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Volume XXXIII, Issue IV -December 2025

What's new at HQ?

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



Upcoming Events

December 24: Closing at noon. Last day Shortgrass office is open until 2026.

January 2: Shortgrass office reopens for 2026 and deliveries resume.

January 19: Library Managers Meeting at Shortgrass headquarters.

January 21: SLS Board Meeting.

February 16: Family Day - Shortgrass office closed. Missed deliveries will be made up on the following business day.

February 18: SLS Board Meeting.

February 28: Deadline to submit [annual report and survey to PLSB](#). Reminder: it needs to be approved by the board prior to the deadline.

March 16: Library Managers Meeting at Shortgrass headquarters.

March 18: SLS Board Meeting.

Shortgrass Received a Significant Grant



We would like to extend a huge thanks to the Government of Alberta for their incredible support. Their generous matching CIP grant of \$75,000 made our much-needed technology infrastructure upgrade a reality. We gratefully acknowledge the support of our Board of Trustees for their commitment and foresight in approving Shortgrass' matching \$75,000 contribution required to seek and obtain this funding.



Code Red

Thanks to a generous donation from United Way to the Shortgrass Code Red Program, participating libraries will have a restock of products for the upcoming two years.

Code Red is a program providing free period products to community members at public libraries combating period poverty in SE Alberta.

Bob Batchelder



Bob Batchelder, a long term Shortgrass employee, passed away on September 21, 2025. He worked at Shortgrass Library System for 17 years as Coordinator of Technology and as Assistant Director, and in a consulting capacity after retirement.

Bob lived in Medicine Hat for 36 years and was deeply involved in the community. He contributed to organizing the Esplanade archives and authored two books for the Medicine Hat News. He was presented with the Library Association of Alberta (LAA) 2009 President's Award for his innovation and willingness to share his knowledge and experience.

CEO Update



Petra Mauerhoff, CEO

Another busy year is coming to an end, and brings with it more changes for early in the new year. Our Manager of Systems & Technical Services, Lauralee Gilmour is moving on from Shortgrass to a sabbatical in warmer parts of the world in February 2026 and with my heart full of envy, I hope you will join me in wishing her all the best. I am happy that we found a great internal candidate, Sadaf Hakimizadeh to take over her position. This of course meant that we had to hire a replacement for Sadaf to fill the Librarian, Library Development Services position. We're happy to announce that Meghan Stewart has been hired and she will step into her role in February. Meghan comes with extensive experience in programming, customer service, and outreach, and Shortgrass is excited to have her.

The Shortgrass Library Board saw quite a bit of turnover after the municipal election. The Board is made up of councilors from the 11 member municipalities, who are responsible for the governance and oversight of the organization. At the November 21st meeting, the Board elected their new executive: Councilor McKenzie from Cypress County was elected as Board Chair, Councilor Jones from the County of Forty Mile will be serving as Vice Chair and Councilor Reynish from the City of Medicine Hat will serve as Treasurer. I look forward to working with the Board to ensure that Shortgrass provides library support services that make a difference in the member municipalities.

The Shortgrass office will close at noon on December 24th again this year, and will reopen on Friday, January 2nd, 2026. The last delivery run for the year will also be on the 24th of December and on January 2nd the drivers will be out with a regular Friday delivery as well as a "make up" delivery for Thursday, January 1st, to get items moving again between the 14 member libraries.

I hope everyone gets a chance for a peaceful and joyous time with family and friends in December and I look forward to getting back to work in 2026.

Petra

Library Development Services Update

Sadaf Hakimizadeh, Librarian, Library Development Services

2025 Membership Drive



It was a pleasure supporting SLS libraries in the 2025 Membership Drive.

The initiative was a huge success, with participating libraries seeing a 100% increase in the number of patrons renewing their memberships during the drive compared to monthly averages.

Each participating library received a prize of their choice from Shortgrass to give away to a lucky patron via a draw.

The next membership drive will be in 2027.

Make your storytimes accessible

Looking for ways to make your storytimes more inclusive and welcoming for children with disabilities?

Check out this guide from CELA, which includes suggestions for getting storytimes off to a good start, ideas for room layout and book selection and an extra section on planning for a successful sensory storytime.



[Click here to see the guide](#)

Programming Kit Spotlight: Virtual Reality (VR)

Our most popular programming kit had a makeover! After 87 programs over 6 years, it was time for the old devices to retire. Shortgrass purchased two Meta Quest 3 headsets and controllers, the latest VR technology in the market, which is a significant improvement compared to our older version. The kit started circulating immediately after the upgrade and we anticipate a high demand for it in 2026, so if



you're thinking of having a VR program at your library, we recommend booking the kit early!

To book a programming kit, send an email to programmingkits@shortgrass.ca.

[See all programming kits here](#)

Systems and Technical Services Update

Lauralee Gilmour, Manager, Systems and Technical Services

Farewell from Lauralee



After three years with Shortgrass, the time has come for me to trade winter winds for tropical breezes. I'll be wrapping up my role in February and heading off on a long travel sabbatical that will take me across Southeast Asia for a year or two. Starting in Thailand, then Vietnam, then ??? - I'll let future-me figure that out!

While I'm excited for sunshine, street food, and beaches, I will genuinely miss the day-to-day conversations at Shortgrass and with member libraries. This role has been one of the highlights of my career, and I will remember it fondly - you are all dedicated, creative, and endlessly resourceful. Supporting you has been meaningful and rewarding, and I'm proud of everything we've accomplished together in terms of providing the best possible library services to our region.

A few people have asked how they can keep in touch with my travels, and I'm starting a fun little food/travel YouTube channel for anyone who'd like to follow along: [Protein & Passport](#).

Thank you all for being a wonderful part of my time here. Take good care of yourselves, keep doing great work, and if you ever need advice on hiking trails in Chiang



Mai or where to find the best fresh coconut drinks...well, you know where to find me!

Lauralee Gilmour
Manager, Systems & Technical Services (for a little while longer)

What's New at Shortgrass Member Libraries?

Day Camps at Irvine Community Library



During the teachers' strike, Irvine Library hosted day camps with various fun activities. A total of 161 children attended these free programs over this period.

Irvine Community Library is proud to be able to step up and pivot quickly to meet the needs of their community.

Bassano Memorial Library Annual Auction

Bassano Library held their 6th annual Facebook Fundraiser Auction that ended November 28th.

With 74 lots of new/homemade and gently used items donated by the community, including a painting of the Bassano Dam by a local artist that was won with a \$555 bid, the auction raised over \$4200!



In Library News...

Bill C-15 and the Future of Library Mailing Rates



Bill C-15, introduced in the House of Commons on November 18, 2025, proposes amending the Canada Post Corporation Act to remove existing government oversight, granting Canada Post the authority to independently set its own postage rates and terms. This change has raised concerns within the Canadian library community, as the amendment could eliminate the reduced postage privileges, such as the historic Library Book Rate used for inter-library loans and the free mailing privileges for individuals who are blind or have print disabilities. If mailing costs increase, this change could negatively impact equitable access to library resources, particularly for patrons in rural or remote areas and those relying on accessible materials. To advocate for the continuation of the Library Book Rate, concerned individuals are encouraged to contact their local Member of Parliament (MP).

Professional Development & Training

Succession Planning in Non-profit Organizations



[Click here to reserve a spot](#)

Succession planning is essential for good library governance. This practice protects institutional knowledge and ensures staff competencies are maintained during leadership changes and staff turnover.

Join this session to learn what succession planning is, why it is critical for service stability, and the key components required to successfully implement the three types of succession plans.

Free online session
January 14, 2026 - 1:30 to 3:00 pm

Intellectual Freedom in Crisis



This webinar examines the current surge in intellectual freedom attacks, analyzing coordinated censorship campaigns by moral entrepreneurs and bad-faith influencers. It will explore the historical context of moral panics limiting access to materials, cover resulting legal threats, and address the human cost, including occupational trauma and burnout among library workers.

January 14th, 2026, 10:00 - 11:00 am

[Click here to register](#)

Accessibility in Action: Building Inclusive Library Experiences

A practical discussion on how accessibility is reshaping library services, sharing global insights, case studies, and technology approaches that help libraries ensure independence, dignity, and belonging for all.

On Demand webinar



[Click here to watch](#)

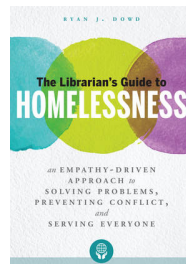
The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness

Exciting news: our subscription to The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness has been renewed for 2026!

Until December 2026, Shortgrass Library System is providing member libraries with The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness. This is an empathy-based training program aimed at providing frontline library staff with the tools to help them manage problem situations.

Learn to deal with patrons who are under the influence, use the right tone of voice and body language, handle problematic behavior, respond to inappropriate comments, and more.

To access the training, please get in touch with [Sadaf](#). This training is available until mid-December, 2026.



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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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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