

RBMS Membership & Professional Development Committee Minutes

ALA Midwinter Meeting, Philadelphia

Saturday, January 25, 2014

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Pennsylvania Convention Center 202A

Members present: Katie Henningsen (Chair), Alison Clemens, Megan Constantinou, Elspeth Healey, Courtney Jacobs, Maggie Kopp, Jennifer MacDonald, Melanie Meyers, Melissa Nykanen, Patrick Olson, Charlotte Priddle, Jennifer Sheehan, Kimberly Tully

Guests present: Kyle Anglesey, John Arturi, Athena Jackson, Mary Lacy, Arvid Nelsen, Fernando Pena, Beth Whittaker

Minutes by Patrick Olson

1. Welcome and introductions

K. Henningsen welcomed members and guests. All present introduced themselves.

2. Selection of recorder

P. Olson agreed to take minutes.

3. Liaison reports

a. ACRL Membership Committee. K. Henningsen reported that the ACRL Membership Committee met virtually in December to review the information each ACRL Section is tracking. In addition to letters sent to new and returning members, ACRL is asking RBMS to track the other ways we share information with our members, social media, electronic discussion lists, etc.

b. RBMS Scholarship Committee. J. Sheehan reported that the scholarship page is up on the Preconference website. The committee will award 15-20 scholarships this year. The application deadline is March 21, 2014 and applicants will be notified before April 25, 2014.

c. RBMS Diversity Committee. K. Henningsen reported that for the past two years her committee has worked with the Diversity Committee to co-host the New Members' Brown Bag at the Preconference. The committee intends to continue this relationship and have the Brown Bag scheduled for the Wednesday of the Preconference. For the past few years, K. Henningsen has served as liaison between the Diversity Committee and M&PD. Someone will need to take over this role after this year's annual conference when K. Henningsen rotates off of both committees.

d. Book Fair. M. Constantinou reported that over the summer she combined the various separate book fair documents that have been circulating around into a single "A Guide for

RBMS Book Fair Liaisons and Captains.” This document is available on ALA Connect and should be updated on an ongoing basis by the current Book Fair Captain Liaison. The California Book Fair will be held in Pasadena, Feb. 7-9, 2014. Our Book Fair Captain for this event is Nina Mamikunian from the Clark Library.

The Boston Book Fair was held Nov. 15-17, 2013. The Book Fair Captain for this event was Cate Hirschbiel from Boston College, who took on this role for the first time. Cate had a team of 4 volunteers plus herself, and they spoke to about 70 people and handed out several pamphlets.

Cate also raised questions about the objective of the table, which did not seem clear to her or many of the people visiting the fair. People primarily stopped by the table to ask for the location of bathrooms or to seek information on careers in rare book librarianship, a trend which I have also seen at the NYC Fair. The M&PD committee previously decided that our ABAA bookseller colleagues should be the primary target audience of the table, but booksellers rarely visit the table in actual practice. Perhaps we should consider streamlining the table to focus more specifically on promoting membership in ACRL/RBMS, while making it a secondary mission to supply pamphlets from complementary organizations? That would clarify our objective and will hopefully attract new potential members. M. Constantinou mentioned that she would be happy to adjust the mission statement in the Book Fair Captain guide for discussion at the next M&PD committee meeting. A debate ensued on the role and goals of the RBMS presence at the book fairs. M&PD agreed to rethink why and how we maintain our presence at book fairs. When M. Constantinou rotates off the committee, it was suggested that the next book fair liaison also be stationed in NYC, given the convenience provided by proximity to the ABAA headquarters and the flagship book fair.

Action Item: K. Henningsen – Investigate the possibility of including the RBMS postcard developed by the Diversity Committee in the book fair handouts.

Action Item: P. Olson – Develop a brief paragraph or bullet pointed list of reasons to encourage private collectors to consider donating their collections to libraries.

Action Item: M. Constantinou – Include the Preconference flyer developed by the Preconference Program Planning Committee in the handouts.

e. Core Competencies in Special Collections Librarianship Task Force. J. MacDonald reported that the group had yet to meet at Midwinter, but had been busy through the fall assessing needed revisions, noting that the existing text was both too vague *and* too specific. The task force will recommend that the Competencies be kept but updated and revised. There will be an oral report to that effect at Exec., then a white paper with details about the recommendation for Annual 2014, a draft revision for MW 2015, and a revised document by Annual 2015. Clarification of the purpose of the document is needed, and clarifying the purpose will be the focus before addressing the competencies themselves.

4. Ongoing projects

a. Educational Opportunities Directory. C. Jacobs reported that she and Christina Kasman volunteered to join Garth Reese on the project to review and update the RBMS Education Opportunities Directory. Discussions began during Fall Semester 2013.

At the previous midwinter meeting, the committee discussed including continuing education opportunities in the directory. The Executive Committee indicated we could move forward on this plan, preliminary plan is to create an ancillary page and include programs at a national level, Rare Book School, CALRBS, London Rare Books School, A&M Book History Workshop, RBMS Preconference, SAA workshops.

The group has created a google document to create, edit, and record the group's continuing work. This information will be shared on the ALA Connect page for future members. There is current discussion to remove personal information (names of individuals and/or program directors) from the list because keeping up with constant staffing changes has proved difficult). The new priority would be on keeping links to programs and institutions up-to-date. If anyone has any strong feelings on this matter we welcome comments via email to any of the group members.

b. Buddy Program Report. M. Meyers and K. Tully reported that there have lately been more buddy mentors than buddy mentees—a welcome development. A survey is distributed to participants following each conference. Participants have noted that the time commitment is minimal and much of it is spent helping the new attendees navigate the schedule.

c. Mentoring Program. K. Henningsen reported that the group has made three mentor pairs since ALA Annual and do not have anyone currently in the queue for a mentor. Pairing a mentee with a mentor seems to work best by identifying those with similar positions or interests or those who are geographically in the same region. So far in this cycle, no prospective mentors have turned down the opportunity.

d. Member Survey. M. Nykanen and E. Healey reported that the last member survey was conducted in 1997. They will be basing the new survey on the 1997 survey for data comparison, but will revise the survey for accuracy and clarity as needed. They will also be working with several other RBMS committees, including Diversity, to add a few new questions to the survey. In addition, they will identify an online survey platform and potential incentives for survey takers. They are hoping to revise the survey between now and ALA Annual 2014. They will then present a proposal to Budget and Development for any funding needed, and present a proposal to the Executive Committee with the revised text. Once it has been approved, they will send it to the ALA Office for Research and Statistics for approval. The survey will then be distributed, perhaps in the Spring of 2015. If any M&PD committee members have suggestions for other committees that may like to suggest new survey questions, please let Melissa and Elspeth know.

F. Pena suggested that a question about the benefits of RBMS scholarships might be considered. A. Jackson suggested that a survey platform such as Qualtrics would allow

for greater interoperability with other ACRL surveys. Pena and Jackson both mentioned that the Executive Committee would be happy to have access to the Google Doc being used to revise the survey in order to provide feedback during the process.

Action Item: M. Nykanen and E. Healey — Share the Google document of 1997 survey questions with the members of the Executive Committee for feedback on modifying existing questions or adding questions for the 2014/2015 survey.

e. ACRL Section Membership Activities. M. Kopp reported that she and L. Murphy studied results from the most recent ACRL membership survey, comparing responses from RBMS members with responses from four other comparably-sized ACRL sections: Science & Technology, Distance Learning, Community & Junior College, and African American Studies. The ACRL survey questions dealt with demographics of the section, attitudes toward ACRL, attitudes about professional development and education/learning activities, and members' concerns about issues facing the profession. RBMS membership numbers fluctuate up and down year to year, but indicate a long-term decline. They are exploring the activity of ACRL sections that have seen large increases in membership.

5. Committee website / FAQ

E. Healey reported that the Continuing Education Opportunities Directory is the third most visited page of the RBMS website, following the Your Old Books page and the homepage. The Directory had 10,062 views (8.83% of rbms.info traffic) between 15 June 2013 and 3 January 2014. The web team is in the process of migrating content from Drupal to a WordPress CMS. They may be asking for additional assistance to help undertake this project, especially as M&PD's Careers FAQ consists of quite a number of pages. As they get closer to the migration, E. Healey will keep the committee apprised of volunteer opportunities. As the content is migrated, Healey suggested that it might be worthwhile for M&PD to consider when and if the Careers in Rare Books and Manuscripts FAQ needs a content update. URLs have been updated whenever they come across outdated or dead links, but a larger review of content may be worthwhile in the next year or two.

6. Letters to new members

K. Henningsen reported that 142 letters have been sent to new and returning members since the 2013 Annual conference. This accounts for July through November of 2013, as they have yet to receive the member list for December. As of November 2013, RBMS had 1,602 members, a .44% dip from that same time last year.

7. Preconference planning

a. Preconference Orientation. K. Henningsen reported that this year we will modify the format of the Preconference Orientation; we are going to test the format used at ACRL's orientation session. The first half hour will include our traditional welcome and information about ACRL, RBMS, and the Preconference. During the second half hour, instead of inviting a small group of RBMS committee chairs up to talk for 2 minutes about each of their committees, we will invite all groups to send a representative and ask attendees to rotate every 2-3 minutes. This will allow them to meet and chat with each committee representative in small groups and give representatives an opportunity to

answer a few questions. Our hope is that this will be an engaging and fun way for all those present to meet each other and learn more about becoming involved in RBMS. K. Henningsen will be sending out an email a bit closer to the Preconference, but it would be of great help to have M&PD members on hand to facilitate this second half of the session. If you can plan your travel to arrive in time for this event, Tuesday, June 24, from 4:00-5:00 p.m. that would be much appreciated.

Action Item: K. Henningsen – Mention the need for members from each committee to be present at Orientation at Information Exchange and the Executive Committee meeting.

b. New Members' mixer. K. Henningsen, on behalf of T. Ondrla, reported that the NMM is planned for Las Vegas, will be in an area called the Skywalk. It has lovely windows overlooking the strip. It's Tuesday 5 – 6:30 and already on the website. We'll try to keep the price tag similar to previous years. The bar/apps model seems to be working.

c. New Members' brown bag. K. Henningsen reported that we are scheduled to once again host the New Members' brown bag. It will take place on Wednesday, June 25, in the 22nd floor Club Room. There will be a half hour between the end of the last session and the start of the Brown Bag to allow people to grab their lunch and bring it back. Last year we had a great turnout, but there was a suggestion to clarify the language a bit regarding the need for people to bring their own lunch. If M&PD members are willing, it would be wonderful to have a large turnout from the committee at this event.

Action Item: Local Arrangements Committee — Put together a list of 3-5 take-out restaurants near the hotel that can be distributed at Orientation for new members.

d. 2014 Seminar Update. M. Meyers and A. Nelsen reported (at start of meeting) that they will be hosting a seminar titled “Retrofitting Expectations,” which will aim to generate discussion to get at the core ideas of what special collections librarians need for training and advancement.

e. Future Programming. K. Henningsen will be moderating a discussion session, ‘Displaced Librarians: Curating Local History as a Newcomer,’ at the 2014 Preconference. There will be a New and Emerging Voices session at the 2014 Preconference. Brainstorming for 2015 ensued, with proposals due June 6, 2014. Members present settled on two proposals to submit to the Seminars Committee.

Action Item: Charlotte and Alison — Draft a proposal for collaborative instruction.

Action Item: Maggie and Melanie — Draft a proposal for cross training between special collections and digital humanities.

8. Volunteer opportunities

The following opportunities will be available beginning in July 2014. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Katie:

- Liaison between M&PD and Diversity—Kim Tully volunteered
- Web Liaison

- Buddy Program Assistant—Charlotte Priddle volunteered
- Book Fair Liaison

9. New business

No new business.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Patrick Olson, February 5, 2014.