

## Clara Toppan Gift Realized

When University of Wyoming alumna Clara Toppan died in 2001, she left the University of Wyoming her 160-acre property known as the Lodge Pole Ranch, in Wilson, Wyoming, near Grand Teton National Park. The UW Foundation's sale of that property on behalf of the university in late fall 2006 has resulted in more than \$17 million for UW programs, a record gift for the university.



The American Heritage Center (AHC) will receive \$3 million to endow the Frederick and Clara Toppan Rare Books Library.

During her lifetime, Clara contributed money to the AHC which provided for the 1994 hiring of Anne Marie Lane as the first rare books curator for the university. The Toppan Library features fifty thousand old and special books, including Clara's late husband's collection of fishing and hunting books. Other collecting areas include the American West, British and American Literature, Early Exploration, Religion, and examples of the book arts.

Not only is the Toppan Library a welcoming place for scholars to research the many volumes located there, but Lane also has used the books for teaching students in a wide variety of classes. Each year she instructs nearly one hundred classes from UW and other colleges, as well as students from elementary to high schools. The

Anne Marie Lane, curator of rare books for the Toppan Library, exhibited one of the fifty thousand books in the library after the announcement of the sale of Clara Toppan's property resulting in \$17 million for UW programs..

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## From the Director



**Mark Greene**

In my last column I wrote at some length about preservation for access. In this column I would like to present some of the nationally recognized steps the AHC is taking in the area of access itself. Before I do, however, let me mention that for anyone interested in the preservation of family papers, photos, and computer files, the AHC has some flyers available on its web site designed to provide basic information for anyone interested in insuring family archives are well taken care of. Just go to <http://ahc.uwyo.edu/about/publications.htm> and scroll to the bottom of the page, where you'll find the flyers. Please feel free to make copies for relatives, friends, or even small groups. While not all family collections will find their way to an archive, no collection can arrive at an archive unless it is first preserved by the family.

But once material is acquired by a repository, and stored in fire protected, climate controlled stacks, it must be made accessible to researchers. As one of my profession's most influential theorists wrote 50 years ago, "the end of all archival effort is access." And as you know from this newsletter and our annual reports, the AHC provides access to a larger number and wider variety of researchers than many other university special collections. We take providing access very seriously indeed. In fact, the AHC and the Minnesota Historical Society are leading something of a revolution in the profession by explicitly bypassing some traditional preservation steps in order to speed and improve access and use. To badly paraphrase Shakespeare, it's not that we love preservation less, but that we love access more.

For there is a very real problem with devoting staff time to carefully and assiduously removing every paperclip and staple from a collection, photocopying every newsclipping, separately sleeving every photograph, and replacing every folder with a new "archival" folder. All of these actions have been standard steps for decades, consuming by one estimate half of the overall staff hours devoted to making a collection accessible to researchers—and thus having a large role in creating backlogs of inaccessible collections at almost every repository.

In fact, collection backlogs at major repositories typically run 30% to 60% of total holdings. A full 59% of repositories acknowledge that their backlogs are a "major problem." A survey found that about 30% of researchers had been barred from collections because repository staff had not yet described or arranged the records. This might be justifiable if removing paperclips, etc., had a substantial demonstrable impact on the preservation of archival collections. But the impact was neither substantial nor demonstrable when we finally took the time to investigate these traditional practices. Why? Because the threat of chemical degradation and migration posed by newspaper clippings, for example, is significantly retarded by storing collections in stable climates—we know this from no less an authority than the Library of Congress. Essentially the same is true for the threat of rusting metal, deteriorating photos, and acidic folders. There is good evidence to suggest that we tolerate this situation in part because as a profession we give higher priority, in practice, to serving the perceived needs of our collections, and to rather selfish pride in the most fastidious aspects of our craft (an

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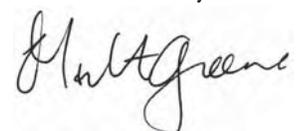
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Vicki Schuster

obsession with cleanliness and order that serves none of the real business interests of users), than to serving the demonstrable needs of our constituents and our real objective: making materials accessible to users. The situation also persists because we have allowed techniques appropriate to a different age to survive unchallenged in an era dominated by collection materials that are profoundly different in both volume and character. Techniques and expectations that made great sense when acquisitions consisted of a small volume of material do not make sense in the face of massive collections that can run to dozens, hundreds, even thousands of boxes. Thus, we have not seen in the United States the clarion demand for “comprehensive accessibility” now common in the United Kingdom.

A wide range of survey statistics and a wealth of published and unpublished literature points to our profession’s processing approach failing by any reasonable measure to address the reality of late twentieth century collections. Despite the weight of tradition and the attraction of inertia, the time finally seems ripe to challenge U.S. archivists to change. And I am proud to say that the AHC is leading that change. A recently published article in the *American Archivist*, by me and Dennis Meissner of Minnesota (a pre-publication version is available at <http://ahc.uwyo.edu/documents/faculty/greene/papers/Greene-Meissner.pdf>), defines a methodology, which is a topic of conversation (the vast majority of it positive, I’m pleased to say) at professional meetings from Washington D.C. to Oregon over the past two years. Our new approach is being adopted (and adapted) by repositories across the nation, including at Yale and the Library of Congress. Our argument specifically eschews devoting staff time to item level attention to collections in exchange for making those collections much more quickly accessible to researchers—three to five times more quickly, in fact.

Needless to say, we practice what we preach here at the Center. We believe we should be paying more attention to achieving basic physical and intellectual control over, and thus being able to permit research access to, *all* our holdings, rather than being content to process a few of them to perfection. And so, with help from a grant from the National Historic Publications and Records Commission (the granting arm of the National Archives), the manager of our arrangement and description department, D. Claudia Thompson and the archivists and processors who work with her, have achieved the extraordinary. First they quadrupled the speed with which we processed collections (processing in archival lingo means physically organizing the material and writing sometimes extensive descriptions about the material) in two years, they have almost succeeded in cataloging every single collection at the AHC (cataloging refers to creating a summary level of description for a collection, along with other fields specified by national standards, and submitting them to the international bibliographic database known as OCLC).

The AHC will very soon, therefore, be one of the nation’s very few repositories to have catalog information available about its entire holdings, ensuring that researchers can find every collection we have. This is a truly momentous achievement, and in addition to D.C. Thompson, I would like to recognize all the people who directly contributed to that effort: archivists Kenton Jaehnig, John Waggener, Mary Elizabeth Kenney (our NHPRC project archivist), and Mark Shelstad; processors Loreley Moore, Chris Garmire, and John Hanks (now retired). They have all successfully adapted to rapid and groundbreaking change in our procedures, and placed the Center at the forefront of the national effort to reduce or eliminate backlogs of uncataloged material. The end to which this effort is directed is improved access to our collections and more use by our researchers, from fourth graders to international scholars. This is an achievement of which all of us here—and all of you who are friends of the AHC--can be very proud.



## Toppan Gift Realized *continued from page 1*

classes are as diverse as instructing students in an English literature class to one discussing women's roles in nineteenth century dime novels. Lane also teaches her own classes in the history of books and manuscripts.

Born Clara Raab, Toppan moved to Jackson in 1937 and worked for Grand Teton National Park. She was one of the first UW female business school graduates in 1931 and became the first woman certified public accountant in Wyoming. In 1995, the UW College of Business named her the College of Business Distinguished Alumna, and the American Institution of CPAs also twice honored her, once after 40 years of dedication to her profession and again after 50 years. In 1990, then Wyoming Governor Mike Sullivan declared June 22 Clara Raab Toppan Day.

Other beneficiaries of the Toppan gift are the UW College of Business and the college's accounting department, along with UW's Department of Intercollegiate



## Clara Toppan and the Toppan Endowment: A Personal Essay

by **Anne Marie Lane**, the Toppan Rare Books Library Curator



"Clara in the Cowboy Hat," taken in 1993.

Inside the Toppan Library color brochure is a wonderful photograph that we simply refer to as "Clara in the Cowboy Hat" (taken at the opening of the Centennial Complex building in September of 1993). We have an enlarged framed copy of this portrait just outside the Toppan Library door, with her facing in towards the library. When people leave after a tour, I tell them to "give Clara a wave" as they exit. So, she is still very much a part of our daily life at the library. After her passing, I placed a large bouquet of silk flowers on a pedestal just below this photograph, along with a framed saying that I thought was appropriate. It reads: "Each life is a miracle that changes the world...and leaves it a better place than it was before."

In reminiscing about Clara, one thing that always struck me when she came to visit was how completely devoted she was to her husband, Frederick Willcox Toppan. In 1979, she donated thousands of his books to the university, where they were housed in a special room in Coe Library. With the opening of the American Heritage Center in late 1993, she gave a substantial financial gift in order to start an actual rare books library at the university, housed within the AHC, and with support for a full-time rare books curator.

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## Toppan Endowment *continued from page 4*

I opened the Toppan Library on February 21, 1994. Meeting Clara that fall was an unforgettable experience, when her nephew Hil brought her to see the newly functioning library. She walked around looking at Fred's books on the shelves; and told us how much she enjoyed reading each and every one of them (and many of them twice).

The cover story of the June 1995 AHC *Heritage Highlights* issue featured a photograph of Clara in the library. It depicts her relating how she bought the two volumes of the 1755 first edition of Dr. Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* in London, and then had them beautifully restored as a present for Fred's birthday.

The title of this AHC *Heritage Highlights* article was "Toppan Library is Popular with Classes." Clara herself was a University of Wyoming student, graduating from the College of Business in 1931; and it is clear from her endowment legacies that the support of education for other students at UW was a very high priority. Thus, in her Rare Books Library we strive to provide a friendly, intellectually stimulating environment where students, faculty, and other patrons can learn about all kinds of fascinating subjects.

Something else that stays in my memory is Clara's smile. I have two photographs on my desk of the two of us together. The first is from her first visit in 1994, and depicts her looking at a framed photograph that we have hanging on the wall of her and Fred dining in Italy. She is smiling as she looks at it, obviously remembering what a special time they had that day.

The second photograph on my desk is from her last visit to the library. By that time, her health had declined and she was in a wheelchair. But, she is looking straight at the camera and smiling with that expression of delight that she had: delight at being back at the university--and anticipation for the upcoming football game after lunch. She did so enjoy sitting in the president's box and watching the games.



## William D. Carlson Internship

late last year, Professor Emeritus E. G. "Gerry" Meyer transferred the William D. Carlson Internship endowment to the AHC. Professor Meyer is a former professor of chemistry, and also served as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (A&S) at UW. The internship honors a former UW president. Professor Meyer's generosity will support a student intern in the university archives, to arrange and describe records associated with A&S and its faculty. We also envision the internship being used in part to conduct oral histories to supplement the documentary record of the college. We deeply appreciate Professor Meyer's significant support of our programs.



## Nellie Tayloe Ross Documentary Completed

Wyoming's Public Television Station, KCWC, on March 15 premiered a documentary about the life of Nellie Tayloe Ross, who, in January 1925, became the first woman to hold the office of governor in Wyoming and the entire country. The program was titled "Nellie Tayloe Ross: A Governor First."



**Nellie Tayloe Ross became the first woman governor in Wyoming and the country on January 5, 1925. She signed the oath of office surrounded by family in the governor's office.**

more than eight thousand votes. Two years later, however, she lost her bid for reelection. She then toured on the Chautauqua circuit, speaking about her experiences as the first woman governor, and later became a vice president of the Democratic National Committee, and from 1933 to 1953 she served as director of the U.S. Mint, the first woman to hold that position. After her retirement she traveled extensively. Nellie died in 1977 at the age of 101. She is buried in Cheyenne next to her husband and two of her four sons.

The AHC holds the papers of Nellie Tayloe Ross. Many of the images used in the documentary came from those papers. Also, a number of AHC staff contributed to the making of the documentary. Rick Ewig served as associate producer for the program and appeared in it as well. Other AHC contributors included Rick Walters, Vicki Schuster, Leslie Waggener, John Waggener, and Shannon Bowen.



## 2007 Bernard L. Majewski Fellow Selected

The AHC recently announced Jessica M. Smith, a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology with a certificate in women's studies at the University of Michigan, will be the 2007 Bernard L. Majewski Fellow. Smith is presently conducting dissertation research in Gillette, Wyoming. Her research entails the study of women in the mining industries.

Smith grew up in Riverton and Gillette as the daughter of a heavy equipment operator. During breaks from college she drove trucks along with many other women in the coal mines and learned first hand that women's contributions to the mining industry were not limited to caretaking activities in homes and communities as is commonly believed.

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## From the Development Officer

After twenty years in Seattle, I was given the opportunity to return to Wyoming to once more enjoy Wyoming's beautiful landscapes and friendly people. It is wonderful to be able to work for the University of Wyoming, the university from which I graduated. I am especially honored to be able to contribute to the AHC, which has such a fine national and international reputation.

As the new Director of Development and Marketing for the AHC, I bring more than fifteen years of development and marketing experience to my position. Previous organizations I have worked for have included the Woodland Park Zoo, Pacific Science Center, and Seattle Children's Home. In each case, I have enjoyed directing and managing fundraising and marketing efforts with agencies known for excellence.

No agency I have been affiliated with has a better reputation than the AHC. The AHC is known for making primary research more accessible and for its high level of outreach to students, young people, and researchers. I am honored to be affiliated with such an incredible organization.

Please know that none of the great work done by the AHC would be possible without your support and the support of donors like you. Your dollars go to fund necessary expenses that make research and preservation of vital historically significant records possible. Currently, the AHC is seeking funding for these items:

- **Microfilm Reader** (\$8,000).
- **Book Rests.** (These rests protect the spine of each rare books so that these books do not become damaged with use. Each rest costs around \$50 each and 6 are needed.)
- **Slide Scanner** (\$1,900).
- **DVD Burner** (\$400).
- **Specialized Ladder.** (This would allow stable access to rare books at varying levels and costs \$500.)

If you are interested in donating or would like a personal tour of the AHC, please call me directly at (307) 766-4295.



Susan Scratchley

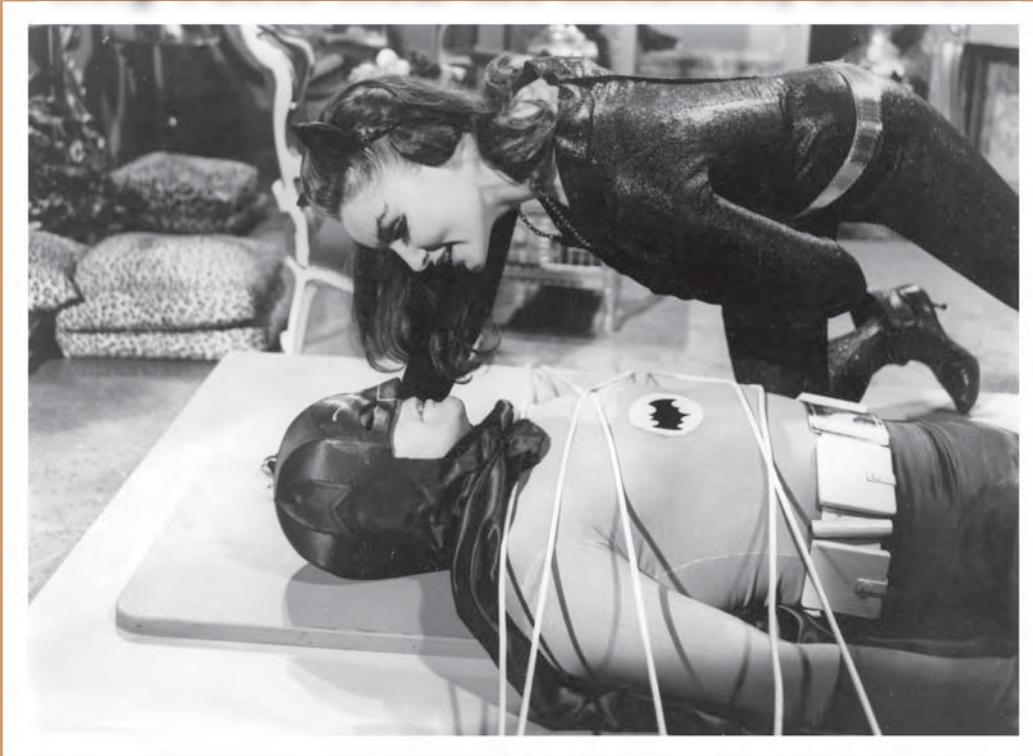
## 2007 Bernard L. Majewski *continued from page 6*

Smith is focusing on two coal mines in the Powder River Basin and is conducting oral history interviews in Gillette. During the summer she also will research a number of AHC collections to determine what the historical record reveals about women's participation in extractive industries. Smith will present a public talk about her research at the AHC during the fall.

The Majewski Fellowship honors the late petroleum industry pioneer Bernard L. Majewski. The fellowship is funded by a generous endowment given to the AHC by the late Thelmas Majewski.

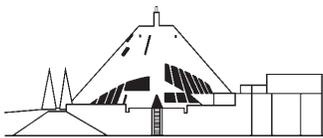


**Holy Photo from the Archives, Batman!**



The television series "Batman," starring Adam West as the Caped Crusader and Burt Ward as Robin the Boy Wonder, premiered on ABC on January 12, 1966. It was an immediate hit and finished in the top ten television programs for the season. William Dozier produced the show through his company Greenway Productions. Dozier also was the narrator on the program. The AHC holds the papers of Dozier, which include correspondence, scripts, photographs, and Batman memorabilia. Dozier also produced another crime fighting series, "The Green Hornet." In this photo, Julie Newmar as Catwoman teases a captive Batman. William Dozier Papers.

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