Jennifer K. Sheehan

Editor's Note

Over the past year, I've tried to take the pulse of our profession, getting a sense of what people are doing, what the most pressing concerns might be, and how *RBM* can be a reflection of all of the above. As I've been asking colleagues for advice on new directions to explore for *RBM*, more than once someone has suggested, "What about opinion pieces or reflections from people who have been in the field a while?" Those of you who have read *RBM* for many years will likely recognize this as a resurrection of the "Notes" section that can be found in past issues. While I can't guarantee the consistency of its appearance in future issues of the journal, I **have** decided to include one of these "reflections" in the current issue (hence the cover image).

For this "Reflections" piece, the author is Eric v.d. Luft, who, in his own words, "straddled the time when 'scholar librarians' were dominant in special collections to the time when 'techie librarians' had pretty much taken over. I was right in the middle of this transition at several institutions." Luft has reached beyond a standard editorial and heavily cited support for his claims, and he offers examples from his career to illustrate broader changes at play over the last four decades. His commentary, and others like it, allow us to benefit from the experiences of more veteran members of our field without confining their words to a formal research paper. After all, how does one write formally about personal experience?

These opinion pieces offer valuable insight into evolving and emerging issues in the profession—and others that have persisted over time. I'd like to urge other...ahem..."seasoned" members of the cultural heritage community to present your informal perspectives on your careers. And in case you're wondering, yes: we welcome those of you who have served in nontraditional roles.

The other articles in this issue explore a range of challenges and opportunities that arise while working with and in special collections, including: a profile of a traditionally underused resource, an exploration of collections assessment, and a pilot project on interlibrary loan of rare materials. Richard L. Saunders gives us a glimpse into the history of newspaper production, and how newspaper morgues (i.e., clippings files) can fill an information need that microfilm and digitization may overlook. The other two articles are case studies: Anna Dysert explores one method of collections assessment in special collections, and Blynne Olivieri and

Angela M. Mehaffey offer their experiences in implementing an interlibrary loan program for special collections materials.

Part of what I love about *RBM* is its ability to share awareness and information among culture heritage professionals without becoming too esoteric. I think we're all searching for ways to do our jobs better, faster, stronger. Whether we're pondering the wisdom of those who have come before, or experimenting with services and techniques that are (as yet) unproven, we can make theory and practice accessible and offer them up to a wide swath of current and future practitioners. I encourage all of you to continue submitting your work to *RBM*, so that we as a profession may benefit from standing on your shoulders.

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RBMS 2016 CONFERENCE

Opening Doors to Collaboration, Outreach and Diversity
The Biltmore Hotel — Coral Gables, Florida
June 21–24, 2016

Opening Doors to Collaboration, Outreach and Diversity seeks to demonstrate the myriad ways special collections and archives can engage and interact with multiple constituencies. Diversity in this context is understood as a broad collaboration with many cultural communities, a re-imagining of the types of partnerships we can create, and a broad conception of cultural heritage formats and materials that might otherwise be overlooked by traditional collecting practices. This conference is intended to serve as a venue in which the special collections community can have productive conversations about its potential engagement with a broader range of cultural materials than it might traditionally. The communities and cultures in which institutions are situated strongly influence what is collected, how resources are described, and how materials are accessed and used. The boundaries of special collections and archives are fluid; they not only document our shared cultural heritage, they are integrally shaped by the cultural circumstances in which they exist. We must open our doors and our minds to find ways to continually engage in productive conversation.

Registration opens February 2016.