

RBMS Security Committee
ALA Midwinter Meeting, 2011

MINUTES

January 8, 2011
Hilton Bayfront
San Diego, California

Members and incoming members present: Alvan Bregman (Chair), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Richard Oram, HRRC, University of Texas, Austin; JoEllen Dickie, Newberry Library; Michael Inman, New York Public Library; William T. La Moy, Syracuse University; Isaac Gewirtz, New York Public Library (Secretary pro tem)

Members absent (and excused): Nicolette A. Dobrowski, Syracuse University; Joel Kovarsky, The Prime Meridian; Lee Bagby Viverette, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; Susan M. Allen, The Getty Research Institute (ex-officio).

Visitors: Fernando Peña, Grolier Club; Mark Greenberg, University of South Florida; Katie Hennigsen, University of Kentucky; Lois Fischer Black, Lehigh University; Catherine Uecker, University of Chicago; Martha Conway, University of Michigan; Ellen Cordes, Horace Walpole Library, Yale University.

I. Call to order:

Alvan Bregman (Chair) called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

II. Approval of minutes:

The minutes of the last meeting (ALA Annual Conference, Washington, June 26, 2010) were approved, amended to reflect the presence of Ellen Cordes as a guest.

III. Chair's Report:

The Chair reported on the following:

1. It is hoped that the Committee's *Security Manual* will be published by ALA within the next 12 months. Richard Oram asked if a title had been chosen and the Chair replied in that it had not.
2. The Exlibris electronic discussion group has been the forum for topics which elicited input from Security Committee members. Among these was the case of theft of archival material by an employee, former book dealer Denning McTague. When a lenient attitude toward the case was expressed by some Exlibris respondents the Chair sent a reminder to the list about relevant sections of the ACRL/RBMS Guidelines Regarding Security and Theft in Special Collections.

Rich Oram, past Chair of the Security Committee, had also written to Exlibris in support

of Ken Sanders' post about the need for dealers to document the identity of sellers of high-end material. Discussion of this issue was continued later in the meeting, under the topic of "Interaction with Local Dealers".

IV. Incidents of Thefts Guidelines:

The Committee's internal guidelines on "Incidents of Thefts" were the subject of review. The Chair asked for a volunteer to succeed Jo Ellen Dickey in compiling the Incidents of Theft report. For the benefit of would-be volunteers, Jo Ellen summarized the duties involved, noting that the "Incidents" compiler may be contacted via the RBMS website. The compiler particularly reviews the following sources for reports on incidents of theft: Exlibris, Google Alert, the Museum Security Network, as well as other venues. Undocumented communications of immediate concern are passed along to Susan Allen for possible inclusion in the Library Security Officers List. The compiler also posted additions to the "Listings of Lost and Stolen Materials" on the Committee's web page.

The Chair observed that a revision of the 2004 Guidelines had been drafted by Everett Wilkie and Alvan Bregman, and both documents were circulated to the Committee for discussion. Rich Oram suggested that personal names not appear in the Guidelines, and the Chair agreed to make the appropriate emendation.

Jo Ellen Dickey affirmed that she could continue in her post until June. The Chair then asked her to review the Guidelines and post the proposed changes on ALA Connect for discussion by committee members. For this procedure to be feasible, and to facilitate discussion of other issues between meetings, the Chair reminded each committee member to establish an account on ALA Connect.

Interacting with Local Booksellers regarding stolen materials:

The Chair noted that Travis McDade had given a talk at the ALA Program, which included reference to his discovery of books belonging to the University of Illinois on the shelves of a local bookseller. The books, which were clearly marked with the University's stamps, had been taken from the general collection, but dated from the 18th century and so would have been destined for transfer to the rare book collection. Committee members then discussed the practical matter of attempting to determine if a book was legitimately de-accessioned (not all institutions stamp "Withdrawn" or its equivalent on de-accessioned books), as well as how librarians might best approach booksellers to recover stolen books from their shelves. Rich Oram stressed the importance of not being confrontational and the need to establish a formal liaison with ABAA. This might not require attendance by representatives of the Security Committee and ABAA at each others' meetings, but could be conducted via electronic means or telephone. He said that he found Susan Benne, the Executive Director of ABAA to be very supportive of pursuing a more cooperative relationship, perhaps involving links from the ABAA website to MissingMaterials.org.

VI. Missing/Stolen Book Databases:

The Chair noted that the University of Illinois recently posted 81 items on MissingMaterials.org. He said that he would contact ABAA in an attempt to enhance cooperation between its members and the special collections community.

VII. State Laws Project:

The Chair said that he would review the status of this project with committee members on-line.

VIII. Proactive roles for the Security Committee:

The Committee discussed possible areas where it might take a proactive role. One suggestion involved identifying best practice for conducting inventories in special collections. Difficulties included working with a combination of card-based and electronic records, errors in records, complicated shelving systems, etc. Practices at various institutions were compared: one of the most thorough (at HRHRC) involved conducting an inventory for one week each year, assigning 60-70 staff members and student workers/volunteers to two-hour shifts. Using this method, the entire library's holdings are thereby inventoried every fourteen years.

Isaac Gewirtz asked if the committee could explore strategies for bringing security issues to the attention to the highest levels of ACRL, including library directors, so that collections security becomes an important priority for them in the administration of their libraries. Fernando Peña suggested that a first step in this process could be a specific proposal from RBMS to ACRL. Rich Oram suggested contacting the Special Collections Committee of ARL.

Ellen Cordes suggested that the committee sponsor RBMS Preconference seminars and workshops on implementing the Guidelines Regarding Security and Thefts, and on how to conduct effective collection inventories. The Chair asked that committee members reflect on these proposals and communicate online with him and other members about them.

IX. Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was presented and passed.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Isaac Gewirtz

Alvan Bregman, Chair
RBMS Security Committee
Feb. 18, 2011

Approved with minor corrections, June 25, 2011