

**Minutes of the meeting of the RBMS, ACRL/ALA Exhibition Awards Committee
Midwinter 2004
January 11, 2004
8:30 to 11:00 a.m.**

Committee members present: Peggy Price, David Whitesell, Marcia Reed, Melissa Conway, Lois Fischer Black, Richard Noble, Christian Dupont, John Pull, and Jennifer Ford.

Committee member absent: Sarah Goodwin Thiel, whose absence was excused.

Visitor present: Susan Walker of Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University. Email: susan.walker@yale.edu

Note: The order of the agenda items was altered slightly to allow members with scheduling conflicts to be present during the discussions of the more important agenda items.

I. Introductions, changes in Membership: Chair Melissa Conway introduced two new members of the committee, Peggy Price of the University of Southern Mississippi and Lois Fischer Black of North Carolina State University. She also welcomed the visitor, Susan Walker.

Update on the Leab Account: Melissa Conway was not able to speak about the current status of the Leab account at the meeting because she had not received the report before leaving for the conference. She mentioned that she would be sending everyone on the committee a performance report issued by ACRL regarding the current state of the account as of November 30, 2003. Note: This report was sent out on January 14, 2004 through email to all members of the committee.

II. New Business- Discussion of granting permission to award-winning sites to feature the RBMS logo and a mention of the award on their site.

Discussion:

Melissa Conway began the discussion by stating that this came to our attention when last year's electronic exhibition chosen for special commendation, *Images of Native Americans* (<http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/Exhibits/nativeamericans/>) The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, placed the RBMS logo with the caption "Exhibition Award, 2003" on their site. This was not, in fact, the case, as Berkeley had sought permission and was waiting for approval before taking action. Melissa stated that she see anything wrong with the practice as long as permission was requested in advance by the institution, and the announcement would be linked to the RBMS website and the

Committee's page. She mentioned the need to bring this issue before the executive committee on Monday. She wanted to establish guidelines for the use of the logo and the Committee's name. Christian Dupont mentioned that there should be some mechanism for winning sites to ask permission from the web editor. Melissa stated putting language such as "you are entitled to use the logo on website...please contact webmaster." She did not want to discourage the use of the logo or the Committee's name on winning sites as the publicity was great, but she noted that there needs to be some oversight. Peggy Price asked if it would be worthwhile to create our own award logo. Christian Dupont mentioned that RBMS wanted to "brand" the logo and so it would need to be used, but he did suggest that we could modify it in some way to reflect our Leab Award winners. He mentioned that the RBMS logo or block worked well and that it might get too complicated if we changed things too much. Christian stated that he would add a graphic featuring our name to the RBMS logo so that all winners who choose to place it on their site would have the same logo. Melissa agreed with this compromise and Christian described the possible modification as the present RBMS logo with Leab Award underneath the logo which would be a link to the RBMS/EAC site. Both Christian and Melissa agreed to bring this up at the Executive Council meeting on Monday.

III. Update on online exhibition of first ten years of Leab winners, with discussion of suggestion to include Honorable Mention recipients.

Because a past recipient of an Honorable Mention citation had expressed his displeasure that the recently-mounted online exhibition of the first ten years of Leab winners did not include this category, Melissa Conway felt that this issue deserved consideration. Melissa felt this was a reasonable request, but worried that scanning all the covers of catalogues cited for Honorable Mention would be very difficult. Christian Dupont mentioned that the Honorable Mention recipients are currently listed on the RBMS/EAC website and there is a search engine on the site. It was noted, however, that these titles are not listed under a single heading. John Pull asked at this point if the Honorable Mentions were a part of the original traveling exhibition celebrating the winning catalogues from 1986 through 1995. Melissa Conway stated that they were included in the traveling exhibit.

Richard Noble stated that the electronic exhibition was the public face of the Leab Awards and cautioned that it needed to be updated to reflect the winners from 1995 through the present. Melissa mentioned that the electronic exhibition currently is titled "Winning Catalogues, The First Ten Years."

John Pull asked how difficult it would be to collect comments on each award. Melissa stated that she would have to contact previous chairs of the Committee, unless we have an archive for the Electronic Awards Committee. Melissa concluded that she could contact former chairs Claudia Funke, Diane Shaw and Elaine Smyth for information. Melissa noted that most of the web work fell to Christian Dupont and John Pull and she worried that keeping an updated web site would be difficult to maintain, especially after Christian and John rotate off the committee. Christian noted that the easiest way to keep

the site current would be to continue to create a page listing each year's winner and adding a scan of the award winners' covers and a citation.

John Pull worried that the "browse list" would be unwieldy if the current electronic exhibition "Winning Catalogues, The First Ten Years" were to be extended beyond the ten year period. John noted that the website was created as a series of flat files and this structure would need to be changed to a database if the time period were extended. Christian agreed by stating that if the site were created as a database keyword searching would be possible. He thought the database structure would be fairly simple to complete but the more difficult task would be to gather information. He suggested leaving the "first ten years exhibition" alone and creating a database approach with scans and citations for the entire time period. Richard Noble agreed and stated that all the entries should be listed in such a database. John Pull mentioned that it was difficult to design a site around the full name of the awards, "the Katherine Kyes Leab and Daniel J. Leab *American Book Prices Current* Exhibition Catalog Awards for Excellence." He asked if there was any standard way we wished to refer to the award. He suggested placing the full title on the main page and having a shortened version appear on subsequent pages. Melissa Conway agreed to contact the Leab's about their feelings on this issue.

At this point in the conversation, Melissa Conway asked how long it would take to start from scratch with a new database approach such as Christian mentioned. Christian stated that technically it would not be too difficult but gathering the scans of catalogue covers and citations from winners since 1995 would take time. Melissa explained that the problem of mounting the covers might perhaps be contingent upon the help of one of the three repositories holding the EAC archive of catalogues. Richard Noble stated that we would need to get permission from the various institutions to place them in the database and have the scans done centrally at one of our EAC catalogue archives. Melissa cautioned that these institutions, like our own, are extremely busy, and Marcia Reed asked if it would not be better to simply approach the individual institutions and request scans of their winning exhibition cover. Richard Noble wondered about the consistency of such scans. Melissa thought that contacting the individual institutions would put the Leab award back in their mind. She suggested sending specifications to each institution and if they were not able to comply then we would go to one of the EAC archives for scans.

Christian thought that having one of the three EAC archives provide scans would be the most efficient way to gather the information. He asked how many covers needed to be scanned to update the information gathered by John Pull for the "first ten years exhibition." John calculated about forty covers and Melissa interjected that the honorable mention recipients should also be scanned.

John Pull asked if we should contact the institutions who were represented in "the first ten years" exhibition regarding the use of their material in a new searchable database. Melissa thought this was a wonderful way to generate publicity for the committee and for the award. Melissa acknowledged that this approach would require a great deal of work

and commitment on the part of several EAC members, but all agreed it would be worth the effort.

Christian replied that he believed the best approach to the problem of gathering information for the database would be to first contact the three EAC catalogue archives to ask if they would be able to provide scans. Melissa asked Christian to draft a request which would be sent to these three institutions. Christian and John agreed that they wanted to continue to have the covers scanned at 300 dpi 24 bit color saved as an uncompressed TIFF image.

Melissa brought up the problem of permissions at this point. Christian wondered if there were not already an implied permission, and John Pull agreed that the permissions gathered for the first ten years exhibition should be carried over from the website to the database. Christian thought sending a form to the institutions asking permission might be the answer to the problem. Richard Noble stated that our new entry forms have a permission request built into them, but we needed to gather the older permissions. Christian wondered about the possibility of many of the individuals having left the institutions. Peggy Price indicated that it was important to put in a good faith request for copyright. Christian surmised that we should develop an “opt out” letter for those who do not want to participate. Richard Noble asked if this question could be brought to the Executive Council. Christian thought it should be reported to them.

Melissa Conway asked if someone on the committee would go into the RBMS website and find all the email addresses of past award recipients. In an email message, past recipients would be offered the option of NOT participating in the databases. Peggy Price agreed to gather the email addresses and also send the message. The message would be coming from Melissa but Peggy is going to draft the text. John Pull suggested wording like, “Congratulations you are to be included in...”

At this point in the discussion, Christian Dupont outlined the necessary fields for such a database which included: institutional names; the title of the catalogue: publication information; authors; designers. He noted that the current information is not broken up into fields and that this would take some time to complete. John Pull asked if Christian would be using Microsoft access and Christian commented that it could be a spreadsheet.

John Pull brought up the topic of online submission forms which would be constructed with fielded data. This data could be fed into a database and could be exported in various formats, such as package labeling. Melissa agreed that there was quite a bit of manual labor for the chair when sending out the boxes of entries each year. Christian agreed with John that it would not be too difficult to create an online form but he cautioned that people will be more likely to make typographical errors on such a form and the committee would have to closely check each entry.

Christian asked if we needed to have signatures on the entry forms and Melissa indicated that signatures were not required on our current entry forms. She stated that such a document would need to be in place by June and she would rather see the expanded

website for EAC go up before an electronic entry form. Christian mentioned that the site would be labor-intensive, but that an online form would not take too much time. Richard asked if a database template could be set up and John stated that we needed to talk through the process of what it took to get to this point. He noted that former member Cynthia Burgess and current member David Whitesell spent quite a lot of time proofreading text.

Melissa stated that we will need to track down information on why each piece since 1995 was chosen. Christian offered to speak with Alvan Bregman about the archives from 1996 to find award citations. Melissa cautioned that this information might not have survived. John Pull mentioned that he had scans from the award presentations of the last few years. Melissa mentioned that former chair Claudia Funke would be sending CDs of these presentations.

Christian Dupont advised that we go ahead and think of the winners' page for this year. Melissa noted that she could make scans for this year. John Pull suggested that the EAC meet at the ALA annual convention to have a working session about all the aspects of the database. Melissa suggested trying to work through email. She then recapped the essential points of this discussion: We had decided to develop a new website for award winners which would be kept current. We had decided to contact one of the EAC catalogue archival repositories for scans of the award winners since 1996. Peggy Price agreed to gather the email addresses of all award winners and draft an "opt out" email.

Melissa asked if we needed ask one of the EAC archives for scans of all the covers since 1986. John Pull remarked that we already have scans of the covers for the first ten years. Christian Dupont mentioned that we would need to send a list of the scans we needed to the archives. We should list all entries on our site, but only the winning entries and honorable mentions would have cover scans. Richard Noble agreed to compile the list of needed scans. Melissa agreed to contact Alvan Bregman to ask if the EAC archives go back to 1986. If it seems that the information about the winners is not among the archival records, then Melissa will begin contacting previous chairs of the EAC.

It was suggested that there would be a link on the "first ten years" website to the list of submissions on the RBMS website. A line would be included noting that Honorable Mention recipients were also, awarded, with a link to the RBMS list. Melissa Conway mentioned that the original complaint regarding the Honorable Mention category was its absence on the "first ten years" site. It was then suggested that a list of Honorable Mention recipients be included on the "first ten years" site. This list would not include scans of covers, however, since those would be included in the larger database. Richard Noble agreed to create a list of Honorable Mention recipients from the first ten years and subsequent winners which could be placed on the first ten years site. Christian Dupont asked Pull to markup Richard's list and send it to him. Lois Fischer Black agreed to compile a list of all the previous chairs of the EAC Committee.

At this point in the discussion Richard Noble asked if we wanted to institute control over the names of the institutions who submit. Melissa Conway suggested that we should use

the Library of Congress Name Authority File. John Pull indicated this might be difficult to do on the “first ten years” website. Melissa indicated that she thought that site should remain as it is but that the database should incorporate LC name authority. Richard indicated that LC was developed for a different medium. Everyone agreed that there were to be no changes on the current “first ten years” site, except for a new page listing Honorable Mentions. David Whitesell thought that the institutions should be allowed to present themselves as they wish on our forms. He thought that it would create more work to establish a form. Richard Noble indicated that it would amount to doing minimal level cataloging for the items. He thought that the resulting database would be quite large and unwieldy.

IV. Discussion of ways to stimulate more interest in the Leab Award in general, and more diversity among the institutions submitting print catalogues and online submissions.

Melissa Conway began the discussion by stating that a recent ACRL questionnaire was sent to each committee requesting information about publicity. She mentioned that she sent notices of the competition out to several listservs and also called librarians at several institutions to encourage submissions. Other committee members asked about placing the notice out on other listservs such as ARLIS. David Whitesell suggested that there should be a follow up message sent out a few weeks after the first, in order to nudge people. Various ways of contacting individuals and promoting interest were suggested- such as each member of the committee contacting individuals from their region to stimulate interest- or sending out announcements of our winners and our submission dates. Melissa Conway agreed that this would be a wonderful method of publicizing the committee, but that the announcements would have to be sent via email due to the cost.

The difficulties of attracting a more diverse group of entrants and selecting a more diverse group of winners was discussed. Institutions having in-house designers were named as examples of why the ‘playing field’ can never be completely level. Richard Noble remarked that we ought not to penalize institutions for having more resources. We are, rather, to make judgments based on an institution’s ability to create an example of “best practice.”

It was suggested that we find ways to make submission more attractive to all institutions. Peggy Price indicated that showing a submission list as early as possible might stimulate interest. John Pull suggested the future possibility of having a shopping cart for catalogs.

It was ultimately decided that although the Committee would continue to encourage diverse submissions, decisions of winners would be based on a standard of best practice.

John Pull asked who was to do the certificates and keepsake list for the winners this year’s ceremony. Melissa agreed to have the keepsake list printed in California. Lois Fischer Black agreed to contact RBMS to see what it took to have these lists placed in the pre-conference attendee bags. John Pull agreed to do the certificates and the press kits.

Richard Noble moved to adjourn and David Whitesell seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.