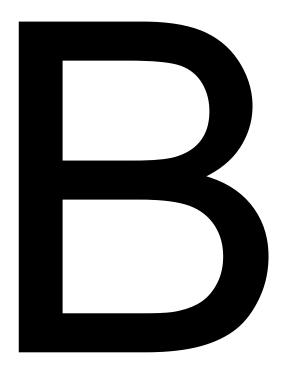
From the Chair

Arlene Weible



ecause this is my last column for *DttP*, I've undertaken the inevitable task of reflecting over the last year. When I began thinking about our accomplishments over the last year, my first impulse was to wonder, did we accomplish anything? Upon further reflection, however, I think there are several achievements over the last year that have helped GODORT to move further down the path of planning for its future.

The migration of the GODORT web site to ALA servers is one such achievement. It is my opinion that GODORT needs to be more attuned to the larger organization in which we reside, and a simple way to achieve this is to make better use of the services offered. The web site migration will provide GODORT with a more integrated presence within the ALA web site, and it will give us an opportunity to interact with and provide feedback to the staff. Hopefully, this will allow us to funnel some of the energy we expend in criticizing ALA down a more productive path. Make sure you check out the new site: www.ala.org/ala/godort.

Another achievement during the 2006 Midwinter Meeting was the successful passage of a GODORT-sponsored resolution to expand round table representation on ALA Council. The proposal allows eligibility for council representation when a round table's membership reaches one percent of total ALA personal membership, rather than the current method, which determines eligibility based on being one of the five largest round tables. While it still needs to be approved by ALA membership, I think the support received for this proposal is evidence of the respect that members have for the work that is done in round tables, and the recognition that our voices are important in shaping the direction of ALA. I ask everyone to join me in extending thanks to Larry Romans, author of the

resolution, for crafting a practical proposal that kept the issue from becoming controversial.

Midwinter also brought an opportunity to experiment with the GODORT meeting schedule. The schedule reflected efforts to consolidate meetings, shorten meeting times, and coordinate agendas and content of meetings. The initial feedback received about the changes was positive, with particular emphasis on the desirability of creating time for GODORT members to attend the meetings of other ALA groups. One proposal suggested that GODORT committees concentrate on accomplishing their work at the Midwinter Meetings, freeing members to attend other groups' meetings the Annual Conference. I think this proposal bears further scrutiny, and I plan to encourage committee chairs to experiment with this idea when planning their upcoming meetings, as well as encouraging all members to attend the programs and meetings of other groups at the Annual Conference. When members do attend meetings of other groups, I encourage them to tell others about what GODORT is doing, so we can build relationships and keep government information issues from being marginalized.

Finally, I believe the recent attention given to GODORT membership issues will bear fruit into the future. The decline in membership has had an impact not only on GODORT's budget and standing within ALA, but also on its psyche. Recent questions about the value of GODORT membership raised on Govdoc-I have challenged GODORT leaders to evaluate how our activities are addressing membership needs. I have tried to get the ball rolling by charging GODORT committee and task force chairs to summarize how their current activities serve member needs, but this is really just an initial step in planning for GODORT's future. A fundamental reevaluation

of GODORT's mission, goals, and organizational structure is needed, and I have every confidence that Aimee Quinn, our incoming chair, and future GODORT leaders will continue to tackle these needs and concerns.

I'd like to make one final note of thanks to the members of GODORT's Steering Committee, and all the GODORT members that have provided me with advice and feedback over the last year. Your encouragement and support has made this past year a highlight in my career, and I am truly grateful.