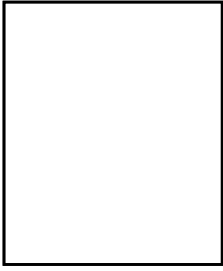


# From the Chair

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Kirsten Clark



It used to amuse me to read editor's columns in major monthly magazines. ree-fourths of the time, the editor would start the column with something

like, "by the time you read this...."

By the time you read this, the fashion powers-that-be will decide that the color of the year will be something called magenta vortex or iridescent hummingbird.

By the time you read this, we will have a new president but not knowing the outcome, I can safely say it will be a Democrat or a Republican.

By the time you read this, the snow will be knee deep and you will be counting down the days until May 1st when spring most likely will have sprung. (I'm just being realistic here—I do live in Minnesota.)

However, since rst writing the Washington Report column as chair of the Legislation Committee a couple years ago, and now writing this GODORT chair column, I have a new found sympathy for anybody that has to expound on a topic where a crystal ball would come in really handy. I spend quite a bit of time choosing my words carefully so that not only three months from now, I don't sound completely out-of-touch with the current situation but also ten years from now I don't sound like a complete idiot by stating something like congratula-

wanted, but we saved some things. I'm not going to speculate on what we did save, but in watching the process so far and thinking about what could be there is one thing that seems to be missing from the current conversations and that is planning not only to save what we can but also planning on how to handle the potential loss of services.

How will we—or how did we—react to the loss of services? Are we all wringing our hands and lamenting the demise of government information access? Or, are we continuing to fight and to show to Congress and others in the federal government that we aren't going to take it. Give us lemons and we may not be able to make lemonade but we can sure make some great Arnold Palmer's.

I will be willing to bet that three months from now, people will be asking: What is GODORT doing about the situation, and how are we stepping forward? As has been the case for the past couple months, GODORT will be doing what it can to move the issues forward. We will be pulling together information and working with the ALA Washington Office to get our message to Congress. What are you doing to help us move forward? Are you continuing to contact your Congress members to push for funding and/or to thank them for the funding they did provide? Are you looking for new ways to provide access to information we have lost? Are you seeing the potential silver linings that come out of whatever happens? And yes, you may need to get out the magnifying glass to see them.

The current budget situation in Washington in some ways echoes where we are with GODORT right now. In my last column, I talked about where GODORT has been for the past couple of years and where I see it going. I outlined three areas I wanted to work on during my time as chair: (1) moving forward on the Strategic Plan, (2) solidifying our policies on virtual membership, and (3) finding the balance point between providing enough structure

to ensure that the organization moves forward while still providing flexibility to move quickly on new ideas.

Since that last column, the Bylaws and Organization Committee, with the help of the Steering Committee, has been working on the new version of the Policies and Procedures Manual to ensure that changes made in the past couple years are incorporated into a single document and provide a starting point for the year's discussions on the Strategic Plan and virtual membership. In addition, we have also been rolling out some of the committee memberships so that we have representation from as many members as possible as we look at the structure of GODORT and how we can better respond to the needs of the organization and to the changing nature of government information creation, preservation, and advocacy.

This fall, the committees will be discussing how they have done their business over the past couple of years and what, if anything, needs to be changed to ensure that the needs of GODORT are met for the next ten years. There will be continued discussion as well as potential bylaws changes brought forth at Midwinter. Just as letting Congress know how we feel about potential budget cuts to government information resources, so too do you as GODORT members need to let committees, such as the Steering Committee, know your thoughts regarding the future of GODORT. There will be opportunities for GODORT members to be a part of those discussions, both virtually and in person. Many of you have taken time to write and talk to Congress. I hope that we see the same level of discussion when looking at how GODORT can serve you all in the future.

## Reference

1. Kirsten Clark, "Re: Library Journal article on GPO and census cuts," e-mail to GOVDOC-L, August 9, 2011.

## Give to the Rozkuszka Scholarship

The W. David Rozkuszka Scholarship provides financial assistance to an individual who is currently working with government documents in a library and is trying to complete a master's degree in library science. This award, established in 1994, is named after David Rozkuszka, former documents librarian at Stanford University. The award winner receives \$3,000.

If you would like to assist in raising the amount of money in the endowment fund, please make your check out to ALA/GODORT. In the memo field please note: Rozkuszka Endowment.

Send your check to GODORT Treasurer: John Hernandez, Coordinator for Social Sciences, Northwestern University Library, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, IL 60208-2300.

More information about the scholarship and past recipients can be found on the GODORT Awards Committee wiki ([wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/awards](http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/awards)).