

Reference Roundtable Reporting:
TLA Conference Panel Presentation, Annual Business Meeting, Survey Team
Board Report, 5/31/2016
Gail Perkins Barton, Chair

On Thursday, April 7, 2016, during the TLA 2016 Conference in Kingsport, TN. , the Reference Roundtable sponsored a Panel Presentation. Five panelists, representing various types of libraries were on the panel: School, Public (1 County, 1 Metro), Special, and Academic. Each participant had 7-10 minutes to highlight how their location currently provides Reference and Information to their community of users. Attendees heard of tools and practices currently used and how each location addresses the unique needs of their communities. There was an overarching PowerPoint with slides provided by each speaker about their library to display during their part of the discussion. After each panelist presented, there was Q&A in order for attendees to glean more from each speaker. The panel info is as follows: Session Date: Friday, April 8, Time: 9:00–9:50 am, Room: Salon 1

Title: Re-Imagining Reference: daring new practices with technology, staffing, location, and...

Panelists:

Rachel Elizabeth Scott, University of Memphis; Trent Hanner, State Library and Archives; Josh Thomas, Memphis & Shelby County Public Library; Jillian Rael, Fayetteville-Lincoln County Public Library; Jennifer Sharp, Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Presentation summary:

Come hear a panel of experienced library personnel from across the state present daring new practices implemented to provide Reference and Information to their users. Glean from their experience for your own library. What has worked? What has not? Just imagine!

Panelists Bios:

Rachel Elizabeth Scott is an assistant professor and Integrated Library Systems Librarian at the University of Memphis. Her research focuses on various aspects of information literacy and music bibliography. In addition to teaching an introduction to research methods course through the University Honors program, she also regularly offers library instruction to students in social science and humanities courses. She has recently placed chapters in ACRL, Facet, Rowman & Littlefield, and Theatre Library Association anthologies and articles in Music Reference Services Quarterly, The Reference Librarian, and Tennessee Libraries.

Trent Hanner is the senior reference librarian at the State Library and Archives, where he has worked since 2006. He supervises a staff of seven librarians and staff members in the library, research services, and legislative services areas. Prior to his professional career, Trent worked at six different bookstores, which provided invaluable experience performing reference interviews and learning how to deal with diverse groups of people.

Josh Thomas was born and raised in Memphis, and spent a good part of his youth in the White Station branch of the Memphis & Shelby County Public Library. Josh went to college in New York City and law school in Chicago, and also lived in the California Bay Area before moving back to Memphis in 2003. After some further career experimentation, Josh became employed with Memphis Public Library and Information Center as a Librarian I in the Humanities Department of the Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library in July 2014, and has been having a blast helping customers ever since. When he's not at the Library, Josh can very often be found playing on the tennis courts in Memphis, as he also works part time helping out at the Memphis Public Tennis Centers.

Jillian Rael became the Director of her hometown library, Fayetteville-Lincoln County Public, in 2013. She holds two degrees from the University of Alabama in Huntsville--a BA in Art History & Photography and an MA in History. Utilizing skills gained through education and her experience in managing independent bookstores, she changed the way her library conducts business and connects with the community. Jillian is currently serving as the Chair of the TLA Public Library Section and Nominating Committee; however, in the coming year she will become a co-chair of the Honors and Awards committee and chair of the History and Archives Committee.

Jennifer Sharp is a school librarian with Metro Nashville Public Schools. She currently serves at John Overton High School, which has a population of over 1,900 students and is Tennessee's most ethnically diverse school. Prior to that, she worked for several years at Central High School in Knoxville. She received her MSIS from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in 2013. She currently serves as the Chair of TLA's School Libraries Section. She has collected perspectives from various school librarians across the state in preparation for this panel, and looks forward to sharing with attendees how reference services look in the ever-evolving school library media center.

Roundtable Annual Business Meeting

Ten members of the Roundtable gathered for the Annual Business Meeting from 2:10-3:00 in Salon 4 of the Conference center. There were members representing UT Martin Paul Meek Library (1), Germantown Public Library (1), State Library and Archives (2), Hardin County Public Library (2), University of Memphis Libraries (1), Nashville Public Library (1), and two other locations.

The Chair, Gail Perkins Barton, called the meeting to order and asked those in attendance to consider serving or nominating others as officers. Earlier, she asked in-coming president Richard Groves if it would be possible for her to serve another year since there were neither in-coming Chair-Elect nor Secretary for the past year. Furthermore, from the TLA Board meeting the previous evening, the TLA re-organization chart was shared which is to go into effect July 1, 2017. It showed that the Reference Roundtable would be reassigned to another Division [of which there will be three] and not be a separate Roundtable. The documents are now posted on the TLA website. Mr. Groves through email replied that he welcomes the continuation of the Chair as opposed to having it vacant.

Chuck Sherrill made a motion that Gail Perkins Barton serve another year as Chair, the motion seconded and passed.

There was group discussion about 'traditional reference' and how providing reference service has transitioned into something that 'looks' different in most places today. Members in attendance provided input from their own locations about how Reference is now provided. All seemed to agree that providing information is just as robust as ever, but the way it is done has changed. Gail announced interest in the Roundtable doing a statewide survey to get a 'snapshot' of how libraries of all types are currently providing Reference Services and has already sent email to members to gather information. Such a survey would be valuable in seeing how other libraries have transitioned from one model to another. Also, it would help libraries contemplating a change, see what has been done and perhaps identify key libraries to contact with questions and ideas. With the results, the Reference Roundtable could present findings at the 2017 TLA Conference and perhaps publish results in the "Tennessee Libraries." The group agreed that a survey would be beneficial so will move forward with officers organizing the project.

The State Library and Archives reported that they had just concluded a survey of public libraries about a variety of issues so Ed Byrne of the State Library and Archive agreed to help with the Roundtable survey. When asked, he also agreed to be the Roundtable Secretary. The motion was made and carried. Jim Nance of UT Martin share that one of their new tenure-track librarians, Adam Clemons would be interested in serving as Chair – Elect. Even though changes are scheduled to go into effect after July 1, 2017, there is also a chance that they might not so it seemed wise to have a Chair-Elect. It was agreed to speak with Adam Clemons and if willing, he would serve as Chair-Elect*.

The meeting adjourned with those in attendance committing to help with the survey and support the Reference Roundtable as needed in the coming year.

Submitted by: Gail Perkins Barton, Chair, Aril 2016

*In speaking with Adam Clemons after the meeting, he was enthusiastic to serve as Chair-Elect and to assist with the survey. Jim Nance also committed to help with the survey and since that time, he and Adam have set up a Reference Roundtable Listserv to assist in communication during the year. Watch for more details.

SURVEY TEAM

The Survey team began work in a robust manner. The members are Adam Clemons, UT Martin, Ed Byrne, State Library and Archives, Jim Nance, UT Martin, and Gail Perkins Barton, University of Memphis. A listserv has been created for the Roundtable members to share information. Also, questions have been proposed for various groups and data shared from a recent project developed by Adam and Jim at UTM. The Roundtable members have received email from the Chair that the survey will be underway in the coming year and to watch for, and respond to the survey. After assessing the gathered information, the survey team will compile data and write a report to submit to the TENNESSEE LIBRARIES for publication consideration.