RBMS Newsletter

Issued by the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries
A Division of the American Library Association

Fall 2009, Number 51

RBMS Newsletter No Longer Published in Print Format

At its meeting on Tuesday, July 14, 2009, the ACRL Board of Directors approved the Association's FY2010 budget, which began on September 1, 2009. The FY2010 budget includes funding for the following sections to print one newsletter issue: AAMES, AFAS, ANSS, Arts, CLS, CICLS, DLS, EBSS, IS, LES, LPSS, RBMS, SEES, WESS, and WSS. However, RBMS has agreed to begin publishing its newsletter in electronic format beginning with the present issue, No. 51. The RBMS Newsletter will be published online bi-annually at http://www.rbms.info/publications/newsletters/index.shtml (where you can also find digital versions of all previous issues). In FY2011, ACRL plans to transition to completely electronic newsletters. As newsletters are official communications of ACRL, all section members will receive email notification when any newsletters are available online.

From the Chair

The 50th RBMS Preconference proved to be a happy and successful occasion. Fifty years to the day of the very first preconference, and in the same city, Charlottesville opened its hospitable doors to celebrate the preconference's 50th birthday. Many retired and other librarians no longer active in RBMS attended to the festivity, not to mention the bumper crop of young librarians and library school students—many, but not all, scholarship winners. Now involved in the process of planning a preconference, I am amazed that the newborn RBMS was able to mount a preconference a scant year after it was created.

The preconference was not all party hats and birthday cake watered with nostalgic tears, but embodied the high event standards we have come to expect. We added something new this year: we made digital audio recordings of most of the plenary and keynote talks, the short papers, and some of the seminars, and have made them freely available on the web. Some speakers have given their presentation files for upload so that both sound and sight can be experienced together. We deemed it a successful venture, and so RBMS bought two of its own digital audio recorders, thereby committing to a goal of making future preconference content available more widely. This is still very much in experimental mode; we invite everyone to visit the web page for the 2009 Preconference, listen to recordings, look at presentation files, and give us your feedback. Kudos to R. Arvid Nelsen, 2009 Preconference Program Chair, who went well above and beyond and exceeded our expectations.

On to the next 50 years. The 51st RBMS Preconference will be held in Philadelphia, June 22–25, 2010, with the theme “Join or Die: Collaboration in Special Collections.” It will offer a full complement of workshops, plenary speakers, seminars, case studies, and discussion groups, as well as tours and receptions. The Philadelphia Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PAC-SCL) is our host, and is very excited to welcome us to their city of brotherly love.

Two new committees are in the process of being finalized. The Scholarship Committee now has the status of a full committee, and will be responsible for awarding scholarships for preconferences and, eventually, for midwinter meetings. The Regional Workshops Committee started out as an experimental project in Conference Development. Its purpose is to select one-day workshops offered at the annual preconferences, and arrange to have them offered again in different parts of the country, preferably one in the spring and one in the fall. There was a successful trial run at the Beinecke Library in December 2008, and there appears to be plenty of interest from people who cannot attend the workshops at the preconferences.

Virtual meetings are high on the agenda of ALA and ACRL. Several ACRL sections are experimenting with virtual meetings, as is ACRL itself, and I think it is time RBMS started at least thinking about it. I urge all committees to consider whether they need to meet in person twice a year, or whether some of their meetings can be virtual instead. Please talk to me if you have any ideas.

I am proud to be chair of this vibrant and growing organization of people devoted to rare books, manuscripts, and special collections. Best wishes to all.

—Deborah J. Leslie (djleslie@folger.edu)

RBMS Nominating Committee

The 2010 Nominating Committee is pleased to present the following slate of candidates for the spring 2010 elections:

Vice-chair/chair-elect:

Mike Kelly

R. Arvid Nelsen

Member-at-Large:

Jennifer Hain Teper

Nina Schneider

Candidate biographies and statements will soon be posted to the ACRL and RBMS websites. The members of the 2010 Nominating Committee—Christian Dupont (chair, as past Section chair), Daniel Slive, and Shannon Supple—express their gratitude to the candidates for their willingness to serve our Section as members of the Executive Committee.
RBMS Newsletter 2 Fall 2009, Number 51

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15
9:00 AM–5:00 PM
DCRM(C) Editorial Group
1:30–5:30 PM
BSC Controlled Vocabularies
4:00–5:30 PM
Lending and Borrowing Task Force

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16
8:00–10:00 AM
2010 Preconference Program Planning
8:00 AM–12:00 PM
Bibliographic Standards
Exhibition Awards (closed)
10:30 AM–12:00 PM
2011 Conference Program Planning
Membership and Professional Development
1:30–3:30 PM
Budget and Development
Publications
Seminars
4:00–5:30 PM
2010 Conference Program Planning
Regional Workshops
Security

This is the schedule RBMS has requested. Be sure to check the final conference schedule for any changes.

RBMS Executive Committee

Deborah J. Leslie (Chair: 2009–2010)
Head of Cataloging
Folger Shakespeare Library
201 East Capitol St. SE
Washington, DC 20003-1004

Henry F. Raine (Vice-Chair: 2009–2010)
Head of Library Technical Services
New York Historical Society
170 Central Park West
New York, NY 10023-5194

Kate S. Moriarty (Secretary: 2009–2011)
Rare Book Catalog Librarian
Saint Louis University
3650 Lindell Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63108-3302

Mary A. Lacy (Past-Chair: 2009–2010)
Senior Archives Specialist
Library of Congress
101 Independence Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20540-0001

Melissa Conway (Member-at-Large: 2007–2010)
Head Special Collections
University of California-Riverside Libraries
PO Box 5900
Riverside, CA 92517-5900

Jeffrey M. Makala (Member-at-Large: 2009–2012)
Assistant Librarian, Rare Books and Special Collections
Thomas Cooper Library
University of South Carolina
1322 Greene St.
Columbia, SC 29208-0001

Fernando Peña (Member-at-Large: 2008–2011)
Librarian
The Grolier Club
47 East 60th St.
New York, NY 10021-1098
Committee News

Bibliographic Standards

The Bibliographic Standards Committee (BSC) is hard at work on four additional manuals in the DCRM suite: Music, Graphics, Manuscripts, and Cartographic Materials. Editorial teams are making excellent progress on these components and drafts for review from some of them are expected before ALA Midwinter 2010. Following the publication of Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Serials), the DCRM(S) editorial team presented a well-attended workshop on rare serials cataloging at the 2009 RBMS Preconference in Charlottesville. BSC also sponsored a preconference seminar on bibliographic citations in catalog records that, among other things, outlined and presented the work being done by BSC on the revision of Standard Citation Forms for Published Bibliographies and Catalogs Used in Rare Book Cataloging (2nd ed.). As part of the efforts to integrate the RBMS Controlled Vocabularies into a single thesaurus for rare materials (and then to be subsequently added to the OCLC Terminologies Project), the Controlled Vocabularies Subcommittee is making a strong effort to rectify problems in the thesauri and provide scope notes for every current term. To facilitate this project, BSC approved a moratorium on new term submissions. The moratorium went into effect on June 9, 2009 and will continue for two years. All term proposals submitted before the moratorium will be considered and resolved by the Subcommittee.

—Randal Brandt (rbrandt at library.berkeley.edu)

Budget and Development

During ALA’s Annual Conference, RBMS Budget and Development Committee members focused attention on facilitating various section initiatives. Diversity outreach, expanding use of digital technology for outreach, and expanding the scholarship program to include support for Midwinter attendees were the main topics. As a result, the Committee made the following recommendations to the Executive Committee: 1) to spend RBMS funds as available, possibly allotting 2009 funds for the purchase of digital audio recorders, and using some 2010 funds to support diversity outreach presentations in Boston (Midwinter 2010); 2) to consider the following points when developing the 2011 action plan to ACRL: a) request separate funds for Midwinter scholarships, b) request funds to support diversity outreach presentations, before or after Midwinter, using the newly approved RBMS Diversity Recruitment Toolkit at schools that have a preponderance of student groups underrepresented in the profession, c) request funds for audio equipment to disseminate RBMS programming and workshops using Web 2.0 technologies. Subsequently, the Executive Committee did approve use of remaining Section budget funds to purchase digital recording equipment, and with special permission from ACRL, the equipment was purchased and will be available for use at the upcoming preconference in Philadelphia.

—Elaine Smyth (esmyth at lsu.edu)

Collection Development

A small but enthusiastic crowd of both RBMS members and ALA members from other sections joined co-chairs Ron Lieberman and Lois Black to explore pressing issues in collection development. The primary discussion topic, identifying potential transfers from the general collections, occurred much of the session. Particularly relevant was mention of the Guidelines on the Selection and Transfer of Materials from General Collections to Special Collections. Discussion about the “Last Copy in Illinois,” an initiative to preserve a copy of every book in the state followed. Finally, the session concluded with a look at off-site storage and special collections.

—Lois Fischer Black (lob206 at lehigh.edu)

Conference Development

One of the most important standing charges for the Conference Development Committee is to “identify potential preconference sites and work with RBMS members at those sites to develop and submit site proposals to the Executive Committee in a timely manner.” In seeking to fulfill that important charge, the Committee is still actively seeking proposals for possible hosts of the 2012 preconference. The annual meeting of ALA that year will be in Anaheim, California, June 21-27. Information about site selection can be found in the RBMS Preconference Planning Manual on the RBMS website at http://www.rbms.info/committees/conference_development/manual.shtml#site.

The Annual Meeting in Chicago was primarily devoted to reports of preconferences and conference programs past and to come, including the 50th RBMS Preconference in Charlottesville. The web evaluation system allows ACRL staff to have summary results very quickly. With 62% of the preconference participants completing an evaluation, here are a few of the statistics gathered. Overall the evaluations were very positive; 94% of the respondents indicated that they would attend another preconference. Nearly 70% of respondents are special collections librarians, with almost 60% working as administrators, curators, or in reference/public services/outreach. 29.9% of the respondents have been in the profession for 1–5 years; 28.6% for 20+ years. 28% of respondents were attending their first RBMS preconference. The 50th anniversary was a big draw for respondents, with over 50% marking it as one of their top two attendance factors. Committee discussion of the future of RBMS preconferences included reviewing the discussion session on the topic held in Charlottesville, considering ways to provide more opportunities for virtual attendance, and agreeing on a survey to be sent to the section in mid-fall 2009.

—Elizabeth L. Johnson (johnsonl at indiana.edu)

Curators and Conservators

Perhaps owing to the change in location from that announced in the program, and the early hour, the attendance was small (8 attendees). After a brief introduction of the new co-chairs (Beth Kilmarx and Ken Lavender), Nicolette Dobrowolski, Head of Public Services, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University, presented topics for discussion concerning public services as a point where curators and conservators must come together to best serve the public. The following are the salient points that the speaker raised: 1) Different public service components to Curatorship, Conservation, Cataloguing/Processing/Other; 2) Most everything conservators/curators do in their everyday work affects public services (collection development/level of conservation); 3) Changes in field are blurring the lines—we all have public service responsibilities now; 4) Collecting/Conserving “born digital” collection material; 5) Do you take into account public service circulation statistics for possible collection development/conservation decisions?

Further lively discussions concerned hidden or unprocessed
collections, off-site storage, and selection for digitization. Possible topics for future meetings include choosing exhibits for digitization, putting the pragmatic into the relationship, curator-conservator relations in managing digital assets.

—Kenneth Lavender (klavende at syr.edu)

Diversity

The Diversity Committee is pleased to announce the completion and publication of the RBMS Diversity Recruitment Toolkit. It is an online guide for RBMS members and library professionals who wish to make presentations about careers in special collections librarianship to students and paraprofessional staff, particularly those from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. We encourage you to download the Toolkit and deploy it at your institutions; feedback is welcome. You may download the Toolkit at http://www.rbms.info/committees/diversity/index.shtml.

We also welcome and encourage guests to join us at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston. We will be discussing the Toolkit, ideas for sponsoring events at preconferences, and other diversity-related outreach initiatives.

—Verónica Reyes (reyesv at u.library.arizona.edu)

Exhibition Awards

The 2009 Katharine Kyes Leab & Daniel J. Leab American Books Prices Current Exhibition Awards went to the Getty Research Institute, the Grotlier Club, the Stanford University Libraries, the Thomas Cooper Library at the University of South Carolina, the Book Club of California, and the Houghton Library (Harvard University). The presentation ceremony took place, as usual, at the ALA Annual Meeting, in our new and very much better time slot preceding Information Exchange. Details, including the remarks of the Chair at the presentation, are available via the EAC web pages at http://www.rbms.info/committees/exhibition_awards/index.shtml.

Also as usual—nothing wrong with the usual when it works—was the display of all the Leab Award submissions on Friday morning of the 50th Anniversary Preconference, outside the plenary meeting space in which Katharine Kyes Leab herself held forth splendidly, with her customary gusto and high good humor. There’s no need to take one biased committee chair’s word for it: check out the audio file of Plenary III [pt. 2] on the rbms.info Preconference pages. The capper to this is that Kathy generously donated her honorarium to the Committee, enabling us to produce a fairly good looking checklist of submissions, for distribution in the Preconference goody bags.

This year’s submissions are picking up, as they always do when the deadline (October 15) approaches. The process has been greatly facilitated this year by the good work of James P. Ascher, Committee member and RBMS webmaster, in producing an interactive PDF form that can be filled in, printed, and submitted at one go. Once these are all in, more usualness will take place: distribution of boxes to the committee members, much pondering, and final judgment in Boston, on a long Saturday morning at Midwinter.

—Richard Noble (Richard_Noble at brown.edu)

Guidelines for Borrowing and Lending Special Collections Material

On Sunday morning, July 12, 2009, a new RBMS task force was launched. The Task Force is charged to review, update, and revise two related ACRL/RBMS documents—the 2004 revised Guides-

lines for the Interlibrary Loan of Rare and Unique Material and the 2005 revised Guidelines for Borrowing and Lending Special Collections Material for Exhibition—combining these two documents into a single set of guidelines. During its first meeting, the Task Force began to lay groundwork for its task, looking at the issues of combining the related but structurally and intellectually distinct sets of guidelines. The Task Force also considered changes in the past five years that are relevant to borrowing and lending activities. In the early days of our work, the Task Force welcomes suggestions, experiences, examples of policies and procedures, and questions. Please communicate such comments to Hjordis Halvorson, the Task Force chair, at halvorsonh at newberry.org, or to any member of the Task Force.

—Hjordis D. Halvorson (halvorsonh at newberry.org)

Manuscripts and Other Formats

The Manuscripts and Other Formats Discussion Group attracted a crowd of nineteen attendees who shared news of recent conferences and workshops, and also described new acquisitions. Among challenges posed by certain acquisitions were collections containing proprietary information maintained by active businesses, such as recipes, and court files maintained by a faculty member who routinely serves as an expert witness.

Attendees also took the opportunity to bring questions to the group. On the minds of colleagues are: reuniting dispersed manuscript collections through collaborative digitization projects; formalizing a process for determining an appropriate level of processing; serving unprocessed collections; and enhancing finding aids for already processed collections.

Attendees next tackled the subject of selecting not only content, but also potential partners for grant projects. This served as a nice segue into our primary discussion topic: More Product, Less Process, four years later. Attendees revealed they were, in general, hesitant to adopt Meissner and Greene’s recommendations regarding staples, paper clips, and other metallic devices. They also observed that minimal processing may be more costly in the long run, if duplicative and superficial material is retained, thereby eating up shelf space. Concerns were also raised about the possibility of sensitive data being overlooked during expedited processing. Finally, the meeting concluded with a brief look at the impact exposing hidden collections has had upon public services staff. One attendee observed that technical services has been “sexy” in the age of hidden collections, but public services has not garnered the same attention in recent years.

The meeting adjourned with one final announcement; there is an opening for a co-chair of this Discussion Group. Interested parties should contact either Lois Black or Deborah Leslie.

—Lois Fischer Black (lob206 at lehigh.edu)

MARC for Special Collections

The MARC for Special Collections Discussion Group (MASC) met on Sunday, July 12, from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM, with Sarah Fisher of Yale and John Overholt of Harvard presiding and 44 people in attendance.

A brief report was given on the OCLC response to the WorldCat Local Special Collections and Archives Task Force report. A number of the concerns raised by the Task Force report were addressed by OCLC but one problem still to be solved is including the display of local holdings information, a step that is essential for making WorldCat Local usable as an OPAC. Next, the group discussed
the impact of digitization on cataloging priorities and workflow. Participants compared procedures in their respective libraries and agreed that large-scale, internally-initiated digitization projects are easier to plan for than situations where a patron requests digitization of a single page, a request that might require nearly as much cataloging as when the entire book is digitized.

The final topic concerned the retention and maintenance of card-based shelf lists. About a third of those in the meeting said they were still actively maintaining their shelf lists, while an equal number said they have retained their existing shelf list but no longer add cards to it. Sarah Fisher and John Overholt announced they had reached the end of four years as the co-convenors of MASC, and that leadership of the group would be handed over to Annie Copeland of Penn State and Ellen Ellickson of Yale.

— Ellen Ellickson (ellen.ellickson@yale.edu)

Membership and Professional Development

Our activities at the 59th Annual Preconference in Charlottesville were well attended. The Buddy Program was as popular as ever. Twenty-four pairs of buddies were matched for the Preconference and three pairs for the Annual Conference in Chicago. Anecdotal feedback was positive and hopefully will be confirmed by evaluations sent out to program participants. The Preconference Orientation and Introduction to RBMS was attended by 115 people who were welcomed by ACRL Executive Director Mary Ellen Davis and President Erika Linke as well as RBMS committee and discussion group chairs. Nearly 60 people, both new and seasoned RBMS members, attended the New Members Outing that followed the Welcome Reception at the Preconference.

The Mentoring Program remains popular as well. Since the program began in December 2004, 65 mentoring pairs have been matched, including three pairs matched since Midwinter 2009. Evaluations will be sent to program participants. Mentors are always needed, so please volunteer for this worthwhile program if you can.

The online Educational Opportunities Directory (http://www.rbms.info/committees/membership_and_professional/educational_opportunities/index.shtml) has been updated. Fifty-five schools were seeking the assistance of the Publications Committee. When James Ascher gives his report on the work of the Web team, he will provide more detail on this project. With respect to our liaison with the ACRL Publications Committee, I attended those meetings, and the key message that I conveyed was our gratitude for their organization’s considerable financial assistance with the commemorative keepsake volume.

—William La Moy (wlmoy@syr.edu)

Public Services

Thirty people attended the Public Services Discussion Group meeting on Saturday, July 11, 2009, from 3:30-5:30 pm to discuss topics of interest to Special Collections public services professionals. The meeting opened with announcements including a position opening. Discussion centered on the joys and frustrations of using Google Books, statistical gathering and use in various institutions, outreach efforts, and use of automated patron and circulation systems both home grown and commercial. Other topics, which came up during the discussion, included security of records, digitization projects, community commitments, and barcoding. Discussion was lively and informative. The PSDG will be meeting again in January at the midwinter meeting in Boston and the Manuscripts and Other Formats Discussion Group will be joining us. We invite all who are interested to come. Anyone with suggestions for topics to be included is invited to contact the current co-chairs Margaret Tufts Tenney (mtenney@mail.utexas.edu) or Susan Odell Walker (susan.walker@yale.edu).

—Margaret Tufts Tenney (mtenney@mail.utexas.edu)

Publications

The principal business of the Publications Committee during the annual meeting of ALA in Chicago in July of 2009 was to review the mechanisms and procedures for the design and production of the commemorative keepsake volume that was published to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Section. We also examined the process that was used to design and print the exhibition award certificates, which were created on behalf of the Exhibition Awards Committee. Both of these publication projects were considered as case studies on the operations of the Committee. Because the Web team functions as a subset of the Publications Committee, we also discussed the ramifications of storing such content on rbms.info. For example, the full text of the commemorative volume in a PDF file is now held by the Web team, and this was fairly easily posted to our website. The new design templates for the exhibition award certificates will also be supplied to the Web team. As a result, these designs could readily be employed for future award ceremonies. In terms of new business for the Committee, a representative of the Membership and Professional Development Committee attended our meeting and relayed the fact that the Committee had prepared a document in the form of frequently asked questions and was seeking the assistance of the Publications Committee. When James Ascher gives his report on the work of the Web team, he will provide more detail on this project. With respect to our liaison with the ACRL Publications Committee, I attended those meetings, and the key message that I conveyed was our gratitude for their organization’s considerable financial assistance with the commemorative keepsake volume.

Security

The Committee heard reports on MissingMaterials.org, a website for sharing information relating to missing and stolen special collections materials, based on WorldCat bibliographical records, and MissingMaps.info, a similar site for cartographic materials. Institutions are invited to submit records of such materials (further information is available on both sites). ACRL/RBMS Guidelines Regarding Security and Theft in Special Collections was approved by the ACRL Standards and Accreditation Committee and by the ACRL Board and is available at http://www.alaweb.org/ala/mngps/divs/acrl/standards/security_theft.cfm. The final manuscript of the Guide to Security Considerations and Practices for Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collection Libraries (ed. Everett Wilkie) was submitted to ACRL for publication in 2010.

—Richard W. Oram (rooram@mail.utexas.edu)

Seminars

Selected presentations and documents from seminars presented at the 2009 RBMS Preconference are now available online. Many thanks to committee member Shannon Supple who was among
those experimenting with audio recording program content. Listen to audio from the seminar "Taking the Shifting Gears Challenge" and view documentation from several other seminars at http://rbms.info/conferences/preconf/docs/2009/2009docs.shtml.

Seminars in development for the 2010 Preconference cover topics including: artists in collaboration with libraries, born digital materials, collaborative exhibits, archivists and catalogers learning from each other, and a consideration of the question, "what can we stop doing?" You can keep up with seminar planning by visiting our Committee wiki, found on the RBMS wiki page at http://wikis.ala.org/acrl/index.php/RBMS, or by contacting one of the Committee members.

It is not too early to contact the Seminars Committee with seminar proposals for the 2011 Preconference. We love to hear from people with ideas, even if they cannot commit to organizing the seminar they suggest. Anyone can submit an idea for a seminar either through our online form or by emailing the chair of the Committee, Erika Dowell.

—Erika Dowell (edowell@indiana.edu)

2010 Annual Conference Preview

The 2010 RBMS Conference program will take place on Sunday, June 27, from 1:30–3:30 pm during the ALA Annual Conference. The program, To Catch a Thief: Cataloging and the Security of Special Collections, will explore a number of questions facing rare book and manuscript repositories. This topic is timely: the revision of ACRL/RBMS Guidelines Regarding Security and Theft in Special Collections has been finalized at the same time many libraries are making great efforts to expose their hidden collections through minimal-level or collection-level processing. How can these repositories balance the dual missions of collection security and access to the material? Can full catalog records deter theft or do they create a bigger temptation? How have these records been instrumental in identifying and reclaiming stolen materials? In light of increasing pressures on technical service staff and library administrators due to budget cutbacks and competing priorities, our speakers will address these concerns based upon their own and others’ experiences with book theft and recovery. This program is being co-sponsored by MAGERT and the Collection Management & Development Section of ALCTS.

—Nina Schneider (nmschneider@humnet.uc.edu)

2010 Preconference Preview

The 51st annual RBMS Preconference will be held in Philadelphia from Tuesday, June 22 through Friday, June 25. Inspired by the close and productive relationship among the members of the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSCL), the theme of the preconference is "Join or Die: Collaboration in Special Collections."

In our current climate of strained budgets and staff shortages, the theme of collaboration seems an especially timely one, and we intend to explore collaborative relationships as broadly as possible: with our coworkers and our colleagues; with scholars and students; with donors, funders, and vendors. In short, our subject will be any instance in which we can accomplish more by working together than we could alone, with an emphasis on creative but practical solutions to the challenges we are all confronting.

In light of the preconference theme, it seemed appropriate to reduce the number of plenary sessions, but these will include an overview of the history and structure of PACSCL and a look at the digital commons and its application to the recent work on the Archimedes Palimpsest. The remainder of the programming will focus on shorter, more interactive sessions in a variety of formats. We will present several panels of case studies, reports on real-world collaborative projects within the special collections profession, describing how collaboration occurred, mistakes made, lessons learned, and successes achieved. In addition, we will offer a series of discussion sessions, providing an opportunity for attendees to hear from their colleagues, and share their own experiences, on topics of mutual interest. Finally, thanks to the hard work of the Seminars Committee, we will present an expanded slate of seminars, with encore presentations of several of those with the greatest interest, to ameliorate the difficult choices attendees sometimes have to make.

Three workshops will open the preconference on Tuesday, including Latin for rare book catalogers, Joel Silver's class on reference sources for rare books, and a session on working with the rare book trade. This last will include a visit to the Bookseller's Showcase, which, thanks to the enthusiasm of ABAA's membership, will be the largest yet presented at an RBMS preconference.

The main preconference hotel will be the Doubletree Hotel Philadelphia, located in the heart of center city and conveniently situated near public transportation and many of Philadelphia's best-known attractions. The room rate is $189 per night. In addition, dorm rooms will be available at nearby Drexel University; details will be announced in early spring. On Thursday, we will spend the morning in Philadelphia's Old City, at the American Philosophical Society and Chemical Heritage Foundation. After an extended lunch break to allow for exploration and tours of this historic area, we will reconvene at the spectacular Union League for a plenary and evening reception.

The Local Arrangements Committee is organizing tours to a dazzling array of Philadelphia's special collections, including the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the Rosenbach Museum and Library. In addition, extended daylong tours of Historic Germantown and two Delaware locations are in the works. Wednesday will feature a restaurant night sampling just a few of Philadelphia's many dining opportunities, and an open house at the University of the Arts showcasing Philadelphia's diverse book arts community.

We look forward to welcoming you to the first preconference of RBMS's next fifty years. Please send any questions or suggestions to program chair John Overholt.

—John Overholt (overholt@fas.harvard.edu)
2009 Preconference

The 50th anniversary RBMS Preconference, “Seas of Change: Navigating the Cultural and Institutional Contexts of Special Collections,” took place in Charlottesville, Virginia, from Wednesday, June 17 through Saturday, June 20, 2009. The Omni Charlottesville Hotel served as the main meeting venue and official conference hotel. A full day of meetings was held at the University of Virginia Newcomb Hall conference center, where the first RBMS preconference was held during the same dates in 1959.

A new record of 368 full registrations had been received by the time the preconference opened. With additional onsite and one-day registrations nearly 400 people attended, making it the largest RBMS preconference thus far. In keeping with the “golden anniversary” theme, a special initiative was launched to welcome back section leaders who had retired from the profession. Four “golden leaders” (Julius Barclay, Donald Farren, Joan Friedman, and Marcus McCorison) as well as twenty-three other former chairs attended. A special “50 for 50” fundraising campaign was held to support the “golden leaders” initiative and the traditional first-time attendee scholarship program. ACRL provided $7,500 in 2-to-1 matching dollars for the campaign, which included gifts from 42 individual donors. Yale University Library contributed an additional $2,000 in scholarship monies in honor of Marjorie G. Wynne, one of the Section founders who passed away in April of this year. A total of $15,340 was distributed to 21 first-time attendees (including five from professionally underrepresented backgrounds) and three golden leaders accepted complimentary registrations. In all, 92 attendees—approximately one in four—identified themselves as first-timers, and 94% of all attendees who completed the post-conference survey said that they would attend another preconference.

The main program included five plenary sessions that addressed the several cultural and institutional contexts of special collections, among them academic research universities (opening address by University president John Casteen), research communities (Fran Blouin, Bentley Historical Library), professional organizations and library education (Beverly Lynch, UCLA), collectors, auctions and the book trade (Katharine Kyes Leab, American Book Prices Current), publishing and print culture (Todd Lippy, Exopsis magazine, and Eli Horowitz, McSweeney’s Quarterly Concern), the law and policy of the global information ecosystem (Siva Vaidhyanathan, University of Virginia Law School), preservation and large-scale digitization (Oya Rieger, Cornell University), independent research libraries (Ellen Dunlap, American Antiquarian Society), and academic library systems, domestic and international (Sarah Thomas, Oxford). In addition, David Stam reflected on the history of RBMS and the preconference and Ian Willison shared remarks on the Boston 1980 preconference and the global history of the book.

Three short-paper sessions featured presentations by nine “new and emerging voices” on topics ranging from digitization and reformatting, to cataloging and curatorship, community partnerships and marketing, and the use of library materials in museum exhibitions. A total of nine seminars were offered in three sessions. Topics included examinations of the OCLC Research “Shifting Gears” white paper on digital workflows and the RBMS/ACRL special collections transfer guidelines; engaging students, volunteers and paraprofessionals in archival processing; dealing with mold out-

breaks; building digital collections; citing bibliographies in rare book cataloging; library friends groups; the CLIR postdoctoral fellows program; and the impact of previously “hidden” collections on public services.

Five facilitated discussion sessions gave attendees the opportunity to come together to explore topics of common interest and concern, including: “Working with Our Parent Organizations, with Examples Drawn from the History of RBMS,” “Making Preconferences Ready for the Next 50 Years,” “Many Voices at the Table: Diversity in Special Collections,” “Web 2.0 and Special Collections,” and “Issues Faced by Small Libraries.”

Four workshops were offered on the first day of the preconference: “Copyright Fundamentals for Special Collections Librarians,” “Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Serials),” “Beyond the Show and Tell: Teaching Strategies for Special Collections Professionals,” and “Web 2.0 Basics for Special Collections Librarians.” An all-day Booksellers’ Showcase featuring thirty ABAA-member exhibitors was also held on the opening day. ABAA generously sponsored an evening welcome reception that was held in conjunction with the Showcase.

Thursday evening, the University of Virginia Library sponsored a 50th-anniversary celebration and reception at the Colonnade Club on the historic central grounds of the University of Virginia. Other social events organized as part of the preconference included a New Members’ Outing and a Restaurant Night.

Attendees also had the opportunity to sign-up for eleven tour events, including tours of special collections and other library facilities at the University of Virginia, historic downtown Charlottesville, Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, James Madison’s Monticello and nearby Barboursville Vineyards, and a Blue Ridge Mountains hiking expedition.

Special sponsorship also allowed us to provide some new elements this year. A keepsake publication providing detailed information about programming at all fifty preconferences to date—generously sponsored by ACRL—was distributed to attendees. Thanks in part to the sponsorship and support of OCLC Research/RLG Programs, audio recordings were made of many of the plenary presentations, all of the short papers, and one of the seminars and are now available from the RBMS website at http://rbms.info/conferences/preconfdocs/2009/2009docs.shtml, with additional links and pointers from the preconference website. PDF files of many presentation visual aids may also be viewed as well as the keepsake publication and the official program.

Many preconference attendees stayed on in Charlottesville after the preconference closed on Saturday afternoon to enjoy other cultural and natural attractions of Central Virginia and to attend a farewell program and reception for Terry Belanger, Rare Book School founding director and University Professor and Honorary Curator of Special Collections at the University of Virginia, who had previously announced his retirement.

—R. Arvid Nelsen (nels0307 at umn.edu)
Transitions

**Donald J. Barrett**, who was instrumental in establishing the Special Collections Department and the Gimbel Aeronautics History Collection at the Cadet Library of the United States Air Force Academy, has passed away. **Terry Belanger**, director of the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia, which he founded in 1983, has retired. **Jodi Berkowitz** has been appointed legacy finding aids archivist in the University Library at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. **Cassie Brand** has been appointed project associate for “Mapping Special Collections for Research and Teaching at Goucher College” at Goucher College Special Collections and Archives. **Martha Conway** has been appointed associate director of the Special Collections Library at the University of Michigan. **Katherine E. S. Donahue** has retired from her position as associate director of UCLA’s History and Special Collections for the Sciences at the Louis M. Darling Biomedical Library. **William A. Gosling** has been named university librarian emeritus and curator of children’s literature emeritus at the University of Michigan. **Eric J. Harberson** has been appointed senior instructor, music special collections librarian, at the University of Colorado-Boulder Libraries. **Michael Heskett**, head of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission’s State and Local Records Management Division, has passed away. **Jessica Mirasol** has been named librarian archivist for music collections at the University Libraries of Old Dominion University. **Allison Jai O’Dell** has joined Goucher College as special collections cataloger for the project “Mapping Special Collections for Research and Teaching at Goucher College.” **Jordan Patty** is now head of processing archivist/librarian at the George Mason University Libraries. **John Saylor** became associate university librarian for scholarly resources and special collections at Cornell University. **Michael Suarez** has assumed the position of director of the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia. **Jay Trask** has joined the Archival Services Department as head of archival services at the University of Northern Colorado’s James A. Michener Library in Greeley. **John Vincler** has been appointed special collections librarian at the University of Akron’s Archival Services.