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From the President

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From the PRESIDENT

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Professional development is an important aspect of any profession. Webinars and reading professional literature provide valuable experience and are an excellent resource. Attending workshops, meeting authors, networking with colleagues also provides a different type of opportunity for growth. The pure excitement of being able to ask your favorite author a question or to get an autographed copy of his/her latest book, reminds us all why we became involved in the library profession in the first place. (I remember getting an autographed baseball from film maker Ken Burns and asking Warren Brown - author of United Cakes of America, how to make a better chocolate cake.)

One of the most rewarding aspects of my job is the opportunity to work with individuals who are new to our profession. Professional development remains a key topic with new staff when discussing various statewide training opportunities and attending conferences. Our annual conference in GA is called "GaCOMO" and the most common question asked is usually "What exactly is COMO?"

Here is how the story goes (with special thanks to Dr. Gordon Baker for his valuable information):

Once upon a time, in 1985, a group of library professionals, from the Georgia Association of Informational Technology (GAIT), Georgia Library Association (GLA) and Georgia Library and Media Association (GMLA) met to discuss a possible professional development collaboration between their organizations. The

presidents of the three organizations began planning proposals for a conference and GaCOMO was born. The original acronym GaCOMO stands for Georgia Council of Media Organizations.

To encourage participation, the GaCOMO leaders also produced a joint membership brochure targeted at over 1,000 library/media specialists who were not a member of any specific organization.

By 1988, GaCOMO's major focus was the first joint conference of four organizations (which now included GEPA, Georgia Educational Publishers Association) at Jekyll Island, GA. The Jekyll Island conference proved to be highly successful both financially and as a cooperative venture between organizations. In addition to Jekyll Island, GaCOMO has met annually in Savannah, Athens, Macon, Augusta, and Columbus.

The legacy of conference collaboration created by the leaders of the original GaCOMO continues to this day.

At our GLA MidWinter Planning Meeting on January 16, 2015, we had over 100 attendees from different GA libraries and organizations who shared ideas and plans for our annual COMO conference in Athens October 7-9, 2015. We have a wonderful group of people who are excited and want to create a fantastic professional development experience. It is an opportunity for all our libraries to work together and showcase the best and brightest that Georgia has to offer.

Our Opening Keynote Speakers will be the creators from UNSHELVED(Gene Ambaum and Bill Barnes) and our All Conference Luncheon speaker will be George Needham, former Library Consultant and current Vice President for Global and Regional Councils with OCLC.

Be sure to mark your calendars! The deadline for program proposals is April 30, 2015, and registration opens July 1, 2015.

There have been many changes in GaCOMO over the years, but the dedication and

commitment to work together for the good of all Georgia libraries lives on.

Don't miss your opportunity to be a part of Georgia's professional development legacy.

See you in October!

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