

# EDITOR'S NOTE

*Sidney E. Berger*

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The present issue of RBML is my last as editor, after six rewarding and trying years. In this time the journal has seen prosperity on several fronts. The subscriber base is up, the number of advertisers has crept up year after year, the journal has run in the black, and—as gratifying for me—the submission of articles has given me a variety of materials to choose from.

One of the things I promised in my very first issue was that I would try to open up the journal to a wider range of topics, authors, and subjects than it had had in earlier years. As the field of rare book librarianship expanded, so did the focus of RBML. Previous editors made the journal appropriate for their audiences; I tried to do the same for what I saw as an audience that had expanding, broadening interests. This seemed appropriate since the world of rare books and manuscripts—their acquisition, cataloging, funding, user base, hardware and software, facilities, and movement through the world—was changing. Indeed, we now favor the term “special collections departments” over the older “rare book departments.”

This changing world will be the subject of my contribution to this issue of RBML. And in this I am joined by Michèle V. Cloonan. We look at the future of “librarianship,” with an understanding that our responsibilities no longer remain isolated from those at other institutions. With new media, new hardware and software, new technologies in preservation and conservation, and so on, libraries and others (museums, archives, and historical societies, for example) face the same fiscal, legal, and technical challenges. Innovations in cataloging, handling, and disseminating information will bring these institutions together.

The second article in this issue, by Sid Huttner, looks at the profession in the digital age and what we must do to keep current and to continue to be responsive to a new and more diverse clientele.

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Similarly, Susan Allen talks about a particular clientele and how special collections can build bridges to undergraduate students who could profit from our holdings.

John Bloomberg-Rissman then brings us up to date on the field of short title catalogs, some of the most remarkable and useful reference tools of our profession. In a way, these catalogs address the issues of both the Huttner and the Allen essays, for it is through these tools that we continue to bring information to our patrons.

Finally, Anna R. Bryan offers up a brief bibliographical note on the provenance of a scrapbook in her university's collection. We have published other notes on provenance, and this one points up the importance of looking into the history of the materials in our possession.

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In concluding my last Editor's Note for RBML, I would like to acknowledge a number of people who have assisted me along the way. Sid Huttner, our stalwart and tireless book review editor, has done a truly remarkable job of securing many intelligent, well written reviews of books pertinent to the lives of our readers. We owe Sid (the other Sid) our deepest appreciation for all of his fine efforts. (With our stepping down, incidentally, RBML loses its distinction of being the only journal in the universe edited by two Sids.)

I have been fortunate to have had the assistance of a responsive and intelligent editorial board who has guided the selection and content of all of the articles appearing in the last 12 issues of RBML.

Mary Ellen Davis, Hugh Thompson, Pam Spiegel, and the many other people working in the ACRL Publications office have helped shepherd the journal to completion in style.

The many authors who have contributed articles have kept the journal alive, and I have had the pleasure of reading their essays and working with them to bring their efforts to fruition.

The businesses that have advertised in RBML in the past (and who will, I hope, continue to support it) have been the difference between our sinking or surviving. We have survived because of their generous and kind support.

And the administrators in my own institution, the University of California, Riverside—people like my supervisor Peter Briscoe—have encouraged me in my editorship and supported my efforts for six years. They also deserve my thanks.

Finally, I wish the future editors, Lisa Browar and Marvin Taylor, all the best.

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A last note: I wish to thank Robin Price for her imaginative work on the cover of this issue. This is the first issue of RBML to have a letterpress-printed cover.

Adieu.