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TLA 2019 Conference Wrap-Up

The Tennessee Library Association Conference was held in Chattanooga, Tennessee April 24-26. The Chattanooga Convention Center played host to the annual conference and it was a rousing success. The conference hotel sold out and additional rooms were added at another downtown hotel. Conference attendees enjoyed hearing from a wide variety of speakers and session presenters. Dr. Bernard Turner kicked off the conference as the keynote speaker. Barrett Brown gave a lively discussion as the Intellectual Freedom speaker and Land Grant Films spoke and showed part of the film “The Library that Dolly



Left: TLA door prize drawings. Right: Conference Chairs and Coordinator Cindy Welch, Jamie Osborn, and Cathy Farley.

Built” as part of the Friends and Trustees Luncheon. Chattanooga Public Library graciously hosted the All Conference Reception and a won-

derful time was had by all. More than anything, it was great to be together as Tennessee Librarians. We hope to see you next year in Knoxville TN.

Attending and Presenting: TLA 2019

At TLA’s Annual Conference in April, my former coworker and I gave a presentation on a crowdsource-funding project we developed to raise money to repurpose a room in the library at my previous institution. We discussed what worked, what obstacles we encountered, and what we would do differently if we could. It was a great experience and allowed me to provide information to other library professionals who may not have traditional fundraising means available for essential library projects. It can feel intimidating presenting in front of your peers. However, if you remember they are all there to learn something, it helps reduce some of the stress involved. We all want to be

better at our jobs and at what we offer our patrons, and we all have something valuable to say that others will want to learn from.

Attending any library conference is a good way to learn from others in the field and make connections with other librarians. I am always amazed at what other libraries are doing, and this conference allowed me the opportunity to learn from their experiences. I attended sessions that ranged from topics pertaining to copyright, data privacy for patrons, experiences of the state’s leading library leaders, to defending first amendment rights when a library hosts a drag queen story time. While a lot of the sessions pertained to my job in an academic

library, some of them did not, but I still learned something from those sessions through the experiences of other library workers in the state. I encourage anyone to attend the annual conference next year if you get the chance. The experience was invaluable, and I came away from this conference feeling inspired by other librarians. I feel like attending any library conference helps me feel rejuvenated about the profession and ready to make positive changes in my library. This year’s annual conference was no exception, and I cannot wait to attend next year!

—Ashli Wells, *Interlibrary Loan, Vanderbilt University Massey Law Library*

President's Corner: 2019 TLA General Session Welcoming Remarks

Welcome everyone to our 2019 annual Tennessee Library Association Conference, Opening Hearts, Doors, and Minds. It has been my pleasure to serve again, this time as your Acting President, due to the passing of our President-Elect, Heather Lanier with the Brentwood Public Library, just before her term was to start. This time last year we were all in Memphis running around the conference center. Heather was recruiting committee members, talking with me about different things and making encouraging remarks as I was worrying about doing my public speaking bit here. I remember noticing her using a tiny flip notebook to take notes on as she spoke with members so I ran up to Target and got her a journal to use. She and I took photos in the photo booth and I've kept them posted on my desk. She was a joy to be around and she, Susan Earl, and I were among the last people to leave



Jeffie Nicholson, TLA Acting President, presents the President's Award to Angela Heath, wife of Heather Lanier. Heather was honored posthumously with the prestigious President's Award at the General Session of the Tennessee Library Association's conference in Chattanooga, TN on April 25th. (Photo credit: Sharon Parente)

the reception last year. If you read the newsletter, you saw the selfie we all took together.

Our losing her last year was sudden and unexpected. She told me at the conference that she was having a procedure. We were to think positive and it would be alright. We have missed her vibrant and enthusiastic embrace of our association, members, and those of us on the Board this year. We were all looking forward to working with her. I know that everyone who voted for her in the election was looking forward to seeing her lead our association this year.

In talking with the Board and excuse me, the now John P. Holt Brentwood Public Library staff, the number one thing everyone mentioned that we could do to honor and remember Heather this year was to incorporate love and a heart into our annual conference theme. I came across a variation of our theme being used for a booksellers' convention overseas and tweaked it. Then, in looking at the various drafts of the theme by our graphic designer, this one was definitely it. As Cathy Farley pointed out to me, the graphic for minds in the G of the word opening, that is Heather. So we've been able to have her on every conference item you see. Last year Cathy told me I would get sick of seeing the conference logo everywhere. Well, it didn't really happen. This year I am so pleased to see Heather honored and remembered everywhere and on everything here at what was to be her conference.

Heather wanted everyone to feel welcome here in our association and she welcomed everyone with open arms. I watched and listened to her recruit committee members at the conference last year and I was struck by her persuasion and enthusiasm.



It didn't really matter if you wanted to be an active participant; she was so enthusiastic and happy to belong to the association that not only was she not going to take no for answer, but she was going to make you glad to participate and work with her. She loved being a part of this association and shared it with us all. She lived her life with an open heart.

Heather volunteered at other nonprofits. She was always very generous with her time in working for our association. She served on our Restructuring Taskforce, which I think I heard them joke about thinking it was only going to take a few weeks and it took three years. Lucky for us she was on the task force and she was the only one on the taskforce who hadn't already served as TLA President plus she was willing to run for President. This enabled us to have a leader versed and immersed in all aspects of our restructured bylaws and new board structure. Opening doors to a new future for our association.

Heather was willing to put herself forth in order to enable others to find the opportunities and tools they needed to open doors to brighter futures. She had a knack for persuading and pulling people in our organization to work for her, which in turn has taken some of us in different directions and opened the door to change.

In talking about opening minds, I know Heather was an advocate for libraries and other causes dear to her. She was willing and open to discussing ideas, to exploring how to make things work, and how to persuade others to support and engage in our association. I can say that in my experiences she was kind and generous in these discussions.

Therefore, when I had to pick a theme for our conference, I thought and hoped that this was something Heather would approve of. Not because of anything I just said about her being a wonderful person which she was, she was also modest, but I think she would be pleased that these concepts to could be applied to our organization and our libraries in a broader stroke. I know not everyone

here had the privilege and joy to know her.

I do think Heather would be pleased with how everyone has embraced the conference theme and applied it to the programs you find in your conference booklet and on Sched. It's exciting to learn how everyone across Tennessee has been opening hearts, doors, and minds for their communities. It is even more exciting to think of everyone here taking this knowledge back home and that we can create an exponentially more powerful impact with the implementation of all we learn here.

Thank you again for being here. Keep your hearts, doors, and minds open. Today and tomorrow are a wonderful opportunity to recognize that like Heather you are each

making much more of an impact on others than you know. Make the time now to share appreciation of these relationships with each other over the next two days and have a great conference.

Note: After the General Session I was asked to share the welcoming remarks. I believe I stayed pretty close to my notes but I'll have to beg your forgiveness if you were an attendee and I did stray from them. I hope everyone is continuing to seize the moments we have now to support each other and our communities. Best wishes for a wonderful summer and thank you for the honor of serving as your Acting President for 2018-2019.

—*Jeffie Nicholson*
TLA President

2019 TLA Honors and Awards

Friend of the Year Award: Ron & Meg Halter, Blount County FOL (small library); Marilyn Morrison, Friends of Linebaugh Public Library (large library). **TLA Trustee Award:** Jerry Don Moss, Marion Co. Library Board. **TLA Making a Difference Award:** Sharon Edwards. **James E. Ward Library Instruction Award:**

Ari Baker & K.C. Williams, Blount Co. Public Library. **Tennessee History Book Award:** *Rufus: James Agee in Tennessee* by Paul Brown. **TLA Intellectual Freedom Award:** Martha Hendricks, Clarksville-Montgomery Co. Public Library. **Daniel Taylor Award:** David Dansby. **President's Award:** Heather Lanier.

Scholarships:
Tennsco Grant for Public Library Advancement: Kaylee Gentry. **Dr. Edwin S. Gleaves Scholarship:** Chelsea Tarwater. **Conference Internship Program:** Kyle Johnson, Kristen McBee, Emily McCutcheon, and M. Ryan Ogle

Another Successful Conference with Sched at #tnla19!

This year marks the fifth conference TLA has held using Sched!

The total number of conference attendees and conference sessions has held steady over the last five years. The number of conference attendees who actively use Sched has increased from 8% in 2015 to 53% in 2019! We'd love to see that keep going up!

The number of program sessions has held steady, but the number of speakers who took advantage of the ability to upload their presentation files to Sched has varied wildly - only

20% in 2015, a peak of 47% in 2017, and 30% (so far) in 2019. 2017 was a peak year for speaker use of Sched - in addition to 47% of programs having files uploaded, 17 messages were sent from speakers to the attendees interested in their session. This year, 9 messages were sent.

Attendees can also provide feedback for any scheduled conference event via Sched (not just program sessions!). This year, there were 249 feedback submissions, which is the highest we've had! This feedback is

vital to the conference committee, so please take advantage of this feature.

Thanks to everyone who used Sched this year! If you haven't been using it, we hope you'll try it out next year! This year's conference is still available at <https://tnla19.sched.com>, with a number of presentations added, so check it out.

See you next year!

—*Jodie Gambill and Courtney Fuson*,
TLA Sched co-administrators



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Rutherford County Library System Celebrates Free Comic Book Day

When it comes to Free Comic Book Day, the Rutherford County Library System (RCLS) does it big! After small beginnings, this annual event is now system-wide, with branches from small to large offering their communities a chance to get free comics and enjoy fun activities.

Linebaugh Circulation Supervisor Garrett Crowell spearheads the event, coordinating with the local comic book distributor and fellow librarians to ensure that patrons can find something unique at each branch during the day-long event.

As the main branch, Linebaugh saw the largest crowd of over 1,100. They offered movies, cosplayers, a photo booth, games, balloons, a Death Star ball, and lots of prizes from local businesses.

With FCBD falling on May 4,

there was a lot of Star Wars integration into the events. The Smyrna branch had their own Star Wars Ambassador, who brought his Star Wars memorabilia collection. They saw over 375 visit their event.

Still, the smaller branches of the system were not to be outdone! The Technology Engagement Center (TEC) had food trucks for the day. The MGL, Eagleville and TEC each had over 150 participants drawn to their branches, making the RCLS grand total at about 2,000 visitors for the day's activities.

Free Comic Book Day is a great way to further literacy. We encourage other libraries to get involved. For questions about how we organize and fund our RCLS event, please contact Garrett Crowell at gcrowell@rclstn.org.

—Carol Ghattas



Free Comic Book Day at RCLS.