

Draft Minutes
RBMS Membership and Development Committee
ALA Annual Conference 2008
Anaheim, California
Hilton Anaheim, Palos Verdes B
Saturday, June 28 2008, 10:30 am- 12:00 pm

Members present: Ellen Ellickson, Yale University (chair); John Cullars, University of Illinois, Chicago; Donna Davey, New York University; Kathleen Burns, Yale University; Susan Odell Walker, Yale University; Diane Warren, Texas Tech University; Sarah Fass, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Laila Miletic-Vezjovic, University of Central Florida; Veronica Reyes-Escudero, University of Arizona.

Members absent: Stephanie Joseph; Susan Fagan

Guests: Jennifer Sheehan, University of North Texas; Deborah Whiteman, UCLA; Mark Danley, University of Memphis; Deborah Cribbs, St. Louis Mercantile Library; Heather Cole, Harvard University; Eva Guggemos, Yale University; Dennis Sears, University of Illinois, Chicago; Rebekah Irwin, Yale University; April Brewer, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Mattie Taormina, Stanford University; Michele Bigelow, Sony Studios; Rachel Leff.

1. Introductions, Motions and Announcements

Ellen Ellickson welcomed members and guests.

No changes were made to the Agenda.

The minutes from the midwinter meeting in Philadelphia were unanimously approved.

Ellen welcomed Donna Davey, NYU, as the new chair of the Membership & Development Committee.

2. Discussion of the New Members Orientation and Introduction to RBMS and the New Members Reception at the Los Angeles Preconference (June 24 2008)

Ellen Ellickson reported that her plan was to have RBMS committee chairs' pictures running on Powerpoint at the New Members Orientation but the outdoor venue (the terrace at the Luxe Hotel) was too bright for screen viewing. The next morning before the first plenary session, the PowerPoint was again supposed to have been shown but technical difficulties prevented more than one 5-minute loop from running. However "RBMS Headshots" will be running at Information Exchange on Sunday, June 29th.

RBMS Image Archive (Ellickson)

Ellickson also brought up the wider question of images, generally, for RBMS – specifically the creation of an online photographic archive that would contain photos of RBMS executive persons, committee chairs, speakers, social events, etc., both formal and informal. How might we do this? The ALA Communities and Flickr websites were

suggested as possibilities. Kathleen Burns proposed that M&PD consider starting a blog, as well, to both link to an RBMS Image Archive and create an additional portal to the programs and events under the M&PD umbrella; currently these are distributed both on the RBMS and individual preconference websites, as well as maintained as stand-alone web documents by committee members. Burns noted that we would need to get permission before putting people's pictures on the web. Attendees discussed whether it would be necessary to identify all persons in casual group snapshots. There was general agreement that whatever site we use should be password protected. Ellickson and Cullars felt that the M&PD would be a good place to start this photo archive and that we should get on board with it, although any plans should be run by the Executive Committee first so Ellen will bring it up at Exec on Monday morning.

New Members Orientation: general comments

Ellickson asked the group for feedback on the New Members Orientation. Some felt that the format (with numerous speakers, although not as many as formerly) was too lengthy. Guest Mark Danley (University of Memphis) noted that, as a new member, he found the atmosphere generally to be collegial and welcoming, and not as 'elitist' as he had been led to expect. M&PD members responded that 'elitist' is not the kind of organization we want to be. Ellickson encouraged those guests interested in being on the M&PD committee to email Donna Davey or herself.

3. Buddy Program (Reyes)

Veronica Reyes reported that the Buddy Program had twenty-five requests for buddies this year. These were matched up with nineteen volunteers. Six volunteers had two buddies to take on. Next year M&PD might put out a call for 'emergency buddies' to help with this situation. Ellickson and Reyes noted that the Buddy Program has been a valuable one; Reyes heard positive comments about it at the Los Angeles Preconference. Mark Danley contributed that he had benefited greatly from this year's program, having been paired with a rare books professional who is also a scholar in his area of study. Many commented on the value and popularity of the program. One person noted that it functions almost like a mentoring system.

Kathleen Burns suggested that some kind of assessment for the Buddy Program might be a good idea – is it, in fact, serving as a short-term mentoring program for some participants, for example? Assessment could help M&PD evaluate and improve the program.

A discussion of various buddy experiences followed, with attendees sharing both positive and negative experiences. Some had been paired with 'weak' buddies. Sarah Fass asked about the information sent out to prospective buddies re expectations. Reyes replied that everyone gets a relatively informal blurb; she tries to match people up according to interests. Ellickson suggested that the blurb should be made more specific. It was clear from the discussion, that people can have varied experiences, depending on the buddy's (i.e. the experienced professional) personality, drive, interest, etc. Cullars

observed that many of the best buddies are those who have been actively involved in RBMS for some time: these are people, who because of their jobs, outgoing personalities, and roles in RBMS, tend to have a lot to give in this regard.

Deborah Whiteman mentioned that there were some problems with people finding their buddies at the recent Preconference. Discussion followed and the group acknowledged that this can be challenging in a group of 400 people. With Pre-conferences getting larger, this could become even more of a problem. The following suggestions were made:

- i. The blurb sent out to buddies should be made more specific re expectations; there should be an exchange of cell phone numbers, for example. The committee agreed that email is not enough and doesn't always work, once people are in the conference setting.
- ii. Perhaps there should be designated times and places for buddies to meet. For example, we could ask buddies to come to the New Members informal reception. (This year's reception, at the Bel Air Bar & Grill was well-attended and a great success.) Danley noted that the social aspect of this should be stressed: we want people to contact one another, but don't want it to be too structured. Ellickson and Reyes thought that we could add tips to this effect in the blurb. All agreed that this should be a fun experience and that we want to keep the casual aspect.
- iii. Mention of the Buddy Program could be folded into M&PD's remarks at the New Members Orientation – i.e. If you haven't already contacted them, all buddies should meet at ...[name time and venue].

Reyes pointed out that she already does a lot of back and forth emailing – we need a template. She asked for help and Sarah Fass, Heather Cole and Deborah Cribbs volunteered to work with Reyes on this. Ellickson added that, as a next step, it would be nice to add an image component.

Last fall, Burns set up a Google doc with a timeline and instructions for organizing New Members' events at RBMS preconferences. Susan Fagan and Richenda Brim planned a successful event this year in Los Angeles. Burns asked for a M&PD committee member to organize the 2009 New Members' event in Charlottesville. Heather Cole volunteered.

4. Reports on the Diversity Committee and Scholarship Committee

Diversity Committee (Burns)

Kathleen Burns gave a report on the activities of the Diversity Committee. The Diversity Committee is finalizing an outreach toolkit. The Committee also sponsored a seminar at the 2008 Los Angeles Preconference on “Developing and Sustaining Collecting Relationships with Cultural Communities”, and has submitted another seminar for consideration, “Cross Cultural Competencies for Special Collections Staff” (tentative name). The Diversity Committee will be meeting on Sunday, June 29 at the Marriott Anaheim, and Burns encouraged others to attend. Burns announced that Veronica Reyes

and Athena Jackson will assume the co-chairmanship of the Committee from Anne Marie Lane and Fernando Pena.

RBMS Scholarship Committee (Burns)

Kathleen Burns will stay on as Chair of the M&PD Scholarship Committee. This was previously ad hoc, but has now been made an official committee. It consists of one member from the Diversity and Budget & Development Committees, as well as the Member at Large who serves as liaison with M&PD.

Members of the 2008 Scholarship Committee were: Fernando Pena (Budget), Veronica Reyes (Diversity), Kathleen Burns (M&PD), and Melissa Conway (Member at Large). There were 78 applications this year, with 22 recipients awarded a full, partial, or registration scholarship. The breakdown was: 2 Full Member, 9 Full Student, 5 Partial Full Members, 1 Partial Student, 1 Registration-only student, and 4 Registration-only Full Member awards. Five of the scholarships went to students from underrepresented backgrounds. Awardees were selected after a blind review process, and selected based on their interest/experience in special collections; and their interest and anticipated commitment to RBMS. Applicants from underrepresented communities were given preference. A total of \$12,015 was disbursed, with \$885 in donations from RBMS members. Other funding sources included a grant from the ACRL Action Plan and profits from the 2007 Preconference.

Next year's scholarship awards will likely include a "golden scholarship" campaign to subsidize the conference attendance of some of the Section's founders and early, now retired, members. Details and application information will be distributed in January 2009.

Ellen Ellickson announced that, in honor of RBMS section co-founder and past section chair Marjorie Wynne, Yale University has pledged \$2,000 in general attendance scholarship funding for three years beginning in 2009.

5. Mentoring Program (Burns)

Burns reported that she has contacted Teri Yoder, coordinator of SAA's mentoring program. SAA does not yet have a formal assessment for its program. Yoder would be happy to work with M&PD come up with an evaluation form that could be used for both programs. Until now, the evidence for the M&PD mentoring program's success has been mainly anecdotal. Burns noted that frequently people will sign up for the program because they are interested in jobs, and then tend to fade away.

Ellickson offered some statistics on the program: a total of 53 pairs have been matched since the program began in 2003. Over the past five years, the program has enjoyed varying levels of success. There was some discussion of ways to keep up the momentum in this program, as people come and go (i.e. interests, career paths, and the need for mentoring all change).

6. New to the Profession FAQ and List of Experts

FAQ form for RBMS website (Cole, Davey and Fagan)

Heather Cole, Donna Davey and Susan Fagan have come up with draft FAQs regarding a career in rare books. They have come up with about thirty questions covering education, job resources, skills, etc. This group would appreciate feedback about how the form should look. They will now be working on answers to the FAQs.

Ellickson brought up an important point to be included in the job FAQs: that those applying for jobs at large institutions need to answer *all* of the requirements in a particular job description – otherwise their applications will be weeded out by the institution's HR office before they ever get to a search committee.

Eva Guggemos suggested that the FAQs would work well in wiki format. Guggemos has her own wiki for a general library school audience. Ellickson asked whether she could work with Cole, Davey and Fagan on this. Cole noted that ALA has a wiki platform that could be used for RBMS. Arvid Nelsen is using this platform for a seminars wiki. Rebekah Irwin agreed that this could be easily done. The group will look into this possibility.

There was some discussion about how broad an audience the FAQ form should appeal to – i.e. those just entering on a library career or directors, academics, etc. Most felt that we should keep relatively focused; most importantly, things should be easily found online. We want to avoid the aggravation of multiple screens of information. This area could easily get very large. Cullars and Ellickson suggested the use of links/urls wherever possible, to obviate this problem.

List of Experts (Ellickson)

Ellickson and Cullars are working on a List of Experts to add to the 'new to the profession' section on the MPD web pages.

Ellickson noted that she has mentioned the FAQ and List of Experts to the Executive Committee. She asked members of MPD to keep working on this, and to keep conciseness in mind. We will discuss this further at Midwinter.

7. RBMS Presence in the ACRL Booth, Liaison reports, ACRL 101.

Letters to new members (Ellickson)

Ellickson reported that she typically volunteers an hour, during ALA, in the ACRL booth. Volunteers are given a FAQ and the experience is a very positive one. For those interested in ACRL, this is a worthwhile thing to do.

As chair of M&PD, Ellickson is liaison to two ACRL committees: the Professional Development Coordinating Committee and the Membership Advisory Committee. She has been unable to attend these meetings because they occur in the same time slot as, respectively, the RBMS M&PD meeting and RBMS Info Exchange.

Ellickson also reported that she attended ACRL 101 this morning. She represented our section and, along with representatives of other ACRL sections, answered questions and exchanged business cards.

Ellickson reported on sending monthly electronic letters of welcome to new RBMS members. Since Annual 2007, she has sent out 282 letters to new members.

8. Educational Opportunities Directory

Ellickson reported that she has done her yearly task in connection with the Educational Opportunities directory; that is, sending queries to directors of all the library schools listed in the directory as to whether any updates should be made to their entry. She has not yet had the RBMS Web team put up the changes but will do that after Annual. Walker pointed out that the Directory, as is, is mainly a list of library schools and felt there should be information here about other types of courses offered in the field. Rare Book School is included but other institutions also offer similar courses –for example, a summer course at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and another at University College London. Walker volunteered to put together a list of such course that could be added to the “Other Resources” section on the Educational Opportunities page.

Reyes suggested that we also add links to courses offered for archival students and professionals, such as the Western Archives Institute. She observed that archival educational opportunities are frequently of interest to heads of special collections, who need to know both rare books and archives.

9. M&PD sponsorship of round tables, seminars, papers for future Preconferences

Burns announced that the theme of the 2010 Preconference in Philadelphia will be collaboration. She proposed the idea of an M&PD seminar on collaborative online professional tools – such as wikis, social bookmarks, IM, etc. Ellickson thought it was an excellent idea for M&PD to sponsor a seminar on this topic.

10. Closing remarks

Preconference size

There was some general discussion about the fact that the RBMS Preconferences sell out so quickly. Danley felt that this discourages interest. Should ACRL increase the size of preconferences? Cullars responded that this was partly a space issue – i.e. how many people can we get into the plenaries? Enlarging registration would cut down on the number of cities/locations that we could use. Ellickson will bring this point up at the Executive meeting.

RBMS 2008 Preconference papers and talks

Guests Mattie Taorima and Rebekah Irwin suggested the idea of podcasts of Preconference presentations on the RBMS website. Or, could we sell the talks on cd? Ellickson noted that a number of the talks will likely become available on the web in the very near future. Cullars added that RBM will most likely publish the papers, as well.

The meeting adjourned at 12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Whiteman