

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

Spring 2005, Number 42

From the Chair

The title of this year's Preconference, "Bridging the Gap," and its symbol, St. Louis's famous Eads Bridge, invite a general meditation on bridges, both physical and metaphoric, and on the various roles they play in our lives. I'd wager that physical bridges are of daily importance for most of us, even if they are often ignored. For me—living down-river in Baton Rouge, Louisiana—the most significant physical bridge is one that spans the Mississippi, heading west. It's a lovely sight lit up at night, topographically the highest point in East Baton Rouge Parish, and a triumph of engineering. Though I seldom cross the bridge, it's an essential part of my life, and Baton Rouge would not have survived into the 21st century without it.

These days, as chair of RBMS, I'm more likely to be thinking about metaphorical bridges than physical ones—bridges that are just as essential as that bridge across the Mississippi. Chief among them is the bridge of education that we need to construct so that the collections that we build and care for—as well as the institutions that house them—will continue to thrive in the future. There is a problematic rift between the growing multiplicity of educational roles assigned to special collections librarians and the shrinking opportunities for education available to prepare us for those roles, as Eric Holzenberg, chair of this year's Preconference Program Planning Committee, has observed. We hope to lay some new foundations for bridge building into the future by focusing our attention on the nature and scope of that rift in St. Louis.

Another contributor to RBMS's array of bridge-building tools is the new Task Force on Core Competencies for Special Collections Librarianship. Chaired by Kathryn Beam, the Task Force will meet formally for the first time at Annual in Chicago to tackle its assignment to draft a document on core competencies for our profession. With our upcoming Preconference and the launch of this Task Force, RBMS joins a conversation already well under way among members of the ARL Special Collections Task Force.

In addition, RBMS members are using other means to span the education gap. As Ellen Ellickson reported at Midwinter, the mentoring program was greeted with enthusiasm, with fifteen pairs of participants matched in less than a month. Thanks to support from ACRL, we will be able offer eight scholarships for new attendees to this year's Preconference. And we continue to find ways—programming, scholarships, direct mail, and personal contacts—to span the "diversity gap" and bring members of under-represented groups into our organization.

In these areas, RBMS can lead, but personal effort and commitment will make our organizational effort succeed or fail. So when someone asks you to mentor, donate to the scholarship fund, or make a presentation to students in an ethnic studies program, think about your work and your collections and say "yes."

A final thought on bridges: built in 1874, the Eads Bridge lapsed into disrepair and was closed in 1991, no longer safe to traverse. After more than a decade of renovation at a cost of \$35 million, it reopened on Independence Day, 2003. Our professional bridges are not yet all closed for repairs. Let's keep them open. See you in St. Louis!

—Elaine Smyth

2005 RBMS Preconference

How to educate ourselves in order to educate others—that, in a nutshell, is the theme of the 46th Annual Preconference, to be held June 21-24 in St. Louis. "Bridging the Gap: Education and Special Collections" will explore a crucially important issue in our profession: the rift between the growing variety of educational roles played by special collections librarians—as teachers, advocates, interpreters, impresarios—and the shrinking opportunities for formal training and continuing education available to prepare special collections librarians for these roles.

Leading by example, the Preconference will offer all-day workshops as continuing education opportunities for participants. The roster of plenary speakers includes voices from the United States and abroad, scholars and library professionals, teachers and students. Illustrating the major Preconference themes, seminars will cover such topics as: "Preservation Education for Special Collections Librarians," "Current Trends in Fellowships," and "Redefining Rare, or, What's so Special about *that* Collection?" Short paper sessions will present thought-pieces and case-studies on exhibitions, the use of primary source materials in a classroom setting, and library outreach initiatives.

St. Louis has never before hosted a Preconference, and local institutions are eager to share their treasures with RBMS participants. Tour options include free visits to local special collections, as well as a number of paid outings to institutions such as the new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. The conference will be based at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis, in the former St. Louis Union Station. This beautifully restored national landmark is convenient to the Gateway Arch and Laclede's Landing, and it overlooks the historic 1874 Eads Bridge, the first bridge to span the Mississippi at St. Louis, and a symbol of this year's Preconference. Wednesday's events will take place at Washington University, courtesy of Anne Posega, head of Special Collections, who also heads this year's particularly energetic and enthusiastic local arrangements team.

Scholarships are available to first-time attendees who are RBMS members. For more information, see the Preconference website: <http://library.wustl.edu/units/spec/rbms/index.html>.

RBMS Annual Conference Meeting Schedule Chicago: June 24-27, 2005

FRIDAY, JUNE 24

8:00-10:00 pm

Bibliographic Standards, Thesaurus Subcommittee

SATURDAY, JUNE 25

8:30-11:00 am

Membership and Professional Development

8:30 am-12:30 pm

Bibliographic Standards
Exhibition Awards

9:30-11:30 am

2006 Preconference Program Planning

9:30 am-12:30 pm

Security

11:30 am-12:30 pm

2005 Conference Program Planning (wrap-up)
2005 Preconference Program Planning (wrap-up)
Nominating (closed)

1:30-3:30 pm

2006 Conference Program Planning
Budget and Development
Collection Development Discussion Group
Diversity Action Plan Implementation Task Force
Publications
Seminars

3:30-5:30 pm

Task Force on Core Competencies in Special
Collections Librarianship

5:00-7:00 pm

Public Hearing on *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare
Materials (Books)*

SUNDAY, JUNE 26

8:30-11:00 am

Conference Development
Task Force on the Revision of the *Joint Statement
on Access to Original Research Materials*

9:30-11:00 am

Curators and Conservators Discussion Group
Manuscripts and Other Formats Discussion Group

9:30 am-11:30 am

Joint Meeting of Public Services Discussion Group
& MARC for Special Collections Discussion Group
Task Force on the Revision of the *Guidelines on the
Selection of General Collection Materials for
Transfer to Special Collections*

1:30-3:30 pm

Conference Program & Exhibition Awards Presentation

4:00-5:00 pm

Information Exchange

MONDAY, JUNE 27

8:30 am-12:00 pm

Executive Committee

This is the schedule RBMS has requested.
Be sure to check the final conference schedule
for any changes.

2005 Annual Conference Program

The RBMS Annual Conference Program at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago will be held on Saturday, June 25th. The program, "Collecting World Cultures: African, Asian, Caribbean, and Native American Materials in Chicago Institutions," will address questions of cultural appropriation, opportunities for multi-faceted use by native communities, the difficulties presented by linguistic diversity, and collection management challenges.

Speakers include Nancy R. Cirillo, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature, University of Illinois at Chicago; David L. Easterbrook, George & Mary LeCron Foster Curator, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University;

Brian Hosmer, Director, D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian History, CIC American Indian Studies Consortium, Newberry Library; Nancy R. John, Assistant University Librarian, University of Illinois at Chicago; and James Nye, Bibliographer for Southern Asia, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago.

The RBMS program is co-sponsored by the African, Asian, and Middle East Section (AAMES) and the Literatures in English Section (LES) of ACRL and the American Indian Library Association. For more information, contact Program chair Mary Lacy at mlac@loc.gov.

Committee News

Bibliographic Standards

The Delta version of *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Books)*, or DCRM(B), has been generating lively controversy, and there will be a public hearing on the Epsilon version of the document at the Annual Conference. Anyone wishing to participate in the online discussion of DCRM(B) should contact the Committee chair, Deborah J. Leslie, at djleslie@folger.edu. The list is moderated, and self-subscriptions are not permitted.

The thesaurus subcommittee, under the editorship of Beth Russell, is closing in on the selection of thesaurus software. Once the software is purchased, loaded, and the thesauri converted, they will be made available on the web with searching, indexing, and display suitable for thesauri.

The Joint ALCTS/ACRL Task Force on Early Printed Materials is turning its attention to the recently distributed draft of Part 1 of AACR3. (Acronym-haters: the official working title really is "AACR3"). The job of the Task Force is to make sure that there is no essential conflict between its rules and DCRM, and a great deal of impassioned discussion is ongoing under the chairmanship of Robert Maxwell.

Bibliographic Standards is sponsoring a full-day workshop at the 2005 Preconference on *Descriptive Cataloging of Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance, and Early Modern Manuscripts* (AMREMM), taught by Gregory Pass, Jennifer MacDonald, and Susan L'Engle. We are also sponsoring a seminar on "Digital Initiatives and their Impact on Cataloging Departments," moderated by BSC member Ann Copeland and featuring presentations by Nicole Bouché and Genie Guerard.

Our meetings at ALA are always open, and visitors are encouraged to attend and participate.

Budget and Development

In Boston, the Committee reviewed both the budget for the New Haven Preconference, with a view to reconciling discrepancies with ACLR, and the preliminary budget for the upcoming St. Louis Preconference. We will explore means to sustain and enhance the Preconference scholarship program. The issue of Preconference fund-raising was also discussed at length, with a view to the possibility of establishing some continuity in the fund-raising process, along with some more effective means of "showcasing" book dealers who support the Preconference. It was suggested that a meeting between RBMS and ABAA reps take place to discuss this topic during the San Francisco Book Fair.

Conference Development

Planning for future Preconferences dominated our proceedings at the Midwinter Meeting. Eric Holzenberg, Program chair, and Anne Posega, Local Arrangements chair of the upcoming St. Louis Preconference, outlined the workshops. Christian DuPont will chair the program at the 2006 Preconference in Austin, which will examine the relationship between libraries and museums. Rich Oram and Cathy Henderson have already arranged some entertaining and

stimulating local events. Application for an \$85,000 grant to support the Preconference has been submitted to the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The Committee reaffirmed its e-mail recommendation to the RBMS Executive Committee about taking an agenda item to the ACRL Board of Directors to accept the proposal by Johns Hopkins University Libraries to host the 2007 Preconference in Baltimore. Details on the program and local arrangements will be forthcoming at the Annual Meeting in Chicago.

Proposals are being solicited for the 2008 Preconference, which will precede the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim. The 2009 event will be the 50th RBMS Preconference. ALA Annual will again be in Chicago, and potential hosts for this anniversary Preconference are urged to submit proposals.

A roundtable discussion topic has been submitted for the April ARCRL National Conference in Minneapolis: "Hiring a Special Collections Librarian: The Skills, Qualifications and Challenges of Recruitment," which will appeal to librarians not already involved in special collections.

Core Competencies in Special Collections Librarianship

The Task Force on Core Competencies in Special Collections Librarianship began working after the Midwinter Meeting. The members are: Kathryn Beam (chair), Mark Dimunation, Jackie Dooley, Daniel Slive, and Hjordis Halvorson (as liaison with the Membership and Professional Development Committee). Our work to date has included: reaching consensus on what core competencies *are* (especially since special collections librarians work with such a wide variety of materials), developing a working bibliography of resources, organizing and prioritizing sets of knowledge and skills, establishing a procedure for generating feedback, and determining a timeline for our work. A preliminary report will be available at this year's Annual Conference. A final report is expected for the 2006 Annual Conference.

Curators and Conservators

At our meeting in Boston, we and the ALCTS-PARS Physical Quality and Treatment Discussion Group asked Alan Puglia, conservator for Houghton Library Collections in the Weissman Preservation Center at Harvard, to discuss the creation and management of their "Quick Repair" program. Forty-one people attended the interesting presentation and discussion that followed. The program was developed to address a variety of conservation needs in the Houghton Library, including a reduction in the number of books set aside for treatment in the "book hospital." It focuses on special collection items that can be repaired in an hour or less on-site with limited space and equipment. Prior to the work day, Puglia selects appropriate repairs from items with outstanding treatment requests. In general, he chooses books with sound structures that do not have compound problems (e.g. a book with torn pages *and* a loose board that *also* needs dry cleaning). Developing selection criteria is an ongoing process, but also the most important aspect of the "Quick Repair" program. Puglia also relies on curatorial input to define goals and repair expectations. (cont. on p. 4)

Several conservators from the Weissman Preservation Center participate in the repair session one day each month. Participating conservators and technicians bring their own tools and supplies with them, since the conservation lab is not housed within Houghton Library. The majority of treatments fall under the following categories: dry cleaning, paper repair and hinge-ins, corner repair, leather consolidation, inner hinge repair, simple sewing, and board attachment. Puglia returns to the library the day after the repair session to perform quality control on the repairs.

One of the most innovative parts of this program has been development of a solvent-soluble repair tissue by Puglia and Priscilla Anderson, who developed this tissue specifically for these sessions. More information on the tissue can be found in "Solvent-Set Book Repair Tissue," *American Institute for Conservation Book and Paper Group Annual 22* (2003). All repairs are held to conservation standards, including reversibility, stability, durability, and aesthetic considerations. Puglia works closely with the curators of each collection to ensure that their needs and priorities are being met and to keep them informed of the progress that conservators are making on their collections. In three and a-half years, they have held thirty-nine "Quick Repair" sessions and repaired 1,015 books.

Much discussion followed the presentation regarding repair techniques and strategies for presenting this information to our home institutions. We also discussed how curators, conservators, and preservation librarians may have to shift approaches and expectations when we consider the wide range of treatment possibilities available.

Diversity Action Plan Implementation Task Force

The Task Force has been working with the Publications Committee on a diversity insert for the RBMS brochure. We have also begun planning our first group of presentations at universities with high minority enrollment, to be given in San Antonio during ALA Midwinter, 2006. These presentations will promote special collections librarianship as a career choice. Two short articles by Task Force members appeared in the January, 2005 issue of *Versed*, the bulletin of the ALA Office for Diversity.

We encourage RBMS members to attend the 2005 Conference program in Chicago, "Collecting World Cultures: African, Asian, Caribbean, and Native American Materials in Chicago Institutions." Kudos to the Conference Planning Committee for organizing this program.

Exhibition Awards

The Committee met in closed session during the Midwinter Meeting in Boston to select the 2005 Katharine Kyes Leab & Daniel J. Leab *American Book Prices Current* Exhibition Award winners. There were forty-two entries in the four divisions of printed materials and twenty-five entries in the electronic exhibitions category. The following are the catalogs, brochures, and electronic exhibition selected for awards:

Winner, Division 1 (Expensive Catalogs): Mortimer Rare Book Room, Smith College, *Holding In, Holding On: Artist's Books by Martha A. Hall*, Martha Hall and Martin Antonetti.

Winner, Division 2 (Moderately Expensive Catalogs): The Huntington Library, Huntington Library Press, *Objects of American Art Education: Highlights from the Diana Korzenik Collection*, Diana Korzenik, with an introduction by Cathy Cherbosque.

Winner, Division 3 (Inexpensive Catalogs): The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto, *Commentary: An Exhibition of Artwork by Sylvia Ptak*, Sylvia Ptak and Kyo Maclear.

Winner, Division 4 (Brochures): Vassar College, *Uncle Tom's Cabin in Print: The Collection of Mary C. Schlosser*, Mary C. Schlosser, Ronald Patkus & Joyce Bickerstaff.

Winner, Division 5 (Electronic Exhibitions): The Center for Renaissance Studies at the Newberry Library, *Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend*, Clark Hulse, Karen Acklin & Michael Acklin, <http://www.newberry.org/elizabeth>

A full list of 2005 entries will be posted in April on the RBMS website. All printed catalogs and brochures submitted for the 2005 competition will be on display at the Preconference, and certificates will be given to the five winners at an awards ceremony at ALA Annual in Chicago.

Also at Midwinter, the RBMS Executive Committee approved the proposal of the Publications Committee to accept the EAC design for the "Leab Award Winner" graphic incorporating the RBMS logo. The design is the creation of past EAC member Christian Dupont.

Guidelines on the Selection of General Collection Materials for Transfer to Special Collections

The inaugural meeting of the Task Force to Review *Guidelines on the Selection of General Collection Materials for Transfer to Special Collections* (1999 revision) was convened by Charlotte B. Brown in Boston with twenty attendees. We reviewed the proposed timeline for completing the Task Force's work and the list of RBMS, ACRL, and ALA committees from which to solicit comment during the review process. We also discussed comments submitted prior to our meeting (responses to postings on the RBMS and Preservation and Reformatting/PARS listserves), and responded to the chair's request for additional members of the Task Force.

All are welcome to attend our next meeting at ALA Annual. Please note: there will be several opportunities to submit comments as the *Guidelines* are being revised over the next year. Finally, the chair thanks RBMS member Laura Micham for her advice and suggestions.

Loan of Special Collections Materials for Exhibition Task Force

At its meeting in Boston, the ACRL Board of Directors approved the revision of the *Guidelines for Borrowing and Lending Special Collections Materials for Exhibition*. The newly-approved *Guidelines* document is available at the RBMS website and it will also be available on the ACRL site soon. The RBMS Executive Committee discharged the Task Force at its Midwinter meeting.

Manuscripts and Other Formats

We did not meet at Midwinter due to the new discussion group schedule rotation. Our next meeting will be at ALA Annual in Chicago. Tara Wenger, who served ably as co-chair, has resigned, and a replacement is sought. RBMS members interested in serving should contact RBMS vice-chair Katherine Reagan at: kr33@cornell.edu.

MARC for Special Collections

Over thirty people attended our meeting in Boston. As always, the first agenda item was rare book and special collection cataloging news, including announcements of cataloging vacancies.

Bibliographic citations (510 MARC fields) was the first discussion topic on the agenda. We discussed when it was appropriate to make citations and when was it necessary to verify a citation found in a record. There was near unanimity that a bibliography should be cited in a catalog record if consulted. Most institutions have a list of "required" bibliographies and catalogs, such as the *English Short Title Catalog (ESTC)* or the *Bibliography of American Literature (BAL)*, which are always cited. Author or imprint bibliographies are sometimes cited routinely for specialized collections. There was some disagreement about when to verify a citation found in a catalog record. All agreed that this is necessary for records created through retrospective conversion. Most participants agreed that there was no reason to check citations in full-level records cataloged to current standards.

The second topic was the cataloging of ephemeral material. Once again, there was agreement that the level of cataloging depends on the institution, its priorities, and collection strengths. For example, one institution may create collection-level records for its private press ephemera, but a second institution specializing in private presses may choose to catalog the same material at the item level. One interesting observation was that pamphlets were sometimes considered ephemera in the past and often cataloged using collection-level records. Institutions are often going back and recataloging this material at the item level today.

Cataloging electronic periodicals for special collections was our third topic. Attendees agreed that this is happening more often than in the past but noted they can usually consult other catalogers at their institution for assistance. A related issue was concern about the permanence of such material, and whether a collection prints paper copies, which then may or may not be cataloged.

Our final topic dealt with the challenges facing special collection catalogers during renovation or construction projects. Several participants emphasized the importance of advance planning when faced with a construction project. Among issues to be addressed are security, transportation and storage of material, potential damage from water or construction dust, as well as access to reference material, curatorial staff, and cataloged or uncataloged materials.

Please join us at the Annual Conference in Chicago, where we will join the Public Services Discussion Group for a joint meeting. Topics for discussion will include: implications for accessing "hidden collections," communication about cataloging policies, and the challenges of local or in-house databases. Please send other ideas and comments to: edwin.schroeder@yale.edu.

Membership and Professional Development

The Committee rolled out the new Mentoring Program in early December, 2004, and it was greeted with great enthusiasm. We began with fifteen mentors, and many more came on board after the program began. As of early March, 2005, twenty-one matches between mentors and mentees had been made. The Committee also formed a subcommittee to look into issues of virtual committee membership as they relate to RBMS. The subcommittee plans to submit a draft report by June.

Nominations

The RBMS Nominating Committee, responsible for recruiting and nominating a slate of candidates for the elected offices of the section, is pleased to announce the following RBMS slate for the 2005 ACRL ballot:

Vice-Chair / Chair-Elect:

Henry F. Raine, New-York Historical Society
Edwin C. Schroeder, Yale University

Member at Large:

Charlotte B. Brown, UCLA
Laura Micham, Duke University

Secretary:

Richenda Brim, Getty Research Institute
Danette R. Pachtner, Duke University

The members of the Nominating Committee (Daniel J. Slive, chair, Christian Dupont, Claudia Funke) thank all of the candidates for agreeing to run for office and urge all RBMS members to vote in this election.

Public Services

The Discussion Group met at Midwinter with an overflow crowd of thirty-five people. As in past sessions, we talked about how we deal with new developments in technology, this time focusing on the technologies that readers themselves are bringing into our reading rooms. Increasingly, readers want to use digital cameras, handheld scanners, and cell phones, while traditional special collections practice would require that photography and copying be done by trained staff. As we discussed the common concerns and values governing these activities, we discovered that there is a range of practice in our libraries. Some special collections are developing new approaches: for example, some allow anyone to use a handheld scanner, some charge for the privilege and keep close records, others offer inexpensive staff-produced JPEGs.

We also gave attention to providing technology for persons with disabilities, such as visual impairment, which seems to be relatively undeveloped in special collections, in part because responsibility is borne by the parent institution in many cases. Some libraries have set up adaptive technology stations and insured that reading rooms are wheelchair accessible. High shelves and card catalogs continue to be a problem in many collections. No one had experience with video magnifiers for visually impaired readers.

(cont. on p. 6)

We also talked about which electronic reference and bibliographic databases and primary text databases are important for special collections work. With these resources proliferating, it's a challenge to learn about new resources and train staff to keep their searching skills current. Attendees shared information on their favorite databases and training strategies.

Other concerns raised were public services hours, handling reference correspondence in the larger context of a general reference system, and visits by the CIA to see a manuscript collection.

At our meeting in Chicago we will be joined by the MARC for Special Collections Discussion Group to discuss topics such as: the implications for "surfacing" hidden collections, communication about the catalog, and the challenges of local databases. The dialogue between catalogers and public service librarians promises to be lively.

Publications

The Committee is making progress on some important projects. The diversity insert is almost ready for final printing, with some details being worked out regarding layout and design. The electronic version of *Your Old Books* is also in the final stages of development and should be available soon. An updated print version is being developed too, and ACRL has been consulted about the steps needed to obtain funding and to proceed with printing; a new cover will be designed and added to the final version.

Negotiations are continuing with ACRL and ALA regarding the new RBMS website address. A version of the RBMS logo has been developed for Leab Award winners to add to their electronic and print publications, indicating they have won the award and in what year. A sample of the logo can be seen on the RBMS website.

Martha Lawler will be stepping down as chair after ALA Annual, at the end of her term. RBMS members interested in serving can contact RBMS vice-chair Katherine Reagan at: kr33@cornell.edu.

RBM

The Spring issue of *RBM* marks the inauguration of a closer relationship between the journal and the annual RBMS Preconference. While it has always been the intention of the editor to draw upon the Preconference for possible articles, no arrangement has existed up until this point. With this issue, the chair of the Preconference Program Committee assumes the role of guest editor, an arrangement that will hopefully continue into the future. In this instance, Mike Kelly served as guest editor, having worked with potential authors within the context of the 2004 Preconference held at Yale. This issue concentrates on the subject of repatriation. In addition, as part of a continuing emphasis on international developments in special collections, *RBM* includes an article from Hungary on the digitization of Renaissance manuscripts.

Security

The Committee continues to work on its proposed manual for rare book and manuscript library security concerns and procedures. In the past year, two more chapters have been drafted by committee

members, and we hope that the manuscript will be completed in another year.

Todd Fell has taken over the "Incidents of Theft" list from Alvan Bregman. The list—now with over a decade of theft reports—is a valuable resource for those interested in trends in the area and the careers of specific thieves. The Committee has also added two new links on the RBMS website to its lists of missing materials.

We will begin to explore development of a joint statement with other RBMS affinity groups concerning ways to identify and handle materials that may have been stolen at some point in the past. Although the RBMS Executive Committee demurred at its Boston meeting on establishment of a task force for that effort, it did conclude that the Committee could pursue the statement on its own.

Several members will be leaving the Committee after ALA Annual in Chicago. If you are interested in joining, please contact the chair, Everett Wilkie, at: ewilkie@ix.netcom.com.

Seminars

At our meeting in Boston, we worked to finalize plans for seminars to be offered at the St. Louis Preconference. The array of topics will provide something of interest to everyone, including: "Contemporary Issues and Initiatives Pertaining to Access in Special Collections," "Digital Reproductions: Authenticity, Cataloging, and the Impact of Initiatives on Cataloging Departments," "Going over to the Dark Side: Librarianship and the Book Trade," "Virtual St. Louis: a Digital Urban Archives," "Describing Archives: a Content Standard (DACs)," and "Digitizing Cultural Heritage: Academic Special Collections in Partnership with Native American Communities." (For more information, see Eric Holzenberg's 2005 preview or the Preconference website: <http://library.wustl.edu/units/spec/rbms/index.html>.)

In other committee business, Arvid Nelsen reported on the Seminars Presented Database. Seminar data going back to 1985 has now been entered. Posting the complete database in a searchable format on the RBMS website is still in the future. In the interim, Arvid will create reports from the database that can be posted easily.

At our June meeting in Chicago, the Committee will consider proposals for seminars to be presented at the 2006 RBMS Austin Preconference. Topics of interest to museum and archives professionals, as well as to special collections librarians, are particularly welcome. There is the possibility of funding support for non-ALA seminar presenters in 2006. (For further details on this aspect of the Preconference, contact Christian Dupont: cydupont@syr.edu.) The Committee invites you to submit proposals, with a submissions deadline of June 1. It is *not* necessary to be a member of the Seminars Committee to make a proposal. For information about what to include in a proposal, please see the form available on the RBMS website at: <http://www.rbms.nd.edu/committees/seminars/index.shtml>, or contact the chair, Elizabeth Johnson, at: johnson1@indiana.edu.

Chair's Report, 2003-2004

Thanks to the energy and commitment of both long-term members and enthusiastic newcomers, RBMS continued its tradition of vigorous activity in 2003-2004. The Security Committee posted an invaluable compilation of state laws concerning library theft on the RBMS website. In addition to continuing its work to finish the new *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials*, the Bibliographic Standards Committee formed a joint task force with ALCTS CC:DA (the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services, Cataloging & Classification Section, Cataloging: Description and Access Committee) to review the longstanding cataloging rules for early monographs. The Publications Committee formulated a policy concerning use and distribution of the Section logo, and also proposed the creation of a web editor position—with a two-year term and two assistant editors—to supersede the former webmaster position. All of these initiatives met with the Executive Committee's approval.

The Diversity Action Plan Implementation Task Force continued its good work for a second year in collaboration with several standing committees. Under its auspices, the Publications Committee drafted a diversity insert for the RBMS brochure, and the Membership & Professional Development Committee's Subcommittee on Preconference Scholarships began a new tradition of designating two of the annual scholarships for members of underrepresented ethnic or racial groups. The Task Force on *Guidelines for Interlibrary Loan of Rare and Unique Materials* revised the *Guidelines* and successfully shepherded them through the long approval process. The Section also added a Collection Development Discussion Group to its roster. Discussion group chairs worked out a clever rotation in which one discussion group will either sit out or hold a combined meeting with another group at each ALA conference, be it Midwinter or Annual. And after a stimulating discussion of ideas for restructuring the Information Exchange and Executive Committee meetings, the Section retained the existing structure, but initiated the taking of minutes at Information Exchange.

It is a pleasure to record the success of the 45th Annual RBMS Preconference, held at Yale University, on the theme "Ebb and Flow: The Migration of Collections to American Libraries." Plenary sessions and short papers explored such topics as: how books and manuscripts found their way to America, great American collectors as cultural plunderers and/or benefactors, the repatriation of cultural materials, and how digitization can "virtually repatriate" materials to countries where conditions are too volatile to allow for safe keeping of the originals. Seminars covered a wide variety of topics, including preservation, funding opportunities, the Text Encoding Initiative, exhibitions, and usability testing. Workshops on cataloging manuscript music and the technical examination of rare books, maps, and manuscripts rounded out the program, together with a wide range of tours that showcased the riches of Yale's libraries and the surrounding cultural resources. I would like to thank the Program, Local Arrangements, and Seminars Committees, the speakers, and the workshop presenters for their contributions to a richly stimulating three days. Particular thanks go to Program chair Mike Kelly and Local Arrangements chair Nicole Bouché, whose unflagging zeal and superb organization made this Preconference the enlightening, enjoyable, and well-attended event that it was.

Continuing our collective conversation on cultural heritage issues, the RBMS conference program at the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando featured a panel on "Documenting Cultural Communities in Florida." Speakers discussed the delicate issues involved in collecting materials from the African-American, gay and lesbian, and Cuban immigrant communities. Thanks to Lynda Claassen and her Conference Program Planning Committee for putting together this lively session.

In between these highlights, a good many other committees, task forces, discussion groups, liaisons, and RBMS booth-staffers at book fairs worked hard to make this another remarkably productive year for RBMS. It is an honor to be surrounded by people of so much energy, talent, and dedication. Congratulations and a tip of the hat to all!

—Margaret F. Nichols

Also of Note...

Rare Book School: New Courses

Rare Book School (RBS) now offers courses at four locations: Charlottesville (UVa), Baltimore (Walters Museum and Johns Hopkins), New York (Grolier Club), and Washington, DC (Freer/Sackler Gallery).

New and relatively new courses offered in RBS 2005 include:

- The History of European Handwriting (Nicolas Barker)
- Donors and Libraries (Susan M. Allen and Wm P. Barlow, Jr.)
- Seminar in Illustration Processes (Terry Belanger)
- Indian Manuscript Illustration, 1450-1800 (Daniel Ehnomb)
- The 15th Century Book in MS and Print (Paul Needham and William Noel; Baltimore)
- Japanese Illustrated Books, 1615-1868 (Ellis Tinios; Washington)

For more details on courses and schedule information, see the RBS website: <http://www.virginia.edu/oldbooks/>.

SHARP Conference: July 14th-17th

The thirteenth annual conference of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing (SHARP) will be hosted by Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Following the conference theme of "Navigating Texts and Contexts," speakers will address the importance of context in understanding texts. Joint events are planned with the Bibliographical Society of Canada/la Société bibliographique du Canada, which will meet in Halifax on July 12-13, 2005, and the History of the Book in Canada Project/le Projet histoire du livre et de l'imprimé au Canada. The Bibliographical Society of America (BSA) will also sponsor a panel. For more information, visit the SHARP 2005 website: <http://www.dal.ca/~sharp05/index.html>.

APHA Conference: September 22nd-23rd

The annual conference of the American Printing History Association (APHA) will take place in San Francisco at Mills College. Titled "[r]Evolution in Print: New Work in Printing History & Practice," the conference will combine academic papers with hands-on workshops and demonstrations that focus on the history, current status, and future of print. For more information, visit APHA's website: <http://www.printinghistory.org/htm/conference/index.htm>.

Transitions

Jeff Barton is now manager of the library at the Brooklyn Historical Society. **Randy Bixby** has been named the new manuscripts curator/archivist at Morris Library of Southern Illinois University. **Teresa Burk** is research services archivist in special collections and archives at Emory University's General Libraries. **Laurie Whitehill Chong** has been named special collections librarian/curator of artists' books at the Rhode Island School of Design. **Raquel Cogell** is librarian at the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. **Elaine K. Didier** has been named director of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum. **Julia Gardner** has been appointed reference/instruction librarian in the Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library. **Jennifer Gunter King** is now head of archives and special collections at Mount Holyoke College. **Richard J. Kuhta** has been named the first Eric Weinmann Librarian to the Folger Shakespeare Library. **Edward R. Kukla**, first head of the Special Collections Department at Minneapolis Public Library, has retired after eighteen years of service. **Gretchen Lagana**, special collections librarian and curator of the Jane Addams Hull House Collections at the Richard J. Daley Library of the University of Illinois at Chicago, has retired after over twenty-three years of service. **Megan Lewis** is now rare materials cataloger in the Rare Book, Manuscript and Special Collections Library at Duke University. **Michelle Light** is head of special collections technical services at the University of Washington. **Valerie Love** has been named archivist in special collections at the University of Memphis. **Jeffrey Makala** is now assistant librarian in rare books and special collections at the University of South Carolina. **Julie Mellby** is taking up the post of graphic arts librarian at Princeton. **Kate Moriarty** is now rare book catalog librarian at Saint Louis University. **David Pavelich** has been appointed refer-

ence/instruction librarian in the Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library. **Catherine L. Reinhardt** is the new modern and special materials cataloger at the Folger Shakespeare Library. **Elizabeth Russey** has been named manuscripts processing archivist in special collections and archives at Emory University's General Libraries. **Dan Santamaria** has been promoted to assistant university archivist for technical services at Princeton's Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library. **Nicolette Schneider** is now reference and access services librarian in the Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library. **Lynne M. Thomas** has been named head of rare books and special collections at Northern Illinois University. **Mary Ruth Townsend**, rare book librarian at the University of Michigan, has retired. **Anne C. Weller** has been promoted to curator of special collections in the Library of the Health Sciences at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

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