

MARCH 20 - 24, 2018

#PLA2018

PHILADELPHIA

## Sally Yates, Hasan Minhaj Open and Close PLA 2018

Former U.S. Deputy Attorney General Sally Q. Yates described public librarians as “the keepers of, and the gateway to truth” as she opened PLA 2018 on March 21, taking the stage to rousing applause. “There is a lot of brain power and passion in this room,” she remarked. “Thank you for the work that you do every day. You are thought leaders, you are doers. Our nation needs you today more than ever before.”

Yates said the U.S. is a diverse country with a wide range of views. “That’s part of what makes our country so strong. Out of that debate come the best answers.”

“At our best moments we have resisted those who seek to tear us apart. We have put country before party and the common good before personal ambition,” she said. “And at our very best moments we have lived our patriotism, not just declared it.” But, Yates asked, will we remain faithful to our core values? “We must acknowledge that we have not always lived up to the ideals of the constitution. We have however, remained faithful to our shared vision of what

our country is.”

Yates cited the preamble to the constitution, “We are a democratic republic, not a dictatorship. We were founded on domestic tranquility and



Sally Yates

we should never give a foreign adversary reason to doubt that we wouldn’t stand up together,” adding that we care about each other in this country and that we have an obligation to

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### Thursday Highlights



## Big Ideas Speakers Weave Together Stories, Advice

Renowned author Elizabeth Gilbert kicked off the PLA Big Ideas Series on March 22 sharing funny, frank, and often deeply personal stories and advice. The author of the 2006 international best seller *Eat, Pray, Love* and 2015’s *Big Magic*, a treatise on creative living, (among several other books and novels) told the capacity crowd of her early experiences with libraries including a thrilling time when a children’s librarian brought her over to meet the library’s adult librarian who offered access to the adult stacks; and further she reminisced about writing her first two books in the lovely Rose Reading Room of the New York Public Library. Tackling the topic of “living the life you have imagined,” she told of her early life as a young, unpublished writer living in New York and dealing with rejection after rejection from publishers. After complaining to her mentor (a visual artist), the woman asked her, “What are you willing to give up to have the life you keep pretending you want? The mentor further pointed out, ‘The spotlight of your attention is going literally everywhere else.’ This lifechanging conversation was the impetus Gilbert needed to

dive into her writing and she shares the story in order to show others that it is all about priorities. She often receives the question, “How can I live a more creative life when I don’t have any free time? Her advice is to figure out what matters to you and what doesn’t matter to you. She spoke further on relaxation and anxiety, stating to be born female is to be born anxious and explaining how the person who is the most relaxed has all the power in most situations. She pointed out that you can have concern without worry and ended with a reassuring ‘It’s all going to be all right.’”

### Steve Pemberton’s Secret Weapon

Steve Pemberton shared an epiphany as he opened Friday morning’s session – that diversity and inclusion is hard. Really hard. “The reality is that this has become a difficult conversation. Look at the nightly news and see how diversity is often purposefully used to separate.”

He said the best way to mitigate risk is to increase your number of options. “When you take on a challenge you want different points of view around

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### Wednesday Highlights



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# PLA Conference Draws Thousands to Philadelphia

Library supporters and professionals from across the country made their way to the east coast to attend the Public Library Association (PLA) 2018 Conference, March 20 – 24 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Approximately 7,873 public library professionals, exhibitors, speakers and supporters registered to attend the nation's largest conference dedicated to connecting and supporting the educational needs of public library professionals and stakeholders.

Offered biennially, PLA 2018 held the theme "Imagine the Possibilities." The event offered a unique opportunity for peers from across the country and globe to meet to discuss the challenges facing our nation's public libraries. Key areas of discussion focused on advocacy; funding; consumer health information; equity, diversity, and inclusion; family engagement through libraries; and digital literacy.

Each morning, PLA 2018 began the day with a big idea. Designed to motivate and empower public library professionals to consider and execute new ideas, PLA's Big Idea Series included inspiring talks with best-selling *Eat, Pray, Love* author Elizabeth Gilbert; corporate executive Steve Pemberton; and author, policy advocate, and director of Columbia University's Poliak Center for the Study of First Amendment Issues Tim Wu.

Former U.S. Deputy Attorney General Sally Q. Yates headlined the event's Opening Session. Yates' remarks emphasized the invaluable role that libraries play within their communities as gateways to truth and protectors of our nation's democracy. "You are the keepers of and the gateway to truth," stated Yates. "Libraries provide forums for debate and preserve history. They

## Overall Conference Highlights



are one of the few inherently democratic spaces that we have."

### Distinguished Speakers

A line-up of noted guest speakers motivated and energized audience members as PLA 2018 offered programs featuring best-selling author Kari Chapin; Author Daniel H. Pink (*When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing*); best-selling Author Joshilyn Jackson (*Gods in Alabama*); Marley Dias founder of #1000BlackGirlBooks campaign; patriarch of Discovery Channel's Emmy-shortlisted program "Alaska: The Last Frontier" Atz Kilcher; Newbery medalist and children's book author Kate DiCamillo; and award-winning best-selling author and Young People's Poet Laureate Jacqueline Woodson. Comedian, actor, host, and writer Hasan Minhaj brought PLA 2018 to an official end as the closing session speaker.

The event offered more than 100 sessions that explored such issues as libraries and social justice; addressing

the opioid epidemic; eliminating fines; developing diverse collections; and much more.

PLA 2018 served as a platform for

offer readers an opportunity to randomly select a one-, three-, or five-minute story with a push of a button. PLA and Short Edition are bringing this new technology to a select group of libraries including Akron-Summit County (Ohio) Public Library; Free Library of Philadelphia (Penn.); Richland Library (Columbia, S.C.); and Wichita (Kans.) Public Library. Made possible by funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, participating libraries may house the Short Story Dispenser in their library or place the kiosk in common areas within the community. Libraries will have the ability to brand Story Dispenser kiosks to enhance the library's visibility, as well as insert information about library collections, services, and programs at the footer of each printed short story.

Hundreds of exhibitors showcased



**Attendees listen to presentations at the AAP Children's Publishers Book Buzz program.**

several PLA national announcements. A new national study on voter perceptions of libraries was unveiled. The PLA, American Library Association (ALA), and OCLC released *From Awareness to Funding: Voter Perceptions and Support of Public Libraries in 2018*. The research updates OCLC's seminal 2008 study that explored voter perceptions, use, and attitudes toward public libraries, librarians, and library funding. The report shows that a majority of U.S. voters believe public libraries are essential to communities and a source of civic pride. However, a majority of voters still do not realize that the primary source of library funding is local. Other key findings, infographics, and more are available at <https://www.oclc.org/research/awareness-to-funding-2018.html>

### New Partnership

PLA also announced a new partnership with tech startup Short Edition. Short Story Dispenser. First launched in France, Short Story Dispensers

the latest technology and services vital to public libraries, librarians and their users. New to the exhibits floor was the PLA Pavilion. The Pavilion served as the conference's living room providing conference goers with access to a welcoming space to relax, hold meetings, or meet PLA staff. The space provided comfortable sofas and chairs, a presentation area, and a stage. Networking opportunities flourished as many participated in career fairs; interactive games via the PLA mobile app; the exhibits opening reception; author signings; and an array of special events.

Those who could not travel to Philadelphia for the conference participated virtually. There were 110 registrants for the PLA 2018 Virtual Conference, which presented many elements of the live conference, including high-quality educational programming, networking opportunities, and author events.

PLA 2020 will take place in Nashville, Tennessee from Feb. 25–29, 2020.



**Daniel H. Pink talked about time of day, how people respond to different parts of the day, and timing trends in human behavior during the Author Lunch on March 22. After the presentation, Pink signed his new book, *When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing*. The book provides suggestions on when to work, sleep and play, useful for freelancers and hourly-scheduled workers alike.**



# Teaching Life Skills to Teenagers

Research supports that young adults are underprepared for the workforce. Schools have not kept up training in this area and enrollment in Home Economics classes is down 38 percent. Many young people lack the basic skills for minimum wage jobs.

These thoughts opened the March 24 session “How to Adult: Teaching Life Skills to Teens,” presented by Kayla Marie Figard, Belmont Library (Calif.) and Elizabeth Tanner, County of Los Angeles Public library, with input from Erik Berman, San Jose Public Library.

Although the programs have different names at the three libraries -- Life Hacks for Teens, Adult 101 for Teens,

and Life Skills Academy — they all teach similar skills and inspire one another to offer new topics. Topics include how to manage money, etiquette, car maintenance, sewing and mending, public speaking, personal organization, healthy cooking on a budget, meals and snacks, personal safety, and more.

Tanner walked the audience through three mini programs that attendees could use in their own libraries. “Time management programs have almost no cost,” she said. Berman likes to use “Multitasking is a Myth” to open the conversation on time management.

The exercise has teens breaking up into groups of two — one person is the

time keeper and the other is the participant. “Write multitasking is a myth and then the numbers 1-19 below that statement and track how long this takes and then switch roles,” said Tanner. Then have them try to write multitasking is a myth inserting a number after each letter, i.e. M1, U2, L3, etc. “The point is to show teens that it is more efficient to focus on one thing at a time. Once done, discussion follows about practical tips such as using a planner, or a time budget.

Public speaking is another easy program to introduce into your library. “We begin with tongue twisters. This is a great warm up for speaking,” Tanner said. “It helps with pacing and enunciation.” This is a good program to build in layers, and participants practice getting in front of

the group making eye contact or just standing up straight and introducing themselves.”

A program that Figard has had success with was called “How Not to Live in Your Parent’s Basement.” She said to share experiences they can learn from. “We cover communication with landlords, knowing your rights, and role playing. Ask them where they want to live, if they want roommates, do they want to be near transit or parks, and we cover leases.” To begin, she has the teens come up with three interview questions for a prospective roommate.

Any life topic can be made into a program for teens. “Our evaluations show that the teens feel more confident about tackling adulthood by attending these programs,” Tanner said.

## Celebrate National Library Week, “Libraries Lead,” April 8-14, 2018

Celebrations during National Library Week include:

**Monday, April 9:** State of America’s Libraries Report released, including Top Ten Frequently Challenged Books of 2017.

**Tuesday, April 10:** National Library Workers Day, a day for library staff, users, administrators and Friends groups to recognize the valuable contributions made by all library workers. #nlwd18 (<http://ala-apa.org/nlwd/>)

**Wednesday, April 11:** National Bookmobile Day, a day to recognize the contributions of our nation’s bookmobiles and the dedicated professionals who make quality bookmobile outreach possible in their communities. #bookmobileday2018 (<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/bookmobileday>)

**Thursday, April 12:** Take Action for Libraries Day. #fundlibraries

Read more at <http://www.ala.org/conferenceevents/celebrationweeks/natlibraryweek>.

### Friday Highlights





# Thank You

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PLA 2018

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## Doing Whatever It Takes to Get to PLA 2018!

The team from Starling by VersaMe (booth #244) had already boarded a plane in Charlotte (N.C.) to exhibit at PLA. After we boarded the plane, the flight was cancelled due to snow and we found ourselves stranded with dedicated librarians from all over the country. Everyone was so disappointed to miss #PLA2018 that we were inspired to get us all there by hook or by crook. After finding the last rental van in a three-hour radius, five librarians (all strangers) and a reduced-to-one-woman VersaMe crew (to make room) climbed aboard for an eight-hour PLA Road Trip Adventure.

Thought that said something about how important PLA is to the library community! — Dave Sopp, VersaMe, [dave@versame.com](mailto:dave@versame.com)

*Intrepid public librarians and an exhibitor rent the last van at the Charlotte airport to get to PLA 2018 in Philly during the nor'easter that curtailed travel to the northeast right before the event. (left to right) Carol Munroe, Mead Public Library (Sheboygan, WI); Patricia Dew, New Hanover County Public Library (Wilmington, NC); Drew Wichterman, Tipp City Public Library (Tipp City, Ohio); Caitlin Wichterman, Greene County Public Library (Ohio) and Catherine Levins, VersaMe (Huntersville, NC)*

## Yates, Minhaj

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protect future generations as well.

"Without vigilance our rights we take for granted can slip away. No one is above the law and everyone is entitled to its protection," Yates said. "Truth is the very foundation of our democracy. Every public servant from the President on down, swears to bear truth and allegiance and any debates must be based on common facts rather than raw emotion."

"Libraries are forums for debate. Libraries preserve history. They are one of the few inherently democratic spaces that we have," she said. Quoting Neil Gaiman, Yates said, "Google can bring you back 100,000 answers, a librarian can bring you back the right one."

Yates – and PLA President Pam Smith – concluded the session with Yates sharing her vivid memories of the children's corner at her library. ALA President Jim Neal greeted the audience. "One of the amazing things I have found is that you are so agile. [You] support new, changing, and innovating needs with limited resources. You are clearly at the center of your communities," he said.

### Minhaj Closes PLA 2018

Incoming PLA President Monique Ziesenhenné introduced Hasan Minhaj, comedian, actor, host, and writer who closed PLA 2018 on March 24. "My agent called me and asked if I wanted to perform in a warehouse, in front of a group of librarians while a volleyball tournament is going on in the background," he said. "Yeah,

duh."

Minhaj often gets asked if people really act the way we see them in his television skits. "The best stuff never makes the field pieces," he replied. "When the cameras are put away, that's when the racism really comes out."

He gave an example. "I like to talk to my mom before we take off during trips. I call my mom and she's speaking to me in Urdu on speaker phone. Everyone on the plane is staring at me...so I said 'goodbye mother' and I hung up on my mom! Why did I do this? Why am I doing this? This is America."

"I can't speak to my mom in Urdu because people are afraid of terrorism," he continued. "I understand why people are afraid of people who look like me with long black beards, but how is every crazy white guy part wolf? Brown guy – terrorism. White guy – lone wolf. Wolves travel in packs!"

Minhaj put pencil-to-paper to figure out how likely it is that one would die from foreign terrorism. "You are more likely to die from furniture than from foreign terrorism. The Cato Institute conducted a study. The chances of being killed by a refugee is 1 in 3.6 billion."

He reframed the so-called 'refugee debate' like this. "It boils down to a war on values. The real question is not if refugees can adopt American values. It is if Americans can adopt American values," Minhaj said. "We are currently on our third travel ban. I'm not saying we shouldn't take precautions, but we owe it to [refugees] to at least look at their applications."

## PLA's Quick Reads for Busy Librarians Series



Get more info at [www.pla.org](http://www.pla.org).

## PLA Quick Reads Series

Digital downloads in the PLA Quick Reads series are all about helping you make the most of your time by covering important topics in public librarianship in a quick, practical, and direct way. The goal is to shed light on an essential topic quickly and because busy public librarians don't have a ton of time, each of the publications is under 100 pages. All Quick Reads books published after September 1, 2016 are free to PLA members via the PLA member library.

Four titles in this series are now available. They are:

**Free to PLA members!** *Building and Operating a Digital Media Lab* – To claim your free, PLA member copy, click here or visit the PLA Member Library.

**Free to PLA members!** Get *Inside: Responsible Jail and Prison Library Service* – To claim your free, PLA member copy, click here or visit the PLA Member Library.

**Special price for PLA members!** *The Bed Bug Guide for Public Libraries*.

**Special price for PLA members!** *Weeding Manual*.

If you are a PLA member, *Building and Operating a Digital Media Lab* and *Get Inside: Responsible Jail and Prison Library Service* are free to you via the PLA Member Library. If you are not a PLA member and would like to order any of the Quick Reads publications, use the order form at [www.publiclibrariesonline.org/the-store](http://www.publiclibrariesonline.org/the-store).

## Big Ideas

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the table to make the best decisions ... We come into the world with visible characteristics and diversity traits ... but the real story is below the water line. The things you can't see. You would be stunned to see how much commonality there really is, but it requires conversation and a willingness to be open and to learn."

What should be done next in Pemberton's view?

- Describe what you do well
- Emphasize mutuality
- Establish a shared language of collaboration and empowerment
- Anchor diversity in your mission
- Develop ownership and accountability at all levels

He then described the abuse and neglect he suffered as a child. But Pemberton had a secret weapon. "I love to read. Reading told me that the way things are today won't be that way tomorrow." In fifth grade, a field trip to the public library changed everything. "This is like real life Oz to me," thought Pemberton. The idea that he could get books for free really jumped out.

"My greatest hope is that you [librarians] can see how important you are. Nobody cared what I looked like in the library, there were no labels. It was like a real home to me. I was never more at peace than when I was in the library. It helped define my identity.

"The library was the first place that I ever felt family. Go back to your communities and think about how important you are," concluded Pemberton.

### Tim Wu Discusses Attention: Our Most Valuable Resource

Tim Wu said he's had a love affair with public libraries since he was eight years old. He opened the March 24 Big Ideas session by saying he had won a bookmark contest. "The award was a joke book." He still has the book. "What is faster, hot or cold? Hot, anyone can catch cold," he said.

In the 1990s Wu got very excited about the internet. "Getting emails were exciting then, not a nuisance," said Wu.

"In the early 2000s when I got to Silicon Valley, the goal was to try to make it possible for all the world's information sources to speak to each other. These were high ideals, and we thought this would bring the world together."

Wu started to notice that while there was excitement about the internet, there were a lot of big companies that wanted to control it and decide what people should be able to view. "My job was to sell a product to China, but they wanted something they could control and it didn't seem right to me." So Wu went to academia and came up with the idea that the user should decide what the internet is used for and that the carrier should not get in the way. "The idea of net neutrality was born."

Wu admits the free flow of information can be very threatening. "Net neutrality has been killed, but we are still fighting the fight. I'm not surprised that the Russian or Chinese governments do not respect net neutrality, and it is sad that this country has joined in that thought. If we do one thing over the next few years, it must be to restore net neutrality."

A second issue that is profoundly threatening our democracy is the crisis of attention harvesting. Wu, author of *The Attention Merchants: The Epic Scramble to Get Inside Our Heads*, stated that time and attention have become our scarcest and most valuable resources. "The contest for attention has led to a problem. Google and Facebook and other web publishers, embrace getting your attention as the measure of their success. They want to prove to their advertisers that they can manipulate you."

"When you have a business model focused on maximizing time, you want viewers to become addicted," Wu said. "I think this is dangerous. We are at a moment in democracy where the very basics of the speech equation have fundamentally transformed how this country is governed. Who are the entities that need to be the trustees of our time? The time is coming quickly that major social media news sites must learn right now -- that you can't make up things. The time has come for social media groups to clean up their act," he concluded.

## Public Libraries Online ([www.publiclibrariesonline.org](http://www.publiclibrariesonline.org)) Seeking Contributors

PLA invites you to become a part of the dynamic, high-profile team of *PL Online* writers: by contributing at least one 400-600 word, library-related (preferably public library; but library world in general is good) blog post per month.

All work is done virtually with regular submission deadlines and a managing editor. These are all volunteer positions. We are looking for a diverse group of contributors, so don't be shy! Email us at [publiclibrariesonline@gmail.com](mailto:publiclibrariesonline@gmail.com). In the e-mail subject line, type "PL Online Contributor" and include a message of introduction, a bit about why you are interested, and any writing experience (writing experience is not mandatory), along with your first and last name, library, and title. Deadline is May 4, 2018. If you have questions, please email Kathleen Hughes ([khughes@ala.org](mailto:khughes@ala.org)).

## #PLA2018

A selection of #PLA2018 tweets:

**Louisa @llws**

Giving away all these signed books and arcs to friends, patrons and coworkers is going to make this coming month a joy. #PLA2018 #PLArippleout

**Maria Fesz @m\_fesz**

Gettting up early to hear @superwuster talk about net neutrality and attention harvesting was a good call #libraries #PLA2018 #NetNeutrality

**BMore Brampton Library @bramptonlibrary**

Good physical space for human interaction is scarce — it is a rich and important part of what public libraries offer. Tim Wu #bigideas @superwuster #PLA2018

**Martin Munguia @MssoaMartin**

The danger of anyone gathering too much customer data, even libraries, is that it cuts down on an individual's choice to be something different. Too much customization can create a personal prison. @superwuster #PLA2018 #NetNeutrality

**OUP Libraries @OUPLibraries**

Comedian @hasanminhaj closes out the #PLA2018 Conference with a powerful message about fear, empathy, and what libraries can do to promote inclusivity: <http://bit.ly/2Gd6CJg> via @amlibraries

**Mallory Arents @MLArents** 1.4 billion visits to public libraries last year is the new fact I will share with "isn't Google killing libraries?" #PLA2018

**Brian Shepard @BrianDShepard**

Don't start with the question "what can the library do?" but start with "what does the community need?" #PLA2018

**Morgan County Library @mocolibrary**

Thank you, @iStevePemberton. You are family. #diversity #librariesarefamily #readingtounderstandothers #PLA2018

**miss julia @Julia\_Frederick**

"Don't be afraid to unapologetically be yourself. No one wants the Diet Pepsi version of you." — @hasanminhaj #PLA2018

**American Libraries @amlibraries**

Information, democracy, self-governance. "The librarians have always been on the right side" of these things. — @superwuster at #PLA2018

**Sayantani DasGupta @Sayantani16**

The more specific you are as a writer, the more people you'll reach because it's where the reader meets you in the story" @JackieWoodson #pla2018

## Product News —

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### Free Set-Up, Free Shipping On JanWay Plastic Bags

In addition to JanWay's regular low plastic bag pricing, from now until April 30th, JanWay is also offering FREE SET-UP (normally \$150) and FREE SHIPPING to the continental United States. There has never been a better time to order plastic bags!

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in the community. The advertising value of these bags can't be underestimated! If you're looking for a sponsor, local business will be far more eager to purchase the bags for the library with the added incentive of their name printed right on the back of the bag!

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# PLA 2020

February 25-29 | Nashville





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**#TheLibraryLife is...** A belief that your space is more than a reserve for books, but a gathering place where your community comes to learn, study, and sometimes . . . just unwind.

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## The Public Library of Brookline

### A Space for Books:

Collection weeding opened up space for a multi-purpose Common Area and made their Adult Collections easier to access.

### A Space for People:

New layout created more space, not just for books, but for patrons too, improving the experience for adults and students.

Your mission. Our purpose. **#TheLibraryLife**



Searching and  
Ordering Simplified



Author & Community  
Engagement



Extensive Product  
Knowledge



Shelf-Ready  
Title Processing



Patron-Focused  
Custom Curation Lists



Smarter  
Collection Analysis

Visit **booth 301** to chat about your goals for **#TheLibraryLife**.