

# From the Chair

Lynda Kellam



Dear GODORT Members,

I am excited to serve as the chair of GODORT for this year. And what a year to serve! For those unfamiliar with me, I am the senior data librarian at the Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research, where I've been since July 2019. Before that, I was the data and government information librarian at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) for fourteen years. At UNCG I was the Federal Library Depository Program selective depository coordinator and, while I no longer work directly with documents, I remain committed to the use, preservation, and continuity of access to government information.

I know many of you are experiencing a “new normal,” especially with fall semester reopenings. I've continued the tradition of Friday chats started by our past chair, Susanne Caro, when lockdowns began. The chats cover a variety of topics and have been incredibly useful to me and others. We've talked about reopening our libraries, international government resources, and fugitive documents. The chair of the Depository Library Council, Alicia Kubas, visited us to talk about the work of Council and answer questions. We have a lot more planned for the year, but I would love to entertain topics from our members as well. Come and chat with GODORT!

In addition to building community in GODORT, I am interested in civic engagement discussions. As a doctoral candidate in American history, I study public initiatives to support

humanitarian endeavors in the late nineteenth century. A common refrain in that literature is the power of an informed and engaged public, and that idea holds true today. As government information librarians, we are uniquely placed to connect users with the information that can help them become active participants in our society. GODORT has had or will have several events and initiatives connected to ideas of civic engagement. The main event was our webinar on September 17 called Libraries and Voter Engagement in 2020 and Beyond organized by Kian Flynn and the GODORT Education Committee. We also have an exciting conference session planned for the ALA Annual Conference that delves into issues around civic engagement.

The elections will be over by the time you are reading this, but as librarians we will continue to support the right to access government information. I look forward to working with our GODORT leadership and members over the next year as we continue to provide access to government information of all kinds.

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