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Volume XXXIII, Issue II -June 2025

What's new at HQ?

Welcome to our June 2025 edition of Shortgrass Clippings! Read on to hear about what Shortgrass staff & libraries have been up to this quarter.



Upcoming Events

July 1: Canada Day - Shortgrass office closed. Missed deliveries will be made up on the following business day.

August 4: Heritage Day - Shortgrass office closed. Missed deliveries will be made up on the following business day.

August 5 - 14: Christopher Cool Magic Shows.

August 20: SLS Board Meeting.

September 1: Labour Day - Shortgrass office closed. Missed deliveries will be made up on the following business day.

September 15: Library Managers Meeting, at the Graham Community Library.

September 17: SLS Board Meeting.

September 30: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation - Shortgrass office closed. Missed deliveries will be made up on the following business day.

CEO Update



Petra Mauerhoff, CEO

Following the end of the spring sitting of the legislature and the resignation of the Honourable Ric Mclver from his role as Minister of Municipal Affairs to take on the position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, Premier Smith has announced updates to her cabinet and caucus leadership. Dan Williams has been appointed as the new Minister of Municipal Affairs.

In her statement regarding the cabinet changes, Premier Smith said that the government intends to continue working on the priorities identified during the last

election. She noted that while the government has already addressed many of the province's key priorities, additional work remains, and indicated that she and her cabinet colleagues will continue pursuing their ambitious agenda.

Advocacy efforts for increased provincial library funding continue, including through a joint resolution to be presented to Alberta Municipalities this fall requesting a change in the way provincial operating grants are calculated. You can read more about the resolution in this newsletter.

Shortgrass is working with partner organizations to plan for the 2025 Board Leadership SE Alberta event. This will be the first year the event returns since we had to cancel the last one in spring of 2020, and we are excited to offer the opportunity for board governance training to anyone currently involved in or thinking about getting involved in a board in the Shortgrass region. The one day event will offer sessions on topics such as Board Governance, policies and bylaws, and other relevant issues and we strive to present these topics that may not sound overly exciting in the most engaging way possible. Save the date and join us on September 27th at Medicine Hat College. Registration information will be available later in June.

The Shortgrass Board has made some changes to the recently introduced donations policy, which allows Shortgrass Library System to accept charitable donations on behalf of libraries who do not have their own charitable status. Donations accepted on behalf of member libraries will now be disbursed TWICE a year, in July for donations received in the first six months and December for donations received between July 1 and November 30th. You can read the details of the policy [here](#).

This is also your reminder that the 2nd half of municipal as well as materials levy invoices is due by June 30th. Contact billing@shortgrass.ca if you have any questions or need another copy of the invoice, which was originally sent out in January.

Wishing you all a great summer!

Petra

Development Services Update

Sadaf Hakimzadeh, Librarian, Library Development Services

Programming Kit Spotlight



Braille Labeler

We're excited to provide this new kit to Shortgrass libraries!

Make your library more accessible with this easy-to-use device to create Braille labels for items, signs, locations, etc. The vinyl tape required to emboss labels is also provided. The kit comes with accessibility tips and a quick start guide.



Cliff Hanger

A new programming kit has been added to our collection!

The Cliff Hanger is a fun active bean bag toss game for all ages. It's easy to set up and perfect for indoor or outdoor events, encouraging teamwork, friendly competition, and physical activity.



Have you booked programming kits for the summer yet?

The following kits have been updated with new materials and they're available to be booked in the summer:

Duct Tape: new colours and patterns (available all August)



Karaoke: 3 new CDs (available all summer)

Quilling paper: a variety of colours and shades (available all summer)

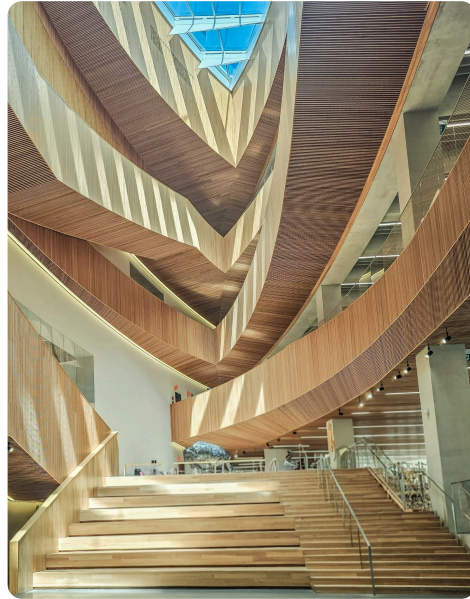


CHECK THEM OUT!

[View all programming kits here](#)

Wandering Librarians: Sadaf Visits Two Calgary Public Library Branches

In my recent trip to Calgary, I had the opportunity to visit the gorgeous Central Branch of the Calgary Public Library.



Fun in the Children's section!

I also visited the historical Memorial Park branch. Did you know that it's the first public library established in Alberta? It's a beautiful building!



Systems and Technical Services Update

Lauralee Gilmour, Manager, Systems and Technical Services

New provincial language learning subscription: Transparent

Public Library Services Branch subscribes to a language learning platform on behalf of all public libraries in Alberta. For the past seven years, this has been Pronunciator. It is now being replaced with Transparent Language Online, and we expect Shortgrass links to go live in June or early July, once it is configured for us.



Transparent Language Online offers:

- Customizable courses for learning more than 140 languages (including Indigenous languages and extensive ESL collections);
- A wide range of activities to help learners practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing in those languages;
- Assessment tools to gauge proficiency against international standards; and,
- A dedicated mobile app.

Transparent provides an online [marketing kit](#) with customizable images, and Shortgrass will also provide promotional images.

We are excited to offer this new language learning resource to patrons!

Griffin Heaney, Technical Services Assistant

Video Games: New Accessibility Info

Accessibility in video games can be very hit or miss! Some handle it extremely well, and some...do not. This can be very frustrating for players, and a game is not simply "accessible" or not. Many players have different accessibility needs - subtitles, audio description, lighting and contrast adjustment, adjustable controls, difficulty adjustment, alternate controller support, etc.

It is crucial that players with disabilities and training in different accessibility features are the ones reviewing these - just because a game advertises a feature doesn't mean it will be usable (for example, subtitles that can't be adjusted to a different size and/or font can be unreadable).

CanIPlayThat.com provides reviews "by disabled gamers, for disabled gamers". They give players the inside scoop so they know in advance whether a game is a good choice!

All Shortgrass videogame records now link to the related "Can I Play That" page (if one exists - otherwise, it links to the "Can I Play That" homepage). Find this under 'Explore Further' on Bibliocommons:

Explore further

Related titles



Online resources

[Click to view accessibility information \(External website\) >](#)

CAN I PLAY THAT?
AN ABILITYPOINTS INITIATIVE

C I P T News Reviews Codex Lexicon Features Resources About

View games All games By platform By genre By developer By publisher

Mario Kart 8 Deluxe
Developer: Nintendo EPD
Publisher: Nintendo
Genre: Racing
Platforms: Nintendo Switch

ESRB Rating: 3 (Everyone) | Content Rating: 0 (Everyone)

Hit the road with the definitive version of Mario Kart 8 and play anytime, anywhere! Race your friends or battle them in a revised battle mode on new and returning battle courses. Play locally in up to 4-player multiplayer in 1080p while playing in TV Mode. Every track from the Wii U version, including DLC, makes a glorious return. Plus, the Inklings appear as all-new guest characters, along with returning favorites, such as King Boo, Dry Bones, and Bowser Jr.

General: Official website
Community: Riddit, Wiki
Support: Website, Nintendo Website

Articles

Visually Impaired Review - Mario Kart 8 Deluxe
Accessibility Review
January 4, 2023 | Christy Smith | 9 minute read

We also link to the main page for the game - over time, new articles will be added to those pages as they are written.

Happy gaming!

What's New at Shortgrass Member Libraries?



Five Fun Facts about MHPL Youth and Community Librarian, Stephanie!

1. Born and raised in Medicine Hat, I've come full circle by working at my childhood library!
2. Lived in Japan for 1 year and has been back once; itching to go back.
3. Is an OG (original) anime/manga fan before it was cool.
4. Used to own horses.
5. Will go on a long-winded rant if someone says graphic novels don't count as real books.

Jewelry Making at Redcliff Public Library

Redcliff Public Library recently hosted a two-day jewelry making program using one of the many kits available through Shortgrass. Nearly 30 kids participated, learning new skills and creating their own unique pieces. Lots of fun, cool jewelry, and happy faces: success!

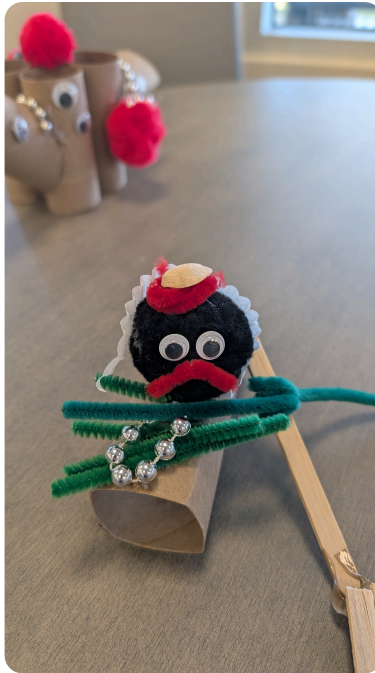


**Unrecognizable Monsters and Vegetarian Vampires
at Irvine Community Library**

Over the past six months, Irvine Library's programming has taken on a new energy, thanks to the playful ideas and thoughtful experiments led by their new Program Coordinator, Anita. They have hosted several events full of fun, surprises, and learning.

During one memorable session, kids listened to *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires: a story about the messiness of making something new, followed by a crafting free-for-all with a table full of random materials. The results?

Homemade games, a few unrecognizable monsters, some wall decor and a "vegetarian vampire". The vampire had green pipe cleaner "salad" in front of it, and red lips "because of the blood"!



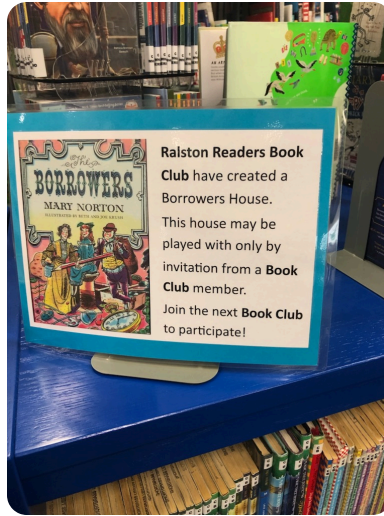
In May, the passive “Lego MAY-nia” program was a huge hit. Everyone got a Lego block for every item they signed out. The tower of Lego started off looking a little sad, but as it keeps on growing, creativity has taken over, and the tower now sports two wheels protruding from the walls, a couple of security cameras, random doors opening into space, and a dome-shaped turntable. Everyone is having so much fun watching what comes next. Dr. Seuss would be proud!

No Irvine spray park to beat the summer heat? No problem! The library will be hosting some pop-up spray fun afternoons this summer with sprinklers, misters, water toys, and Super Soakers.

As Anita puts it: “Onwards, forwards, upwards and awkwardly, but not cowards!”

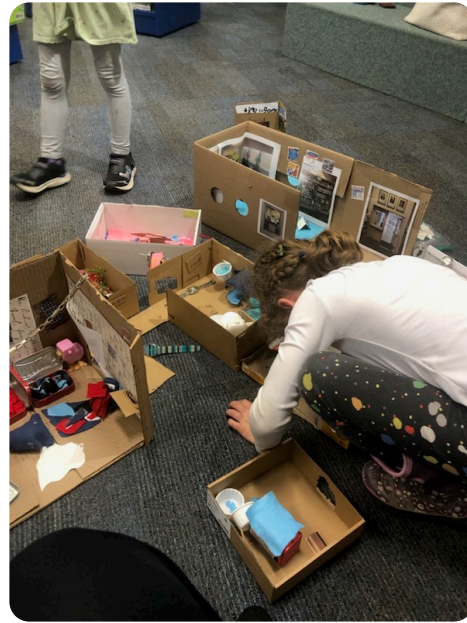


Children's Book Club at Graham Community Library



The latest session of the Children's Book Club, a wonderful program offered by Graham library, has been met with lots of enthusiasm.

After reading *The Borrowers*, the kids used their imaginations to build tiny houses inspired by the story. Around ten creative little homes were made in total. The standout was a miniature library that the kids designed and built together. Great teamwork and creativity!





In Library News...

**LAA's Response to Government Announcement
regarding School Libraries**

On May 26, Alberta's Minister of Education and Childcare, Demetrios Nicolaidis, announced plans to introduce new policy in September 2025 aimed at limiting access to what is being described as "sexually explicit" materials in school libraries. Four titles were named as examples: Blankets, Flamer, Gender Queer, and Fun Home.

A public consultation was open until June 6, inviting feedback on whether such materials should be accessible in school libraries. The structure of the survey has drawn concern for its leading and decontextualized questions.



Since the government's announcement, Action4Canada and Parents for Choice in Education (PCE) have claimed responsibility for influencing the policy direction, citing their ongoing lobbying efforts.

The Library Association of Alberta (LAA) has issued a statement expressing deep concern and has sent a request to meet with the Minister. They are also collaborating with organizations including the Centre for Free Expression, Canadian School Libraries, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations, and local stakeholders to ensure a coordinated and constructive response.

Peggy Curthoys



We are saddened to share the passing of Peggy Curthoys, a former Acquisitions Officer who was a valued member of Shortgrass for nearly 30 years.

Her lifelong love of reading led her to a career in libraries, from her early days as a library technician to her many years with us in acquisitions. Peggy was also known for her love of cats (especially her beloved Max) and her firm belief in intellectual freedom.

As is customary, Shortgrass Library System will be making a donation in her memory.



Peggy (left). 1995



Peggy (second from the left),
Staff Photo, Christmas 2006

BPAA Celebrates 50th Anniversary



The Book Publishers Association of Alberta (BPAA) celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Since its founding in 1975, the BPAA has played an important role in strengthening Alberta's publishing industry and expanding access to locally published books.

Over the past five decades, the BPAA has led initiatives to promote Alberta's literary output, including The Best of the West, Books from Home, and Read Alberta Books. It also launched the Read Alberta eBook Collection, giving Alberta libraries access to locally published digital titles. In a major step toward accessibility, the BPAA was the first regional publishing association to partner with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind to produce DAISY audiobooks and later launched the Accessible Alberta: eBooks for Everyone collection.

"The BPAA has always been intentional about supporting Alberta book publishers and connecting Alberta libraries, bookstores, schools, and readers with local content," said Executive Director Kieran Leblanc. "As we recognize this significant milestone and reflect on the past 50 years, we look forward to where we can grow from here and the relationships we can continue to strengthen."

The 50th anniversary celebration will take place at the Alberta Book Publishing Awards Gala on September 18, 2025. Registration details will be released in July. In the lead-up to the event, the BPAA invites the public to share memories and stories about the association to be featured during the celebration. Memories can be shared by email (info@bookpublishers.ab.ca) or on social media using the hashtag #BPAA50Years.

Joint Resolution on Public Library Funding to be Presented this Fall

A joint resolution will be brought forward to Alberta Municipalities this fall, requesting changes to how provincial operating grants for libraries are calculated. Initiated by Calgary Public Library (CPL) and Parkland Regional Library (PRL), the resolution reflects the requirement that both a large urban and a smaller rural municipality jointly submit such proposals.



The City of Calgary is advocating for an immediate increase in provincial funding, along with the use of up-to-date population statistics to calculate grant amounts. In addition, the resolution includes a request for an ongoing inflationary adjustment to provide more stable and predictable funding over time.

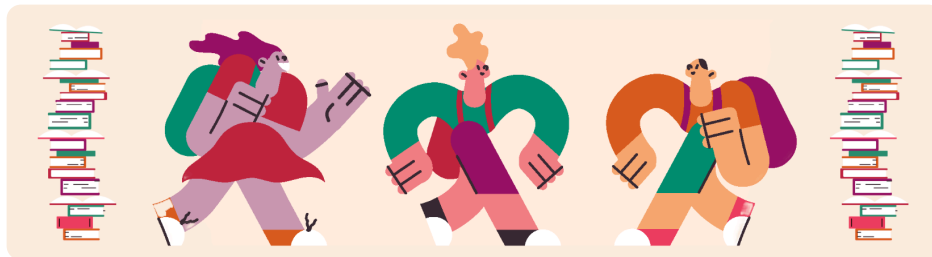
Separately, discussions have taken place about a potential province-wide joint letter supporting increased library funding. While the wording of the resolution has been agreed upon, any such letter will be postponed until after the resolution is considered this fall to ensure consistency in messaging.

There is no immediate action required at this time, but this development is shared for informational purposes.

[Click here to read the resolution](#)

Professional Development & Training

Discover Curriculum-Mapped Local Books with Alberta Books for Schools: A Free Resource from the BPAA



Looking to add more locally published and authored books to your library? Alberta Books for Schools makes it easy! This free resource from the Book Publishers Association of Alberta features an ever-growing collection of Alberta-published titles that align with the K-12 curriculum.

While designed with educators in mind, the collection is useful for anyone building a strong local collection. Books are available across grade levels, subjects, genres, and accessible formats.

Explore the searchable online database to discover high-quality, locally relevant content for your library.

[Explore the Collection](#)

Board Development Seminar



BOARD LEADERSHIP
SOUTHEAST ALBERTA

Board Development Seminar

SAVE THE DATE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2025
8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Medicine Hat College,
299 College Drive SE

TRAINING

LEARNING

NETWORKING

The background of the flyer features a blurred image of several people in a meeting or seminar setting, with large blue text 'SAVE THE DATE' overlaid on the right side.

Are you well-prepared for emergencies?



Did you know that for every dollar spent on mitigation before an emergency, organizations can save up to \$6 in recovery costs?

Canadian Red Cross offers a free online tool that allows you to complete a self-assessment and receive a preparedness score. Whether you're taking your first steps or have a fully-functioning emergency management program, the Ready Rating program can help you achieve a higher level of preparedness. Once you understand your current level of preparedness and begin making improvements, you can revisit the tool in six months or a year to reassess and get an updated score.

[Click here for more information](#)

Shortgrass Professional Development Collection



Brush up your skills on everything from management to programming! For instance, why not check out the latest addition to the collection, **That Librarian** by Amanda Jones, a small-town US librarian's inspiring account of her courageous battle against censorship.

Staff from 14 Shortgrass member libraries can borrow from the Professional Development collection. These books can be reserved through WorkFlows, but won't show up in Bibliocommons, as they are only available to staff. Visit our website to browse the full list, and head to WorkFlows to place a hold!

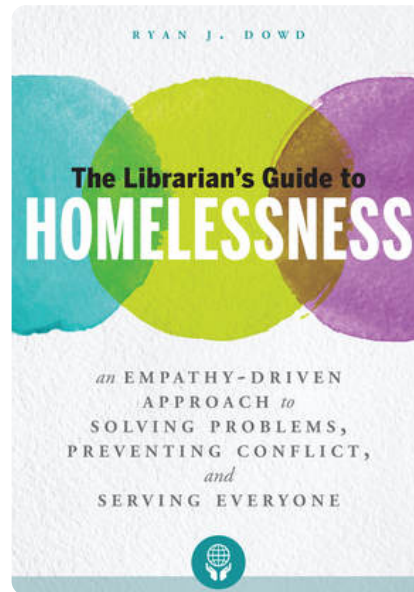
[Browse the full list of books here!](#)

The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness

Until December 2025, Shortgrass Library System continues to provide member libraries with The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness. As in past years, Shortgrass intends to renew this resource, as member libraries find it useful.

This is an empathy-based training program aimed at providing frontline library staff with the tools to help them manage problem situations.

Consisting of a three-hour Core Training session and 30+ additional one-hour modules, this training is available to all member library staff/volunteers.



Register to dive into issues such as dealing with unsupervised children and teenagers; handling sensitive subjects such as body odour; de-escalating fights before they happen; and more.

To access the training, please get in touch with [Sadaf](#). This training is available until mid-December, 2025.

zoom

Don't forget that our virtual meeting software, Zoom, is available to all Shortgrass member libraries.

Please contact [Lauralee](#) if you would like to book Zoom to host your next virtual program or Library Board Meeting.

Share Your Stories!

Anything new to share? Send us your photos, stories, and updates!

- Screenshots of a popular online event
- Photos of what's going on at your library - displays, programs, renovations, weeding projects
- News about your library

Submit updates to newsletter@shortgrass.ca

Shortgrass Library System
Resourceful by Nature

shortgrass.ca

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Tel. (403) 529-0550 – Toll Free Number 1-866-529-0550

Shortgrass Library System honours and acknowledges that we are situated on Treaty 7 and Treaty 4 territory, traditional lands of the Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, Stoney-Nakoda, and Tsuut'ina as well as the Cree, Sioux, and the Saulteaux bands of the Ojibwa peoples. We also acknowledge and honour that we are on the homelands of the Metis people.

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