

Diane Dias De Fazio

Editor's Note: Work Is Work

In the autumn, my Editor's note was, in part, an accounting of the work we'd done, and a hesitant pledge in uncertain times. Writing in February to be read in May or June now seems less soaked in doubt, though we are awash in uncertainty.

Developing this issue took over a year, and what a difference a year made. This issue brings dauntless authors, who collectively took an honest look at the special collections profession and—despite revealing uncomfortable truths—herein provide pathways, for all of us who nonetheless *want* to *remain* working in archives and special collections, to demand better for ourselves, our colleagues, and the future of the field. Melanie Griffin, Yuzhou Bai, and Ruth Xing helped me critically assess my own workplace, and worth. Perhaps you'll find yourself musing, like I did, "There are still universities advertising special collections and archives jobs that require only a bachelor's degree?" Or: "If more than three studies are published by different organizations, and all of those studies are created by different individuals, and they all use different study participants, but nevertheless all the results *concur*—that contingent, contract, term, and part-time positions are unhealthy and discouraging—why do those roles still exist?"

This issue aimed to be thematic, with articles only on "jobs, recruitment, hiring, and retention," and, in a way, it remains that. Griffin, Bai, and Xing will inform how the field considers attracting new talent and keeping us all from the precipice of burnout and career abandonment. The RBMS Membership and Professional Development Committee's Rebecca Bramlett, Sophia Dahab, Eric Friede, and Michael Seminara asked RBMS members, "Tell Us About Yourself," and (to borrow a phrase) the results will surprise you! Gemma Steele and Hayley Webster reflect on widespread inconsistencies in marking materials to safeguard our collections—that being the ethical, physical, and philosophical work of special collections practitioners. Jen Hoyer's piece expands the definition of "librarian's [writing] work" in that it is not a case study but, rather, marks the return (and reimagining) of interviews to *RBM*, spotlighting an author's investigation of a historic librarian whose name is so familiar we all almost think we knew her: Belle da Costa Greene (1879–1950). Finally, Mara Caelin and Lyric Grimes challenge us to rethink the workplace, those it represents, and our collective reputation, in their abbreviated papers from the annual RBMS conference session, *Power of New Voices*. Rounding out the issue, RBMS Chair Grif-

© 2025 by Diane Dias De Fazio (CC BY-NC [<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>]).

fin and RBMS25 conference co-chairs Beth Kilmarx and Jeremy Brett (who is also a Board member) provide updates. This issue declares, again, that our Section has something to say, and we are willing risk-takers who strive to do what's right (also: some of us are tired).

My ACRL Editorial colleague, Kristen Totleben, provided an inspiring Editor's note in a recent issue of *C & RL*, where she outlined the work of an Editor and Editorial Board within our parent division of ALA. The following borrows from that transparent offering.

Selected Accomplishments, 2024–2025

- Your Friendly Neighborhood Editor, along with *RBM*'s Reviews Editor John Henry Adams, coordinated and participated in an online panel that brought together publishing leadership from the American Printing History Association (APHA), the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing (SHARP), *Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America*, and *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library Information Practice and Research*.
- The Editor and Reviews Editor presented a virtual poster at RBMS 2024 designed to present a forum for early-career professionals interested in publishing.
- Updated submissions guidelines were added to rbm.acrl.org, with specifications for image quantities and word counts.

Selected ACRL Work Plan Activities, 2024–2025

- Sarah Allison and Joel Minor volunteered to coordinate a subcommittee to document processes at *RBM*. As part of that subcommittee's work, sharing the submission evaluation rubric is under development, as is a draft scorecard.
- Jolie Braun, Margaret Gamm, Alison Fraser, and Fiona Kovacaj volunteered to coordinate an editorial board subcommittee to create, implement, and provide results of a reader survey. The survey was reviewed by ACRL before it went live in April, and the subcommittee will make their report publicly available soon.
- Jennifer Gunter King and Virginia Sytsma volunteered to work with RBMS social media to expand *RBM*'s outreach efforts, so tell your friends to follow RBMS on BlueSky!

Future Plans

- *RBM* is creating a stance on generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). By the time this issue goes to print, we will have had one open meeting to discuss identifying priorities and policy.
- I hope to facilitate a workshop for early-career special collections librarians and archivists on writing effective scholarly abstracts and conference proposals.

- Finally, house style idiosyncrasies aside, we will continue to refer to the large body of water south of Louisiana, west of Florida, and northeast of the Yucatan as the “Gulf of Mexico,” and we will continue to provide a home for conversation-provoking scholarship. ‘Til next we read again!

Correction

A book review in the print version of *RBM* volume 25, no. 2 misspelled the surname of the book’s author. His name is Georgios Boudalis, not Boulais.

The Editor recognizes an ethical responsibility to promptly correct all factual errors, large and small, and encourages you to contact us if you think you see a mistake. Messages can be sent to diane.diasdefazio@gmail.com. To learn more about how corrections are handled, readers are encouraged to view a similar page by the New York Times at <https://www.nytimes.com/article/new-york-times-corrections.html>.