

**Minutes of the 2011 RBMS Preconference Program Planning Committee  
Marriott Copley Place-Simmons Room, Boston, MA  
January 16, 2010 4:00-5:30 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Steven Escar Smith, chair; James Ascher; Joe Barkley, ACRL staff liaison; Patricia Bozeman; Mark Danley; Elizabeth Johnson; Melissa Gallup Kopp; Jason Kovari; Jessica Lacher-Feldman; Martha Lawler; Jennifer Paustenbaugh; Henry Raine, RBMS chair-elect; Elaine Smyth; Lynne Thomas; and Deborah Whiteman

**Members Absent:** Dan Slive; Jackie Dooley

**Guests Present:** Mark Danly; Erika Dowell; Christian Dupont; Hjordis Halverson; Athena Jackson; John Overholt

Chair Steve Smith called to order the first meeting of the 2011 RBMS Preconference Program Planning Committee at 4:05 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as distributed.

**Report on Site Visit**

Smith, Raine, and Tory Ondrla, ACRL conference supervisor, traveled to Baton Rouge in November to visit various preconference venues with local arrangements chair Elaine Smyth. Raine reported that they saw meeting spaces, visited the conference hotel, and saw possible reception sites. Negotiations with the hotel are near completion. Smyth noted that the conference hotel is the Hilton Baton Rouge Capital Center Hotel, a five-star, historic hotel that used to be the famed Heidelberg Hotel. The hotel is in a very good location and is close to restaurants, museums and a free trolley service. Receptions are planned for the Rural Life Museum and the conference hotel. Raine said that since there were two state capitol buildings his hope is that if there are funds for three receptions then the third reception can be held at the old state capitol. For those interested, he has posted photographs of various proposed conference venues on his Facebook page.

**Report on Local Arrangements**

A firm price on hotel rooms should be announced soon. There was some discussion regarding the pricing of the hotel rooms. It was later confirmed that rooms will be available in the \$130 range. Since the preconference will not be held during the height of the tourist season, rates in other nearby hotels should be reasonable too. There are a number of tour possibilities in the area and tours will be planned before the preconference as well as after, for those who will not attend the ALA Conference. Smyth is investigating options for an inexpensive bus ticket for those going on to the ALA Conference in New Orleans as well as an option for those who want to fly in and out of New Orleans. Plans are still fluid at this point.

Smith observed that this was an excellent opportunity to draw in members from the region and that there were lots of good things to see and to look forward to in Baton Rouge.

## **Website**

Smith announced that James Ascher, who is currently serving as RBMS web editor, will serve as preconference web editor. Ascher stated that he did not have a particular vision at this point of what the preconference site might look like. Smyth said that she has a talented web designer on staff who might be able to assist Ascher with design elements. Smith indicated that he would really like to see the site up earlier than is usual for RBMS preconferences—perhaps as early as Christmas 2010. Ascher said he was agreeable to this but would need content. Smith said that the local arrangements committee should be able to feed him content as contracts were signed and arrangements solidified. Raine noted that most conference content should be able to be locked in a year out with the exception of the seminars. He noted that we can make it live with the statement that content is being regularly added and updated. Smith assured 2010 Preconference chair John Overholt that the committee would wait to start publicizing the site and the 2011 preconference until after the conclusion of the 2010 conference.

Ascher asked if it was a goal to have a post-conference collection of presentations and documents? Overholt responded that he thought RBMS was more or less committed to doing that since they had purchased the recording equipment prior to last year's preconference. Smyth thought it would be worth discussing the use of revenue from the previous conferences in order to have some of the more arduous post-recording clean-up handled. Ascher also asked the committee about whether they wanted to see official preconference bloggers? Smith noted that many members have expressed a keen interest in being able to participate virtually and that overall, conference blogging has been positively received. Erika Dowell commented that some thought needs to be given as to how to select bloggers. Smith responded that he thought an official appointment would be the best approach. The committee also talked about the use of Twitter and whether it was desirable to have official tweets. Smith asked Lynne Thomas to work with Ascher on the various options for using social media to push out preconference content.

## **Seminars**

RBMS Seminars Chair Erika Dowell discussed several topics for the seminars:

- Assessment of special collections public services (C. Dupont)
- Guidelines for Borrowing/Lending for Exhibition (H. Halvorson)
- RDA or security for catalogers (J. McDonald)
- Transferring special collections materials to the general collections (something related but different from last year's seminar on the topic)
- Committing "heresies" like taking special collections materials to classes (A. Body)
- Subject librarians working in special collections
- Teaching with special collections materials
- Collecting in emerging areas such a social movements or pop culture
- Web 2.0 and video for the web, for YouTube

For 2010 there are twelve slots but ten seminars. It has been nine in recent memory but the 2010 preconference committee decided to go with twelve so the Seminars Committee is preparing again for that possibility in 2011.

Mark Danley asked about scholarships and whether there's any interest in prioritizing these for people outside special collections who work in special collections. Smith said that a scholarship committee would be convened, and when they were he would ask them to look at this issue.

Athena Jackson said that the RBMS Diversity Committee is also looking at some possible seminar topics and she will forward these to Dowell.

Ascher asked the committee whether they thought it would be out of line to ask people to submit written papers ahead of time. Dowell responded that this may be a barrier for seminar presenters, especially since the first goal of seminars is to teach. Halvorson noted that some seminar content does end up making its way into *RBM*. Martha Lawler reminded the committee that there is an issue of *RBM* annually devoted to the preconference.

### **Structure and Conference Schedule**

Smith said that he had thought a long time about the structure of the preconference. He would like to see fewer plenary sessions and plenary sessions with a different structure such as panel sessions rather than a single speaker. Overholt reported that the 2010 preconference is only going to have three plenary sessions and that this committee may want to wait until they have feedback from the 2010 preconference before making a decision on this. He said that 2010 would also feature extra rounds of seminars, discussion sessions, and free form tours of various local sites. Smyth said she would love to see a plenary session with more discussion. Elizabeth Johnson said that she liked the format of yesterday's ALA-ERT Author Forum. The speakers made some brief remarks and then the moderator asks questions and takes questions from the audience. Thomas observed that this requires someone really good as a moderator as well as engaging panelists. Smith said that there was still a lot of time to talk and think about structure and would look forward to a continuing conversation about this.

### **Review and Discussion of Theme**

Smith said that a draft abstract had been distributed by email and again at the beginning of this meeting. He is not sure how much longer we can defer the selection of the theme but wants to have discussions and have feedback for as long as possible.

Overholt offered that he was having a hard time seeing how the draft abstract might translate into programs. Pat Bozeman said that one question that arose from her reading of the draft was, "Are we the flavor of the month?" Jackson said that she thinks Lois Black may be a good resource on talking about or sharing ideas on the classes and subject matter of materials the public feels is worthy of preservation. She likes the thread of diversity connected to the people who are using material and the people who are serving it up.

Thomas said that as written, the proposed title will not fit on the preconference tote bag. It needs to be pithier. Raine noted that RBMS has had a lot of preconferences that are self-referential. Maybe we need a preconference focused on diversity. Jackson said she liked this idea but worried about using diversity in a way the rest of RBMS is using it. There was a discussion around the idea of palimpsest and having a real emphasis on diversity with a palimpsest subtheme rising to the top. Melissa Gallup Kopp offered an observation from a colleague that where as once special collections was on the periphery it has now moved to the center of academic and research libraries' attention. Perhaps this might be something that could be built on.

Smith stated that he was looking for two to three people to work with him on refining the theme and coming up with something pithy. Danley, Jackson, Kopp, and Thomas volunteered. Smith said that we need to have this nailed down and be able to announce it at the annual conference. Lawler asked since we would be meeting in Baton Rouge was there anything from the Cajun culture and the way they have remained distinctive after more than two hundred years that might also serve as thematic inspiration?

Smith thanked everyone for their participation and looks forward to working with the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Prepared by Jennifer Paustenbaugh, recorder