

Minutes from Midwinter 2000 Publications Committee Meeting

RBMS Publications Committee

Minutes, ALA Midwinter Meeting, San Antonio, TX

Saturday, January 15, 2000, 2:00-4:00

Members present: Margaret Nichols (Chair), Lisa Browar (ex officio), Deborah Leslie, Marvin Taylor (ex officio), Bradley Westbrook
Members absent: Stephen Ferguson, Laura Fuderer, Priscilla Thomas, Everett Wilkie (ex officio)
Visitors: Daren Callahan, Claudia Funke, Dawn Mueller, Tim Murray, Henry Raine (recorder), Judy Harvey Sahak, Laura Stalker, Manon Theroux, Hugh Thompson, Rebecca Ziegler

1. Housekeeping; membership—Margaret Nichols Nichols asked if everyone had looked at their entry in the updated committee roster on the RBMS web site, and said to make sure that entries are correct. Any corrections should be sent to Stephen Ferguson. Nichols announced that Westbrook would be coming off of the committee following the 2000 Annual Conference. She announced that Abby Tallmer, Diana Smith, and Judy Harvey Sahak would be joining the committee as new members.

2. The future of the RBML Award (RBM Award)—Nichols Nichols announced that the RBMS Executive Committee had asked the Publications Committee to make a recommendation regarding the future of the RBML Award. The original purpose of the award, which was to encourage people to write articles for RBML, was discussed, but it was noted that those who have won the award in the past would probably have written their articles anyway. The issue of funding for the award was raised. Traditionally, the award has been funded by Christie's, but the funding is always uncertain. Tim Murray, chair of the RBML Award Committee, explained that the decision for the next award would take place at the 2001 Midwinter Meeting. He said that he would contact someone at Christie's about funding. He asked what other sources of funding might be available, and Stalker suggested contacting the RBMS Budget and Development Committee.

Taylor noted that the award seemed like a lot of effort for very little return, especially in the context of current changes with the journal. The title has changed to RBM, and the new co-editors are commissioning articles by sending out announcements about future issues on particular subjects, or approaching individuals directly with requests for articles. Taylor and Browar suggested discontinuing the RBML award, and said that this was the right time to do so. They noted that soliciting articles and then giving people an award for writing them might seem unethical. Someone also observed that the editor of American Archivist was surprised that the RBML award was as high as \$1,000, because awards for journal articles are usually much smaller. Stalker asked if an award had to have money attached to it.

Stephen Ferguson had suggested an award for graduate students to encourage study in the history of the book. Perhaps the award could be designated for best college essay, or as an RBMS fellowship in the history of the book. Taylor asked if Christie's would still be interested in funding the award if its purpose changed. Someone asked if

ABAA might be interested in funding the award. It was noted that the RBMS Executive Committee would have to decide whether or not to discontinue the RBML award, based on the recommendation from the Publications Committee. Westbrook made a motion to disassociate the award from RBM. The motion was seconded and approved. Stalker explained that since the motion was to detach the award from the publication, it would be necessary for the Executive Committee to formally end the RBML award, and then to appoint a task force to establish a new award. Murray suggested making the chair of the award committee an ex-officio member of the Publications Committee. It was noted that the RBMS brochure mentions the RBML award, and that this text needed to be corrected.

3. RBM (formerly RBML)ÐLisa Browar/Marvin Taylor Browar and Taylor, the co-editors of the journal RBM, reported on the meeting of the Board earlier that morning. They announced the change in the journal's name from "Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship" to "RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage." They announced their plans for the first issue of the new journal, and said that between 250 and 300 letters had been sent to various individuals requesting comments on the topic of "What's so special about special collections?" Responses had been discussed at the Editorial Board meeting that morning, and the Board had selected submissions for the first issue of RBM.

Taylor and Browar announced that the fall 2000 issue of RBM would focus on the topic of cultural heritage, and would include within its scope historical societies, museums, private archives, and other institutions. They said that the final issue of RBML had just been mailed out, and that they were now looking for a complete redesign of the journal, broadening the audience to book dealers, collectors, and other constituencies. Someone asked if there would be a place in the new journal for news articles and announcements. Taylor and Browar explained that these would be more appropriate for the RBMS Newsletter or for the RBMS web site. They announced a new feature, which will be exit interviews with people retiring from the profession. The first of these will be an interview of Sandy Mason by Nora Quinlan. Browar and Taylor also announced that the journal would no longer include book reviews, because these are often so out of date. They may instead publish a list of recently received titles. Taylor said he would send notice to people who submit review copies of their books that book reviews will no longer be included. Browar and Taylor announced possible topics for future issues, including material culture, legal issues for special collections, and moving images and recorded sound. They said that the new RBM Editorial Board is a dynamic group with lots of great ideas for interesting issues.

4. NewsletterÐDaren Callahan/Manon Theroux In the absence of RBMS Newsletter editor Priscilla Thomas, assistant editor Theroux commented on the recent discussion on the RBMS list concerning the quality of the latest issue of the Newsletter. She asked if everyone present had received the latest newsletter. Some reported that they had never gotten it, or had gotten it late, and that this seemed to be an ongoing problem. Hugh Thompson, ACRL Director of Publications, said that he had not received any complaints about non-delivery, and asked that people let him know directly when they do not receive their newsletter. He explained that delays in delivery may have been related to bulk mailing, which is a low priority type of mail, although it sometimes has the same delivery time as first class mail. He said that bulk mailing saves

money, and he explained that ACRL had recently contracted with a new printer located in northern Wisconsin to try to expedite delivery. The bulk mail now goes through Minneapolis. Thomson will consider going back to the original printer if the problems persist. He said that anyone not receiving the Newsletter should contact him, and he will send them a copy first class.

Regarding the recent discussion on the RBMS list concerning the quality of the Newsletter, Thompson reiterated that ACRL had bid for a new printer in order to expedite delivery, and not with the intention of reducing the quality of the Newsletter. The bid was for a heavier grade of paper, but with a poorer finish. The price was lower, so it seemed like a good reason to go with this particular printer. Thompson stated his willingness to address any problems with the Newsletter, but he reiterated that he needs to hear from people directly. Stalker said that she thought the reaction on the RBMS list concerning the latest issue of the Newsletter was very much exaggerated, and that this negative reaction did not reflect the feelings of the entire membership of RBMS. Others agreed with her. Thompson reiterated that problems and complaints need to be addressed through the proper channels at ACRL. He said that Dawn Mueller is now in charge of design. He mentioned that a meeting of ACRL newsletter editors used to take place regularly, and would be taking place again at this conference, and that he would use this as an opportunity to bring up the section's concerns. He mentioned that no other section had complained about the quality of their newsletter. Those present emphasized the need for communication on the part of ACRL when making changes such as selecting a new printer for the section newsletter.

5. RBMS Brochure—Nichols/Brad Westbrook Westbrook and Nichols handed out mock-ups of designs for a new RBMS brochure, along with cost estimates from various designers. The estimates varied widely. Nichols and Westbrook explained that the design of a Section logo and the new brochure were two separate projects, but that the logo could be included in the new brochure. Thompson stated that every section of ACRL is allowed to produce a new brochure every few years, depending on the budget. Nichols said she was thinking of a 4-panel brochure similar to the old one, which could easily be mailed out. She said she would prefer to have a color brochure. Taylor suggested a perforated mail tab for mailing, which would keep brochures from being damaged in the mail, and could be omitted from some of the brochures if they were placed on tables at conferences.

Discussion followed about the quality of the paper, and the desirability of coated or uncoated paper. It was observed that the new version of the brochure included more text, and that there was only one panel available for graphics. Taylor suggested that the empty panel could be designed as a tear-off for people to mail to ALA if they wanted to join RBMS. Thompson reminded the committee that one had to join ALA and ACRL in order to join RBMS. He suggested that it would be useful to mention in the brochure that RBMS membership did not cost anything in addition to ALA and ACRL membership. Stalker suggested that the brochure could include a tear-off that people could send to ACRL to receive a packet of membership information. The form would go to ACRL and be forwarded to ALA. The committee thought that this was a good idea.

Browar mentioned the RBMS Preconference brochure and the fee structure

for registration at the Preconference, and asked what the mechanism was for making sure that people who sign up for the Preconference at the member rate are in fact members of ACRL/RBMS. She was told that there was no such mechanism. Nichols asked if any other changes were needed in the brochure text besides adding specifics about joining RBMS. Taylor asked that "RBML" be changed to "RBM" to reflect the section journal's new title. Leslie objected to the phrase "RBMS has become an internationally prominent organization," which she said sounded like a non-sequitur. Nichols suggested switching the sentence around to read "RBMS has become an internationally prominent organization with a membership that has grown from 300 in the early 1960s to nearly 2,000 by 1999." Taylor asked if anyone cared that the membership had grown from 300 to nearly 2,000; he suggested changing the sentence to "With a membership of nearly 2,000, RBMS has become an internationally prominent organization." Nichols suggested taking out the numbers and leaving the part about "RBMS has become an internationally prominent organization." Stalker suggested prefacing this with "Since its foundation in the 1950s ..." Leslie asked if RBMS really was internationally prominent, and was reminded that there had been participation and attendance at preconferences from Great Britain, Australia, and Japan. Taylor suggested that this sentence was perhaps unnecessary since the opening paragraph discussed the international prominence of RBMS.

A suggestion was made that, as an alternative to this sentence, the membership could be characterized in greater detail, by explaining that it includes librarians and book dealers, representing different types of institutions such as libraries, historical societies, museums, and businesses.

Discussion followed about the choice of a designer for the brochure, and Nichols asked if there was enough information to make a decision about a designer. Estimates had been received from three designers, StudioGraphik, Communique, and Lunamedia. Nichols handed out a table comparing cost estimates from the three designers. Leslie wondered why the quote from Lunamedia was so much lower than the others. Nichols mentioned that she had been pleased with the work Lunamedia had done for an exhibition brochure. However, Taylor said he was not happy with the quality of the exhibition brochure, which looked like it had been done on an IBM rather than a Macintosh.

Westbrook mentioned the work done for his institution by StudioGraphik. He said the work was of stunning quality, but very expensive. Nichols said that one possibility to lower the cost might be to use one designer for the RBMS logo, and another designer for the RBMS brochure. Leslie asked if there were any sense of how much money was available for this project. Thompson said that he could not recall off-hand, and would have to look at the budget.

Leslie noted that it might be desirable to cut down on the number of brochures produced, as a way of reducing the cost. She mentioned that 2000 brochures were printed in 1994, and that there were still 900 on hand. Browar said that the cost related more to the design than to the quantity of brochures printed. She stressed that there was no substitute for good, strong graphic design, and suggested that that was where the money should be spent. Nichols asked if 1000 brochures would be enough, and the committee said that it depended on the distribution. The committee agreed that the number could be left at 2000 if there was

enough money. Nichols said she would find out how much funding there was, and asked if the committee wanted to select Leah Roschke at StudioGraphik as the designer if there was enough money. Westbrook said that there was still a lot of work to do on the design. He asked if there was a preference for one color or two color printing, since there is only a \$100 difference. Someone suggested using recycled content paper. Taylor said acid-free paper would be unnecessary, since this is a disposable publication. Nichols asked Westbrook to continue working with Leah Roschke, and asked for a volunteer to help him. Stalker volunteered. Westbrook asked for a production time line. Nichols suggested April, in time for the New York book fair.

6. RBMS logo¶Nichols Discussion turned to the design of an RBMS logo. It was noted that this needed to be something that looked good on everything, and in a variety of sizes. Someone noted that the Exhibition Catalog Award Committee was planning to use the logo to put on its winning catalogs. Funke suggested that RBMS should really spend the money on the logo rather than the brochure. Stalker suggested something simple and dignified for the logo, that it needed to be done carefully, and that the April book fair should not be pushing this project along. She said that there were brochures left over to hand out at the book fair, and that a single sheet of information about the section could always be printed as a stopgap measure until the new brochure was ready. Taylor suggested getting the new design done by April 1, sending it as a GIF file to the committee, giving them a few days to look at it, and then sending it to the Executive Committee with a recommendation. Westbrook and Stalker agreed that they would pursue the design of the brochure and the logo. Nichols said she would try to find out about the approval process for the logo at the Executive Committee meeting.

7. RBMS booth at book fairs¶Laura Stalker Stalker announced plans for an RBMS booth at the Los Angeles Antiquarian Book Fair, February 13-14. She said that the booth would be highly visible since it would be located right outside the main entrance of the book fair, opposite the ABAA booth. She mentioned that money was available for an RBMS banner for the booth, since only \$11.00 had been spent so far out of the initiative award for this project. She said that she had been collecting informational materials to distribute at the booth, including flyers and handouts relating to RBMS and ACRL, information about SHARP, APHA, Rare Book School, SAA, BSA and other organizations, and sample issues of RBML. Stalker said that there were still about 900 RBMS brochures remaining, and that these would be updated with a small label giving the RBMS web address and handed out at the book fair. Browar said that RBML subscription flyers were no longer valid, however, since they did not reflect the journal's title change to RBM. Stalker urged RBMS committees to send her any other publications or information which they would like to have included in the booth. Stalker said that she had received a mailing list of all RBMS members on the West Coast, and would be sending an announcement on the RBMS list asking for volunteers to staff the booth.

8. Web site¶Steve Ferguson In the absence of RBMS webmaster Steve Ferguson, there was no report on the RBMS web site. Nichols reported that an announcement would be made on the RBMS listserv requesting a volunteer to be the new RBMS webmaster.

9. RBMS-L--Everett Wilkie In the absence of listserv moderator Everett

Wilkie, there was no report on RBMS-L.

10. 1998 Preconference proceedings volume—Stalker Stalker announced that she was continuing work on the 1998 Preconference proceedings, and that the volume was nearing publication. Nichols offered the committee's help, if needed.

11. New business Thompson mentioned that any complaints from people having trouble subscribing to RBM (formerly RBML) should be referred to him. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.