

# friends of kansas LIBRARIES

Assist - Support - Educate

FoKL POINT Newsletter — December 2025



## Happy Holidays

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT FOKL

### Good News — IMLS Update

On December 3, ILoveLibraries.org (an initiative of ALA) shared the good news that IMLS Library grants have been restored thanks to a lawsuit by twenty-one states. [Read the full article at this link.](#)

Despite this positive outcome, the article reminds us that there is still work to be done to ensure future funding of the Institute of Museum and Library Services by Congress.

Ask your congressional representatives to fund libraries in next year's federal budget. Tell them how libraries make a difference in your life.

Let your local school board and city council know you support your local libraries.

Join and participate in groups that advocate for libraries such as local Friends of the Library, Friends of Kansas Libraries, KLA, and United for Libraries, an organization for Friends and Trustees affiliated with the American Library Association.

And be sure to enjoy reading a book from your local library, attend an event, or thank a librarian this holiday season.

### Kick off the New Year with Friends

We will dive into the world of clickbait and AI-driven online content at our inaugural **First Friday with Friends** event of 2026.

Jennifer Durham, Enrichment Librarian at the Wichita Public Library, will lead a presentation on **Misinformation in the Digital Age**.

Participants will gain skills on thinking critically and engaging on social media platforms responsibly — essential skills for those wanting to make informed decisions, recognize propaganda, and protect the integrity of civic engagement and democracy.

Join us for this presentation and discussion on **Friday, January 2nd at 9AM Central**. Zoom meeting link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88484969231>

### **First Friday with Friends** **MISINFORMATION IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

**presented by Jennifer Durham**  
*Enrichment Librarian,  
Wichita Public Library*

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 2 @ 9 AM**



Join us ...

on Zoom!

In this issue: • IMLS Update • Memberships 2026 • Focus on Friends • And More!

## FoKL Membership Update



FoKL is pleased to announce that we have expanded your options for joining or renewing your membership for 2026 through our new online payment portal.

Visit our [membership page](#) on the FoKL website (folk.net) where you may join online with a credit card or print a traditional mail-in membership form.

Join us in 2026 to become part of a friendly community of people who love and support Kansas libraries.

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## News from Wichita Friends of the Library

Erin Shields has completed her term as President of the Friends of the Wichita Public Library (FWPL). She was congratulated during the last Board meeting of the year by incoming President Brian Blackerby. Blackerby said, "Erin has been a tremendous leader and connector for the Friends as she has built stronger relationships across all of the library related boards and organizations. Additionally, Erin has helped integrate wonderful, new board members to the organization, as well, she has facilitated the adoption of new ideas to make Friends more visible in the community."

Shields has been an active volunteer with FWPL since 2021. She considers the FWPL merchandise launch in 2025 to be one of her most memorable accomplishments during her term. Erin said, "The Board found so much momentum and enthusiasm this year. I think our secret sauce was letting people play to their strengths and trusting each other to get the job done. I have no doubt that Brian's experience and passion will keep us moving in the right direction, allowing the Friends to continue making operational improvements so that more of the funds we bring in can go back to supporting the library."



Erin Shields and Brian Blackerby

Two other dedicated Board members, Trent Wetta and Jennifer Foley, completed their terms in December. New officers were elected for 2026. Brian Blackerby will serve as President. Cori Dodds is the new Vice-President and President-Elect. Leslie Meiring was elected Secretary and Susie Scott is the new Treasurer.



Trent Wetta and Jennifer Foley



**The FWPL Board wishes all FoKL members a wonderful holiday season.**



## Friends of Hays Public Library

The Friends of the Hays Public Library have put together a combined art exhibit and auction fundraiser featuring the photography of Chris Schmidt.

The exhibit showcases a compelling collection that captures the beauty, character, and awe of Kansas.

"It is more than just a display of artistic talent," say the organizers. "The exhibit was created with purpose. The photographer generously donated the use of the digital photographs to help raise funds for the Friends of the Hays Public Library. His contribution not only highlighted his passion for visual storytelling but also his commitment to supporting the library's mission and enriching the cultural life of Hays."

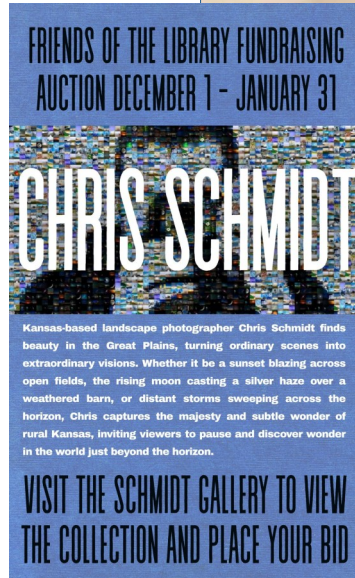
The exhibit and fundraiser will be on view at the Hays Public Library until January 31.



### About the Exhibit: A Window to the West

This collection at the Hays Public Library represents a curated selection of Chris Schmidt's most striking captures. While these prints freeze a specific moment in time—a split-second lightning strike or the slow rotation of the Milky Way—Chris's work is a continuous, living journey.

Through this exhibit, Chris invites you to look closer at the place we call home. Whether it is the ominous beauty of a supercell or the silent grandeur of the prairie at twilight, these images serve as a reminder that world-class beauty can be found right here in our own backyard.



## KLA Legislative Day Scheduled - Tools for Library Advocates -



Mark your calendar for Tuesday, January 27, 2026 for KLA's annual Legislative Day at the Kansas Statehouse in Topeka.

Get the details about this year's event in the most recent issue of *Kansas Libraries Newsletter* [at this link](#).

See also *Making the Most of your Ten Minutes* on page 2 for some excellent tools for this special occasion as well as everyday advocacy.

"A library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life."

Henry Ward Beecher

## Contact us!

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