

ies and scanner-generated, machine-readable files in lieu of sending hard copy or photocopies by mail.

The three phases of testing over the 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-year life of the project will involve the four State University Centers at Buffalo, Albany, Binghamton, and Stony Brook; the Buffalo Health Sciences and Science and Engineering Libraries; and Buffalo's total library system linked to 30 Western New York corporations, law offices and business and financial

organizations that have agreed to cooperate.

The third phase is designed to show whether funds derived from a fee-based service to Western New York clients could generate enough funds to subsidize the service for Buffalo faculty and students. The administrative base of the project will be an electronic bulletin board that will be set up on the SUNY-Buffalo mainframe computer. ■■

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## Guidelines for the security of rare book, manuscript, and other special collections: A draft

Prepared by the RBMS Security Committee

Gary L. Menges, Chair

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*A hearing will be held on these guidelines in Dallas on Saturday, June 24.*

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**T**he final version of "Guidelines Regarding Thefts in Libraries" was approved at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in 1988 and appeared in the March 1988 issue of *C&RL News*. The ACRL Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Security Committee, following the completion of the Theft Guidelines, undertook the revision of "Guidelines for the Security of Rare Book, Manuscript, and Other Special Collections," published in *C&RL News* in March 1982. The revised text of the Security Guidelines, as approved by the RBMS Executive and Standards Committee, appears below.

The revised guidelines include references to the Theft Guidelines and to the RBMS "Guidelines for the Transfer of Rare Materials from the General Collections to Special Collections," both approved since the 1982 Security Guidelines were issued. A

new section on transfers from the general collections (Section VIII) has been added. A number of other additions or changes have been made to the text to clarify or make more specific the guidelines. For example, in Section IV the sentences beginning "Fire and emergency exits..." "A reception area..." "A coatroom..." and "Combinations to vaults..." have been added. There are also a number of editorial changes. For example, "Security officer" and "Security Task Force" used in the 1982 guidelines have been changed to "Library Security Officer" and "Security Planning Group" to make the terminology consistent with that used in the Theft Guidelines. The only changes in the Marking Guidelines (Appendix 1) are in the introduction. Previously the guidelines were "addressed only to those libraries who elect to use marking." The

RBMS Security Committee now feels that marking is essential and "recommends that libraries use marking as part of their overall security arrangements...."

Following ACRL/ALA rules, a public hearing on the revised Security guidelines will be held by the RBMS Security Committee at the ALA Annual Conference in Dallas. Members wishing to make comments and suggest revisions should plan to attend, or you may write beforehand to the chair of the RBMS Security Committee: Gary L. Menges, Head, Special Collections and Preservation Division, Suzzallo Library, FM-25, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195.

## I. Introduction

One of the major problems in the administration of rare book, manuscript, and other special collections is the security of those collections. Thefts have greatly increased because of public awareness of the value of materials. Rare book, manuscript, and other special collection administrators have the responsibility of securing their collections from theft. Security arrangements will vary from institution to institution, depending on staffing, physical setting, and use of the collections.

Thefts have also presented a problem for rare book and manuscript dealers, who may unknowingly sell stolen materials if thefts go unreported. The Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America has established policies which place the responsibility for reporting thefts with the libraries which suffer them, and libraries should pay particular attention to their legal and procedural responsibilities in their attempt to recover stolen library materials.

These guidelines are written to identify the general topics to be considered in an adequate security program.

## II. The Library Security Officer

The RBMS *Guidelines Regarding Thefts in Libraries* lists as its first priority in preventing thefts that a senior staff member should be appointed Library Security Officer, with the responsibility and authority to carry out the security program, and a knowledge of all library security needs, particularly those of Special Collections. The identity of the Library Security Officer should be made widely known, especially among those persons responsible for handling incoming telephone calls and letters. The Library Security Officer's first priority should be to plan a program, starting with a survey of the collections and reviews of the physical layout and staff. (S)he should also seek the advice and assistance of appropriate personnel, such as institutional administrators, corporate counsel, life safety officers, and of outside consultants from law enforcement agencies and insurance companies. The Library Security Officer may recommend that a Security Planning Group be named to bring

problem areas to the Officer's attention and to recommend solutions. A security consultant may be brought in to assist in determining the major threats to the collection.

## III. The security policy

A policy on the security of the collections should be written by the Library Security Officer, in consultation with the administration, staff, legal authorities, and other knowledgeable persons. The policy should include a standard operating procedure on dealing with a theft: determining the circumstances of the theft, reporting the theft to the proper authorities within an organization, and to the local and (where appropriate) national legal authorities. See the RBMS *Guidelines Regarding Thefts in Libraries* for steps to take in establishing adequate policies. The Security Policy should be kept up-to-date with current names and telephone numbers of institutional and law enforcement contacts.

## IV. The special collections building or area

The special collections building or area should have as few access points as possible, with the same entry and exit for both patrons and staff. Fire and emergency exits should be strictly controlled and alarmed, and not used for regular access. The public should have access only to the public areas, not work areas or stack space. A reading room or search room should be identified as the only area in which materials may be used, where the readers can be carefully watched at all times by staff trained for this purpose. A reception area should be set up to receive readers. A security guard or staff member should check readers' research materials before they go into the secure area, and when they leave the area. A coatroom and lockers should be provided for readers' personal belongings. Keys and their equivalents (e.g., keycards) are especially vulnerable items; the keys to secure areas should be issued on an as-needed basis to staff, with master keys secured against easy access. There should be a controlled check-out system for all keys. Combinations to vaults should also have limited distribution and should be changed each time there is a staff change involving a position with access to the vault.

## V. The staff

An atmosphere of trust and concern for the collections is probably the best insurance against theft by the staff, although close and equitable supervision is essential. The staff should be chosen carefully. Background checks and bonding of staff members may be considered through regular institutional channels. Careful personnel management is an ongoing necessity; a weak point in any security system is disgruntled staff who may seek revenge through the theft, destruction, or willful

mishandling of collections. The same security procedures should be applied to staff as to readers, including keeping records of use of materials by staff, checking their belongings when entering and leaving the secure area, and keeping unnecessary personal items out of the secure work areas. The Library Security Officer should make training the staff in security measures a high priority. Staff should know their legal and procedural responsibilities for security and know their own and the readers' legal rights in handling possible problems. All staff should be made aware of and follow established procedures.

## VI. The readers

The special collections administrator must carefully balance the responsibility of making materials available to researchers with the responsibility for ensuring the security of the materials. Readers should be required to present valid photographic identification and a reasonable explanation of their need to use the materials. This check is especially important in the use of archival and manuscript collections. Each reader should have an orientation to the collections requested and to the rules governing the use of the collections. Readers should not be allowed to take extraneous personal materials (for example, notebooks, briefcases, heavy coats, books, or voluminous papers) into the reading room. Lockers or some kind of secure area should be provided for personal items. The readers should be watched at all times, and not allowed to hide their work behind bookcases, booktrucks, piles of books, or any other obstacles. Readers should be limited to only those books, manuscripts, or other items which are needed at one time to perform the research at hand. Each item should be checked before being given to the reader, and when returned; staff should check condition, content, and completeness. Readers should be required to return all library materials before leaving the reading room area, even if they plan to return later in the day to continue their research. Readers should not be allowed to trade materials, nor to have access to materials another reader has checked out. The special collections staff must be able to identify who has used which material by keeping adequate check-out records. These records should be kept indefinitely.

## VII. The collections

Administrators of special collections must be able to identify positively the materials in their collections to be able legally to claim recovered stolen property. There are several means to this end. For example, adequate accession records should be kept, and cataloging and listings in finding aids should be as detailed as possible, including copy-specific information which will provide positive identification. Other means are records and lists kept to fulfill the requirements of insurance poli-

cies. Unprocessed materials should not be made available to researchers without the imposition of appropriate controls. There are several ways of making the materials themselves identifiable: marking with indelible ink following the *RBMS Guidelines for Marking* (see Appendix 1 below), other forms of marking, and keeping photo- or microform copies of valuable materials. Condition reports have also proved useful. *Marking is essential*. Photo- or microform copying must of necessity in most collections be a selective process, with careful thought given to which materials are to be so protected. The more valuable items should also be segregated from the collections into higher security areas and used by readers appropriately under more restricted conditions.

## VIII. Transfers from the general collections

Almost all libraries' open stacks contain rare materials, acquired years before, which remain unidentified and unprotected. Recently reported cases of library thefts show that many thieves search open stacks rather than try to infiltrate special collections stacks or to outwit monitored reading rooms' procedures. Libraries should use the *RBMS Guidelines for the Transfer of Rare Materials from the General Collections to Special Collections* to help identify rare materials on the open shelves in need of protection.

## IX. Legal and procedural responsibilities

The administrators of special collections and the Library Security Officer must know the laws for dealing with library theft applicable in their state and must convey this information to staff. Staff members must know their legal rights in stopping thefts, while not infringing on the rights of the suspected thief. The Library Security Officer must report any thefts to the law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction in the area, and must take responsibility for requesting action from legal authorities.

Libraries must assert ownership through the timely reporting of stolen materials. Appropriate agencies to which to report include the FBI, the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America, and *Bookline Alert, Missing Books and Manuscripts (BAMBAM)*, a national program for theft control. An additional possibility is an advertisement in the Stolen Books column of *AB Bookman's Weekly*. Listings in *BAMBAM* (which may be done anonymously) and in *AB Bookman's Weekly* will help to prevent unknowing transfer of stolen materials and to facilitate their return. See the *RBMS Guidelines Regarding Thefts in Libraries* for reporting details.

## X. Conclusion

Security is a major concern of the entire special collections community and must be addressed in each individual repository. These Guidelines are



necessarily brief. Further information is available through the professional literature, professional organizations, and consultants both within the rare book, manuscript, and special collections community and in law enforcement and insurance professions. Security is perhaps the most important and most difficult area of special collections administration. Still, the efforts of the entire staff with the final responsibility vested in one senior staff member, consultation and cooperation with local and other law enforcement agencies, and reporting losses to proper authorities will result in deterring thieves and in recovering stolen materials.

#### APPENDIX 1

### GUIDELINES FOR MARKING RARE BOOKS, MANUSCRIPTS, AND OTHER SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

#### I. Introduction

There has been much thoughtful discussion in recent years regarding the appropriateness of permanently marking rare books, manuscripts, and other special collections. Recent cases of theft have shown that the clear identification of library material is vital if the material, once recovered, is to be returned to its rightful owner. Marking is essential. The guidelines which follow are intended to aid libraries and other institutions in marking their materials and are intended primarily to provide as consistent and uniform a practice as possible, given the variety and special nature of the materials concerned. The RBMS Security Committee recommends that libraries and other institutions use marking as part of their overall security arrangements; and that they attempt to strike a balance between the implications of two major considerations: deterrence (visibility, permanence) and integrity of the document (both physical and aesthetic).

#### II. General recommendations

General recommendations are:

1. That a form of permanent ink be used for marking.
2. That secret marking as a primary identification device be avoided.
3. That the ownership mark be placed where it can easily be located (but not in a place that is too prominent or disfiguring).
4. That it be placed away from text or image.

For the sake of uniformity and other advantages, marking in ink has been preferred to embossing or perforating. Visible marking is meant to reduce or obviate the need for secret marking, which lacks an immediate deterrence value. Placement of the ownership mark will always be a matter of careful and trained judgment, varying according to each document. For the purposes of these guidelines, the place selected should be as close to the lower portion as possible, on the verso, at a site that is blank

on both sides of the leaf and removed sufficiently from the text or image on the side of the leaf on which it is placed to avoid disfigurement or confusion. Where circumstances or peculiarities of the item do not allow the above to be readily followed, marking may be deferred until further consensus is reached.

#### III. Specific recommendations

Marks should be located as follows:

1. *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*. On the verso of the first leaf of principal text, on the inner margin, approximate to the last line of text. Additional markings may be needed when the item is a composite manuscript or otherwise has a substantial text that may be broken away without noticeable injury to the volume. The location of each subsequent marking would be the same, i.e., lower inner margin approximate to the last line of the text. When the manuscript is too tightly bound to mark in the inner margin, alternate locations may be made in any blank area of the verso, as close to the lower portion of the text as possible. The mark should be so placed that it may not be excised without extreme cropping. (In manuscripts of double columns the mark might be located in the blank area between the two columns.)

2. *Incunabula and Early Printed Books*. On the verso of the first leaf of principal text on the lower inner margin, approximate to the last line of text. Follow the same instructions as given under *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts* above, with the same precautions and alternatives.

3. *Leaf Books, Single Leaves from Manuscripts, etc.* On either verso or recto, at the lower portion of the text or image of each leaf. The choice may be determined to the document itself if one of the sides has more importance (owing to an illustration, manuscript annotation, etc.) The ownership mark should then be placed on the reverse side.

4. *Broadsides, Prints, Maps, Single Leaf Letters and Documents*. On the verso, in the lower margin of the area occupied by text or image or the opposite side. Care should be taken here to insure that the specific area is blank on the side opposite to that which is to carry the mark. If the back side is entirely blank, the ownership mark may be placed freely in areas other than the lower margin.

5. *Multiple Leaf Manuscript Letters, Documents, Newspapers, Ephemera*. On the verso of the first leaf in the lower margin. It may be appropriate to place an additional mark later in the work if a portion (such as a famous signature, paper seal, first appearance of a poem, etc.) would have independent value if detached or excised.

6. *Modern Printed Books, Pamphlets, Serial Issues*. On the verso of the first leaf of the opening text, directly below the bottom line. The placement here is designed to spare the title-page, half-title, dedication page, etc., which in many valuable productions have a separate aesthetic appeal

not to be disfigured even on the verso. As in the case of multiple-leaf materials (see above, no. 5) additional markings may be indicated for those internal items (illustration, maps, etc.) that may have separate marketable value.

#### IV. Kind of ink and equipment

The ink used should be permanent (i.e., sufficiently difficult to remove to act in most cases as a deterrent), inert in itself and in conservation treatment, and able to be applied in minute quantity. The ink and equipment (rubber stamp and balsa wood pad) described in the Library of Congress's *Preservation Leaflet no. 4, Marking Manuscripts*, may serve as an example.

#### V. Form and size of mark

The size should be kept to a minimum (ca. 5-point type size for lettering). The form should be made up of initials identifying the institution as succinctly as possible, based on the National Union Catalog symbols, and suitable for arranging in lists to circulate to dealers, auction houses, collector, etc.

#### VI. Cancellation of mark

Do not attempt to obliterate marks of ownership made according to these guidelines, even in the event that the material is to be deaccessioned. No system has yet been devised for canceling marks which cannot be imitated with relative ease by thieves, and there seems no alternative but to assume permanent responsibility for the fact of one's mark of ownership in a book, manuscript, or other document. Permanent records should be kept of deaccessioned material containing marks of ownership made according to these guidelines, and the material itself when released should be accompanied by a signed letter of authorization on institutional stationery.

#### APPENDIX 2 ADDRESSES

*AB Bookman's Weekly*, Missing Books Section,  
P.O. Box AB, Clifton, NJ 07015.

Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America,  
50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10021.

Daniel and Katharine Leab, BAMBAM, P.O.  
Box 1236, Washington, CT 06793; (212) 737-2715.

The Security Committee, Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, ACRL/American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611.

Society of American Archivists, 330 S. Wells St.,  
Suite 810, Chicago, IL 60606. ■■

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