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# SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

The purpose of this semi annual newsletter is to inform our community about the collections, activities, and services in Special Collections. It is being sent to friends, donors, researchers, peers,



The Shepherd's New Kalender... *claimed to provide its users with "many things that are useful and profitable to man-kind," including information on such matters as days lucky and unlucky, chastity, affrighting dreams, madness in cows, and telling the time by looking at one's hand in the sunlight. From the Veterinary Medicine Historical Collection.*

and the many people that we have met over the years who have come to know Special Collections and support its mission to collect, preserve, and make accessible unique materials and important research collections.

Formally established in 1962, Special Collections has grown in size and stature over the past five decades. Today, the holdings number over 400,000 items in a variety of outstanding research collections, including among others the Russel B. Nye Popular Culture Collection, the Veterinary Medicine Historical Collection, the Comic Art Collection, the Michigan Writers Collection, and the Cookery Collection. In addition to printed books, Special Collections features a growing manuscript and archival collection, as well as a vast amount of ephemeral material covering a myriad of popular topics and viewpoints on issues in American life. Besides drawing researchers locally and from throughout the world, several of the collections are now available electronically on the Internet at [www.lib.msu.edu/coll/main/spec\\_coll/](http://www.lib.msu.edu/coll/main/spec_coll/) thanks to major grant support. Many good things are happening in Special Collections these days and we are excited about the opportunity here to tell you about them. We hope that you will enjoy our first issue.



FrameUp, *featuring the opening defense statement of Angela Davis, civil rights and antiwar activist, on trial for murder in 1971. It was indeed a "frame up" and Davis was later cleared of the charges after 16 months in jail. From the Radicalism Collection.*

## Did you know...

- ♦ Special Collections had over 2,500 patrons in the 2000-2001 academic year, most of whom were MSU undergraduates using materials in the Russel B. Nye Popular Culture Collection and the Radicalism Collection.
- ♦ Special Collections holds the Thomas McGuane Papers which features the literary papers and manuscripts of this award winning MSU alumnus, including correspondence between McGuane and his long time friend Jim Harrison. An inventory of the McGuane papers can be found at [www.lib.msu.edu/coll/main/spec\\_coll](http://www.lib.msu.edu/coll/main/spec_coll)
- ♦ Special Collections is home to the Michigan Cookbook Project, a pioneering initiative to collect all cookbooks and cookery related materials published in Michigan or produced by Michigan communities, organizations, and churches. There are currently more than 2,000 cookbooks in the collection with a number dating back over 100 years.
- ♦ Special Collections is an important source for primary material in science fiction. The Clarion Science and Fantasy Writers Workshop, held each summer on the MSU campus, places all the original stories written by participants in the Clarion Archive located in Special Collections. Now in its 35th year, the Clarion Workshop hosts leading science fiction writers from around the world who work with aspiring writers.
- ♦ Special Collections houses the American Radicalism Vertical File Collection, a large and growing collection of pamphlets, leaflets, clippings, and other material of more than 1,500 subjects covering a wide range of viewpoints on political, social, cultural, sexual, economic, and environmental issues in America over the last half century.

# Remembering the Contributions of Charles R. Schmitter



Charles R. Schmitter. (Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections.)

Detail of "the first position to draw a sword" as described in 1787 by Domenico Angelo in *The School of Fencing*. From the Schmitter Fencing Collection.



Charles R. Schmitter, longtime friend of and donor to Special Collections, died this past winter at the age of 95. He was perhaps best known for his successful 45 year career as the fencing coach at MSU where he led his team and individual fencers to numerous conference and national championships. He won the first NCAA Fencing Coach of the Year Award and was the first American born recipient of the Italian Fencing Masters Diploma in 1956. He also was an avid reader and collector of books. In 1982, upon his retirement from MSU, Schmitter and his wife, Ruth, donated to Special Collections over 600 fencing books in some thirteen languages spanning six centuries. Considered to be one of the finest collections of its kind in the world, the Charles and Ruth Schmitter Fencing Collection includes fencing manuals and histories, along with an array of related subjects from dueling codes to cavalry tactics. Coach Schmitter's love of books and fencing began in his early childhood. "I can't remember when I wasn't interested in swords," he once said. "My first memories are of 'Puss in Boots' with his leather boots and sword. I'd have given anything for a sword like that." Fittingly, 'Puss in Boots' story books are in the collection, alongside the rarest and most important books written on fencing. These include works of two of the great sixteenth-century Italian fencing masters. Achille Marozzo's *Opera Nova*, which first appeared in 1517, was the first work to attempt to fix uniform rules for the use of weapons. His contemporary Camillo Agrippa emphasized the use of the point rather than the edge of the blade in *Trattado di Scienza d'arme* printed in Venice in 1568. Further important additions are being added to the collection in honor of Coach Schmitter and his many contributions to Special Collections thanks to the Charles and Ruth Schmitter Fencing Endowment.

## Bees in the Beal...Bees in the Vault

Management of Bees..., a book written specifically with women in mind describing the Ladies Safety Hive that the author developed for his wife who feared being stung. Explanations are also provided for swarming, honey extraction and obtaining pure wax. From the Baker Apiculture Collection.



The MSU Main Library sits next to the Beal Botanical Gardens, the oldest continuously operated university garden of its kind in the United States. Every spring it has been a destination for all of us weary of the Michigan winter who wish to welcome the budding plants and the wondrous bees working their miracles among the flowers. Not far away from the bees in the Beal is the Special Collections vault which has its own collection of bees, so to speak, despite the cool temperatures and almost constant darkness. Our collection of early bee books

originates from a donation in 1946 by Ray Stannard Baker, who graduated from MAC in 1889, and later won the Pulitzer Prize in 1940 for his biography of President Woodrow Wilson. He may be best known for his books on country life written under the pseudonym David Grayson. The Baker Apiculture Collection is especially strong in early works printed in English, although it does contain titles in several other languages. Some of the rarities include Thomas Hyll's, *A Pleasant Instruction of the Parfait Ordering of the Bees* (London, 1568); and Charles Butler's, *The Feminine Monarch* (Oxford, 1634), which contains a bee's madrigal printed so that four singers may sing it simultaneously. In accordance with Mr.

Baker's wishes, Special Collections has continued to acquire bee books for the collection which now numbers several hundred volumes. A catalog of the titles in the collection printed before 1900 is available on our website.



# Handmade Books Collection Goes on Tour

This year Special Collections was fortunate to receive an outstanding donation of 100 hand made books from Cuba's *Ediciones Vigía*, a cooperative of book artists which brings together poets, writers, illustrators, and designers. The donor, Jeanne Drewes, Assistant Director of Access and Preservation in the MSU Libraries, has visited and worked with members of the cooperative numerous times. *Ediciones Vigía* was founded in 1985. Its name comes from its location in the Plaza de la Vigía (Watchtower Square) in the city of Matanzas to the east of Havana, Cuba. Their publications are all hand made using basic materials including scraps of papers with dried leaves, cloth, yarn, and cut-out images to decorate the book covers. Two hundred copies of each title are produced which are numbered and occasionally signed by the author. Some of the texts are by first time authors, while others are existing works by such famous writers as Rilke and Borges. Recent purchases have brought the total number of books in the collection to 150 making it one of the largest in the nation. More than fifty books and several banners from the collection are featured in the exhibition, *Wrapped Words: Handmade Books from Cuba's Ediciones Vigía*, which had its debut in MSU's Kresge Art Museum this winter and will travel throughout the United States over the next two years.

En el ultimo sendero el iniciado piensa ("On the final path the initiate thinks"), was the winner of the America Bobia national poetry competition in 1995.



## **Wrapped Words:** **Handmade Books from Cuba's Ediciones Vigía**

- April 20 to May 31 – Minnesota Center for the Book, Minneapolis
- June 29 to August 25 – Harold Washington Library, Chicago
- November 2 to December 15 – Spencer Art Museum, University of Kansas
- January 17 to February 28, 2003 – Marsh Art Gallery, University of Richmond
- October 11 to November 23, 2003 – Arizona State University Art Museum

# New in the Nye Collection: The “Classic Toys” Collection

A collection of 364 file folders of toy catalogs and price lists, enough to fill a five-drawer filing cabinet, was received from Francis Facciolo of New York City in 2001. According to Mr. Facciolo's description, “Classic Toys” was a retail store in New York City from 1988 until 2000. The store was first located in Soho and then moved to Greenwich Village. It specialized in collectible toys, particularly toy soldiers and toy and model vehicles. Classic Toys sold both new and antique toys, although the catalogs and lists that are now in the Russel B. Nye Popular Culture Collection are almost entirely for new toys. Classic Toys directly imported many of the toys it sold. The typical Classic Toys' customer was an adult male, often a collector. The catalogs include most of the large and specialist manufacturers of toy soldiers and vehicles in the 1990s.

This collection represents a new direction for our Popular Culture collection, but not entirely. We have always seen links between the print materials we collect, and the licensed action figures, premiums and other realia that are generated around a successful television, movie or comic book series. Our catalog lists several dozen items under “toys,” including collectors guides to many kinds of non-print entertainment related collectibles. With the Classic Toys collection, however, we can begin to present the world of toys that are collectible not as tie-ins, but for their own sake. A list of the company names included has already been added to our website, and questions from users on the internet have started to arrive. These questions are difficult for us, as beginners in this area, but they serve to educate our staff about what the world sees as unique and interesting about our collection, and as suggestions as to how we can develop this area to be more useful in the future.



# SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Visit us online at

[http://www.lib.msu.edu/coll/main/spec\\_col](http://www.lib.msu.edu/coll/main/spec_col)

for more information about the MSU Libraries' Special Collections, and the collections featured here.

Information about gifts, endowments, and other giving opportunities is available from the Director of Development for Libraries, Computing & Technology at [www.lib.msu.edu/digital/friends](http://www.lib.msu.edu/digital/friends)

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## From the Radicalism Collection: World Student Movements



*Rödluvan (Scandinavia) and VietNam Bulletin (Norway) illustrate the international scope of the Radicalism Collection.*

The Radicalism Collection in our library has long been called the “American” Radicalism collection, implying limits that in retrospect seem never to have existed. We have long held a massive collection of materials on British Socialism, for example, and more recently the Changing Men’s Collection has developed as an archive of mens’ movement groups the world around. The “World Student Movements” collection is a neglected part of our radicalism holdings, and one which contributes to this more global focus. The largest part of this collection of over 500 titles was the gift of retired MSU political science professor Frank A. Pinner in 1982. This collection consists of materials on student political movements outside the United States in the 1960s, with European student movements best represented. The 1960s were a turbulent time for universities in many countries, and these materials were accumulated through visits and conferences attended by Dr. Pinner over a several year period. Seen as an international phenomenon, student movements can claim a more important place in the history of the twentieth century than if they were considered as isolated happenings on individual campuses. This collection provides evidence for such studies.

The collection includes both primary and secondary materials, much of it contemporary to the 1960s student movements. Primary materials are in the form of commission reports and issues of magazines and newspapers published by radical student groups. The secondary materials are conference papers (usually in English) and offprints from journals. The countries covered in most depth are Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, in English and in the German, French and Dutch languages. Material of substance (typically conference papers in English) is also included for Argentina, Burma, Canada, China, the Congo, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan, Nigeria, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Scandinavia, Switzerland, and Turkey.