MILNER LIBRARY

I’ve been asked to provide a little information about what’s been happening at Illinois State University’s Milner Library over the last year.  I’m excited to do so **and** to do so, let me give you a bulleted list, starting with a collaboration that I think may excite you as much as it does me:

* The **Council on Libraries and Information Resources** funds grants which seek to expose what they call “Hidden Collections.”  This year, Milner initiated conversation with our friends at Circus World Museum and the Ringling Museum.  Together, the three institutions submitted a grant to provide online access to our collective route book collections.  We all are crossing our fingers that we will be informed that we can proceed with this initiative.  CLIR, the funding agency, will tell us at the end of this month whether or not we can proceed.  \*Crossing fingers\*
* This past spring, Steve and I brought back from Nashville **Dave and Mary Jane Price’s Clyde Beatty Collection**.  Many of you may know that over the course of 6 decades the Prices assembled a fantastic collection about that wonderful animal trainer.  Anything you can think of relating to Clyde Beatty is likely included in this collection – posters, letters, newspaper clippings, magazines, cartoons, books… the list goes on and on!  We are so thrilled to have it as part of our Circus & Allied Arts Collection!
* Giving the world access to that collection and the others which I oversee, is **Eric Willey**.  We hired Eric about a year ago and it’s his mission to publish **Finding Aids** online (see:  <http://archon.carli.illinois.edu/?setrepositoryid=13&settheme=isu>).  These aids are a good compliment to our Passion for Circus photographic site (see:  <http://digital.library.illinoisstate.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/circus>).
* We continue to welcome anyone interested in learning more about circus into our facility.  We have hosted a number of world-class researchers as well as University classes into our special corner of campus.  We **love** turning students on to the richness of circus!  Can you think of a **MORE** interdisciplinary subject?  Circus covers history, geography, theater, accounting, management, insurance, art, education, literature… well, the list goes on and on!

That’s last year.  Looking ahead, I’m excited to report that we have even **more** academic departments that will be using circus as a means to convey course content to students.  In addition to Art, Theater, English, Accounting, Insurance and History, we’ve been working with Geography, Music, Sociology and Women’s & Gender Studies faculty to integrate circus into their curriculum AND the tri-county schools are also working with us to design primary and middle school curricula that will use circus.  To quote their course development liaison, “Circus seems to be perfect!  Think of all the ways we can use it!  From history to geography to literacy… Why didn’t we think of this before?”

It’s a THRILLING time to be at Illinois State University.  I see only brightness in our future and encourage you all to visit us – either electronically or in person.  My contact information is:

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