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# The Preserving of Gifts and Donors

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# The Preserving of Gifts and Donors

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SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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APRIL 15, 2009

## Cornucopia, or...

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## Pandora's Box?

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*Stories of the Gods and Heroes* by Sally Benson, 1940, Dial Press.

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## The Value of Gifts

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- Gifts are essential to the growth of any collection
- Help shape/define the collections
- Provide additional (or the only) resources
- Can bring draw attention to an organization
- But…

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## The Costs of Gifts

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- Nothing is ever free
  - Costs of bringing a collection in
  - Costs of housing a collection
  - Costs of making a collection available to the public
    - Processing costs...
  - Costs of preserving a collection
    - Infra$tructure such as heating and A/C
    - Boxe$ and other enclosure$
    - Con$ervation...

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## The Perfect World

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Gifts that are received are in good condition, have been well cared for over their life, are properly housed, and come with an endowment to help pay for their long-term care.

Is this possible?

What if they're not?

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## Some of the Problems of Collections

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- Collections received in a disorganized state
  - Piled into boxes = Extensive processing required to make available
  - Will require purchase of folders
  - Will require purchase of boxes
  - Other enclosures for special materials...

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## Some of the Problems of Collections

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- Brittle paper
  - Can it be safely handled
  - Reformatting or making use copies
  - If unique and valuable
    - Conservation treatment?

Which has the greater value, the content or the medium?

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## Some of the Problems of Collections

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- Deteriorated bindings
  - Options more limited
  - "Repair" or conservation treatment
    - Consolidation, especially in case of leather… (red rot)

Conservators and even qualified book repairers limited in CNY region, costs can be quite high so informed selection for treatment critical.

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## Some of the Problems of Collections

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- Scrapbooks
  - Enough said.
    - Rich primary sources of information
    - Contain myriad of other formats
    - Usually made of poor quality materials
    - Structure over-taxed by used and over-filling

Options can include boxing, disbinding and foldering, conservation treatment, or reformatting

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## Conditions in Your Institution

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- Do you have the infrastructure to properly house collections?
  - If not, are fixes manageable?
    - Room-sized a/c unit
    - Dehumidifier
    - Pest management
- Do you have the staffing and tools to properly accession/process materials?
- Do you have a budget for supplies...?

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## If Not...

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- Consider options
  - Not accepting gift (not always attractive, especially if bigger prospect)
  - Raise funds to complete improvements (not easy in today's economy...)
  - Ask for additional funds to help support acquisition and housing of collections from the donor...
  - Accept as is, but...

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## What are Major Costs?

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- Enclosures
  - Folders, Boxes, Sleeves, …
- Repair & Conservation
- Environmental Controls
- Staff (easily overlooked)

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## Where to find more information

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- Department of Preservation and Conservation, Syracuse University Library
  - http://library.syr.edu/information/preservation
- West Lake Conservators
  - Conservation of paintings, work of art on paper, photographs
  - http://www.westlakeconservators.com
- Other regional resources
  - http://library.syr.edu/information/preservation/referral.htm

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Peter D. Verheyen, 15 April 2009