

RBMS Seminars Committee Meeting
ALA Annual 2015 – San Francisco, CA
Sunday, June 28, 1-2:30 pm
Hilton SF Union Square 23 & 24

Attending (24 total)

Committee Members

Heather Smedberg (UC San Diego, outgoing co-chair), Jennifer Borderud (Baylor University, outgoing co-chair), Haven Hawley (University of Florida), Molly Dotson (Yale University), Ellen Cordes (Yale University), Mark Greenberg (Western Washington University), Melanie Griffin (University of South Florida), Kimberly Tully (Temple University, incoming member), Melissa Nykanen (Pepperdine University), Melissa Hubbard (Case Western University, incoming member), Mattie Taormina (Stanford University, outgoing member), Sarah Horowitz (Haverford College, incoming chair), Veronica Reyes-Escudero (University of Arizona), Maggie Kopp (Brigham Young University, incoming member)

Visitors

Curtis Small (University of Delaware), Lois Fischer Black (Lehigh University), John Overholt (Harvard University), Danielle Culpepper (Rare Book School), Laura Micham (Duke University), Will Hansen (Newberry Library), Jennifer MacDonald (University of Delaware), Katie Henningsen (University of Puget Sound), Allison O'Dell (University of Florida), Michael Inman (New York Public Library)

1. **Call to order.** Smedberg called the meeting to order.
2. **Select recorder for minutes.** Dotson volunteered to record minutes.
3. **Introductions.** Attendees introduced themselves.
4. **Approval of Minutes of January Midwinter Meeting.** Taormina made a motion to approve. Midwinter minutes unanimously approved.
5. **Changes in committee membership and leadership.** Co-chairs Smedberg and Borderud introduced the incoming chair of the committee: Sarah Horowitz. Taormina is also an outgoing member.
6. **Review of seminars presented at the 2015 Conference.** Co-chairs requested feedback from committee members and guests on the 2015 seminars.

All seminars were well attended, and anecdotal feedback has been quite positive so far.

SEMINAR A: *Fugitive Bits: Taking Born-Digital Records from up in the Cloud down to Earth.* No one available to report.

SEMINAR B: *A Balancing Act: Collaborative Instruction in the 21st-Century Special Collection.* Timing issues noted, in particular the plenary running late and delaying the room set-up.

SEMINAR C: *Ladies and Gentlemen, Put Your Hands Together: Successful Technical Services and Public Services Collaboration.* Headcount was 95. Session sparked good questions.

SEMINAR D: *Curating Relevance: Engaged Collection Development*. Format, in particular, was considered a success (i.e., moderator asking questions and panelists responding in turn).

SEMINAR E: *Endangered? Hold? Fold? SOLD! Survival, Adoption, Sale, Mothballing, and Abandonment of Rare Collections and Unique Materials*. Attendee regarded the speakers as engaging but regretted that no time remained for questions.

SEMINAR F: *Working with Publishers' Archives from Acquisition to Access*. Panelists worked to integrate their content and form a cohesive program. Audience engaged for approximately 25 minutes of Q&A.

SEMINAR G: *Tips for Working with Elderly Donors*. Session was standing room only. Perspectives from lawyer and social worker deemed especially valuable. Mentoring angle was a success.

SEMINAR H: *Meeting Researchers Where They Are: A User-Driven Manifesto*. An active learning component included small group discussion of case studies. Organizer noted that because it was so well attended, extra worksheets would have been helpful. Also, one attendee commented that the room set-up was not necessarily conducive to small group discussion and suggested that this should be a consideration for any future seminars with a similar format.

SEMINAR I: *Make It Work: Creative Solutions to Common Problem—A Pecha Kucha-Style Seminar*. Attendees complimented the well-organized session, especially its variety of content and clear focus on the audience. Almost 30 minutes for Q&A remained. A future recommendation included adding a slide at the end with a list of the speakers and their topics.

SEMINAR J: *Digital Humanities and Special Collections: New Tools, Challenges, and Opportunities*. Session ran out of chairs with 124 people in attendance. Room set-up with screen on side helped. 20 minutes remained for Q&A. Conversational format was deemed a success. On-site coordinator used premade signs with 10 minutes, 5 minutes, etc., and the system worked well for timekeeping.

SEMINAR K: *Mess Is Lore: Navigating the Unwieldy World of Social Media*. Format involved moderator asking questions, and the session successfully met its goal of keeping the panel conversational. Although 122 in attendance, the large auditorium still posed a challenge; in particular, the audience questions were lost in the recording.

SEMINAR L: *Bridging Borders between Special Collections and Area Studies: Affinities, Collaborations and Integrations*. Attendee observed many audience members taking notes and indicated that the subject of area studies seemed timely. The inclusion of non-special collections librarians on the panel was noted as a valuable contribution.

SEMINAR M: *Whose History Is It? Community Archives and the Shaping of Memory*. Was incredibly timely and paired well with the final plenary to follow. Session faced technical difficulties at the beginning. Co-chairs reminded liaisons and on-site coordinators to confirm

speaker familiarity with technology ahead of time (especially Mac v. PC). Also, compiling all slides into a single presentation in advance was strongly recommended.

GENERAL COMMENTS: Co-chairs reminded committee members that the role of the liaisons and/or on-site coordinator is to make sure someone (moderator, liaison, onsite coordinator) keeps time for speakers.

Culpepper noted that 13 seminars was a large number. This amount of programming, however, became a necessity with the 500-plus conference registrants.

7. **Review proposed Seminars for 2016 Conference.** Co-chairs circulated copies of proposals, including those received after the deadline.

PROPOSAL 1: *Common Sense, Charm, and a Glass of Wine: Successfully Navigating Donor Relations in Special Collections*. Session still needs a designated organizer. Slate of speakers is not yet finalized; including a development officer was suggested. Focus of proposal clarified as “modern donor relations” or building productive relationships with makers/creators of materials or donors of funds/gifts-in-kind (i.e., not focused on other collection development activities such as bookseller relationships). Session would be geared for all levels of experience. Given the title, a possible alternate venue was also suggested.

PROPOSAL 2: *Librarian as Art Curator*. Members requested additional information and indicated that the proposal would require additional speakers and further refinement.

PROPOSAL 3: *Wish you were here! Encouraging Undergraduate Use of Special Collections through Building and Leveraging an Undergraduate Fellowship Program*. Overholt provided a personal recommendation for his Harvard colleague. Since seminars are typically designed around multiple institutions, suggestions included comparing the Harvard program with those of other institutions and branching out to include scaled down or less formal programs such as internship experiences, undergraduate research grant programs, etc. Adding a student recipient to the panel was also suggested (Henningsen suggested a possible student speaker). Session would need a liaison with experience to coordinate and possibly suggest additional speakers.

PROPOSAL 4: *National Collegiate Book Collecting Contest*. Hansen preferred not to serve as seminar organizer but offered to step in if needed (Cordes offered to help with organizing). Although the list of speakers is not yet finalized (Thomson and Young are maybes), the seminar is designed to offer multiple perspectives on the logistics of the contest as well as the debate regarding its merits.

PROPOSAL 5: *Using RBMS Publications as Linked Data: An Introduction and How-to*. Proposal submitted by the Bibliographic Standards Committee. O’Dell indicated that this seminar was designed with a public services audience in mind, offering essentially a “Linked Data 101” and providing an introduction to the benefits of a catalog built using linked data. Additional speakers to be identified. Technical services topics were noted as largely missing from the 2015 conference program, and there was excitement about having more programming for catalogers.

PROPOSAL 6: *Diversity and Outreach in Miami Area Archives and Special Collections*. Proposal submitted by the RBMS Diversity Committee. Educational component would focus on outreach how-tos. Small indicated that not all speakers had been contacted, but alternates had already been identified. O'Dell commented that this seminar might provide an opportunity to include a speaker from a non-academic library or other smaller institution.

PROPOSAL 7: *Challenges That Face Rare Book Librarians and Archivists at Smaller, Less Well-Funded Institutions and How That Affects the Diversity of Presenters, Committee Members, and Attendees at Conferences*. Questions arose, including whether this seminar was intended as career guidance and also what responsibility the Seminars Committee might have to address these issues. Suggestions included focusing more on what one *can do* beyond one's institutional circumstances. A title change to something more positive was also suggested. To direct the session more toward learning outcomes, some suggested having an experienced and well-established professional (and ideally a current RBMS leader) who had come from a small-library background at the beginning of their career as a moderator or panelist (Athena Jackson was named as one such potential speaker). Another suggestion included diversifying the panel by including someone from a small S unit within a larger institution or a small historical society. The possibility of converting this seminar into a participant-driven session was also mentioned.

PROPOSAL 8: *Updates to the Security Guidelines*. Proposal submitted by the RBMS Security Committee. Black indicated that she was exploring multiple formats, since the session could cover security-related news, advice, and training. Smedberg commented that this was a "timely and timeless" topic. Issues to be addressed might include security at smaller libraries, security when teaching, and security audit tools.

PROPOSAL 9: *Web Archiving*. Conversation during the 2015 ALA Annual Digital Special Collections discussion group indicated this would be a popular seminar topic. Suggestions included looking at the SAA interest group for web archiving and adding speakers from smaller, less well-funded institutions to cover different models/perspectives on web archiving.

PROPOSAL 10: *Revisiting the Standards and Ethical Conduct for Rare Book Librarianship*. Questions raised included: which set of ethical considerations would be the focus (e.g., relationships between librarians and booksellers, personal v. institutional collecting, etc.); whether this topic might dovetail with the proposed "Common Sense" donor relations seminar; and might this topic be better suited as an individual paper proposal. Hawley indicated that organizer might need help shaping this topic as a seminar and contacting additional speakers.

PROPOSAL 11: *Succession Planning for Rare Materials Cataloging: Challenges and Strategies*. Another proposal submitted by the Bibliographic Standards Committee. Comments indicated this would be a topic of interest. Attendees stressed the importance of involving catalogers and an LIS educator to cover trends in technical services as well as current institutional shifts.

PROPOSAL 12: *Expect the Unexpected or You'll Never Find It: Sparking Creativity in Student Research through Exposure to Special Collections and Secondary Sources*. Attendees noted the inventive format, but many feared this proposal was too similar to a 2014 conference seminar on teaching. Others expressed concern that the proposal read more like a case study than a seminar.

PROPOSAL 13: *Justice & Mercy Displayed: Balancing the Demands of Work & Family*. Proposal submitted by the Membership and Professional Development Committee. Comments indicated demand for this topic. Topic was also on the short list for participant-driven sessions. Suggestions included: looking at how the RBMS conference/organization could be changed to address work/life issues; being mindful of the individuality of each situation; contacting an HR representative to speak about state/federal laws; and including a non-married and/or non-parent panelist to provide yet another perspective.

PROPOSAL 14: *Soft Skills That Librarians, Curators, and Archivists Need to Be Successful in Their Careers*. Although this proposal bears resemblance to a recent session on “What You Didn’t Learn in Library School,” others noted how the seminar could cover a lot of angles, including: newer professionals v. early-career managers, introversion v. extroversion, facing change, fostering collaboration, managing personnel, etc. Members suggested the proposal could be improved by clarifying the seminar’s focus and educational takeaways, for example: skills v. self-awareness, development opportunities (furthermore organizational development, especially when committed to diversity), how managers might define and encourage the development of soft skills, etc.

PROPOSAL 15: *Futurists, Riot Grrls and Other Radicals: How ‘Zines Transform Special Collections*. Suggestions included: exploring ‘zines as a communication form, tying in with Miami-area collections, and bringing in someone from the Zine Librarian (un)Conference. Hawley indicated this seminar would be geared primarily toward an audience unfamiliar with ‘zines. Another attendee suggested this could take the form of a participant-driven session (i.e., hands-on examination of ‘zines and/or conversation with ‘zine creators).

PROPOSAL 16: *Water Water Everywhere!* Members suggested the disaster recovery theme while important and of interest, might be a perfect fit for the 2017 RBMS Conference in Iowa City (even though Seminars do not need to fit the theme of the conference, the appropriateness in this case was noted).

PROPOSAL 17: *Balancing the Sacred: Considering the Personal Nature of Research and Collecting Alongside the Goals of the “Open Door” and Free and Unrestricted Access*. Suggestions included: adding a speaker who collects/digitizes and provides access to sacred materials (e.g., Voodoo archives at University of Florida); possibly inviting Michael Suarez, since this seminar proposal was designed in response to his 2015 RBMS conference presentation; and accounting for the physical space of special collections and its tension between openness and specialness/access and barriers.

PROPOSAL 18: *Roundtable Discussion on the Recruitment and Retention of Librarians of Color*. Proposal submitted by recent IMLS-RBS fellowship recipients. Format would be a series of Q&A. Suggestions included: inviting speakers from a range of institutions; focusing on community outreach; offering recommendations for successful initiatives. The idea was well received. Also suggested that this seminar would benefit from an experienced committee liaison since the proposers are newer to RBMS and the format proposed is not the traditional panel, to make sure Seminar objectives are met.

8. **Next steps: timelines and deadlines.** Applicants will have until July 15 to respond to any committee comments and revise/resubmit proposals as needed. Committee members will then have two weeks to review and vote after the slate of proposals is finalized.
9. **Other business.** None.
10. **Adjournment.**