

# Tennessee Archivist

*the newsletter of the Society of Tennessee Archivists*



Winter 2026 | Volume 45 | Number 1

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Winter 2026 | Volume 45 | Number 1

## Society of Tennessee Archivists

Established 1977

[www.tennesseearchivists.org](http://www.tennesseearchivists.org)

### 2026 Executive Committee

#### President

Christopher Ryland  
Vanderbilt University

#### Vice President

Janine Winfree  
Knox County Public Library

#### Secretary

Grace Neeley  
University of Memphis

#### Treasurer

Sandra Campbell  
Middle Tennessee State University

#### Newsletter Editor

Molly Copeland  
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

#### Archivist

Sam Richardson  
University of Tennessee at Martin

#### Webmaster & Past President

Carolyn Runyon  
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

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## Cover Image

Howard High School students participating in a sit-in demonstration at the lunch counter of F.W. Woolworth Company in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee, 1960 February.

Chattanooga Civil Rights Movement Demonstrations photographs. Courtesy of the Chattanooga Public Library and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Special Collections.

# President's Message

Christopher Ryland  
Vanderbilt University

Happy 2026! I'm honored to serve as this year's President of the Society of Tennessee Archivists. We're looking forward to an eventful year. In addition to holding our annual meeting this fall, it will be a busy year! We will also be moving the STA website to a hosted web platform, upgrading the membership and meeting registration, and investigating opportunities for professional development opportunities.

In support of these and other activities, I will be naming committee rosters for the Arrangements, Education, Nominating, and Membership committees. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered.

I'm also happy to announce the formation of a new [STA Google Group](#) for us all to share announcements, news, and opportunities within the group. Please visit <https://groups.google.com/u/0/g/tennesseearchivists> to join and participate.

Please also contact me directly at [christopher.ryland@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:christopher.ryland@vanderbilt.edu) with any questions, ideas, or if you would like to get involved.

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## 2026 Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will conduct the regular business of the Society. The roster for the Executive Committee is available below.

Role	Name	Division	Affiliation
President	Christopher Ryland	Middle Tennessee	Vanderbilt University
Vice President	Janine Winfree	East Tennessee	Knox County Public Library
Secretary	Grace Neeley	West Tennessee	University of Memphis
Treasurer	Sandra Campbell	Middle Tennessee	Middle Tennessee State University
Newsletter Editor	Molly Copeland	East Tennessee	University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Archivist	Sam Richardson	West Tennessee	University of Tennessee at Martin
Webmaster & Past President	Carolyn Runyon	East Tennessee	University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

# News & Notes

## Roy Blount Jr. Papers at Vanderbilt University's Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries

The collected papers of celebrated writer and humorist Roy Blount Jr. are now housed at Vanderbilt University's Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries. Blount, a 1963 graduate of Vanderbilt, donated the collection in late 2024.

The [Roy Blount Jr. Papers](#) include correspondence, writings, research files and other materials generated by the author over his life and career. Heath Overton, Processing Archivist, processed the collection with oversight from Mary McSparran, Curator of Manuscripts.

"When I came to Vanderbilt 66 years ago, all I knew were hymns, sentence structure, and the funny papers," Blount said. "Now look! Whatever value lurks in these sweat-streaked sheets, I am thankful and proud to have it preserved by the school where I found a faith in the arts and sciences."

Physical materials from the Roy Blount Jr. Papers may be viewed in the reading room of Vanderbilt's [Special Collections and University Archives](#).

## Join the New STA Google Group

A new email discussion group has been created for the Society. Members are encouraged to join and participate in this new communication tool. To join, visit [this link](#). Start a conversation, share information, ask for professional advice, or post announcements!

## Applications Open For 2026 Tennessee Archives Institute

The [2026 Tennessee Archives Institute](#) will be held at the **Tennessee State Library and Archives** in Nashville on **April 13-15, 2026**. The Institute is open to archivists, librarians, and records custodians. This year's Institute will incorporate an overall theme of "Back to Basics." Through a combination of lectures, networking, and TSLA speakers, participants will leave the Institute with tools and resources to better serve their archive and patrons.

### Enrollment is competitive and limited.

- First-time attendees must submit the application, a brief statement of interest for participating in the Institute, and a letter of support from a supervisor or senior manager.
- Returning participants need only submit the application form.
- All applicants must be an employee or volunteer with an organization that holds archival materials.

The registration fee for accepted applicants is \$85.00. Do not send any registration fee until you have received confirmation of your acceptance.

The application form and all the supplemental items must be submitted using Submittable by **February 20, 2026**. If it is your first time using Submittable, you will need to [create an account](#).

Please contact [adp.tsla@tnsos.gov](mailto:adp.tsla@tnsos.gov) with any questions.

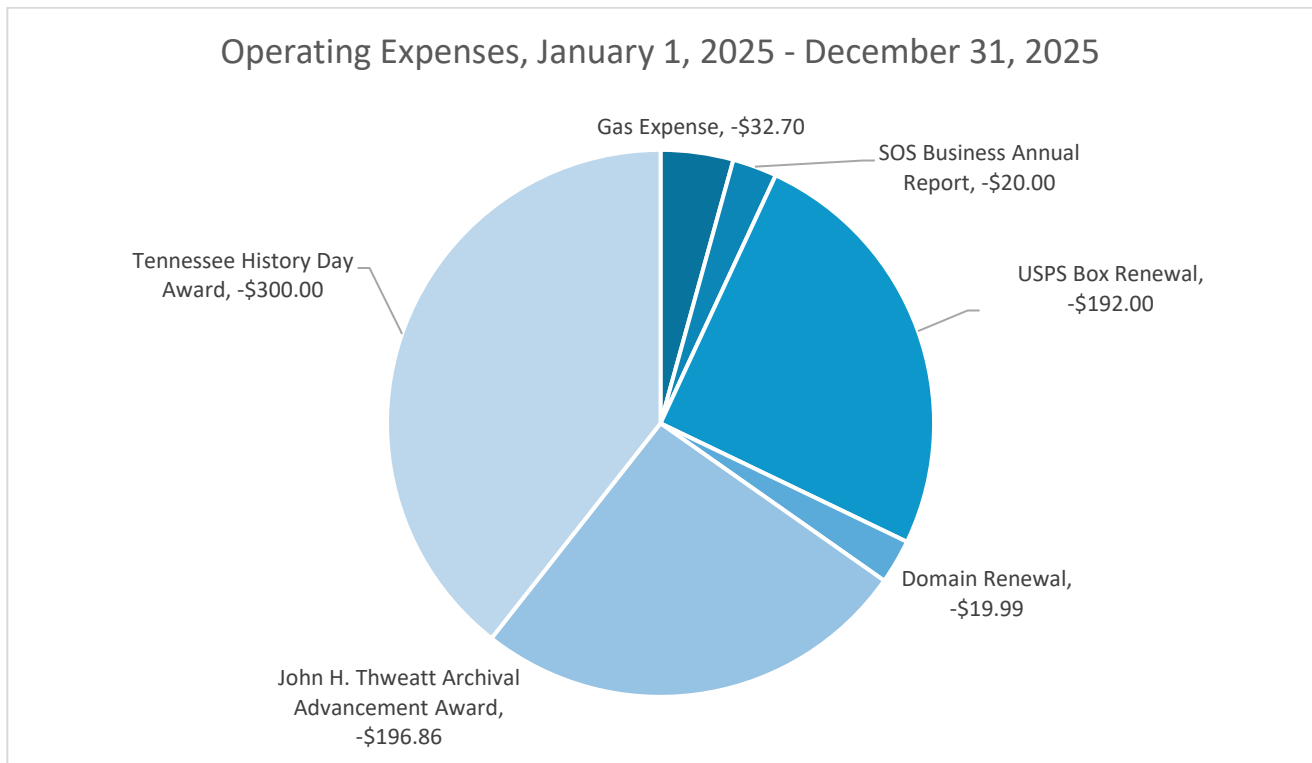
# Treasurer's Report, 2025

Sandra Campbell  
Middle Tennessee State University

Molly Copeland  
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

## Operating Income and Expenses, January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

Description	Expense/Income	Category	Expense/Income
Membership Dues	\$829.13	Dues	\$829.13
Reimbursement (Gas)	\$35.00	Operating	-\$209.70
Gas Expense	-\$32.70		
SOS Business Annual Report	-\$20.00		
USPS Box Renewal	-\$192.00		
Domain Renewal	-\$19.99	Website	-\$19.99
John H. Thweatt Archival Advancement Award	-\$196.86	Awards	-\$496.86
Tennessee History Day Award	-\$300.00		
<b>Profit</b>	<b>\$102.58</b>		



## Annual Meeting Income and Expenses, January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

Description	Expense/Income	Category	Expense/Income
Registrations	\$6,729.01		
Registration Reimbursement	-\$85.00	Registration	\$6,644.01
Program Printing	-\$246.26	Printing	-\$246.26
Vanderbilt Libraries Conference Extras	-\$2,545.92		-\$2,545.92
<b>Profit</b>	<b>\$3,851.83</b>		

## Operating and Annual Meeting Income and Expenses, January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

Description	Expense/Income	Category	Expense/Income
Membership Dues	\$829.13	Dues	\$829.13
Reimbursement (Gas)	\$35.00		
Gas Expense	-\$32.70		
SOS Business Annual Report	-\$20.00		
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Annual Meeting Registrations	\$6,729.01		
Annual Meeting Program Printing	-\$246.26		
Annual Meeting Registration Reimbursement	-\$85.00		
Annual Meeting Vanderbilt Libraries Conference Extras	-\$2,545.92	Annual Meeting	\$3,851.83
<b>Profit</b>	<b>\$3,954.41</b>		

# Navigating Challenges: Archives in an Age of Uncertainty

Photos from the 2025 STA Annual Meeting by Tim Gollins, Vanderbilt University



# Honoring the Legacy of Pioneering Chattanooga Representative Tommie F. Brown

Sara Kaparos

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Carolyn Runyon

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

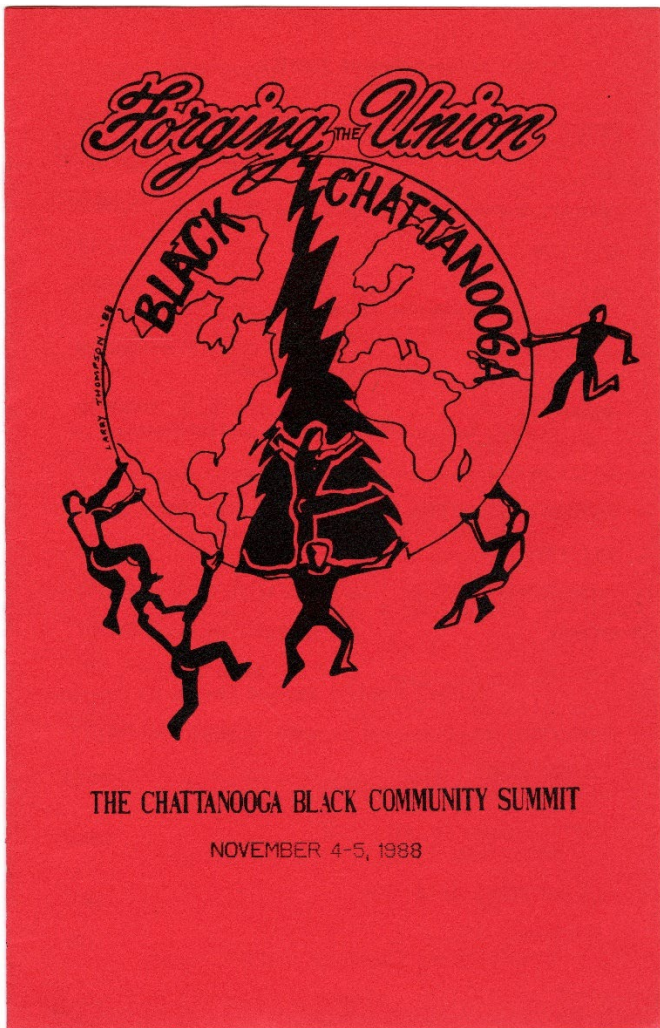
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Special Collections regrets to announce the passing of Dr. Tommie F. Brown on 2026 January 20. Brown was an accomplished civic leader, educator, researcher, and state legislator whose career is defined by historic firsts, including serving as the first Black woman to represent the 28th District in the Tennessee House of Representatives. Sadly, the publication of the [finding aid for the Tommie F. Brown papers](#) has coincided with Representative Brown's death. We are saddened by her loss but are honored to steward her impactful legacy of civic engagement and legal action.

A lifelong member of the Chattanooga chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Tommie F. Brown was a pioneering social justice activist and public servant from Chattanooga, Tennessee. Brown got her first taste of enacting change through legal action as the lead plaintiff in *Brown v. Board of Commissioners of the City of Chattanooga*. In 1989, the local NAACP chapter identified Brown as the ideal lead plaintiff to work with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to oppose the city's violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Their success compelled the city to abolish its commission-style government and develop voting districts to represent various neighborhoods on the City Council. Brown's papers



*Tommie F. Brown campaign flyer, c. 1996, MS-147-05-003. MS-147 Tommie F. Brown papers. University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Special Collections, Chattanooga, Tennessee.*

provide insight into the ways Black women have gained and leveraged legal and political power through participation in the groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and ACLU and by winning elected office to advocate for greater racial and gender equity.



Chattanooga Black Community Summit pamphlet, 1988 November, MS-147-04-013. MS-147 Tommie F. Brown papers. University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Special Collections, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Also included in Brown's papers is research for and drafts of her Doctorate of Social Welfare dissertation, [\*The Struggle to Control Black Leadership: A Study in Community Power\*](#). For her dissertation, Brown sampled and interviewed white and Black respondents involved in Black community leadership in Chattanooga, Tennessee in the 1970s. She posits that there was a bifurcated leadership structure in the city as a result of both white and Black communities trying to control Black community initiatives; she hypothesizes that

these two leadership initiatives took different positions on social issues due to their different constituencies, leading to weakened Black community movements. To combat this, Brown proposes an increased focus on the allocation of community resources. Exceptionally, this proposal is something that Brown later brought to fruition in 1993 as a founder of the 28th District of Tennessee Community Development Corporation, an organization focused on providing infrastructure and administrative support to community organizations.

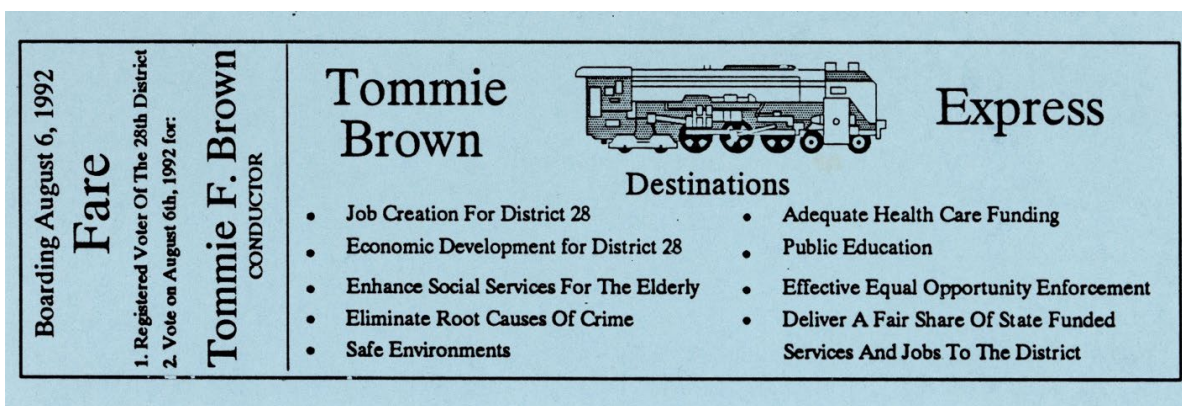
According to the [Center for American Woman and Politics](#), Brown is one of only fourteen Black women to serve as a Representative in the Tennessee General Assembly. With the exception of Representative Brown, none have corresponding archival collections or finding aids available for researchers in [ArchiveGrid](#). Brown served in the State of Tennessee General Assembly as a member of the House of Representatives from 1992 to 2012. The bulk of the materials in the Tommie F. Brown papers relate to her legislative career. Holdings include meeting minutes, legislative amendments, and research materials Brown accumulated to support her legislative endeavors. Though she served on a wide variety of committees over her 20 years in the Tennessee General Assembly, she was most consistently involved in the Children & Family; Education; and Finance, Ways & Means committees. Brown sponsored legislation on a variety of topics, including education, health, racial discrimination, children's rights, and voting rights. Among other accomplishments in the General Assembly, Dr. Brown proposed the legislature that would finally have Tennessee ratify the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Holdings also include financial disclosures, census data, and print ephemera ranging from 1991 to 2010 that detail the campaigns led by Brown to become the first Black woman to win the 28th District Seat in the Tennessee House of Representatives. Also present is a draft of Brown's 1992 election victory speech as well as her certificates of election.

Brown's contributions, documented in the correspondence, reports, legislation, legal documents, charters, bylaws, research data,

meeting minutes, and other document types highlight Black women's efforts to advance political representation of Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, and women in the United States. She leaves a lasting legacy in her community and in the governing laws of Tennessee.

Support for processing the Tommie F. Brown papers collection was funded, in part, by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.



*Tommie F. Brown campaign ephemera, 1992, MS-147-05-003. MS-147 Tommie F. Brown papers. University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Special Collections, Chattanooga, Tennessee.*

## Support the Society of Tennessee Archivists

STA is an entirely volunteer-run organization and relies on active participants and contributors like you to sustain the work of the organization. Get involved with STA today to support our professional community, share your expertise, and network with colleagues from across Tennessee.

### Become a Member of STA

Visit the [STA website](#) to learn more about membership and download the membership form.

### Join the STA Google Group

Join the [STA Google Group](#) to connect with colleagues across the state, share information, ask for professional advice and post announcements.

### Contribute to the Newsletter

We want to hear from you! *Tennessee Archivist* is the place to share ideas, activities, and accomplishments with a community of archivists, cultural heritage professionals, and memory workers. Visit the [STA website](#) to learn more about submitting content to the newsletter.

# Appendix 1: Annual Meeting Feedback Survey Report, 2025

Prepared by

Christopher Ryland, President  
Vanderbilt University

Janine Winfree, Vice President  
Knox County Public Library

Carolyn Runyon, Past President  
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

## Introduction

Launched on November 10, 2025 and closed on November 21, 2025, the Society of Tennessee Archivists (STA) Annual Meeting Feedback Survey collected information regarding the Society's Annual Meeting held at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee on October 16 and 17, 2025. The Executive Committee distributed the survey to 281 members and attendees. Eighty people registered for the annual meeting. Thirty-six members and attendees completed the survey. Some of the findings include:

- All respondents are likely to attend another Annual Meeting and most are likely to attend a virtual professional development opportunity.
- Respondents are less likely to seek elected office, volunteer for committees, or contribute to the Society's newsletter.
- Respondents are most interested in community archiving and project management workshop topics.
- Several respondents indicated that networking is an important aspect of the meeting and expressed desire for additional opportunities.
- Thirty percent of respondents were dissatisfied with the registration payment options.

Findings are organized by survey question:

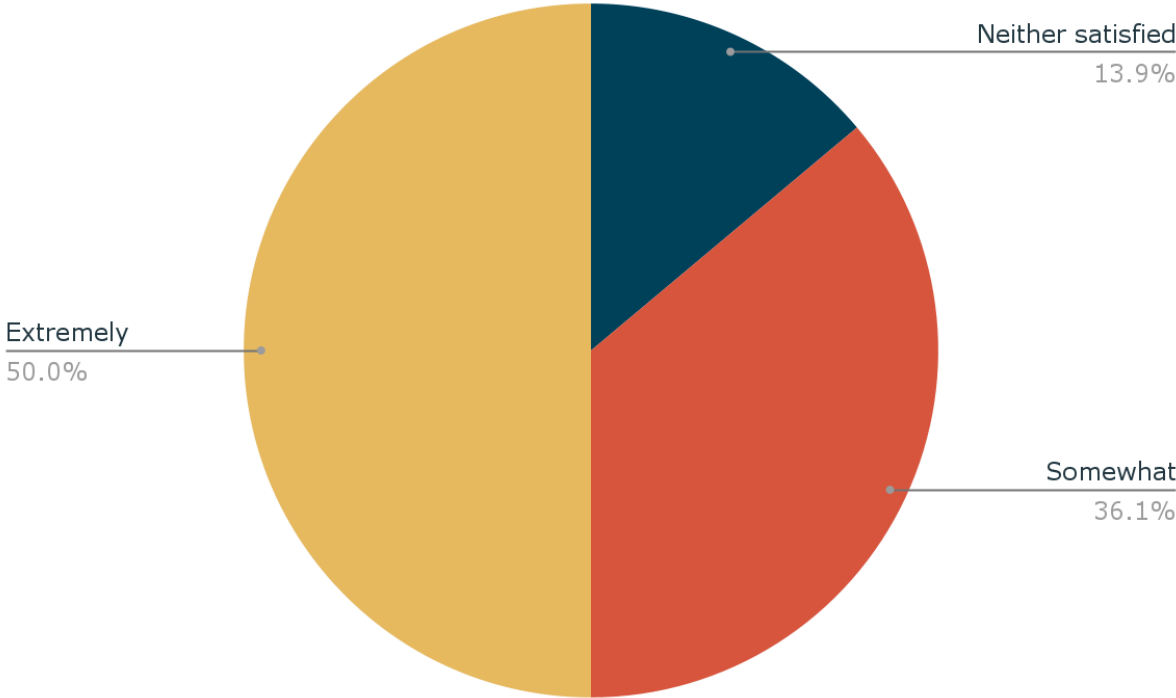
1. [How satisfied were you with the Annual Meeting's theme of "Navigating Challenges: Archives in an Age of Uncertainty?"](#)
2. [Offer additional feedback regarding the Annual Meeting's theme of "Navigating Challenges: Archives in an Age of Uncertainty," including suggestions for next year's theme.](#)
3. [Rate your satisfaction with the following elements of the Annual Meeting.](#)
4. [Rate your interest in the following potential workshop topics.](#)
5. [Enter additional workshop topics we should consider.](#)
6. [What kind of venue do you prefer for the Annual Meeting?](#)
7. [What was the most valuable aspect of the Annual Meeting?](#)
8. [What was the least valuable aspect of the Annual Meeting?](#)
9. [Offer additional feedback about the Annual Meeting.](#)
10. [Rate your likeliness to engage with the Society in the following ways.](#)

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to the attendees of the 2025 Annual Meeting for offering thoughtful feedback. The Arrangements Committee will use your feedback to inform the 2026 Annual Meeting.

# How satisfied were you with the Annual Meeting's theme of "Navigating Challenges: Archives in an Age of Uncertainty?"

n=36



Selection	#	%
Extremely dissatisfied	0	0%
Somewhat dissatisfied	0	0%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5	14%
Somewhat satisfied	13	36%
Extremely satisfied	18	50%

Offer additional feedback regarding the Annual Meeting's theme of "Navigating Challenges: Archives in an Age of Uncertainty," including suggestions for next year's theme.

n=11

It was fine. A suggestion would be something for the 250th. Like nice and general.

These are challenging times, but I didn't feel that some of the content in the talks and the workshop went along with the theme-some did, some didn't. That's okay, but maybe for next year, the theme should be more general? Suggestions for next year's them:

- Who uses your archive? Something to do with the audience and maybe figuring out how to expand the audience
- Best practices; success stories;
- The lifecycle of acquiring a collection, processing it, and making it accessible

It's a good theme - we could probably continue this next year.

A timely topic with some good information on different types of archives and archiving duties.

A lot of thought was put into this theme and it was a great program overall.

This was an awesome theme and it applied to a wide variety of audiences. I think keeping a theme that applies to all archives is useful for all.

All the presentations were good, informative, and interesting.

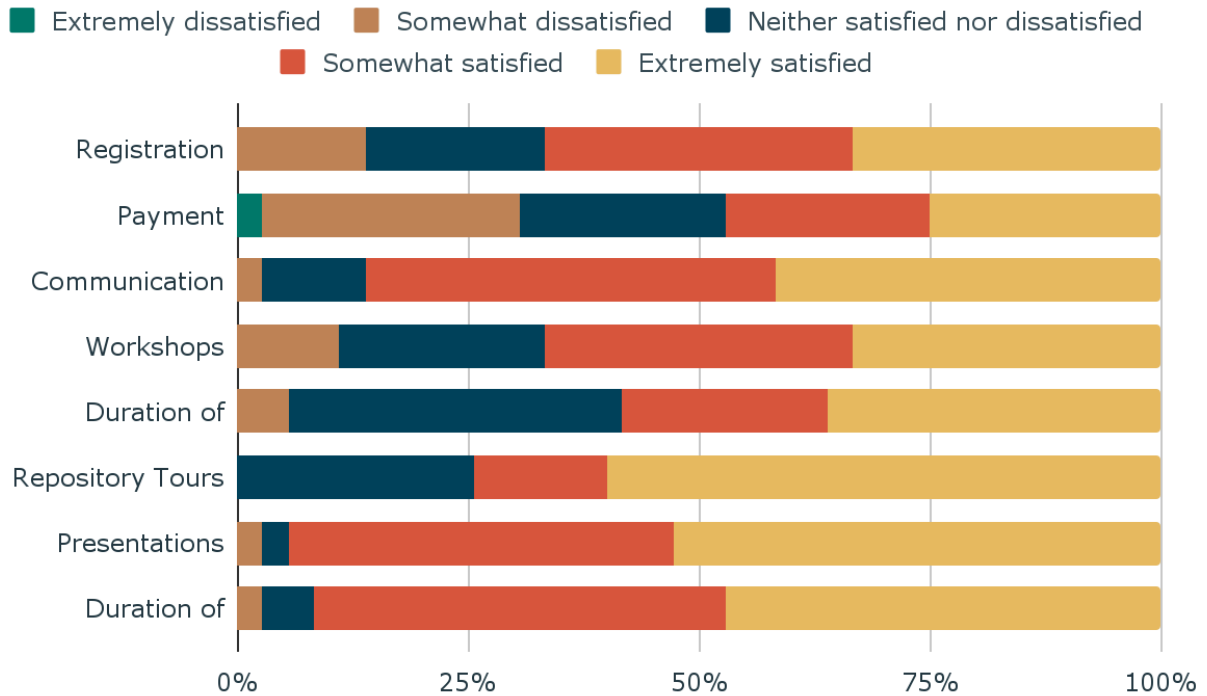
Maybe something about collaboration and community building. Or connecting/working with people of multiple generations as our field grows and changes.

I hate using PayPal. Considering inexpensive accommodations was helpful. The presentation on Social Media was very educational.

The 2025 theme was timely; next year perhaps continue uncertainty theme due to problems from the current Administration.

## Rate your satisfaction with the following elements of the Annual Meeting.

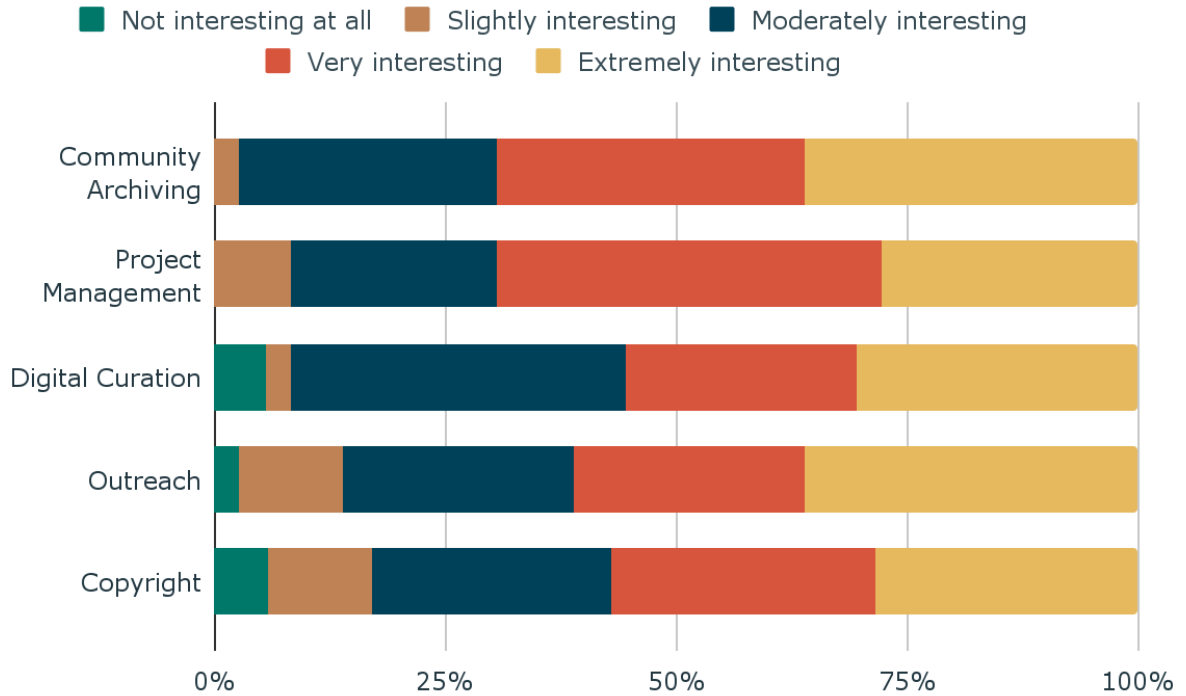
n=36



Element/Satisfaction	Extremely dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Extremely satisfied
Registration	0	5	7	12	12
Payment	1	10	8	8	9
Communication	0	1	4	16	15
Workshops	0	4	8	12	12
Duration of Workshops	0	2	13	8	13
Repository Tours	0	0	9	5	21
Presentations	0	1	1	15	19
Duration of Presentations	0	1	2	16	17

## Rate your interest in the following potential workshop topics.

n=36



<b>Topic/Interest</b>	<b>Not interesting at all</b>	<b>Slightly interesting</b>	<b>Moderately interesting</b>	<b>Very interesting</b>	<b>Extremely interesting</b>
Community Archiving	0	1	10	12	13
Project Management	0	3	8	15	10
Digital Curation	2	1	13	9	11
Outreach	1	4	9	9	13
Copyright	2	4	9	10	10

Enter additional workshop topics we should consider.

n=10

Preservation/conservation

Is there a way to apply MPLP to digital processing?

The logistics of making born digital materials available without the limitations and time investment of online platforms that require metadata work (such as content dm or others).

Donor Relations

Best Preservation Practices for Non-Paper Materials; Metadata: What Do You Really Need to Serve Researchers?; Expanding Outreach (aka How to Get People to Visit the Archive - what programs/events/ideas are seeing success?); it would be nice to have more content aimed at early professional/student attendees on finding archives jobs, networking, etc.

Theoretical and cultural topics. Libraries/archives as memory spaces. Less focus on case studies and procedural discussion.

Basics of Oral History - what to include when working with various people/subjects.

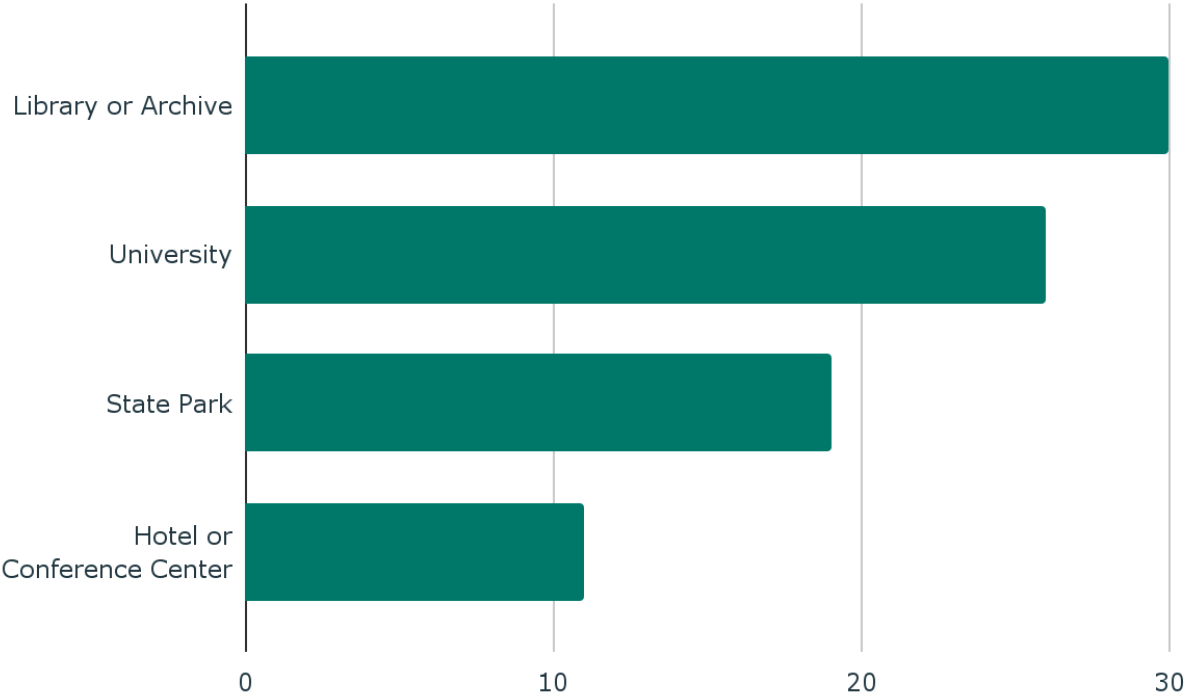
I love any of the legal presentations. I wish Brigitte's was longer! As someone who works in county government, I really like the talks about copyright, replevin, TN codes annotated etc. and would love to see some more of that.

Local archives- preservation and care for collections.

From SAA's Continuing Education Catalog: Train the Trainer: Building a Successful Continuing Education Course, Grant Proposal Writing, and Toward Financial Sustainability in Archives.

What kind of venue do you prefer for the Annual Meeting? Check all that apply.

n=35



<b>Selection</b>	<b>#</b>
Library or Archive	30
University	26
State Park	19
Hotel or Conference Center	11

## What was the most valuable aspect of the Annual Meeting?

n=22

Presentations from other institutions

Networking opportunities

Seeing everyone; catching up with colleagues; seeing exhibits at the venue; hearing from different institutions and work settings (size, staffing, audience, etc.)

I liked having a chance to discuss what we want to be as an organization

Meeting fellow TN archivists

I really enjoyed the more advanced workshop about digitization.

The presentations are a great way to share a variety of aspects of current archival practice with us; I especially liked the social media and LGBTQ+ archives presentations for practical ideas (although the other presentations were very good for pure interest if not actual application).

Enjoyed hearing about what other archives are doing and their structures, needs, experiences, etc.

Networking

Seeing and getting to know colleagues throughout the state.

Time for networking and talking openly with others.

Net working

The planning session for making improvements to STA.

Interfacing with other Archives professionals from across the state that are facing similar challenges and expectations.

As a first time attendee, it was very valuable to hear about what other institutions across the state are working on and to hear from other professionals in the field what challenges and concerns they are experiencing.

Seeing and connecting with colleagues.

Networking.

Getting to meet with other archival folks

Great presentations, excellent speakers.

Getting to network and talk with like-minded individuals.

Strategic planning session.

The collaboration of staff and archives for presentations

## What was the least valuable aspect of the Annual Meeting?

n=9

The workshop

Not sure. Nothing felt completely unnecessary.

I wanted the presentations to be longer and more in depth. Perhaps a longer conference to get more substance.

There was little opportunity (or inclination?) for meeting/discussion among attendees. I think it would be hugely beneficial if STA not only encouraged but facilitated networking among TN archivists in person (particularly for younger professionals who do not already have rich contacts among the org.).

Parking was somewhat of a problem.

Parking.

Digital preservation workshops were repetitive. Last year's conference also offered a digital preservation workshop. I learned in the "advanced" track; however, there was not enough lead time to fully prepare for the workshop. It seemed to be offered at the last meeting. Even though it is more costly, I hope the organizers will consider bringing another SAA workshop to next year's conference. It's great to have well-prepared professional development opportunities than those less organized.

the payment option

## Offer additional feedback about the Annual Meeting.

n=13

Move the raffle to the business meeting or have people sign up for the raffle with the information that the raffle will happen at the end of the conference.

Food was very yummy! Yay and thank you.!

Overall it went well. It might be nice to have some sort of reception so people could get to know each other a little better.

I thought it was a great conference and am excited to return next year. It would have been nice to have a workshop in-between the super simple introduction and the very complex one. I felt like the first was too simple/heard it before and the one I went to asked us to download too many things and was too complicated for just one person to give it with no help. She spent most of the time addressing issues with individual computers. I would have really liked something in-between. That being said, the workshop was good and primarily let me see how overwhelming and complicated born-digital items are. I had no idea how much I didn't know.

I would love to see, in addition to a major overhaul of the ancient website, a little more content aimed at student participation (ex. poster exhibits or social media contributions) to encourage new membership. Also, the business meeting on Day 2 felt scattered and long, comparatively speaking, since not everyone could vote and a handful of the officers were not present to deliver updates (honestly, keep these to the emails or newsletter and use some of that time to create social space and force people to leave their cliques and meet people from other institutions).

1. Several people felt the door prize tickets should be drawn throughout the meeting.
2. It was disappointing to see so many people leave after the last session on Friday.
3. I saw that there was an effort to have a Thursday evening gathering, but no one signed up to go to any of the places. I think the arrangements committee needs to make a plan for some activity Thursday evening (walking tour of a specific area, drinks/dinner, bookmaking or other hands-on activity) for those who are coming in from out of town after day one.
4. More emphasis on networking during the meeting - like a speed networking session with business card exchange. Be prepared to share 3 things, a research interest, and their contact info.

Good to have a meeting in a university setting, but continue to have a variety of institutions and topics.

There seemed to be some mis-communication with registration? A lot of people from my work place didn't have name badges or get registered for the lunch.

It would be great if coffee and tea were available throughout the duration of the conference, not just in the morning. I did really appreciate that hot tea was an option, though.

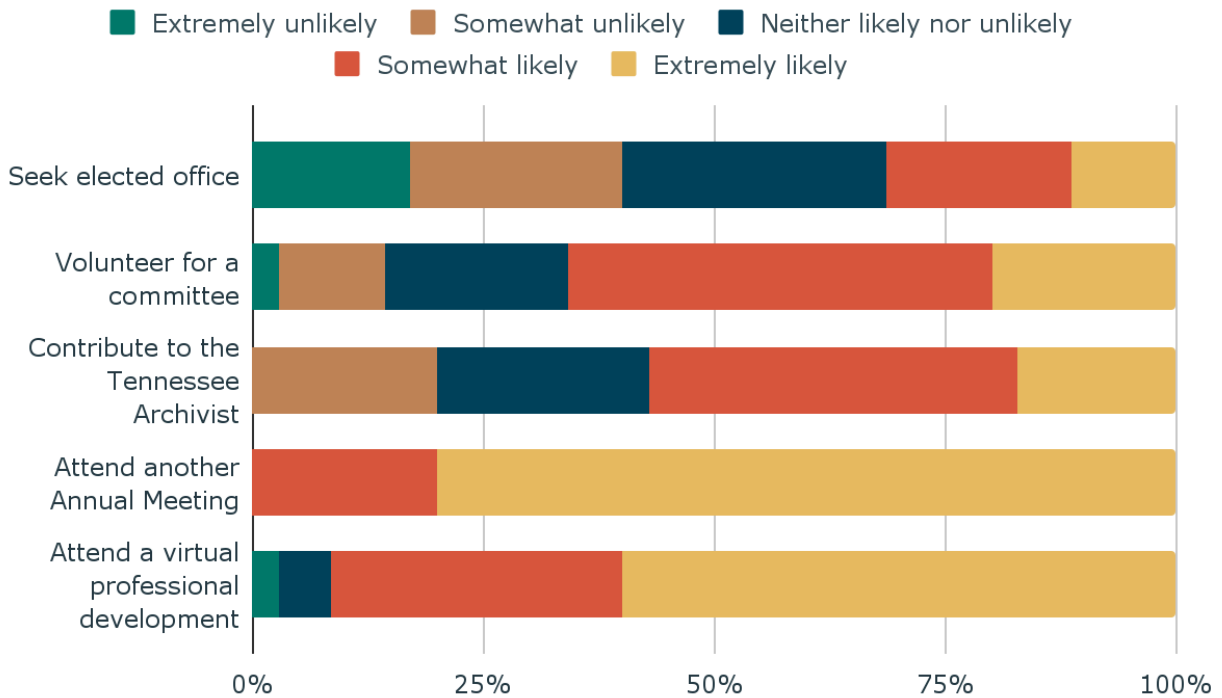
Really enjoyed the historic space reuse.

Very good work in organization for the conference.

Thank you for organizing a lovely event in a beautiful space! Our hosts at Vanderbilt were outstanding. The tours were a real highlight!

## Rate your likeliness to engage with the Society in the following ways.

n=35



<b>Engagement/Likelihood</b>	<b>Extremely unlikely</b>	<b>Somewhat unlikely</b>	<b>Neither likely nor unlikely</b>	<b>Somewhat likely</b>	<b>Extremely likely</b>
Seek elected office	6	8	10	7	4
Volunteer for a committee	1	4	7	16	7
Contribute to the Tennessee Archivist newsletter	0	7	8	14	6
Attend another Annual Meeting	0	0	0	7	28
Attend a virtual professional development opportunity	1	0	2	11	21