Richard W. Clement

EDITOR'S NOTE

THIS ISSUE MARKS THE BEGINNING of a new editorship for *RBM*, but longtime readers will notice little difference in the journal—and that is a good thing. *RBM* remains committed to exploring the wide range of issues that engage all of us who work with primary materials, whether we are librarians, curators, archivists, dealers, collectors, or scholars. My predecessors, Lisa Browar and Marvin Taylor, did the most difficult work in recreating *RBM* out of *RBML* four years ago, and I am committed to maintain the direction they established.

The challenge of making a success of *RBM* is a delicate balancing act. Because *RBM* is an ACRL journal and the *de facto* journal of RBMS, it has a core readership (and an obligation to RBMS and its members), and that fact tends to focus the subject range of articles narrowly on special collections librarianship. And that brings us back to *RBML*. This is not to suggest that the subject of rare books and manuscripts librarianship is inappropriate for *RBM*—far from it. Special collections librarianship remains a major focus, but I also must call attention to other perspectives that can give new meaning to our work and which also have a place here. There are many others who share our interests and concerns with primary materials, and we will welcome their contributions. In that same spirit, I must be mindful that the contents of each issue of *RBM* be of wider interest to these other communities and groups. This balancing act—to expand our readership without losing the core constituency—is at the heart of the *raison d'être* of *RBM*: to engage all those involved with “rare books, manuscripts and cultural heritage.” That was the vision of

Lisa Browar and Marvin Taylor when they founded *RBM*, and it is a vision that endures.

Achieving this vision will not be easy. Indeed, those of us who live in Kansas are often reminded when we encounter such situations of the state's apt motto: *Ad astra per aspera* (to the stars through adversity). As *RBM* reaches for the stars, beset by some adversity, it has the great good fortune to be supported by an Editorial Board whose members have elected to continue with a new editor: members include Jean Ashton (Columbia University), Kathryn Beam (University of Michigan); Jackie Dooley (University of California, Irvine), Christian Dupont (Syracuse University), Chatham Ewing (Washington University), James Fox (University of Oregon), and Henry Raine (New York Historical Society Library).

The two articles in this issue both deal with especially important issues. Suzy Taraba's elegant description of how one can effectively use artists' books in special collections underscores the importance of one fundamental aspect of our work: teaching with primary materials. Her article is particularly significant because it focuses on artists' books, a genre often marginalized in special collections. Julie Grob's piece on diversity marks a milestone for RBMS. As Grob demonstrates through archival research and interviews, RBMS has lagged behind similar organizations in confronting our striking lack of diversity. Through the work of the Diversity Task Force, only just completed, Grob lays out the issues and charts strategies for our collective and individual action.

Ad astra per aspera— *RBM* has the potential to reach those stars, and I invite you to join us. If you have ideas on where the journal should go, issues we should deal with, constituencies we should engage, please let me know. *RBM* is always pleased to receive submissions, and I encourage you to contact me to discuss a possible submission early on. If *RBM*

succeeds and reaches the stars, it will have been because we—as individuals and as a community—have persevered in our shared commitments to the fundamental values of our profession by sharing our opinions and discoveries with all readers of this journal.