From the Chair

Andie Craley

As I stepped out from my library in the evening last week, I heard a familiar sound that starts back up each March as Spring gingerly arrives. Most people in my area associate Spring's return with the appearance of robins and other spring birds—but the clincher for me is when I hear the frogs singing in the marsh. Once I hear that, I'm pretty assured that no significant snowfall will appear and Spring is on its way, despite what Punxsutawney Phil the groundhog may have predicted.

With Spring often comes feelings of hope, renewal, life, joy, and new opportunities. Within GODORT, we would still love to have volunteers fill some open vacancies in our committees for the remaining 2024–2025 season and for the upcoming 2025–2026 year. You can see all the work our GODORT committees do at ALA GODORT Committees, Task Forces, and Interest Groups.[1] Please contact me with any questions and volunteer interest: acraley@harford.edu

GODORT also provides financial support for librarians and projects. Our newest endeavor is the GODORT Preservation Grant, which will provide up to $5,000 for projects that preserve government information produced at any level of government to sustain current and future access. Web archiving or digital preservation activities serve as just one example of such projects. The GODORT Emerging Leaders is another opportunity, with this program designed to enable new librarians to participate in problem-solving working groups and network with peers, a fast track professional leadership. GODORT usually sponsors a candidate each year who submits their application to ALA and is chosen for the incoming class. Finally, the Rozkuszka Endowment Scholarship provides $3,000 in financial assistance to individuals who are currently working with government information and are trying to complete a master's degree in library science. More information on all these opportunities can be found on the GODORT website,[2] and you can donate to any of them via the Donate To GODORT website.[3]

Another opportunity in GODORT is the collaboration with other ALA divisions and round tables, and government information librarians nationwide, to educate, advocate, and preserve open access to government information in all levels of government.

GODORT and the Politics, Policy and International Relations Section (PPIRS) of the ALA ACRL Division collaborate to offer the Kenya Flash Lecture Series.[4] The GODORT web series "Help! I'm an Accidental Government Information Librarian" hosts various webinars that feature government information resources and agencies.[5] This series, along with the Education and Program Committee, hosts webinars for events such as Sunshine Week, which celebrates the importance of public records and open government.[6] GODORT also reaches out to the great network of government information professionals during the GODORT Friday Chats, held during the first Friday of each month.[7] Each Chat starts with a scheduled topic of information, but elicits great collaboration through the sharing of resources, thoughtful discussion, and continued support for the work of government information libraries.

Along with all these collaboration opportunities comes the necessity to advocate for consistency and preservation of government information produced by established agencies and institutions. At recent GODORT Friday Chats and webinars, there has been a demonstrated need to preserve free access to government information during times of executive level transition, prompting collaborative efforts and efforts to raise awareness of this ongoing situation.

Numerous efforts have been shared through GODORT and the GovDoc-L listserv of tracking changes or locating resources that seem to have disappeared. These efforts include The Data Rescue Project,[8] the GODORT 2025 Presidential Transition LibGuide,[9] the End of 2024 Term Web Crawl and Archive,[10] the Preservation of Electronic Government Information (PEGI),[11] and the Weekly Roundup and Trump Trackers guides from UC San Diego.[12]

In this season of renewal, there is hope that all this collaborative work will help us advocate for the strength of libraries to provide consistency and awareness in a time of uncertainty and drastic change. We must continue these good works and advocate for their needs and funding support, both within the communities we serve and to our government bodies. Several advocacy resources can help you build relationships with these stakeholders, including the Advocacy tab at the GODORT Voting and Elections Toolkit,[13] advocacy in your Library State Associations with Government Sections,[14] and ALA's Show Up for Our Libraries campaign.[15] Let's all use these tools together to celebrate the opportunities we have in hope of renewal in open and accessible information.

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