

# THE TLA NEWSLETTER

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## Conference Keynote and Luncheons: What Our Members Are Saying

### Keynote

“You’re doing God’s work.” That was **Robert Gordon’s** final message during his TLA 2015 keynote address. Gordon, like Rick Bragg last year, seemed to be as enamored with his audience as we were with him. Interspersed with stories about the history of music in Memphis were video clips showcasing everything from an unsuccessful Beale Street Music Festival performance (Mud Boy and the Neutrons) to an example of unreliable narration (hilariously illustrated in a video clip of Keith Richards recounting the first time he met Muddy Waters juxtaposed with a Marshall Chess interview roundly refuting Richards’ anecdote). If Gordon’s address seemed rushed, it’s because he was; his newest film, *Best of Enemies*, premiered at the San Francisco Film Festival later that day. TLA 2015 attendees got a sneak peek at the promo for the film, and anticipation for the film’s release was obvious based on the excited murmurs heard throughout the room. The symbiosis between speaker and attendees was confirmed when Gordon had a momentary memory lapse and wondered aloud what the guide’s

name was in Dante’s *Inferno*; when more than a dozen voices immediately shouted out ‘Virgil’, Gordon shook his head and smiled with satisfaction as he said, “This is why I love librarians.” Well, we love you too, Robert Gordon!

—*Chantelle Swaren*  
*Chantelle-Swaren@utc.edu*

### Intellectual Freedom Luncheon

As soon as the crowd quieted at the Intellectual Freedom Luncheon—or got almost quiet since several tables may have been politely arguing over the side dish: is it grits or polenta?—the Intellectual Freedom Award was presented to the Tennessee Coalition for Open Government (TCOG). Executive Director Deborah Fisher accepted on its behalf and relayed the primary function of the group—to make sure Tennessee government activities remain transparent and that citizens have access to information about these government activities, as “information is the currency of democracy.”

**Kristin Pekoll**, Assistant Director of ALA’s Office of Intellectual Freedom (OIF), took the podium next to share her personal story—

how a public library in her home state of Wisconsin became the target of a watchdog group determined to remove a list of YA LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersexual, Asexual) books from the library and its website. The battle lasted for six months, made local and national news, and divided her community. Regardless, she encouraged the audience to recall the Library Bill of Rights and to remember how important it is that all people are able to see themselves and their stories reflected in the books they read. Her talk concluded with a call to action, noting that our right to read what we want and to provide readers with a variety of diverse material is constantly being challenged and that “probably 80% of the time, we aren’t aware it’s going on.” To combat this, she urged each librarian, ALA member or not, to avoid being a “silent censor” and to ask for her office’s counsel about anything—even at “just a hint” of a book challenge. Although her personal experience was difficult

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and had lasting effects on her library and community, it illustrated that these battles are “important, but not easy” and that the OIF is available for support.

—Gayla B. Hall  
GHall@FortisInstitute.edu

### Friends and Trustees Luncheon

With libraries facing a future of transforming, re-branding, re-visioning, and re-invigorating, the Friends of Tennessee Libraries (FOTL) invited **Miguel Figueroa** to speak at the TLA/FOTL Annual Luncheon. As Director of the ALA Center for the Future of Libraries <http://www.ala.org/libraryofthefuture>, he spoke about the ways libraries can learn from the various trends affecting our culture, using a S-T-E-E-P-E-D matrix of: Society, Technology, Economics, Education, Politics and Government, Environment, and Demographics.

He said that the Center works

to: 1) Identify emerging trends; 2) Promote futuring and innovation techniques; and 3) Build connections with experts and innovative thinkers.

Inspired by the Long Now Foundation’s *Manual for Civilization*, the Center has launched an experiment to see if it can crowd-source a *Manual for the Future of Librarianship* <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/manual>, pulling together a shared base of knowledge for librarianship, and they are searching for books, articles, reports, essays, videos, recordings, etc. that will help inform the future of our profession.

—Donald B. Reynolds, Jr.  
Chair, TLA Trustees/Friends Section

### Sched a success at #tnla15!

For this year’s conference, we moved away from our old conference mobile app, Guidebook, and tried out a new service called Sched. Guidebook was

free, but its free features have been reduced drastically year after year. Sched has a nominal fee associated with it, but given its use at other library conferences, we thought it would be worth trying out for TLA.

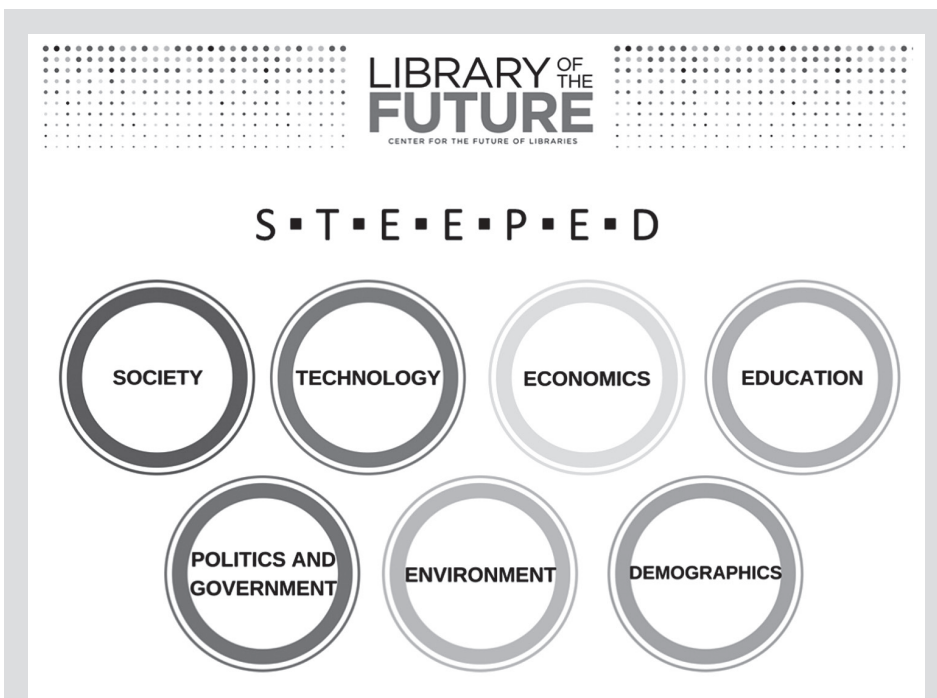
Sched is great because it lets your schedule go with you wherever you are—desktop, mobile, or paper. Attendees, speakers, and exhibitors can connect with each other by creating profiles. Speakers can have their presentation materials posted for easy access. It also provides nice features such as paper signs for each venue (room), support for digital signage, the ability to email attendees of a particular session (like if there is a venue/time change or a cancellation). Sched Support is also very responsive to bug reports and enthusiastic about feature requests.

Sched for TLA was a great success! We had over 100 attendees create their schedules in Sched. 418 unique users visited our Sched site, generating approximately 4,700 pageviews. About 80% of visits were on desktop (getting schedules set up and ready to go), while the remaining 20% were on mobile (viewing schedules on the go). This year’s conference is still available at <http://tnla15.sched.org>, with a number of presentations added, so check it out!

Feedback from conference attendees on Sched was positive. Attendees rated Sched a 4.32 out of 5, meaning it’s almost excellent! 97% of respondents thought it was easy to use, and 94% thought it was useful in navigating the conference.

Next year, we will be promoting Sched even more to make sure all attendees know it is available for their use. Thank you to those who made it a success this year!

—Jodie Gambill and Courtney Fuson



Miguel Figueroa, Director of the ALA Center for the Future of Libraries, spoke about the ways libraries can learn from the various trends affecting our culture, using a S-T-E-E-P-E-D matrix of: Society, Technology, Economics, Education, Politics and Government, Environment, and Demographics.

## Conference Keynote and Luncheons: What Our Members Are Saying (continued)

### What's New from the Public Library Section

As TLA congregated in Memphis for the Annual Conference, public librarians from across the state gathered for a productive meeting. After some serious brainstorming, I am pleased to report that we came out with some wonderful ideas for getting public libraries more involved in TLA. First, we created a new Facebook group, TLA Public Library Section. The group is open to everyone, and we invite you to join in and share what is happening at your libraries! Next, we had great discussions about both the advances and challenges facing public libraries today. We resolved to form panel discussions at next year's conference and to open more dialogues about the challenges and rewards we encounter in adapting to 21st century needs within our communities.

Finally, we are working to create more networking opportunities within TLA and at our conferences. We are each a wealth of knowledge, and we need more outlets to share our ideas and experiences. Finally, we are working on new ways to utilize the TLA website to open up communication channels for public libraries. So, within the coming year—and beyond—expect to see more out of the Public Library Section, and programs meant to help us help each other be among the greatest public libraries in the country!

—Jillian Rael  
Public Library Section Chair  
flclibrary@fpunet.com

### The Tennessee Public Library Trustee Certification Program

The Regional Library System of the Tennessee State Library and Archives will roll out its new Public Library Trustee Certification program beginning July 1. More information will be available in the next issue of the TLA Newsletter, but be sure to check out the training opportunities at <http://tsla.libguides.com/trusteecert>.

—Betty Jo Jarvis,  
Stones River Regional Library  
bettyjo.jarvis@tn.gov

## President's Point of View: A Joint Article from Susan Jennings and Pam Dennis

*Susan:* As most of you know, it was with deep regret that I was unable to attend our Annual Conference due to family illness and an unfortunate car accident. For me, the bumps and bruises are healing and hopefully full strength will return soon. Even though I wasn't able to attend the conference and sit with you "at the table," I *know* that you all had a terrific time in Memphis and lots of good things happened. Thanks to the TLA Executive Committee, Board, and Conference Committee for their phenomenal work in making this conference a success! Thanks to everyone for their kind expressions of love and support! It brightened up a rather dismal time! For the conference highlights, I have asked Pam Dennis,

your incoming President, to write about her impressions of the conference. Thank you all for all that you do... and now...

*Pam:* If you were unable to attend the TLA conference in April, you missed a great opportunity to make and renew friendships and to attend sessions of all kinds. The reception at the Civil Rights Museum was incredible, and I heard many comment about the overwhelming experience of going through the historical exhibit. And, if you stayed at the conference hotel, you got an extra show for your money as we watched the tour bus perform extraordinary feats of maneuverability!

I congratulate the Conference Planning Committee, under the

leadership of Cathy Farley and Missy Dillingham. The conference hotel was comfortable, the programs were interesting and varied, the receptions and exhibits were well planned, the publicity brought in a record crowd from all types of Tennessee libraries, attendees had opportunities to hone their career skills, and much more. We all had great seats at the table and only wish Susan could have been seated at the head.

Next year will be here before you know it, and I hope you will make plans to attend the 2016 TLA Conference on April 6-8 in beautiful Kingsport.

—Susan Jennings & Pam Dennis  
TLA President and TLA VP/President-elect

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## TLA New Members Roundtable Conference Wrap-Up

The New Members Roundtable (NMRT) met many new faces at the Annual Conference! NMRT hosted a social hour where new members were able to mix, mingle, and network all while enjoying complimentary appetizers. NMRT also convened their annual business meeting and heard many wonderful ideas for how to make NMRT stronger in the year ahead. Leadership positions were also

selected during the meeting. Nicole Tekulve from University of Tennessee at Chattanooga will serve as chair and Kate Lewallen from Tennessee Wesleyan will serve as Chair-Elect.

As a reminder, the TLA NMRT is open to individuals who have been members for ten years or less. Membership in the NMRT is free during the first year of membership, free if it is selected as your first roundtable

choice, or only \$2 if another roundtable is selected.

Please join the NMRT on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tlanmrt/>

—Nicole Tekulve  
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