

RBMS Newsletter

*Issued by the Rare Books and Manuscripts
Section of the Association of College and
Research Libraries, a Division of the
American Library Association*

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NUMBER 27

From the Chair

As you will see when you read this issue of the newsletter, RBMS continues to do what it does well: establishing and promoting the best practice in special collections librarianship and providing its members with the comfort and stimulation of a professional peer group. You may also perceive a growing emphasis on communicating with groups and individuals outside the section. Our liaison relationships with organizations such as SAA and SHARP not only reflect the natural affinities of our members, but also support Goal 2 of ACRL's strategic plan—to "Collaborate with other professional organizations and associations of higher education in order to promote mutual interests." Carefully cultivated, such links can serve as important conduits for information. But the strategic plan goes beyond communication to specify collaboration. We have pursued joint projects with other groups in the past (e.g., the ACRL/SAA Joint Statement on Access), and I hope ACRL's Goal 2 stimulates us to continue to make active use of the opportunities afforded by these ties.

The recent creation of the Outreach Initiatives Committee is a declaration of our intent to reach beyond our familiar world of librarians, scholars, and booksellers to a wider public—to individuals as well as organizations. In the spirit of one of the section's notable past successes, the pamphlet *Your Old Books*, this committee will explore ways to place our skills and knowledge at the service of the wider community, to participate in issues of public education and policy and, we hope, to reap the rewards of our labor in terms of increased public support and appreciation of our collections. In my mind, this effort is related to a trend that is of great interest to our membership—the increasing and mutually beneficial exchange of ideas and practices between library and museum communities.

As our reach becomes greater we ourselves may become fewer. As of July 1997, RBMS had 1,826 members. However, a restructuring plan recently approved by the ACRL Board may greatly reduce that figure.

Until now, every ACRL member automatically had

the choice of three sections. It has been natural to assume that RBMS is a second or third choice for some of you. This year your ACRL dues will cover only two sections and you will pay an extra fee for any additional memberships. It is likely that ACRL section memberships will drop overall and more closely reflect the active interest of members. One cannot venture to predict the effect on the absolute size of RBMS or on its size relative to other ACRL sections. The change may have no discernible effect on our activities, and I'm sure it will not dampen our ambitions. You will read more of this matter in future newsletters.

1998 RBMS Preconference

The Nineteenth Century: Strategies and Solutions for Rare Book and Special Collections Librarians is the theme of the thirty-ninth RBMS Preconference, to be held in Washington, DC, 23-26 June 1998. The Preconference will explore strategies and solutions for the acquisition, preservation, and research use of published and unpublished nineteenth-century materials. These scholarly materials, often not found within the current purview of rare book repositories, archives, and special collections, present a significant and growing intellectual, financial, physical, and administrative challenge to librarians, archivists, and scholars.

The program includes a diverse array of plenary addresses, seminars, paper presentations, and workshops designed to foster the investigation of collection development, preservation, public services, technical services, and administrative issues central to the work of rare book and special collections librarians and information professionals. Plenary speakers include: John Cole, Center for the Book; Nancy Gwinn, Smithsonian Libraries; Alice Schreyer, University of Chicago; Paul Conway, Yale University Library; and Sandra Freitag, American Historical Association. Seminars include sessions related to the cataloguing of publications, including but not limited to ephemera, western Americana, publishers' bindings, managing development of picture books. Additional seminars

RBMS MIDWINTER MEETING SCHEDULE

New Orleans January 9-12, 1998

FRIDAY, January 9

8:00-10:00p Bibliographic Standards (Hearing)

SATURDAY, January 10

8:30-11:00a Bibliographic Standards I
1998 Preconference Program Planning

9:30-11:00a Guidelines for Borrowing Special
Materials for Exhibition (Ad Hoc)
Membership

9:30a-12:30p Exhibition Catalogues Awards I
(Closed)

11:30a-12:30p Outreach Initiatives (Ad Hoc)
RBML Editorial Board
1999 Conference Program Planning

2:00-4:00p Budget and Development
Education & Professional Development
Manuscripts & Other Formats
Publications
Seminars

8:00-10:00p Security Committee

SUNDAY, January 11

8:30-11:00a Bibliographic Standards II
Conference Development
Curators & Conservators
Public Services

9:30a-12:30p Exhibition Catalogues Awards II
(Closed)

11:30a-12:30p MARC for Special Collections
1998 Conference Program Planning
1999 Conference Program Planning

4:30-5:30p Information Exchange

MONDAY, January 12

8:30-11:00a Executive Committee I
2:00-4:00p Executive Committee II

⊕ *This is the schedule
RBMS has requested from ALA.
Be sure to check the final conference schedule
for changes.*

Preconference (cont.)

focus on such diverse issues as printed booksellers' catalogues in the electronic age, the evaluation of exhibitions and exhibition catalogues on the World Wide Web, inhouse rare book auctions for libraries, the revised security guidelines proposed by the RBMS Security Committee, and the role and future of the RBMS web site.

Two all-day workshops will be held on Tuesday, June 22. "Reading Room Security" will include components related to patron registration, surveillance systems and techniques, the Bland case, and the role of the legal system in deterring and prosecuting thieves.

The second workshop, "Preservation Selection for Nineteenth-Century Books," will be led by Sue Allen and includes lecture and practicum components. Registrants will receive a workbook of readings, examples, and guidelines to assist in identifying and evaluating nineteenth-century materials. Workshops require pre-registration and the payment of a separate fee. Space is limited in both, and registration will be accepted by mail, using the RBMS Preconference registration form, until

all slots are filled. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance by 1 June 1998.

On Thursday afternoon there will be a group of special research programs. Pre-registration is required, and due to limited enrollment, only one program per person is permitted. There is no extra cost for these programs.

The Preconference hotel is The Washington Court Hotel, located at 525 Jersey Avenue, NW, two blocks from the Capitol and three blocks from Union Station. The room rate will be about \$140 per night. A number of alternate hotels are also available, and dormitory housing at \$45/single and \$54/double per night will be available through George Washington University.

Registration is limited to 250. Fees are \$175 for RBMS members and \$210 for non-members. Fees include entry to all Preconference receptions, luncheons, coffee breaks, and all papers and seminars. Receptions are planned for Tuesday evening at the George Washington University Rose Garden, Wednesday evening at the Washington Historical Society, and Thursday evening at the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Committee News

Executive

Three recommendations of the ACRL Section Funding Task Force have been approved. One has given RBMS an increase in basic services funding. Another allows RBMS greater latitude in how it spends its basic services funding. The third will result in a restructuring of section membership within ACRL and may significantly affect the size of our membership (See *From the Chair*, p. 1).

The recently appointed ad hoc committee formed to review the *Guidelines for Borrowing Special Collections Material for Exhibition* was renamed the Guidelines for Borrowing and Loaning Special Collections Material for Exhibition Committee.

Jean Ashton was appointed the Section's first formal liaison to the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP). The liaison position was made at the request of the SHARP board.

The Outreach Initiatives Committee (ad hoc) was created to develop projects to convey the expertise of RBMS members to a wider public. The committee's initial efforts will be devoted to projects relating to the history of the book. Steve Ferguson is chair.

Frances Maloy, ACRL liaison to RBMS, is about to go off the ACRL Board. Ms. Maloy has been a valuable friend to RBMS and she was warmly thanked for her many services to the Section. Her presence at Executive Committee meetings will be greatly missed.

Education and Professional Development

The committee's efforts in producing an online Education Directory aimed at those interested in courses pertaining to rare books and manuscripts is now closer than expected. Issues such as timeliness of information, confidentiality and the necessary updating are just some of the issues the committee has dealt with during the course of creating the directory. It currently rests at a private URL at Cornell and will migrate to the RBMS web page with links to other appropriate sites eventually. The committee is also exploring the idea of an internship survey. The result would be of possible benefit to those interested in entering this field.

Publications

Sid Berger's term as editor of *Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship* will end in late 1998, and ACRL has begun a search for his successor. The group has considered the possibility of mounting back issues of *RBML* on the RBMS web site, but felt that it was not a

good idea to turn the journal into an electronic publication at this time. Some enhancements to the RBMS web site have been considered, including a form for submitting suggestions to the Seminars Committee and the directory of educational opportunities being prepared by the Education and Professional Development Committee. The web site is attracting many users; especially popular is the electronic version of *Your Old Books*. The pamphlet version of this text is still useful and is available through ACRL Publications (not ALA Graphics, as was formerly the case).

Conference Development

Last spring, the ACRL Board voted to accept our proposal to meet in Montreal, Canada, in 1999. The Committee is now seeking proposals for the year 2000, when the ALA Conference will be held in Chicago, and we are working to secure a strong proposal from special collections librarians in that city. The committee also is working on improvements to the RBMS Preconference Planning Manual, including finalizing a planning timeline for use by Preconference committees and ACRL staff. Discussions at Midwinter will focus on review of evaluations of the 1997 Claremont Preconference, the year 2000 site selection, the draft planning timeline, and a number of possible minor changes to the Section's Preconference policies.

Bibliographic Standards

The Bibliographic Standards Committee presented a workshop at the RBMS Preconference in Claremont, California, on the topic of Internet resources for rare book cataloging. A web site, created for the workshop, "Resources for the Rare Materials Cataloger" (<http://www.library.upenn.edu/ipc/index.html>) is being maintained by the Committee and will be available on the RBMS web page. Another web site maintained by the Committee, already available from the RBMS web page, is the Latin Place Names File (<http://www.lib.byu.edu/~catalog/people/rim/latin/names.htm>) which lists place names as they appear in Latin in early imprints together with their modern (AACR2R) form.

The Committee is currently working to revise the RBMS thesauri which contain terms authorized for use as access points in rare book cataloging and to reconcile them with other standard thesauri such as the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* and the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus*. Changes to the RBMS thesauri and new terms may be proposed using an online form (<http://www.library.yale.edu/~dleslie/thesauri.htm>). The

Committee is also finishing a revised edition of *Examples to Accompany Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books*, which should be published shortly by ACRL. A new Committee publication, *Guide to Rare Book Records in Online Systems*, designed to aid librarians and system vendors in selecting and designing local systems to accommodate rare book records, will be made available from the RBMS web page. Finally, the Committee is involved in efforts to formulate a "core" standard for rare book catalog records and standards for the cataloging of rare serials.

Budget and Development

The Budget and Development Committee has created a donations database for the section that will allow the tracking of cash and in-kind donations in support of section activities. RBMS members with information about past donations to the section should contact Tom Kelly (kellyt@smtpgate.umkc.edu).

Security

The Committee continues to work primarily on the revision of the ACRL/RBMS *Guidelines for the Security of Rare Book, Manuscript, and Other Special Collections*. It is hoped that the first draft will be available for the committee's review at the 1998 Midwinter meeting. Anyone with suggestions for the revision should contact Nancy Romero, chair of the subcommittee reworking this document.

A "Disaster and Emergency Response Salvage Wheel" is available for \$5.95 from 1-888-979-2233. The "Slow Fires" preservation video has a follow-up called "Into the Future," to which The Research Libraries Group has added more about digital material.

The Committee, as part of its Guidelines revision, is also looking at various marking systems to identify materials. A new system called ISIS (Intrinsic Signature Identification System), which is based on the principles that every object is unique and that highly magnified pictures show differences not apparent to the naked eye, has been reviewed by the Committee for potential usefulness as a non-invasive method of identifying materials. To view samples of the way in which this system works, visit the vendor's web site at: <http://www.verification.com>

The LSO listserv is up again after a three month interval and people previously on it need to resubscribe. For information on doing so, contact Susan Allen (sallen@library.ucla.edu). Subscription to the LSO list is restricted only to those who have been appointed Security Officer by their library.

Manuscripts and Other Formats Discussion Group

Aside from an informal exchange of news, two primary topics of discussion emerged. Announcements of several online exhibitions prompted the topic of changing user groups. In response to academic programs, libraries increasingly are providing bibliographic instruction to undergraduates to introduce them to primary source materials. Other programs, such as the Library of Congress-Ameritech National Digital Library Competition, have emphasized even younger students as potential users of primary resources. The online exhibits available via the World Wide Web are bringing in queries from users outside of the realm of traditional scholarly research. These new users give special collections librarians and archivists, especially those with curatorial responsibilities for manuscripts and other formats, occasion to reconsider standard issues of acquisition, security, preservation, description, interpretation, and outreach.

The second major area of discussion concerned "stuff." This aptly named discussion group often deals with particular "other formats," but this conversation addressed the very common experience of special collections departments becoming the dumping ground for, and manuscripts librarians becoming the de facto curators of, "all the other stuff." Several members described their collections of mixed media, realia, artifacts, and all the other "stuff" from papyri to puppets. There was great interest in a future session which would deal more formally with this topic.

Exhibition Catalogue Awards

The Exhibition Catalogue Awards Committee continues to explore issues relating to adjudicating Web exhibition catalogues and has looked at Web exhibitions with a Netscape browser. The Committee is interested in judging Web exhibition catalogues, and acknowledges the widespread use of the Web and other non-traditional spaces for mounting exhibitions, but unanimously agrees that printed catalogues remain its primary devotion. The Committee has discussed and reshaped the seminar it was in the process of proposing for the 1998 RBMS Annual Preconference. Outgoing Chair, Stephen Tabor, has made available to the Committee copies of his beautifully printed list of this past year's harvest of catalogues. The Committee is exploring the significance of the reduced number of catalogues received for judging, and, hoping that this statistic augurs no trend, will remain sensitive to this issue and work to promote increased submissions for future judging.

Membership

The RBMS Membership Survey prepared by the Membership Committee gathered extensive data from current members of the section, and the results are being tabulated. The Committee is working on another version of the survey to be sent to targeted non-members along with a section brochure encouraging their participation in RBMS. The survey, funded through an ACRL Initiative Grant, is scheduled to be completed and results publicized in the coming year.

Once again the Membership Committee's buddy system was a considerable success, with a record ten pairs of new and experienced members participating at the preconference in Claremont and RBMS/ALA meetings in San Francisco. The Committee would like to thank all who participated.

Public Services Discussion Group

The RBMS Public Services Discussion Group has been concerned with policies and procedures relative to providing photographic and other images from rare book and manuscript materials. Discussions of these matters have provided insight into how our institutions variously handle issues such as the increasing demand for scanned images, pricing and billing, and administration of copyright. Other topics of concern to the Committee include the kinds of printed handouts used to effectively communicate our rules and guidelines for collection access and methods of documenting collection use.

The Public Services Discussion group offers the RBMS community an on-going opportunity to exchange ideas on various approaches to promoting and servicing the use of rare book and manuscript collections. Announcements of minutes and agendas appear on the RBMS Listserv, and RBMS members with questions or comments are invited to contact Katherine Reagan at kr33@cornell.edu

Call For Catalogues

The RBMS Exhibition Catalogue Awards Committee invites you to submit catalogues to be considered for the Katherine Kyes Leab and Daniel J. Leab American Book Prices Current Exhibition Catalogue Awards.

Catalogues eligible for a 1998 award will have been published between 1 September 1996 and 31 August 1997, in conjunction with exhibitions either in progress or concluded by 31 August 1997. The deadline for submitting catalogues is 30 September 1998. To request instructions for entering catalogues and entry forms,

contact Michael Joseph (mjoseph@rci.rutgers.edu). Further information may also be obtained from the RBMS web page: <http://www.princeton.edu/~ferguson/ecac/rules.htm>

1997 RMBS Preconference

The 1997 RBMS Preconference, "Rereading the Past: New Methodologies and Approaches to the History of the Book," looked at how research in the history of the book has developed since the 1980 Preconference, "Books and Society in History," while at the same time examining new strategies.

The keynote speaker was Robert A. Gross, College of William and Mary. In his talk, "Communications Revolutions: Writing a History of the Book for the Electronic Age," he congratulated RBMS for first raising many issues at the 1980 Preconference which have since become paramount in book studies. He also called the publication from that Preconference, "Books and Society in History" (1983) very important in spreading information about the new field.

Julian Roberts, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, presented "From Bibliography to Book History: A British Perspective." He discussed the history of the study of bibliography and surveyed the progress of long term bibliographic projects of imprints, such as the Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue.

Jeffrey Groves, Harvey Mudd College, spoke on how publishing practices of Ticknor & Fields contributed to the formation of literary canon in the 19th century, and Rosalind Remer, Moravian College, examined current research into early American publishing enterprises.

Steve Ferguson, Princeton University, detailed his survey on merging theory and practice in the history of the book and called for increased education and an award to promote the field. Ellen Dunlap, President of the American Antiquarian Society, detailed how studies in book history have benefited her institution.

A survey of attendees confirmed that the Preconference's theme and format were well received. Out of 146 returned evaluations, 98.6% rated the Preconference good or very good. The two factors that most influenced people to attend the Preconference were the theme/speaker (68%) and the location (44%). 94% of the respondents felt that the theme of the Preconference was appropriate to the concerns of the profession and 79% felt that it was adequately addressed. 88% felt that Preconference organizers had utilized local resources well. Of the 232 people who attended the Preconference, 51 were first-time attendees.

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Transitions

Special Collections librarian at the Central Library of the Glendale (CA) Public Library, **Barbara Jane Robinson Boyd**, has died at the age of 75. **Randall Burkett** is now African-American Bibliographer in the Special Collections Department at Emory University. **Cecil K. Byrd**, professor and librarian emeritus at the Lilly Library, died in April, 1997. **Michael Cloonan** is Chair of the Dept. of Library and Information Science, UCLA. At Bowling Green State University Library, **Patricia Falk** has joined the staff as special collections cataloger. **George Talbot Goodspeed**, bookseller, died this past spring. **Stacy B. Gould** is assistant university archivist, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA. **Nancy Hadley** is Warren E. Burger archivist, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA. **F. Gerald Ham**, retired state archivist and head of the Archives Division at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, is the recipient of the 1997 Distinguished Service Award of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). **Roslyn Holdzkom** has been appointed university archivist at the University of Washington, Seattle. **Eric Holzenberg** has been named librarian at the Grolier Club, New York. At the Central Library of the Free Library of Philadelphia, **William Lang** was appointed head of the rare book department. **Gary A. LaValley** is now the archivist at the U.S. Naval Academy's Nimitz Library, Annapolis, MD. **Russell Martin III** is Curator of Newspapers and Periodicals at the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA. **Michael North** is now Cataloger at the Grolier Club in New York. **Lorraine Perrotta** has been appointed

Acquisitions Librarian at the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. **Henry Raine** is Project Director for Cataloging and Archival Description for the New-York Historical Society Library Collections. Southwest Missouri State University has appointed **David E. Richards** as head of special collections and archives. **Elizabeth A. Robinson** has been appointed principal rare book cataloger at the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. **Daniel Slive** is now Coordinator of Reader and Bibliographic Services in the John Carter Brown Library, Providence, RI. **Suzy Taraba** is now University Archivist at Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT. **William E. Tydeman** is the new associate director of libraries for the Southwest/Special Collections at Texas Tech University Libraries, Lubbock. **Tyler Walters** is head of Special Collections at Iowa State University, Ames.

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