

IJA archives team meets in Las Vegas for collections rescue

On February 21, 2008, a five-member “collections rescue team” convened in Las Vegas, Nevada for four days of concentrated work on the historical collection and archives of the International Jugglers’ Association.

Since 2004 the collection – a massive jumble of historical photos, ephemera, stage props, wardrobe items, and organizational files – was stored in a secure climate-controlled room adjacent to the office of *Juggle* magazine editor Alan Howard. Before that, the collection ricocheted around the U.S., treasured and protected by its caretakers, but inaccessible to IJA members or the public.

The goals of the four days: (1) Assess the scope, condition, and documentation of the collection. (2) Address the most urgent collections-care needs, using museum-standard conservation and storage methods. (3) Begin a museum-standard system of accession and organization. (4) Begin digitizing selected objects and photos as a first step toward making the collection accessible. (5) Improve storage, making materials more easily accessible for future collections teams.

Preparation included long-distance training in best practices in organization and collections care, coordination of equipment needed for digitization, and purchase of archival supplies. The project was the initiative of IJA board member Sandy Brown, with training and direction by museum professional Reg Bacon.

The team arrived from distant points: Massachusetts (Reg Bacon), Illinois (Steve

Rahn), Nebraska (Greg Jizba), Kansas (Sandy Brown), and California (Martin Frost). The four long days of work are detailed below.

After evaluating progress, 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; and the goal of compiling collections metadata – to facilitate creation of a rich, cross-referenced, member-accessible database of information & digital images.

There are still mountains of work to be done, but the mission was an excellent beginning. The IJA holds a rich historical collection, and making it accessible will 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**)

A selection of props & photos from the Eddy & Eleanor Johnson Collection
(2004.1.x) (Donated by Eleanor Johnson)

Eddy Johnson Promo Photo c. 1950
(2004.1.3g)

Edwin G. "Eddy" Johnson (1922-1999), one of the eight founders of the International Jugglers' Association in 1947, worked professionally and semi-professionally through the years, both as a solo performer ("Eddy Easy") and in an act with his wife, Eleanor Johnson ("Eddy & Ellie"). He was involved with the IJA throughout his life, serving as an officer in the 1950s and organizing the 1952 convention in Altoona, Pa. (He was designated an Honorary Life Member of the IJA in 1995.) A graduate of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, he pursued a career with the federal government, ran a travel agency in his retirement, and served 16 years in the Pennsylvania state legislature. Upon his death in 1999, Eleanor Johnson donated his props and collection of photos to the IJA at his request.

Dimensions: 8" x 10"

Material: Coated glossy print (gelatin / silver chloride POP print)

Photographer: Studio photo - Bruno of Hollywood, New York, N.Y.

Date/Location: Early 1950s



Harry Lind Clubs (10)

(2004.1.1a-j)

Photo of Single Harry Lind Club

(2004.1.1e)

Dimensions:

20.5" long; 11" in circumference; weight approx. 14 oz.

Material: Solid maple turned wooden handles; 2-piece hollow basswood body; painted canvas covering.

Maker: Harry Lind (1879-1967). Harry Lind was the preeminent maker of juggling clubs in the U.S. from the 1930s until his death in 1967. In the years following a 20-year stage career as a juggler and club-slinger, Lind purchased woodworking equipment from circus propmaker Edward Van Wyck and set up shop in his hometown of Jamestown, N.Y. His goal was to improve upon the durability of handcrafted wooden juggling clubs, and he achieved this through his new approach to attaching the handle. Instead of attaching the handle by means of a nut as Van Wyck had done, Lind wedged the handle in place as part of the assembly of the two hollow body pieces. Harry Lind was one of the founders of the IJA, was president in 1953, and chairman of the Chautauqua, N.Y. convention in 1957.

Date: 1940s-50s



Howard Nichols 1950

(2004.1.2.i)

Howard Nichols (1894-1977) performed his spectacular hoop-rolling and hoop juggling act in theatres around the world in a career that spanned over 50 years. He attended the IJA conventions in 1950 (Elkhart, Indiana) and 1951 (Williamsport, Pa.), and was the feature closing act in the public show both years. (For further information, see the informative article by Joan Nichols on the Nichols-Nelson Troupe in the Nov./Dec. 2006 issue of *Juggle* magazine.) In this photo Howard Nichols juggles four hoops while balancing two on his forehead and spinning one hoop on each leg.

Dimensions: 8" x 10"

Material: Coated glossy print (gelatin / silver chloride POP print)

Photographer: Unknown

Date/Location: 1950 IJA Convention, Elkhart, Indiana.



ACCESSION RECORD

Accession#: _____

Date Received: _____

Source: _____

Received by: _____

Date Accessioned: _____

Address: _____

Accessioned by: _____

Received as: _____

Purchase Price or Value: \$ _____

Description: _____

Remarks/Provenance: _____

Condition Report (w/date): _____

Conservation Treatment (w/date): _____

Storage Type (w/date):	Location (w/date):
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Digitization Report:

Date: _____

- Scan Color
- Digital Photo Monochrome
- Grayscale

Image Type	File Name	Resolution	Dimensions	File Size	File Format
Archival Image					
Thumbnail Image					
Web Image					

Remarks: _____

File Storage & Backup: _____

Accession#: _____

INTERNATIONAL JUGGLERS ASSOCIATION ARCHIVES
METADATA WORKSHEET

Accession#: _____

Archival Image: _____

Scan

Color

Monochrome

Grayscale

Thumbnail Image: _____

Digital Photo

Web Image: _____

Title: _____

Creator: _____

Subject: _____

Description: _____

Publisher: _____

Contributor: _____

Date Original: _____

Date Digital: _____

Type: _____

Format: _____

Digitization Specifications: _____

Resource Identifier: _____

Source: _____

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