Beth Whittaker

Editor's Note

THE ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE of *RBM* represent the variety of experiences special collections professionals face as we confront, as library administrators are fond of saying, “the new normal” of reduced resources and increased expectations.

Anne Bahde explores how to provide access to “the stuff,” actual historical materials rather than digital surrogates, in the context of large lecture style classes held outside the traditional confines of our reading rooms. In a suite of articles resulting from a session at the 2010 RBMS preconference, Merrilee Proffitt, Mark Allen Greene, and Michael Foxe describe letting go of some of our traditional work, our expectations, and our anxieties in order to respond creatively to the new realities which we face. Finally, Kelli Hansen turns a mirror to our profession as it stands today, reflected through the lens of job advertisements.

This is the first issue of my second term as editor of *RBM*, and I continue to be confronted with exciting challenges facing publishing a professional and scholarly journal. For those of you who do not know, ACRL's *other* journal, *College & Research Libraries*, became open access this past spring. This means that all content of that journal, from 1997 to the present, is freely available to all in electronic format. This decision is certainly in keeping with ACRL's commitment to support open access to scholarly work. I would direct you to the FAQ (<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/publications/oafaq.cfm>) for more information about *C&RL*.

Of course, this exciting development for our “sister journal” raises a host of questions about the future publication and distribution of *RBM*. I have been involved in such discussions my entire first term, and honestly do not expect them to end before I cease to be editor. I am increasingly convinced that open access to the electronic version of *RBM* is not only inevitable from a publication point of view, but a logical outgrowth of our professional's laudable commitment to the free exchange of information and ideas.

On a somewhat related note (perhaps?) the next issue of *RBM* will break with recent tradition. Instead of focusing on papers presented at the previous year's RBMS preconference, it will feature a mix of articles from the regular submission process. This will allow us to publish several exciting articles that have been waiting quite a while to see the light of day. It is a good time to remember that much RBMS preconference content is available online in its “native” format, and to thank those who make that possible.

I do not know what the future holds, but I am more excited than ever about the role this journal plays in sharing information in the fields of special collections, manuscripts, and archives.