

# Interview with Incoming GODORT Chair

Robbie Sittel, Government Information Librarian, University of North Texas

## Favorite Spot in Denton, Texas

Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center ([https://www.cityofdenton.com/en-us/all-departments/quality-of-life/parks-recreation-\(1\)/parks-trails/clear-creek](https://www.cityofdenton.com/en-us/all-departments/quality-of-life/parks-recreation-(1)/parks-trails/clear-creek)). I love Clear Creek because of the many natural environments it contains and how different it is from season to season. While walking the trails, I've seen snakes, deer, herons, all kinds of bugs in and among swamp, forest, and an upland prairie covered in wildflowers. All of this within a stone's throw of town.

## Favorite Pastime/Hobby

I like to try my hand at sewing. This year I'm attempting to sew Clarice Louisba Scott's Shopper's Coat (<https://www.nal.usda.gov/exhibits/ipd/apronsandkitchens/exhibits/show/the-bureau-of-home-economics/item/22>).

I've also expanded my efforts in developing a City Home Garden (<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc96642/>). For anyone with a not-so-green thumb and a square foot of yard, I recommend planting okra. Everyday brings a small harvest, giving one a sense of resounding success as an urban farmer; plus, grilled okra is among the best summer foods.

## Favorite TV Shows

I like to watch documentaries and true crime. I tend to land mostly on the Netflix documentaries and docudramas. So many choices, so little time.

## Favorite Book

I can't say that I have a favorite book; I can say that I'll read anything written by Ann Patchett. I'm also a fan of non-fiction. I like to read books that show

me a new way of looking at things and that challenge my understanding of the world.

## Favorite Government Document

This is a hard question for me. I'm always a little envious when someone immediately spouts out an answer to this question. Despite that envy, I'm not sure I can say I have a favorite government document. Instead, I think I'm passionate about *all* the government documents and am ignited when I hear other people get excited about this or that government document.

## Favorite Movies

I tend to watch more television series than movies, but have always loved Wes Anderson movies. *Rushmore* is probably my fave.

## On Your Reading List Now

I want to visit Eudora Welty's house and garden this summer so I'm rereading some of her novels and short stories. Also, on my list (in my Audible queue) is *Caste* (Isabella Wilkerson), *The Poison Squad* (Deborah Blum), *Red Comet* (Heather Clark), *We Had a Little Real Estate Problem* (Kliph Nersteroff), *Franchise* (Marcia Chatelain), and a few others.

## Music on Your Phone

Honestly, I don't listen to that much music on my phone. If I'm listening on my phone it's an audio book or podcast. I tend to take a lot of walks and will choose a podcast that fits the proposed length of my walk. Some of my favorite podcasts include 99% Invisible, Conan O'Brien Needs a Friend, NPR's Throughline, The

Experiment from The Atlantic, All my Relations, Side Door from the Smithsonian, and The Sporkful.

## Favorite Drink

Nonalcoholic beverage of choice is a soda water. I'm always looking for new brands and new flavors of sparkling/soda water. Thus far, Big Swig out of Austin might be the most interesting I've tried. They have a jalapeno-pineapple flavor.

For alcoholic beverages, I love a gin-based cocktail. This year my sister and I made our own Orgeat and bitters that resulted in an amazing Army Navy cocktail. If ever you're in the Denton area, let me know and I'll shake up a batch.

## Favorite Type of Food

This question is always the toughest, because I love to eat and cook . . . just about anything! It might be easier to ask my least favorite type of food and still it would be hard to say.

## Favorite Conference City

Washington, DC. Maybe it's the gov docs in me, or the politics junkie, but I do love DC. Every spot seems historic, and on every visit, I try to visit or see something new. Plus, it's super easy to get around, good food and fancy cocktails are easy to find, and I get to see all of my favorite friends and colleagues when I'm there for conference.

## Favorite Vacation Spot

This is another tough question. I would say my favorite vacation spot is where ever I happen to be vacationing. I have a goal to fill up my National Parks Passport (<https://shop.americasnationalparks.org/product/22515/Pass>

port-To-Your-National-Parks%C2%AE-Classic-Edition/) with stamps so I tend to gravitate to national parks or national historic sites. I'm also hoping to fill my Passport to Presidential Libraries (<https://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/visit/passport.html>), which also puts these on my list as vacation destinations or diversions along the way.

### **Historical Figure You'd Like to Meet**

My thoughts on who I'd like to meet probably change over time. Coming off the hundredth anniversary of the nineteenth, I'd like to meet Alice Paul, the steadfast leader of the American suffragists, community organizer, and advocate for women's rights. And though I say Alice Paul, there are countless other women involved in the suffrage movement that I'd also like to meet—Jovita Idar, Zitkala-Sa, Ida B. Wells, Lucy Burns, Nina Allender, Carrie Chapman Catt, and others. Ask me again in a year

who I'd like to meet and it could be a completely different answer.

### **Pet Peeve**

Hmmm, another hard question. If I had to say, I suppose it would be beating around the bush or hemming and hawing, both from me and toward me. I try to be straightforward, while not being brutal. I also hope others will be straightforward with me. That is, if I drop the ball, act poorly, or am doing something wrong, please tell me. The realization might sting at first but I'd rather be told so I can correct things rather than continue to do the wrong thing or nothing at all.

### **What Inspires You about Your Job?**

I'm inspired by my coworkers and colleagues in my own library and across the country. Government information stalwarts who possess unmatched enthusiasm for our collections and the need to share them with others. These folks

work to promote government information collections and draw connections between other disciplines and resources. I'm inspired by their dedication to collect, preserve, and ensure access to this information. I'm hopeful I can pass this enthusiasm on, even just a little.

Many library-folk talk about their communities within libraries, and I know I'm preaching to the gov docs choir, but there is something different about the gov docs community... the mention of a specific government series that sparks cries of excitement and fire in eyes, or the compassion behind connecting patrons with the government resources or agency that can help with whatever life problem they're facing, the passion to ensure access to the information of the government. There is something a little bit different about this community. I'm glad I found my way to it and am, every day, grateful for and inspired by my government documents community of mentors, friends, and colleagues.