

Get to Know ...

Arlene Weible

Gwen Sinclair

Arlene Weible may not have realized she was destined to be a government information librarian when she was first hired as a student assistant in the library at Whitman College. Fortunately, the director helped to develop her interest in librarianship, and Arlene subsequently obtained her MLIS degree from the University of Arizona. In Charley Seavey's government documents class, she found the perfect mesh of her interests in cataloging, political science, and history. She had the good luck to land her first professional job as an assistant government documents librarian at Yale, where she worked with Sandy Peterson. After a few years, Arlene returned to Oregon for a documents position at Willamette University. She later held positions at the Washington State Library and the University of North Texas before moving back to Oregon, where she has been working with federal government documents for almost 20 years.

As the Library Consultant and Federal Regional Depository Coordinator at the State Library of Oregon, Arlene spends about a third of her time handling the duties of the regional depository coordinator, maintaining partnerships and conducting outreach to the other depositories in the state. Statewide database licensing and training is another 30 percent of her duties. The remainder of her job deals with special projects such as workforce development and digital equity issues. Both in her outreach work for the state library and as the regional coordinator, she travels to libraries throughout the state. "I really love the fact that I can visit other libraries as part of my job," she said.

Thinking back over her career, Arlene is most proud of her work to establish the shared regional collection in Oregon beginning in 2006. Portland State University (PSU) had been the regional and was eager to divest itself of that responsibility, so Arlene created a plan to have the Oregon State Library take on the role of regional, working collaboratively with PSU, University of Oregon, and Oregon State University to manage a distributed regional collection. She credits the State Librarian and GPO for their support of the idea that local needs should drive how the regional/selective organization is structured.

Arlene has seen many important transitions in her thirty-five-plus years as a librarian. For example, including government documents in the library catalog was just beginning in the 1990s. Soon thereafter, the World Wide Web developed and government information began to appear online. She recalled, "I've spanned the era when print was king to now, when online is king, and all

of the pitfalls as well." She has experienced government shutdowns and has seen politicians try to influence what is available online, although she has never witnessed the level of politicization that is occurring today. All of this makes her concerned about preservation and long-term access in the digital age and has given her a renewed appreciation for print collections.

Arlene served as the chair of the Depository Library Council (DLC) in 2013-2014. Her attendance at DLC meetings enhanced her understanding of GPO's regulations, which was invaluable when she was setting up the shared regional in Oregon. She has been very active in GODORT as well and was its chair in 2005-2006. "[GODORT] made such a big difference in my early career. It was the reason I was able to have such a diverse career. ... I worked in five different states, and I did that through the networking that I did through the professional organization." She values the productive relationships she has developed as a leader and member of Oregon Library Association, too. Now that so many gov docs librarians wear multiple hats, fewer of them are attending ALA conferences, including Arlene. "That's the thing I miss the most about going to ALA. It was such an energetic group of people who are really passionate about this aspect of librarianship. That's really energizing."

In her free time, Arlene enjoys growing vegetables and canning her home-grown peppers and tomatoes with her sisters. She confessed, "I've got a little bit of a jigsaw puzzle obsession going. ... I can put things together, and they fit, and they work, and when I'm done, I've completed something." Arlene is also an avid reader of historical fiction for its mix of history and engaging storytelling.

Aside from her worries about the preservation of government information, Arlene is concerned about the independence of round tables in ALA and hopes that GODORT can survive on its own. "I'm still very dedicated to the group, even if I'm not that active these days," she said. Finally, she has these words of wisdom for new government information librarians: be curious and "don't be afraid of questioning rules."

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