

From the Chair

John A. Stevenson

“This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson.¹

I am honored to be writing this column for our revitalized professional journal, *DttP: Documents to the People*. The transformation of *DttP* under the current editorial team demonstrates that our members are very capable. Running for this office, I wrote about things that GODORT should do to remain viable. We need to recognize that we live in a time of change and to act to make change work for us.

For those who don't know me, I have served as the coordinator of government documents and maps processing at the University of Delaware since 1990. Changes should not terrify us if we can work with them. Although I started my documents career in reference, library-wide reorganization offered me the opportunity to automate depository processing in my library as a technical services librarian. Throughout my career, GODORT members and programs have proven to be wonderful sources of specialized knowledge applicable to my work.

Just as our members' professional responsibilities are evolving, so is GODORT. Libraries have experienced tremendous changes over the past decade. New technology and people's responses to it have changed the way we access and collect information. Fiscal and organizational factors result in many librarians experiencing changes in the reporting structure of their work places and in the work that they are called upon to do. The proposed shift in duties of the GODORT Web administrator is an example of a small change intended to make things work better. As described elsewhere in this issue, the proposed bylaws change will appear on the GODORT Web site and be put to a vote at the Midwinter business meeting in Boston. Details change, but the mission needs to be fulfilled. Recent changes in the library world do not diminish the need for our round table.

The purposes of the Government Documents Round Table are: (a) to provide a forum for discussion of problems and concerns, and for the exchange of ideas by librarians working with government documents; (b) to provide a force for initiating and supporting program climate, we should look at our colleagues as potential “documents librarians” since access to information via the Internet is making the distinctions between specializations less clear. While all librarians know some sources produced by governmental bodies, our co0010 Tc deueercBresponsible.

Building Membership

GODORT isn't just a “Federal Depository Library Program Round Table” and one need not work in a federal depository library to participate. Our purpose transcends international, federal, state, and local depository programs to include the full range of government information that should be available the public. While changes to the FDLP are of continuing interest and GODORT has a task force dedicated to federal documents, we care about permanent access to all public government information.

I want to thank the many GODORT members whose current duties distance them from the daily tasks of documents workers but who retain their membership to keep up with current issues. Many of them serve as mentors and role models. We also need to encourage membership among those whose professional lives

