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**From the Selected Works of Peter D Verheyen**

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April 15, 2009

# The Preserving of Gifts and Donors

Peter D Verheyen, *Syracuse University*



Available at: [https://works.bepress.com/peter\\_verheyen/7/](https://works.bepress.com/peter_verheyen/7/)

# The Preserving of Gifts and Donors



**PETER D. VERHEYEN**  
**HEAD OF PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION**  
**SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

**A WORKSHOP FOR CLRC & DHP AT**  
**FAYETTEVILLE FREE LIBRARY**  
**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
    - ✦ Infrastructure such as heating and A/C
    - ✦ Boxes and other enclosure
    - ✦ Conservation...

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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>

Peter D. Verheyen, Head of Preservation and Conservation  
Syracuse University Library  
[pdverhey@syr.edu](mailto:pdverhey@syr.edu) | 315.443.9756

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