



## **Message from the Great Northwest Region Treasurer**

In the RIM world, if we have a hand in the organization's program, I can imagine that we envision our program like that shining emerald city of OZ. I can also imagine that we look at our program and want it to be that jewel, so we think "great thoughts." As we wind through that yellow brick road of another ARMA year, we come across some final challenges still to face before we can see our program to the brilliant end. We need to make it through that dark and evil forest and cross that beautifully deceptive poppy field to get to that city of green. While it is important to conquer that forest with a strategic plan, or create a great vision in order to navigate the poisonous field, we need to focus on implementing the program. It's working through people and getting things done. While you may want to lay that to someone else, the individuals that have to lead your program have to understand how the bricks of the road are put together. It is not necessarily for them to do the work of bricklaying themselves, but to be aware of how they follow up to make things happen.

One traditional style of program management is represented by the Wizard of Oz, which is comprised of five goals of what is termed "school-based management." In the order of their appearance, I will briefly describe each of these goals as we can relate and apply them to our records management programs no matter which stage that program has achieved.

The mild and meek Dorothy exhibits the quality of the first goal. This goal allows employees to share in shaping their own work environment. A successful records program is a flexible one that gives everyone in the organization a voice in dealing with the life cycle of records. A successful records manager will bring others along to meet basic regulatory record keeping requirements. Dusting off and sharing that retention schedule could be just what you need to get started on that road to keeping a bright and shiny program.

Dorothy first meets the Scarecrow who shows us the second goal stressing accountability. We all know the importance of attention to detail when it comes to records management. This consideration will pay off when it comes to being able to access records and when faced with their admittance in litigation. We are seeing more and more that instant access to your company's records is dramatically increasing. This brings up the issue of keeping up with technology and the changing face of records as to be accountable for those bits and bytes. If you are like me, that does take a bit of that ole brain power. Those records inventories and file plans should be reviewed to give you that sense of security of meeting those all knowing eyes watching your program.

Next we meet the Tin Man on that road. He illustrates the third goal of giving the employees as much freedom as they need to do their job. I have found it hard at times as a records manager to let go and at times to give your heart and trust to employees to do the right thing in their record keeping practices. You can't be everywhere and all knowing at all times. You can give them the tools and assistance to get started and monitor them on their way. ARMA's Leadership Academy might just fill that void for you to check out. This can give you that feeling of satisfaction that you are sharing those skills with others to make a brilliant records program.

The fourth goal speaks of control. The team comes across the Cowardly Lion next. He growls the lesson that we need to be as steadfast and confident in our own internal controls we have set for our records management program as we show them outwardly to the world. As a records manager, it can take a lot of fortitude to address the need for more security and budget controls that need to be addressed to administer your program. Take another look at ARMA's records management competencies that are outlined and put forth from your Chapter leadership or on ARMA's website for guidance and assistance with these control issues.

By this time, we see we have a well functioning records program and that we have reached the expectations we wished for. Or did we? In the story, the team finally reaches Oz but feels something is missing. They still want to meet that Wizard they know will fix everything for them. The Wizard does just that in revealing the fifth and final goal of fostering a system that encourages innovation and creativity. He shows them that they all have the tools already to work together to make each of their wishes come true. He encourages us to think "outside of the box" and try new ways of thinking about records management. We come up with ways to work smarter and not harder in the wake of astronomical environmental and economic changes. We still need to run our records program in the parameters in the way we have always done it but that does not mean we can't come up with more effective and efficient ways of getting the same results. Check out the records management LISTSERVE to gain and share in those innovative ideas that happening out there. Have you listened to the radio talk show Inside the Records Room? What an idea....how clever huh?

It is my hope that this ARMA year has been a good journey down that records management road that in your Chapter meetings you were able to impart to your "team" these goals as I outlined above. I have seen what you are doing in some of your monthly programs and you have indeed touched on these without even knowing it I bet! Please celebrate your successful journey this year. Know that even though the road is not a straight one and there are many challenges and obstacles to face, you all are making a difference and contribution to the success of your organizations in the way you manage that all important RIM program of yours!

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Great Northwest Region Treasurer