

Jennifer K. Sheehan\*

## Editor's Note

---

In some ways, this Spring 2017 issue is a natural continuation of what we found in Fall 2016. In these two issues, I've been pleased to see (can we call it a "trend" with only two points of reference?) more international content in *RBM*: Laila Hussein Moustafa's profile of a library in Afghanistan in the Fall 2016 issue, and now Mariette Atallah's discussion of an archival collection at the American University of Beirut. Another common thread is the topic of anthropodermic bibliopegy. Last fall, Jacob Gordon discussed the ethics of identifying anthropodermic bindings. Now Gerald Chaudron expands on one of the examples, in this case at the University of Memphis, and presents a firsthand account of the identification process and its aftermath. Two other articles depart from last fall's themes and provide different perspectives: Kristen Nyitray and Sally Stieglitz's experiences in acquisition through community engagement, and Jason Dean and Emily Grover's discussion (from a shared student/staff perspective) of how social media can stimulate bibliography research for special collections student workers.

I had a difficult time selecting a cover image for this issue, because this will be my last one as editor. I contemplated options like a microphone drop or a fade to black, but somehow they seemed a little self-indulgent. Then I stumbled across a cartoon from an 1875 issue of *Punch* that struck me as appropriate. Perhaps no less self-indulgent, but at least sufficiently bibliographic.

Someone reminded me of a quote from the movie *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* the other day, something along the lines of "I guess that's what happens in the end, you start thinking about the beginning." Which made me curious—where WAS our profession, and its representative journal, in 1986 when *RBML/RBM* began? Would the cultural heritage community of 1986 recognize us as peers today, and vice versa? The short answer is yes.

Many of us would assert that Terry Belanger is the father of modern rare books librarianship, with his progeny inhabiting special collections around the world, so it seems fitting that we turn to him as a source. In the very first issue of *Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship*, Terry stated, "as regards rare book staffing, there is no substitute for intelligence, knowledge, industry, guts, and flair. Rare book libraries cannot function properly if their staffs appear to consist of solutions

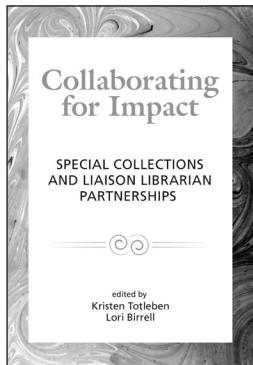
\*© 2017 by Jennifer Sheehan (CC BY-NC [<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>]).

to personnel problems in other divisions of the library.”<sup>1</sup> You don’t get to choose your offspring, but based on the savvy, engaging, thought-provoking content that *RBML/RBM*’s authors have produced over 30+ years, I’d like to believe that Terry is, for the most part, pleased with his posterity.

I’m grateful for the past three years, which have given me the opportunity to engage directly with those of you who are on the front lines and behind the scenes, working in and with cultural heritage collections and contemplating what your experiences might mean for the rest of us. During that time, we’ve celebrated a milestone anniversary for the journal and moved to an open access model of publication. I suspect that *RBM* will continue to evolve; and, as I pass the reins to the next editor, I’m excited to continue reading the journal (in print—come on: you know you want to subscribe!) as it provides reflections on our past and explorations of our future.

1. Terry Belanger, “Rare Books and Special Collections in American Libraries: Seeing the Sites,” *Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship* 1, no. 1: 22.

## NEW FROM ACRL!



978-0-8389-8883-1

Special collections and liaison librarian partnerships can have a tremendous impact on the work within the library and the university community. Designed to guide the reader through three different themes—collection stewardship; projects, research, and exhibitions; and instruction—*Collaborating for Impact* offers inspiration and case studies detailing how these departments can impact research, teaching, and learning by working collaboratively.

Available in the ALA Store at  
<http://www.alastore.ala.org>



Association of College & Research Libraries  
A division of the American Library Association

Advancing learning  
Transforming scholarship

Association of College & Research Libraries  
50 E. Huron, Chicago IL 60611  
1.800.545.2433 | acrl@ala.org