

From the Chair

Andrea Morrison

Permanent Public Access to Government Information

Permanent public access to government information is a priority commitment for GODORT. During the last six months and at our midwinter meeting in San Diego, GODORT has worked to inform, advise, instruct, and protect the rights of the public to have *free* permanent public access to government information. GODORT and ALA are working to track and

provide input on documents digitization projects, including the National Digitization Plan for Retrospective Government Documents sponsored by the Association for Research Libraries (ARL). We are following and reporting on issues of disappeared electronic documents, PURLS, and fugitive documents. In sum, we are working to understand the issues, to communicate, to instruct, to educate, and to create resources in accordance with our purpose. The following goals and some of our accomplishments show how we are fulfilling our mission this year and acting upon our theme of publishing, public relations, and creativity. We have identified the following goals:

- Respond to ongoing legislative issues, especially concerning the USA PATRIOT Act and any threat to free public access to government information;
- Provide ongoing feedback on the Federal Depository Library Program to the Public Printer and the Superintendent of Documents and improve communication and feedback channels through conference calls and other means;
- Promote GODORT development and revenue-building to ground our organization on a solid financial base;
- Continually improve communication with GODORT members via the Web and *DttP*;
- Promote instruction and outreach in the many areas of government information;
- Explore new ways to communicate with the public on our issues.

These are some of our activities and accomplishments to date, identified with the GODORT committee or unit responsible:

- Received the report from the Federal Documents Task Force (FDTF) on Permanent Public Access to Government Information and are reviewing it for implementation. (Steering Committee)
- Reviewing report of the FDTF Work Group on Response to the Public Printer. We will respond to the Public Printer and to the Superintendent of Documents in spring 2004. (Steering Committee)
- Working to provide input on digitization projects.
- Steering received a report from Prudence Adler, Associate Executive Director, Federal Relations and Information Policy (ARL), at Midwinter on the National Digitization Plan for Retrospective Government Documents. She invited us to share our advice on the report, and many GODORT groups are studying the project (www.arl.org/arl/p)

Discussing the new coalition, *OpenTheGovernment.org: Americans for Less Secrecy, More*