

2015

ATG Interviews Tom Hogan, Sr., CEO, Information Today, Inc.

Katina Strauch

Against the Grain, strauchb@citadel.edu

Donald T. Hawkins

dthawkins@verizon.net

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Strauch, Katina and Hawkins, Donald T. (2015) "ATG Interviews Tom Hogan, Sr., CEO, Information Today, Inc.," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 27: Iss. 4, Article 19.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.7137>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

ATG Interviews Tom Hogan, Sr.

CEO, Information Today, Inc.

by Donald T. Hawkins (Freelance Editor and Conference Blogger) <dthawkins@verizon.net>

and Katina Strauch (Editor, *Against the Grain*) <kstrauch@comcast.net>

DTH: Let's start with a little history. Why and how did you found the company?

TH: The original idea was for a conference, which became the **National Online Meeting**. I had my own little business at the time, and I was approached by **Roger Bilboul**, who ran the **International Online Meeting** in London every year. He said he would like to launch one in the U.S. I said, "Sure, I have never organized or run a conference, but it can't be that hard!" So in 1979, we launched the first **National Online Meeting**. I was wrong about the "can't be that hard" part. We ran that in March of 1979, and in 1980, we ran it again and decided at that point that we really had something worthwhile. So we incorporated as **Learned Information, Inc.**, which was later changed to **Information Today, Inc. (ITI)** thank goodness, because nobody could pronounce or spell "Learned Information," and it caused a lot of confusion in the marketplace. That's how we got started, and **Roger** and I are still partners in **ITI** some 36 years later.

DTH: What was the little business before? Didn't you start "Biology Digest," not as the quintessential garage business, but as a kitchen table business?

TH: Yes, that was **Plexus Publishing**, which still exists, but in a much different format now. The print product was called *Biology Digest*, which I was instrumental in starting at a company called **Data Courier**, which does not exist anymore (it was purchased by the forerunners of **ProQuest**). We published an abstracts journal in biology, although we called it a "digest" rather than "abstract" because they were longer and more informative than typical abstracts. I left the company, having acquired *Biology Digest* from my former employer, and it is still going today, but it is in digital form only, available through **NewsBank**.

DTH: So when you say you started in 1979, you are thinking of ITI. The "Biology Digest" part is separate.

TH: **ITI** and **Plexus** are both housed in the same facility but are separately incorporated. We have also done a number of other things with **Plexus Publishing**; for example, we publish a series of books about New Jersey. The most famous one is *Boardwalk Empire*, which eventually became an HBO series on TV.

DTH: So you really started by getting into the conference business, but then you made other acquisitions like directories and even abstract and indexing (A&I) databases.

TH: Yes. During the early years of the **National Online Meeting**, we published a little newspaper of 8 or 12 pages, called *National Online Meeting News*, which contained stories about some of the exhibitors, speakers, or topics that were going to be covered during



the conference. It was a promotional device, but it was in a newspaper format. I fell in love with the newspaper format because at the time, the only publications that were covering the field of online information, or information technology as we see it, were magazines. As you know, by the time a magazine comes out, any content of a news variety that you put in a magazine is pretty much out of date. (Of course, now anything in print is frequently out of date almost as soon as it is published, so you need a Website to go along with it.) So in 1983, we decided to launch a magazine (or newspaper, depending on how you want to look at it) called *Information Today*, which was a follow-on from that little promotional piece. And that still exists today.

DTH: So then things went along, and you started making other acquisitions. What were some of those?

TH: We made a couple of small acquisitions, like *Modem Notes*, which was a newsletter in the field with limited circulation that does not exist any longer, and *Link-Up*, which was a magazine for end users. Our first major acquisition, though, was in 1995 when we acquired *Computers in Libraries* magazine and the **Computers in Libraries (CIL) Conference** from **Alan Meckler**. He had launched a conference called **Internet World** and didn't want the distraction of a library magazine and conference. As you know, **Internet World** became a giant conference and exhibition that suddenly dissolved years later but only after **Meckler** had sold it to **Penton** and made a fortune. We are very happy we acquired **CIL**.

DTH: This year was the 30th CIL conference, correct?

TH: Yes it was going before we acquired it, obviously, but it has been in our stable for 15 of those 30 years.

Our second acquisition of any significance was **Online, Inc.**, which published *Online* magazine among other things. I should also mention that prior to acquiring **Online, Inc.**, we launched *Searcher* magazine, edited by **Barbara Quint**. It therefore seemed a very natural progression to acquire *Online* magazine. As you know, we eventually merged the two magazines and called the resulting magazine *Online Searcher*.

DTH: And the Online, Inc. acquisition got you into the book business because Online, Inc. was publishing books.

TH: That's correct. Under a separate transaction, we acquired their book division, and we have been publishing books in the information technology field ever since.

DTH: And did you also acquire their conference as well?

TH: Yes. We ran their conference for a few years after we made the acquisition. There was a downturn in the economy at that point, so we went back to having just the one conference a year, the **National Online Meeting**, which ran until 2003 after a 24-year run.

We went on an "acquisition binge" in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The first acquisition of that period was a knowledge management magazine, *Website*, and conference, *KMWorld*, in 1999. It still exists and has been very healthy over the years.

DTH: What about the directory business?

TH: We acquired the directory business from **R. R. Bowker**. There were actually six directories together in the acquisition, but the most well-known directories for this audience are *American Library Directory* and *Literary Market Place*, which are still going. We signed the papers for the acquisition two weeks before September 11, 2001. We were, of course, concerned about everything, including what was going to happen to our company and to the latest acquisition. However, it did not seem to affect us very much, and the directory business still continues. It is challenged and has been impacted by the Internet, but it is healthy and strong.

DTH: And finally, you acquired "Information Science Abstracts (ISA)" and got into the A&I business for a little while.

TH: Yes, we got *ISA* from **Plenum Press**.

DTH: And I came along with it because I was the Editor-in-Chief. Why did you leave that business?

TH: The A&I business typically morphed into a full-text delivery business. If you don't

continued on page 49

have the entire text of documents, people just are not satisfied, so we had to sell out to companies like EBSCO that have the resources to acquire the original articles and make them deliverable.

DTH: *And as I recall, at the time, full text was just getting started, so that was a wise and forward-looking decision on your part.*

TH: Well, I would like to think so! It was probably serendipitous more than anything else.

DTH: *Does that bring us up to date as to the company and the business it is in?*

TH: I should mention two other acquisitions, both in the early 2000s. Streaming Media was a product from Penton Media that we acquired in 2002. It was basically just a trade name and a Website at the time, and some mailing lists that they had built over the years. There had been a conference and a magazine, but both had both been discontinued after a rapid rise and fall. We fell in love with the idea of streaming media, which had had its glory days back in the 1990s. We bought it very cheaply from Penton and have built it into one of our best products now, which is *Streaming Media* magazine and two conferences: **Streaming Media East** and **Streaming Media West**. It seemed like a logical progression from the online world that we came from because streaming is obviously an online thing, and there are some overlapping interests between the online world as we know it from the library and information technology perspective and the entertainment world from which streaming came.

In 2003, we acquired *CRM* magazine and its Website, which has to do with customer relationship management and has become one of our best products. It is more of a mainstream IT executive's magazine for people in the customer relationship and customer service field. That led us into an acquisition a few years later of a conference and magazine called *Speech Technology*, which has to do with the interactive voice recognition field: everything that you make fun of when you have to interact with a company using voices. Sometimes it is a nightmare, and sometimes it works very well. It is a field that is highly technical, and we again felt that it fit in with our company structure and our interest in information technologies of all types.

DTH: *So you have become quite a diverse company from your beginnings in the online information business. It is diversified, but everything is related, so it hangs together. What about Taxonomy Boot Camp?*

TH: That is part of the **KMWorld Conference**. It grew out of an idea that people outside the library community did not necessarily know much about indexing and taxonomies, but had to deal with them in their business or educational institution and needed to know about them. Just as an example, last year it was amazing that we had about 200 people registered for Taxonomy Boot Camp,

against the grain people profile

Tom Hogan, Sr.

CEO, Information Today, Inc.
143 Old Marlton Pike, Medford, NJ 08055-8750, USA
Phone: (609) 654-6266 • Fax: (609) 654-4309
<custserv@infotoday.com> • www.infotoday.com/

BORN & LIVED: Born in Summit, NJ, and lived most of my life in New Jersey except for a few childhood years in Lancaster, PA, and five years as an adult in Louisville, KY, where I worked for **Data Courier**, which later became a part of **ProQuest**.

EDUCATION: Graduated from **LeMoyne College** in Syracuse, NY, where the Jesuits taught us how to think and reason. Majored in English because I enjoyed it and had no idea what I was going to do when I grew up. Spent my junior year in Rome, Italy, which was definitely a highlight of my college years. I did graduate work in international relations but found out the career path that would follow from that didn't interest me.

FAMILY: My wife and I have three children (can you still call a 46-year-old a child?) and ten grandchildren.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER: After bouncing around from various information services companies for about ten years, I realized I wouldn't be happy unless I could start my own business. **Plexus Publishing, Inc.** was my first venture in 1977, and **ITI**, which my partner **Roger Bilboul** and I started in 1979, are still alive and well. **Plexus** publishes books about New Jersey, the most famous of which is *Boardwalk Empire*, which was made into an HBO series. Somewhere along the line, I served as president of the **American Society of Information Science (ASIS, now ASIS&T)** and president of the **Association of Information Dissemination Centers (ASIDIC)**, which was later acquired by **NFAIS**.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE: Playing golf, sailing, reading on the beach, and watching my grandchildren play sports, which include soccer, lacrosse, baseball, wrestling, and gymnastics. As a grandparent you have to divide your time equally.

FAVORITE BOOKS: I particularly like books based on historical events, and I'm currently reading *The Boys in the Boat*. I also gobble up every **John Grisham** novel that is ever published.

PET PEEVES: I guess I'm pretty easy going for the most part, but politicians who regurgitate standard talking points really annoy me. And I think lack of funding for libraries is a national disgrace.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Work to help make **ITI** a creative, healthy, and employee-friendly company when I retire. 🐼

whereas the previous year only about 95 had registered. There is obviously a lot of interest in taxonomies.

DTH: *You have a division called Unisphere. What is that?*

TH: About four years ago, we acquired a magazine called *Database Trends and Applications (DBTA)*. When we say "database trends" in this context, we mean database software from companies like **Oracle** in a business environment, not the literary databases that we grew up with. The owner of *DBTA* approached us and asked if we would be interested in acquiring it; the company was called **Unisphere Research**. Its main product is the magazine, but it also publishes research reports on the database world or other technology areas. We have developed a proprietary process for doing user surveys and then reconstituting the information into a research report format.

Faulkner Information Services was another acquisition. **Faulkner** is a database of full-length reports on all kinds of information technology in the computer and communications marketplace. We acquired the company in 2004 from the owners who did not want to

continue with it. Our customers are universities, consulting companies, and major corporations. The interesting thing is that my very first job in 1969 was with a company called **Auerbach Info** that produced computer technology reports. **Auerbach** split in two; part of it went to New York, and part stayed here in New Jersey. Many years after I worked for them, I wound up acquiring the New Jersey part, which in its new incarnation became **Faulkner Information Services**.

DTH: *How many employees does this all add up to?*

TH: About 100.

DTH: *It's quite a remarkable achievement to do all that with only 100 employees! How many locations do you have?*

TH: We have seven in the U.S.: Medford, NJ, the headquarters; New Providence, NJ, where the directories are; Pennsauken, NJ (Faulkner); New York City (CRM); Camden, ME (KMWorld); a production office in Tampa, FL; and Lexington, KY, where some of our marketing people are housed.

continued on page 50

Information Today, Inc.

143 Old Marlton Pike, Medford, NJ 08055-8750, USA
Phone: (609) 654-6266 • Toll-Free: 800-300-9868
<custserv@infotoday.com> • www.infotoday.com/

EXECUTIVE TEAM: Tom Hogan, Sr. (CEO), Dick Kaser (VP, Content), Bill Spence (VP, IT), Bob Fernekees (VP, Sales), Tom Hogan, Jr. (VP, Marketing and Product Development), John Yersak (VP, Administration), Roger Bilboul (Chairman).

KEY PRODUCTS: Magazines, Websites, directories, books, and conferences in various information technology sectors, including library technology, knowledge management, customer relationship management, content management, database management, and streaming media.

CORE MARKETS: Libraries, customer relationship management (CRM) executives, knowledge management (KM) practitioners, database administrators, online video developers.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 100 spread across 7 offices in the U.S. and 1 in Oxford, U.K. 🌱

DTH: What about the European branch?

TH: That is **Information Today, Ltd.**, which is a very small office of three or four people in Oxford, U.K. who have followed on the coattails of what we have done here. Among other things, they manage our **Internet Librarian International Conference** in London every year.

DTH: What about *Internet Librarian*, the conference typically held in Monterey, California?

TH: As I mentioned earlier, we had **CIL** which had become very successful. The first year after we acquired it, the attendance almost doubled, mostly because **Mecklermedia** was not paying much attention to the library world any more. So I said, "We must capitalize on this; let's do something on the west coast." My daughter **Kathy**, our meeting planner, and I went to the west coast to look for a venue. We were looking at Santa Clara, San Jose, and San Francisco, when she said, "Why don't we pop down to Monterey and see what they have to offer?" I was reluctant because I thought that it would be too hard to get to, but we went anyway. We fell in love with the city. We went into one of the hotels there, asked what they had to offer, and before we knew it, we were signing a contract.

DTH: I have always said about that conference that if I was doing some indexing and putting keywords on it, you could not have had better ones: "Internet," "Librarian," "Monterey," and "October!" You can't lose with that combination.

TH: The reason it became **Internet Librarian**, incidentally, was that there was a column in *CIL* magazine called "Internet Librarian." We brainstormed it, and my partner Roger suggested that might be a good name for the conference. We were originally going to call it "Computers in Libraries West," but since the Internet was all the rage at that time, we decided to go with "Internet Librarian."

DTH: It has certainly been very successful, and personally it is one of my favorites. Monterey is a very nice place.

Let's talk about the marketplace as a whole. Many companies have discontinued printed magazines and journals. You have not. Why?

TH: That is a good question, and we constantly face that issue. Our feeling is that the printed magazine serves as a reminder to people that we exist. People still like having the print in their hands. We have Websites that correspond to each of the magazines, and we capitalize on those Websites by selling advertising on them, as we do with the printed magazines. But we are still pretty convinced that the printed magazine business is important. We have no plans to discontinue any of our print publications.

DTH: Another thing that many people think is that with electronic publications, there are many costs that do not exist with print, such as printing and distribution, so

therefore electronic publications should be a lot cheaper. What do you think?

TH: There is a certain truth to that, but the problem is that in any intellectual endeavor like publishing a magazine, you have people costs. So you do not get rid of the expense of producing the content just because it is available in electronic form. As you say, you do save on the printing and distribution costs, but they are relatively trivial compared to the cost of acquiring and producing the content itself.

DTH: And many people do not realize that.

TH: Of course not! For example, in the book world, they think that an eBook should cost \$3 versus \$30 if it is in print. But out of the \$30 you might spend on a print book, probably only about \$5 is the cost of printing it. That is something that people definitely do not understand, and **Amazon** has gone a long way to convince people that books should be really cheap, and I think to a certain degree, they have done a disservice to the publishing world.

DTH: Turning to libraries, what do you think their role is in today's digital world?

TH: First, I hope that libraries never go away. I think that of all the human institutions we have created, with the possible exception of hospitals, libraries rank way up there at the top. The idea that we don't fund libraries sufficiently is to some degree a national disgrace. I do understand why some people think that libraries don't have a role any more, but I think that is wrong. There are lots of things that libraries can do, and the main thing is that librarians themselves are important in helping people find things. People love that search box on Google, Bing, or Yahoo, but they do not necessarily realize what they are missing or where the real information is.

DTH: I thoroughly agree. Some people think that libraries are a dying market, but I don't think so.

TH: It has certainly been a challenging market, which is evident in our corporate strate-

gy and why we needed to diversify. Most other publishers that focused on the library market, like **Online, Inc.**, **Mecklermedia**, and a few others, have either gone out of business or have morphed into something else. We are somewhat like a "last man standing" in publishing about information technology for the library world, outside of the associations themselves, such as **ALA** and **SLA**.

DTH: What strategies do you think that libraries should follow in today's market? Certainly the area of looking up facts can be done well by Google, so many people say, "I can find everything I need on Google." If all you are doing is looking up facts, such as dates when somebody was born or died, that's true. But what do you think libraries can do? I hear people getting up at *CIL* conferences, for example, and bemoaning the fact that everybody wants to just find information on Google.

TH: Yes, Google is fine if all you want to know is the name of an actor in *Gone With The Wind*, but it is not necessarily the case when you have a much more sophisticated problem to research. In our world, directories have been challenged for the same reason. People think they can just get information online, but the fact that we have aggregated all that information in one place and vetted it is the contribution that directories make. And by extension, that is much of what libraries do.

DTH: What do you see for the future of information delivery?

TH: The term "disintermediation" is one that I fear describes much of the future for information delivery across many media types. Will book authors find ways to reach their audiences without benefit of publishers? Will scientists communicate directly with their peers rather than through scientific journals? Will researchers do their own investigations without the use of skilled information professionals?

continued on page 51

Your Library—eImagined for Health Sciences

- 24/7 user access to health science database
- eBook Database for fast content search
- Purchase and Patron Driven Acquisition models available
- Pay only once—for the life of the edition

Visit R2Library.com
Start your free 30 day trial today!

R₂ DIGITAL
LIBRARY

Visit R2Library.com to learn more
Or call us at 800.345.6425 x600

Rittenhouse Book Distributors, Inc.
511 Fehleley Drive | King of Prussia, PA 19406
www.rittenhouse.com



Interview — Tom Hogan, Sr. from page 50

As a company we had some of our best days prior to the advent of the Internet. We were among the gate keepers who helped spread the word about the wealth of information inherent in databases covering the sciences, technology, medicine, and business. Most people now believe that this information is all for the asking inside a simple search box. We know the search box is not the whole story, but trying to convince people of that outside the information profession is no easy task.

I don't want to sound like a "gloomy Gus." I believe there are bright futures out there if one keeps looking. At **ITI** we have continually worked to reinvent ourselves, and so far we've been fortunate in finding ways to provide content that people are willing to pay for or support as sponsors. In my opinion, the library and information communities need to continually reinvent themselves as well. I certainly don't have the answers. I'll leave that up to people a lot smarter than I am.

DTH: *What do you think is the future of ITI?*

TH: We survived what was called the greatest recession since the Great Depression, which was no easy task. We have some fantastic people who contributed to our survival, and hopefully we won't have to go through

that experience again. As long as things stay on a relatively even keel, I think that our future is bright. We have some really solid products that are in demand and have managed, through no real strategic genius on my part, to come up with some products that lead the market in their chosen fields. For example, *Streaming Media* magazine is the only one of any real significance in the online video world.

DTH: *I think that you also have one large hidden asset: you have your own in-house technology department.*

TH: We have a small but mighty IT department that varies from four to five people, and **Bill Spence**, our VP of IT, has done a fantastic job keeping us rolling, both with software that they have created or software they acquired. It is not an easy task.

DTH: *You might call them the unseen heroes. You could not do everything you are doing without them.*

TH: That is true. Search engine optimization (SEO) is the art and science of making people find you on the Web, especially through search engines. Search engine strategies are an arcane art and science themselves, and our IT department has had to keep track of SEO strategies in addition to everything else that they do.

DTH: *On a little more personal bent, what would you regard as the highlight of your career?*

TH: I think leaving a nice comfortable job and going out on a limb and starting a business has been one long 36-year highlight. I was probably too young and stupid at the time to think of the risk, but looking back on it, I have sometimes thought, "Wow, maybe that is something that I should be proud of."

DTH: *Many entrepreneurs say something similar. I think that is the entrepreneurial mindset, and you are thankful for a business environment that allows you to do something like that. Do you have any special business philosophies that you would like to share?*

TH: One is to hang on to your people at all costs. We faced that challenge during the beginning of the recession that we have recently come out of. Around 2009, we had to decide whether we should lay people off because revenue was going down, or whether we should try to keep the people, and we chose the latter. I cannot say that it wasn't painful because we had to institute some furlough days and pay cuts, but everybody shared the pain, and we came out intact for the most part.

Another thing I could say is that the people we have never cease to amaze me with their creativity and how much they can take a "piece of clay" and mold something out of it. Giving people the freedom to invent and be creative is something that I think has helped us along the way.

continued on page 52

DTH: *A small company can do that. You don't have a bureaucracy in which things must go several levels up and back down before a decision can be made. You can be quick and agile, and it fosters a good working environment.*

TH: I agree.

DTH: *I will add one more for you to think about from my personal experience, and that is "keep smiling." I have never seen you enraged.*

TH: I have lost my temper from time to time — not with my people, but with the outside world. For example, at some of the hotels where we have our conferences, when they have botched something and it reflects badly on us, I have lost my temper. But I do try to keep a sense of humor.

DTH: *I think that is critical.*

We have covered a lot of territory here. ATG likes to include something about what people like to do in their spare time and what their outside interests are. I know that you have a similar interest to mine in that we both have a house at the beach on Long Beach Island, NJ where we like to go to relax.

TH: I am a golfer, so that is my biggest "vice." I also have a sailboat which I bought in 1987 and which I enjoy, but unfortunately I don't get as much time to use it as I would like.

DTH: *Did it survive Hurricane Sandy?*

TH: It did. It was up on a cradle at a marina. We also have a little power boat that was at a different marina, and it floated off and was found about four blocks away.

DTH: *At least you got it back. Many people never found their boats.*

This has been a very interesting interview, and I thank you very much. 🐾

A Special Review — Pagans: The End of Traditional Religion and the Rise of Christianity

by **Andrew T. Alwine** (Assistant Professor, Department of Classics, Randolph Hall 308C, College of Charleston; Phone: 843-953-5714) <alwineat@cofc.edu>

In a slim 240 pages, **James J. O'Donnell** introduces readers to "traditional religion" (i.e., what had been called paganism/polytheism) in the Roman Empire and offers a nuanced explanation for its almost complete demise by the fifth century A.D. The book accordingly divides into two parts, the first being a general introduction to the basic features of pre-Christian Roman religion, the second a well-conceived elucidation of how religious dialogue shifted dramatically during the Christian era. As the subtitle implies, the book is as much about early Christianity as it is about traditional religion, although the story is told primarily from the perspective of the so-called "pagans."

The scholarship is absolutely sound, and the author's familiarity with not only the texts but also the physical landscapes is striking. Even the casual reader will be able to sense that **O'Donnell** is an authority on the subject. And yet the informal and chatty style (and the understated sense of humor throughout) lighten the tone and render the prose unthreatening. At times, *Pagans: The End of Traditional Religion and the Rise of Christianity* does become perhaps too discursive, especially when recounting historical background not strictly relevant to the topic, but these are minor blemishes. Perhaps the most refreshing element is the author's willingness to make outright judgments; he calls Elagabalus a "flamboyant airhead" (p. 129). The discipline of history writing needs more of such color, and we are grateful to **O'Donnell** for providing us with such memorable phrases, laced with laughter.

Though the word appears as the title of the book, **O'Donnell** argues that "pagan" ought to be avoided because in the original

context it was pejorative, used by Christians to stigmatize old-fashioned polytheists. This terminological quibble is connected with a major theme of the book: "pagans" were never a self-identifying group of people (in other words, nobody ever considered himself a "pagan" — a member of an identifiable "religion" based on polytheism). While admitting these two facts, I wonder if the word is really so objectionable: its pejorative force is obsolete, and there is nothing wrong with words used as etic terms (i.e., viewing historical phenomena from the outside rather than the inside). In the end, any term (including "traditional religion") will be subject to similar objections, but we need *something* to describe the disparate group of practices that has been called "paganism."

Another theme merits comment. **O'Donnell** argues that many pagan practices were falling out of favor as a result of larger changes in the religious landscape, of which Christianity was only one element. Certainly, the idea of an "epic battle" between Christianity and paganism is overly simplistic, but the alternative of a seemingly inevitable and gradual shift in fundamental religious assumptions is, in my opinion, equally unsatisfactory as it tends to smooth over particulars, especially the distinctives of early Christianity.

For the sake of dialogue, I have chosen a couple of points to nitpick, but I should end with a reminder that the book, as a whole, is solid — an enjoyable and informative read. As an introduction for a general reader to the main issues of the momentous religious developments in the first centuries A.D., this book would be difficult to improve upon. 🐾



Rumors from page 33

Jim O'Donnell who is now **Dean of Libraries at Arizona State University**. We are looking forward to his perspectives/thoughts/whatever on moving from the Provost of **Georgetown University** to a Library Dean. See the review of *Pagans: The End of Traditional Religion and the Rise of Christianity* (Ecco, 2015) on p.52. I see that **Amazon** has selected it as one of the **Best Books of the Year for 2015**.

Here's another book by a library dean! *Social Media and the Good Life: Do They Connect?* by **Mark Herring** (McFarland, 2015). This book examines some of the legal and ethical issues surrounding social

media, their impact on civil discourse and their role in suicides, murders and criminal enterprise.

For some time, we have wanted to start a Website called **Books From Our Crowd**, meaning the people who come to the **Charleston Conference** and who write for *Against the Grain*! Watch for it! Coming up!

Hope that y'all are thrilled with our new **Monographic Musings** Editor, **Regina Gong**. **Deb Vaughn** decided that she wanted more time to raise her FOUR children, fancy that, so **Regina** stepped in. Whew! Let's welcome **Regina** who is Head of Technical Services & Systems at **Lansing Community College** and will be at the **Charleston Conference** in November!

Speaking of which, would love comments, suggestions, etc. for the **Briefly Noted** column in *ATG* that we started a few months ago. This

is because we get so many wonderful books that we cannot review so we took an idea from the *New Yorker* and started this column. Thanks to all of you for your suggestions!!

A new report from the **Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)**, *The Once and Future Publishing Library*, explores the revitalization of library publishing and its possible future, and examines elements that influence the success and sustainability of library publishing initiatives. Authors **Ann Okerson**, of the **Center for Research Libraries**, and **Alex Holzman**, of **Alex Publishing Solutions**, trace the history of library publishing and factors that have transformed the publishing landscape, including changes in technology and the publishing economy, a desire for open access, and the challenges of balancing institutional priorities. The authors describe

continued on page 59