



news in brief

autumn at SLS

Check out the awesome costumes that staff at Shortgrass libraries wore on Hallowe'en on **page 2**.

new funding

Information on funding for Zinio, ebooks and eAudiobooks, and the one-time IT Capacity Fund can be found on **page 3**.

"hello, my name is..."

Meet George, the new Library Manager at Brooks Public Library, on **page 4**.

holiday reading

Find ideas for holiday reading with some of the best 2014 Canadian novels on **page 5**.

cloudburst and techtalk

Get updates on systems and tech from Aaron Dalla-Longa and Chris Field on **pages 6 and 7**.

around the province

Updates from the Ministry of Public Affairs and Public Library Services Branch are on **pages 8 and 9**.

do it yourself

Kris Samraj gives us a report on his DIY book scanning project on **page 10**.

say cheese!

A photo from the November 17 Library Manager's Meeting can be found on **page 11**.

cat corner

Catch up with our furry friends on **page 12**.



message from the ceo

It's the most wonderful time of the year! As we find ourselves ready to wrap up another great year, we still have enough new activity going on to provide little time for reflection so far!

The Brooks Public Library Board welcomed their new Chief Librarian, George Hawtin this fall. You can get to know a bit more about George on page 4. We look forward to having George as part of our Library Managers group.

I am especially pleased with the generous support the Shortgrass Board of Trustees was able to provide to our member libraries on short notice, by picking up the tab for their Zinio subscription and making a significant contribution to keep hoopla! running in the next year (see page 3). The Board knows how much our libraries and their patrons value these resources and is pleased to be able to provide the support.

We are also pretty excited about our two new delivery vehicles: a big Chev Express cargo van for hauling library materials between libraries on days with long delivery runs, and a Grand Caravan passenger van for the smaller loads. Both have been decorated with advertisements for Zinio, to help spread the word about the availability of free online magazines throughout the region. Many thanks to the Community Initiatives Program from Alberta Culture and Tourism for providing us with the funding for this project.

The 3 Day Basic Facilitation Training Workshop we are hosting with Alberta Culture and Tourism's Community Development Unit in January 2015 is the first of its kind in Medicine Hat and I am very much looking forward to learning new skills alongside other not-for-profit and government employees. Look for photos from the event in the spring 2015 edition of this newsletter!

Our Shortgrass elves will continue to work hard throughout the month of December to ensure projects such as the online payment imitative and year end wrap up of orders for library materials continue and everything transitions smoothly into the new year. The calendar of dates on the back of this newsletter outlines the days when our office will be closed.

Wishing you all a restful and festive holiday season and I look forward to seeing you all again in 2015!

Petra

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

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Bassano Memorial Library | • Foremost Municipal Library | • Graham Community Library |
| • Bow Island Municipal Library | • Medicine Hat Public Library | • Redcliff Public Library |
| • Brooks Public Library | • Alcoma Community Library | • Rolling Hills Public Library |
| • Duchess & District Public Library | • Tilley & District Public Library | • Rosemary Community Library |

Autumn at SLS

Shortgrass really gets into the spirit of things when it comes to Hallowe'en!



Redcliff



Bow Island



Rosemary



Medicine Hat

NEW AND HOT

The Shortgrass Library System Board of Trustees generously approved the following expenditures to benefit our public libraries:

- **Complete funding** to pay the **Zinio** subscription for our current 50 titles for the next 12 months.
- **\$20,000** for **hoopla!** use by Shortgrass libraries. The board recognizes hoopla! as a valuable resource that has the potential to attract new customers and provides great content for current users and therefore wants to ensure libraries are able to continue to provide access.
- **\$2,500** for **eBook and eAudiobook** purchases around the Christmas holidays. We have found in past years that this is a time when many new users first explore our eBook catalogue, to test out new tablets or eReaders they may have received as gifts. Having a current and large selection of new eBooks and eAudiobooks available at that time could make the difference between getting these folks to become committed library users or being discouraged by the selection.



A promotional graphic for "Moola" featuring a close-up of a brown cow's face on the right. On the left, text reads "Save your moola" in a mix of fonts, followed by "Read ebooks FREE with your library card". Below this is a tablet displaying the "SHORTGRASS LIBRARY SYSTEM" logo and the tagline "Resourceful By Nature". At the bottom right, a starburst says "Best Sellers/ Latest Books" and the URL "shortgrass.ca/ebooks" is displayed.

The Shortgrass Library System Board of Trustees has also approved a time-sensitive, one-time **IT Capacity Fund** for each library in the amount of **\$1,400**, to help make up for the loss of the CAP funding (which ended in 2012). You may use the \$1,400 to purchase technology equipment directly related to patron use or service. The easiest way for us to keep track of this will be for you to have Aaron purchase the items for you. He will also be able to advise you on the best product(s) for your library's needs.

Your library must spend all of the \$1,400 by December 31, 2014. The offer of funding expires at 10:00 am on December 31, 2014 and any unused funds expire at that time also.

Some examples of equipment you can purchase with this funding include:

- Optical barcode scanners that allow patrons to use their library barcode in the Shortgrass app instead of a physical library card.
- Public Access Computer components
- Tablets (either for in-library use or to be loaned out)
- Game consoles or games (either for in-library use or to be loaned out)
- Replacing video conferencing equipment components

HELLO, MY NAME IS...

This autumn, Brooks Public Library welcomed its new Library Manager, George Hawtin!

Tell us a little about yourself and your background.

Born and raised just outside of Toronto, I worked in politics, government, academia, and the non-profit sector. My community involvement led to my appointment to the library board in my hometown of Ajax, ON, where I was elected chair---at 25, the youngest library board chair in Ontario of a public library serving 100,000. This inspired me to return to school, where I earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from Athabasca University, and a Master of Library and Information Science (concentration in library management) from the University of Western Ontario.

How long have you been working in libraries? Why did you choose this field of work?

I've loved libraries my whole life. It was only upon being appointed to a library board, however, that I learned how much more libraries are than a place where you can check out (all of the) books. I chose to work in libraries because I'm passionate about the opportunities they provide to foster community development and to serve as community space. Some of my other positions in libraries and the information profession have been with the environmental law library at Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario; providing reference service with the Ontario Council of University Libraries; and working in "knowledge mobilization" at York University.

What attracted you to this particular position?

Brooks is small enough that I can get to know all of our regular patrons, and big enough to support two Tim Horton's locations. Through our membership in Shortgrass, we can provide our patrons with the large and varied collection you would find in a big city, while maintaining a small-town feel. On my first day here, I discovered that the Brooks library is moving to a new facility---nearly double our current size, with a much more user-friendly location. The experience of designing a new library is a wonderful opportunity!

What trend or development in the library world do you find most exciting?

The advent of technology is very exciting. As electronic services come along to replace print books, libraries have to adapt, both by offering access to those services and by offering innovative new programs that will keep people coming in. Another issue facing places like Brooks, in particular, is trying to balance the commitment to intellectual freedom they teach in library school with the needs of a more conservative user base.

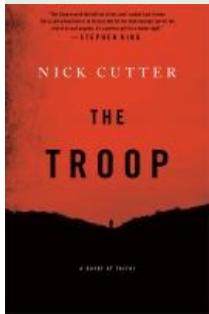
What are some of your interests outside of work?

I'm a professional student, an animal lover, an avid reader, and a rabid fan of Toronto sports teams (though maybe the Stamps will win me over eventually).

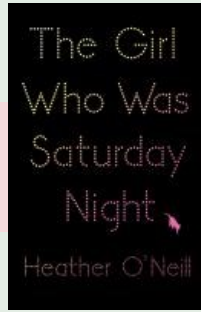


HOLIDAY READS

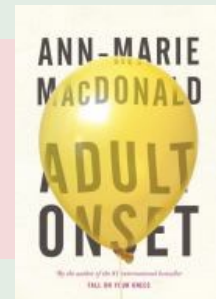
Catch up on these 2014 Canadian novels over those long winter evenings!



The Troop
Nick Cutter



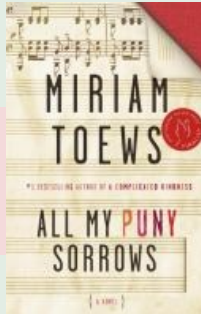
The Girl Who Was Saturday Night
Heather O'Neill



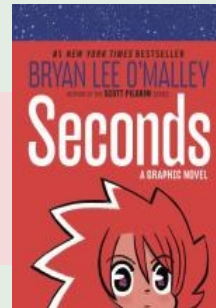
Adult Onset
Ann-Marie MacDonald



Sweetland
Michael Crummey



All My Puny Sorrows
Miriam Toews



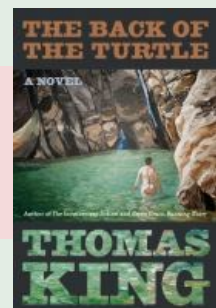
Seconds
Bryan Lee O'Malley



Station Eleven
Emily St. John Mandel



Us Conductors
Sean Michaels



The Back of The Turtle
Thomas King



Readers in Medicine Hat got a chance to stock up on their winter reading at the annual Midnight Madness book sale hosted by the Society of Friends of the Medicine Hat Public Library on November 27!

Cloud Burst

Shortgrass's Systems Administrator Aaron Dalla-Longa returns for his second edition of Cloud Burst! He'll be talking about two new technologies that can improve the way you connect with people.

VoIP

The first is our VoIP (Voice over IP) phone system. We have had it at Shortgrass Headquarters for quite some time, and as of December 1st, Medicine Hat Public Library will also be on this system. The savings of switching over to an IP-based phone system can be big, depending on how many lines you want available to you, how many phone numbers you have, and other factors.

If you are interested in setting up these technologies or if you have any other systems questions, contact Aaron by email at aaron@shortgrass.ca!



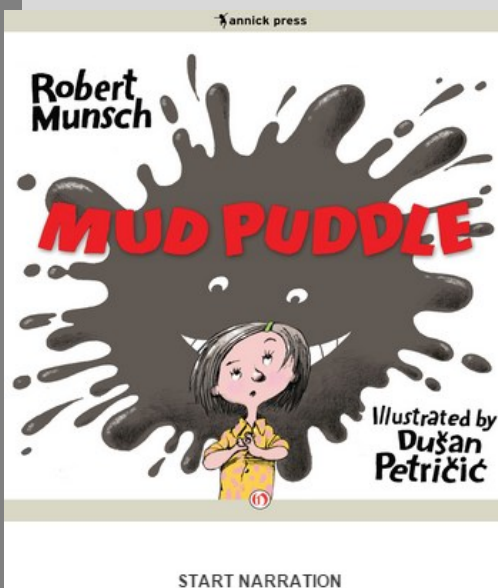
Cisco Jabber

In addition to the phone system, you can now use Cisco Jabber to connect to the RISE network from a single computer. This can be very handy for sitting in on a video conference if you are at a remote location, away from your RISE equipment, and you only have a laptop or desktop computer handy.

New from Overdrive: Narrated eBooks

Overdrive has a new kind of eBook that is a huge asset to any digital collection: narrated eBooks! These are a huge service enhancement, offering professional narration that plays alongside text and pictures—some even have a soundtrack and sound effects. The narrators are well-known and of a very high quality; Randy Travis, John Lithgow, Robert Munsch, and even Ray Charles get in on the action, reading some of your favourite classic stories like Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs, Mud Puddle, Chicka Chicka Boom Boom, Franklin, and Curious George. Narrated eBooks are great for new readers or those who are new to English. Overdrive already has hundreds of narrated eBooks on offer and are adding more all the time. Check it out now, and contact Liz at liz@shortgrass.ca if you're interested!

OverDrive®



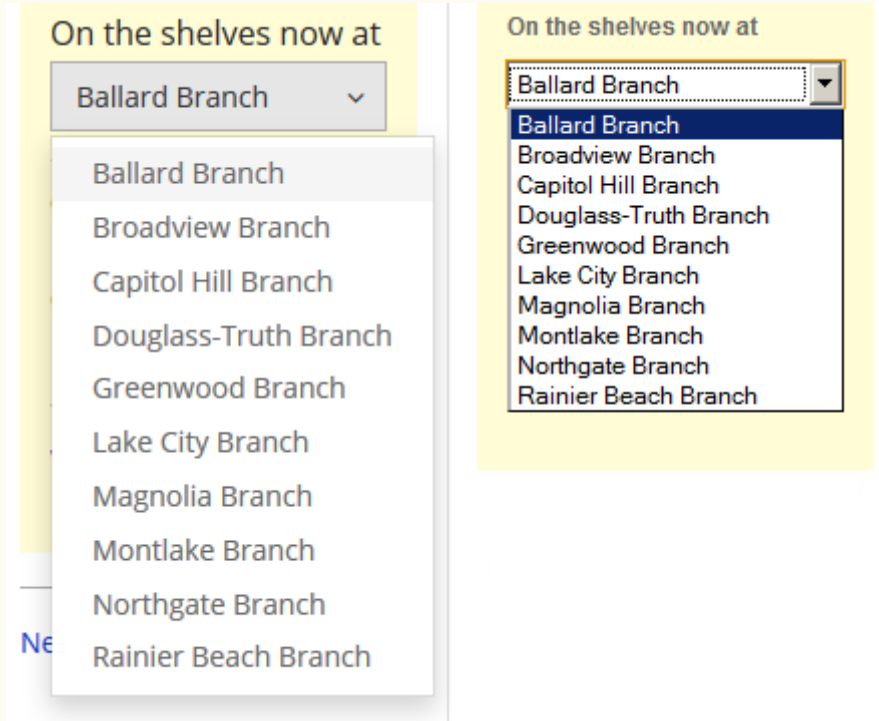
TECH TALK

A Bibliocommons update from Shortgrass's Manager of Library Technology Services, Chris Field!


Bibliocommons Interface Improvements

Notice anything different in Bibliocommons lately? In response to the ongoing shift toward mobile devices as the preferred internet access method, a series of improvements to the Bibliocommons interface were rolled out by the vendor at the end of November 2014. Some of the key changes include:

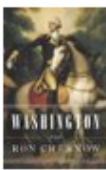
- **A redesigned home page:** four carousels display recently reviewed books, movies, music, and other formats.
- **Font size and type:** default font has changed to Open Sans, size has increased to 14 pixels, and spacing between lines has increased.
- **Larger dropdown menus:** dropdown menus, such as the "Select a Pickup Location" menu, are now larger and easier to read.
- **Bib page changes:** book summaries/descriptions now appear under the cover image so they are always visible, regardless of the currently selected tab. A new "Details" tab, meanwhile, displays a small selection of important bib information such as publisher, copyright date, and ISBN.



More improvements are planned for the future, so stay tuned!



Washington
A Life
By Chernow, Ron
(Book - 2010)
B W277C 2010
[Available in some locations](#)
Holds: 2 on 23 copies
Average Rating:
★★★★★



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By Chernow, Ron
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Average Rating:
★★★★★



UPDATES

Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA)

Do you have print disabled patrons in your community? Through CELA you have access to more than 230,000 audiobooks, magazines, newspapers and described videos in the patron's format of choice, together with braille children's books and tactile materials for early learners. As well as physical materials, CELA provides access to 160,000 online accessible materials. Delivery options for CELA members include direct download to computer, handheld devices and DAISY player and CD and braille mailed to home. Learn more about CELA on their website.

Be sure to also subscribe to the CELA listserv for monthly updates on their services. Ask Chris Field for more information.



Ministerial Update

In 2014 many libraries and regional library systems, including Shortgrass and the Redcliff Public Library, contacted the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, under which the Public Library Services Branch falls, with advocacy letters to ask for an increase in library funding in general and a re-assessment of the current funding formula in particular. As of September 15 2014, there is a new Minister of Municipal Affairs, Diana McQueen. Minister McQueen previously served as Minister of Energy and Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and used to sit on the board for Yellowhead Regional Library. She is supported by the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, Brad Pickering. Any future advocacy efforts should be directed to their attention.

Contact the Minister of Municipal Affairs at

Legislature Office
#404 Legislature Building
10800-97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
T5K 2B6
Phone: 780-427-3744
Fax: 780-422-9550
Email: minister.municipalaffairs@gov.ab.ca

Contact the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs at

Office of the Deputy Minister, Municipal Affairs
18th fl Commerce Place
10155 - 102 Street
Edmonton, AB
T5J 4L4
Phone: 780-427-4826
Fax: 780-422-9561
Email: brad.pickering@gov.ab.ca

Remember to copy your local MLA on any correspondence with the Minister's office.

UPDATES

Minister's Awards

Submissions for the 2015 Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Library Service are now open! These awards "formally recognize great services at public libraries and promote knowledge-sharing within Alberta's library community" and celebrate exemplary library services that are of direct benefit to the public like collections, programs,

outreach activities, and Interlibrary loan. The Minister's Awards are open to all public library boards and regional library system boards in Alberta.

There are a few changes to the awards for 2015. The categories have been simplified, making for easier applications. A jury selected by the Public Library Services Board will continue to pick up to four winning submissions that demon-

strate excellence and/or innovation in library service. However, there will also be a new YOU Libraries Award for which will be adjudicated by a popular vote open to all Albertans online. All applications/nominations that meet the Minister's Awards criteria will be automatically eligible for the YOU Libraries Award. There will therefore be a maximum of five awards granted.

The submission deadline is **March 13, 2015**. Winners will be contacted in April 2015 and announced at the annual Alberta Library Conference in Jasper, held this year from April 30th to May 2nd.

For more information and detailed rules and to download the application/nomination form, go to

http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/plsb_ministers_awards.cfm.



LibPAS

As has been the case for the past couple of years, information for the Public Library Survey and Annual Report of Public Libraries is now being submitted online. To submit the information for your library, go to **ab.countingopinions.com**. This online portal for entering your library's data can be accessed on both PC and Mac computers and on the most recent versions of Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Google Chrome. You should have received an email and password from Public Library Services Branch to let you fill out the survey. If you haven't received that information, or if you have misplaced it, please contact Karen Petch from PLSB at **karen.petch@gov.ab.ca**.

As you enter your data, be mindful of the fact that there is a timeout period of 60 minutes, so try not to let your inputting lapse for a lengthy span of time. You don't have to enter the information in order, but if you enter it out of order, go back and make sure you didn't miss any sections.

There is a print/save option at the top right hand corner of the page in the green menu bar; here, you can print copies or save what you have entered to a PDF. When you are satisfied that the information has all been entered correctly, save the survey and print a draft copy to present to your board. Once the report has been approved by the board, entered the date in the indicated field and select "Submit to PLSB". After the data you have entered has been reviewed and approved, it can no longer be modified by your library. If you need to change any information after this point, you will have to contact PLSB to make the edits on your behalf.

In order to be eligible for funding, library boards must complete and submit their report by **February 28, 2014**.



DO-IT-YOURSELF

Kris Samraj from Medicine Hat Public Library and his colleague Spencer Holizki presented on their DIY Book scanner project on Netspeed 2014, the library technology conference, in



Spencer Holizki, a colleague of mine, and I had a goal – create a do-it-yourself book scanner for under \$500 (including cameras) that would meet archival digital preservation standards. If successful this would help solve a problem for smaller libraries and archives, namely the high cost of digitization projects.

Digitization, the process of making a digital copy, has many benefits. It allows for easier sharing. The text becomes searchable – making research also easier. For rare or historically important books it creates a backup copy, thus decreasing the use of the print copy and therefore further helping its preservation.

However, the cost of commercial book scanners, beginning at \$10,000, immediately put them out of reach for most libraries and archives. Rather than purchase expensive equipment libraries and archives may choose to send books to digitization labs, but those costs are also very high. Many smaller libraries and archives have important local history books, which then miss out on the benefits of digitization. (Most flatbed scanners can match archival results, but compressing books flat damages spines – a no-no when handling rare and unique books.)



The DIY book scanning community offered a possible solution to this problem. Hobbyists from around the world have begun to build their own book scanners at a fraction of the cost of commercial options using readily available materials, point and shoot cameras, and free software. Their goals were simple – they wanted digital copies of their own books. These DIY devices vary widely in design and workflow and consequently their results vary widely as well. If the final results they got suited them they were happy as these projects are for personal use. Our contribution to this field was to try and meet a particular preservation standard using a DIY scanner. Since our goal was to use these machines at an organization level our results would have to meet certain archival standards.

Our prototype was built with plans from the DIY community and with the help of Barry Freeman's woodworking class at Hat High. (Thanks Barry, you and your students are awesome!) There were many wrinkles and obstacles to overcome. The build plans were often lacking critical steps and the post-production software, also created by amateurs, is often glitchy. The physical stand allowed us to capture consistent photographs of the pages. With these consistent photographs we then used Scan Tailor, an open source application, to process all the pages simultaneously. This batch processing is critical for creating an efficient workflow. Finally, the pages were processed for optical character recognition, then stitched together into a single PDF document.

So did we meet archival specifications – were we successful? Yes and no. We were largely able to meet the preservation standards, but the process of building the scanner and photographing the pages and the post-production was far from the seamless process we had initially hoped to create. If you are poor and have time it can be done, but at this point it's not particularly easy. We will continue to tweak our design and workflow to make this easier, in the hope that eventually other organizations will feel comfortable enough to execute their own digitization projects in house.

Say Cheese!



Back: Chris Field; Kris Samraj; Bonnie Bennett; George Hawtin, Kathryn Van Dorp; Tracey Weinrauch, Carol Ann Cross-Roen

Middle: Phyllis Worrall; Vanessa Plett; Stefanie Schranz; Shannon Vanderloh; Shelley Ross; Emma Stewart

Front: Ken Feser; Petra Mauerhoff

At the November 17 Library Manager's meeting we were happy to be joined by Ken Feser, Shortgrass's new contact at the Public Library Services Branch, who gave us an update from the province.

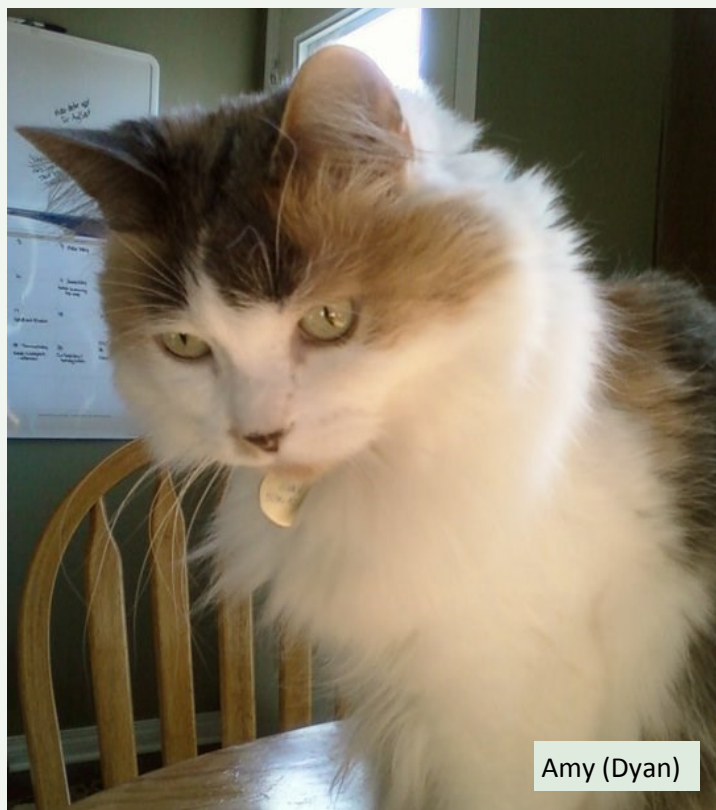
Ken has experience helping public library boards complete their Plans of Service. If you have any questions or need help with creating official documents, contact Ken at PLSB by email at **ken.feser@gov.ab.ca** or by phone at **(780) 415-0296**.



Cat Corner

As every cat owner knows, nobody owns a cat.

—Ellen Perry Berkeley



Amy (Dyan)



Lola (Emma)

December

December 24: SLS office closed at noon

December 25 & 26: SLS office closed. No deliveries. MERRY CHRISTMAS!

December 31: SLS office closed at noon

January

January 1: SLS office closed. No deliveries

January 2: first day SLS office open in 2015. Deliveries resume.

January 13/14/15: 3 Day Basic Facilitation Training

January 19: Library Managers meeting

January 21: SLS Board Committee meetings

February

February 16: Family Day. SLS office closed. No deliveries.

February 18: SLS Board meeting

March

March 16: Library Managers meeting

March 18: SLS Board Committee meetings

March 20/21: Southern Alberta Library Conference Lethbridge

SHORTGRASS WINTER CALENDAR

