived! Last week we received several new chairs and tables for the our children's area. This area is much used by the kids for doing home work, playing the Wii, or just hanging out after school. We invite everybody to come, take a look around and enjoy a latte in the internet lounge.



MHPL's eReader Lending Library

At the tail end of 2012, Medicine Hat Public Library began circulating a selection of eReaders. Since then two more eReaders have been added to the collection bringing the total to five. The eReader Lending Library has taken off nicely with usually all of the devices in circulation. Each of the devices in the eReader lending collection is a different type of eReader. The variety of devices posed some challenges in creating this collection, but also gives MHPL customers a chance to try out a variety of eReaders and see for themselves the pros and cons of each one.

The Lending Library consists of:

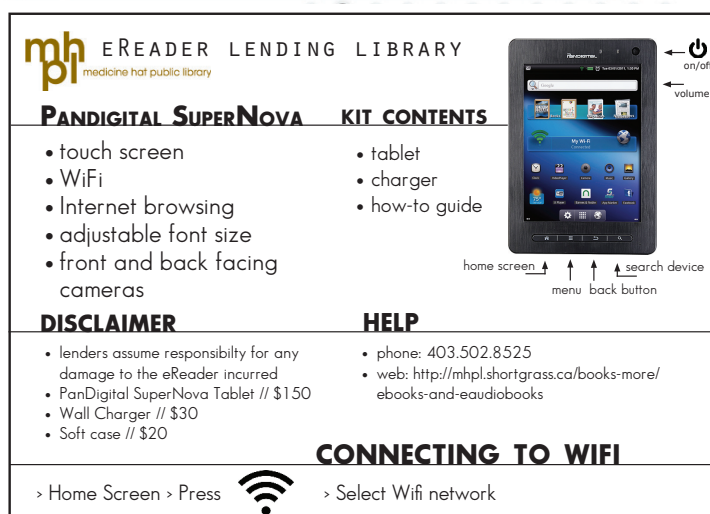
1. KOBO TOUCH. A simple black and white eReader with a touch screen.
2. KOBO VOX. A tablet with a color touch screen and a full Internet experience. It is an Android device.
3. SONY READER. A simple black and white eReader with a touch screen and Wifi capabilities.
4. AMAZON KINDLE. This simple device launched the eReader market. It has a black and white (with no touch) screen. Although the device is not compatible with public library eBooks in Canada public domain books are easily downloaded onto the Kindle.
5. PANDIGITAL SUPERNova. This tablet is similar to the Kobo Vox with a larger color touch screen. It is an Android device.

The eReaders appear in Bibliocommons and circulation periods are set at three weeks. Holds may be placed on them and there is no age restriction on the eReaders. Each eReader comes within a kit that contains: an eReader, a charger, a quick start guide, and a protective soft case.

Andrea Meerstra and I were tasked with implementing this program and we had a number of decisions along the way. Ease of use was our primary goal and that aided informing our choices.

One of the first questions was what to do about Adobe Digital Editions. The digital rights management software is used by every device except the Sony Reader, but can be a nuisance for customers to set up. We decided to preauthorize all the devices with ADE accounts set up

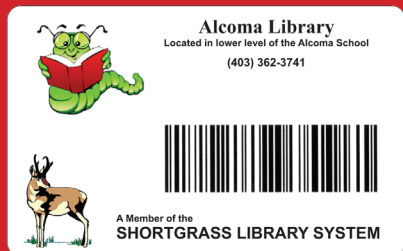
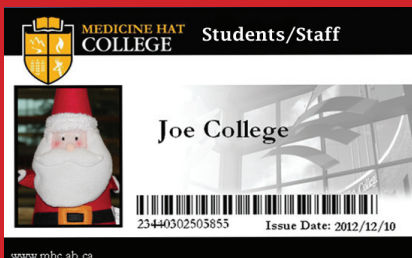
(Banner Slide from <http://mhpl.shortgrass.ca>)



(Image of the Quick Start Guide from one of the kits.)

specifically for each eReader making them much easier to use. This feature also saves customers from using up one of their six device quota set by ADE were they to authorize the eReaders with their personal account.

Another challenge was that the diversity of eReaders required different sets of instructions for each device. It also required MHPL staff to become comfortable with different procedures for managing each device. Andrea and I spent hours going through the process of checking out the kits, downloading eBooks, and checking each device to create useful instructions. Even with that time spent there were many things we missed that were helpfully pointed out by MHPL Staff during our training sessions. MHPL staff were patient with us as we ironed out the wrinkles in the new program and it has been fairly smooth sailing since.



**READ/
EBOOKS.
GRAPHIC NOVELS.
NEWSPAPERS.**

**ON A NEW
iPAD MINI!**



Every new or renewed library membership for any Shortgrass Member Public Library will be automatically entered in a draw for an iPad Mini (32GB).

THE IPAD MINI CONTEST IS OPEN MARCH 1 - JUNE 15, 2013. [CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS.](#)



NEW
BLINDS
FOR
REDCLIFF
PUBLIC
LIBRARY
FUNDED
THROUGH
GRANT

Redcliff Public Library was faced with a problem – the blinds covering the large bay of windows in the library were broken. Functional window coverings are no small issue in sunny South East Alberta. With temperature that reach up to 40 degrees window coverings are vital to cooling the library's interior, but with all the sun we get it's nice to occasionally let in all that natural light.

Tracy Weinrauch, RPL Manager, found a grant through Western Economic Diversification and applied for funding to cover the costs of replacing the blinds.

The application process to the Community Infrastructure Improvement Fund was much more extensive and arduous than expected; involving many trips to the Redcliff Town Office to dig up minutes from ancient board meetings.

That work paid off when the application was approved and the new blinds were installed in January, 2013. Thanks goes out to the Federal Department of Western Economic Diversification for supporting the community of Redcliff.

