

# IJA archives team meets in Las Vegas for assessment, cataloging, collections care, and digitization

On February 21, 2008, five IJA volunteers convened in Las Vegas for four days of concentrated work on the archives of the International Jugglers' Association.

*(Note: Since 2004 the IJA archives collection has been safely stored in a room next to the Las Vegas office of Juggle magazine editor & IJA archives director Alan Howard.)*

The goals of the four days:

(I) Assess the scope, condition, and documentation of the collection.

(II) Address the most urgent collections-care needs, using museum-standard conservation & storage methods.

(III) Begin a museum-standard system of accession, cataloging, & organization.

(IV) Begin digitizing selected objects & photos – both as a preservation measure and as a first step toward making the collection accessible to IJA members.

(V) Improve collections storage, making materials more easily accessible for future archives volunteers.

Six weeks of preparation included the study of “best practices” in collections care & organization, the coordination of equipment needed for the digitization project, and the purchase of archival-quality supplies. The project was the initiative of IJA board member Sandy Brown.

The volunteers arrived from distant points: Massachusetts (Reg Bacon), Illinois (Steve Rahn), Nebraska (Greg Jizba), Kansas (Sandy Brown), and California (Martin Frost). The photos and captions below detail activities over the next four days.

After evaluating progress upon the return home, several future needs/goals were identified, including:

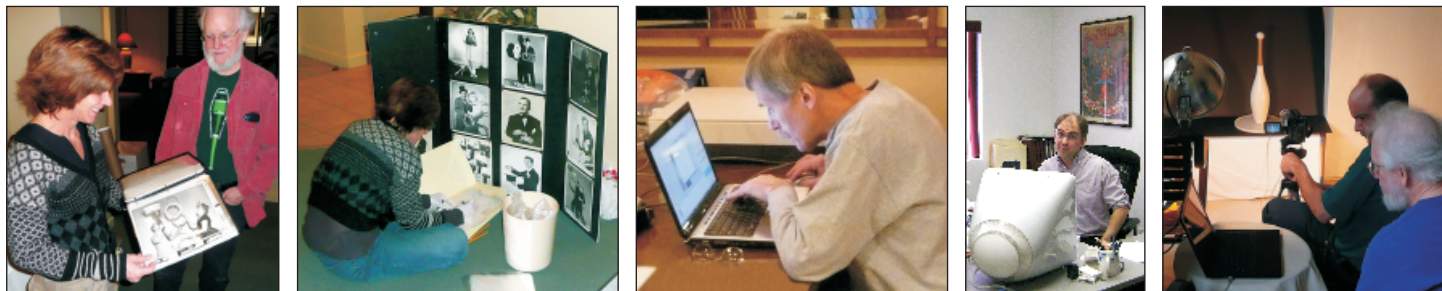
- the need for a comprehensive collections management plan;
- the need for more archival-quality storage for papers, photos, negatives, & film reels;
- the goal of compiling collections metadata – to ultimately facilitate the creation of a rich, cross-referenced, member-accessible database of information & digital images.

There are still mountains of work to be done in cataloging, collections care, digitizing, research, and metadata compilation. But the February 21-24, 2008 mission was an excellent beginning. It is clear from just four days of probing the archives that the IJA holds a rich collection of information on the history of juggling and related performing arts. Continued efforts to preserve the collection and make it accessible can only benefit jugglers, the art/craft/sport of juggling, and the IJA organization for generations to come.

– R.W. Bacon



Above left, the IJA archives includes an impressive collection of juggling-related books. Above center, is the IJA archives team in a rare moment of leisure (l. to r.): **Reg Bacon, Martin Frost, Sandy Brown, Steve Rahn, and Greg Jizba**. Above right, **Reg Bacon** works on a new kind of box routine.



In the photos above (l. to r.) **Sandy Brown & Martin Frost** admire photos in archival sleeves; **Sandy** works on removing photos from acidic backing; **Reg Bacon** captures high-resolution scans; **Alan Howard** researches provenance; and **Martin Frost & Steve Rahn** work on their digital photography.



Above (l. to r.) are **Steve Rahn** amidst the “before” jumble; **the team** taking its one brief juggling break the night before departure; **Martin Frost & Lee Bittenbender** assembling metal shelving; and **Martin** after the collection was placed on the new shelving units. (Photos by **Steve Rahn & Greg Jizba**)