

## Books are

...opened with expectation and closed with profit.

Bronson Alcott

...to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some are to be chewed and digested.

Frances Bacon

...fatal; they are the curse of the human race. Nine tenths of the existing books are nonsense, and the clever books are the refutation of that nonsense. The greatest misfortune that ever befell man was the invention of printing.

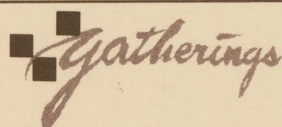
Benjamin Disraeli

...undeservedly forgotten; none are undeservedly remembered.

W. H. Auden

...alike in that they are truer than if they had really happened and after you are finished reading one you will feel all that happened to you and afterwards it all belongs to you; the good and the bad, the ecstasy, the remorse, the sorrow, people, and the places and how the weather was.

Ernest Hemingway



No. 16, Fall 1997

*Gatherings* is published triannually by the Friends of the University Libraries, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, 49008-5080. Contributors to this issue include: Tom Amos, Rare Book and Special Collections Librarian; Judith Arnold, Instructional Services Librarian; Mary Ann Bowman, President, Friends of the University Libraries; Sharon Carlson, Acting Director, Archives and Regional History Collections; David Isaacson, Assistant Head, Central Reference; Elaine Jayne, Instructional and Continuing Education Librarian.

EDITOR: Laurel A. Grotzinger  
[laurel.grotzinger@wmich.edu]

DESIGNER: Mary Shane  
PHOTOS: Galen Rike



Treasurer Meyer, Speaker Amos, and President Bowman

## Friends at Work and Play

By Mary Ann Bowman

The Friends of the University Libraries held its spring booksale on March 19th. With the help of many volunteers from both the Friends and the Libraries' staff, approximately \$1000 was collected from the dozens of visitors who browsed the book display located on the second floor rotunda of Waldo Library. The Annual Meeting was held on April 8th in the classic surroundings of the Meader Room with some 30 members attending. The election confirmed the following Board officers and members for 1997-98:

Dr. Mary Ann Bowman, President  
Dr. Robert Hahn, Vice President  
Ms. Bettina Meyer, Treasurer  
Ms. Kristin Tyrrell, Secretary  
Ms. Marilyn Gosling, Board Member, 1997-2000  
Dr. William Combs, (1995-1998) and  
Dr. Richard Brewer (1996-1999)  
continue their terms.

The presentation for the meeting was artfully delivered by Dr. Thomas Amos, Rare Book and Special Collections Librarian for the University Libraries, who had caught the interest of all attending by the title of his remarks: "Medium Rare: Constructing and Deconstructing Special Collections at Western Michigan University. A reception in the Meader Rare Book Room brought the afternoon to a pleasant conclusion. The special fall meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 24th at 4:30 p.m., and will feature renowned historian/author/lecturer Dr. Paul Maier of WMU's Department of History.

## "Medium Rare..."

By Tom Amos

In a forty-minute presentation to the Friends of the University Libraries on March 19th of this year, I was challenged to live up to my title. In calling the collection "medium rare," my intention was to describe what a special collections unit can contribute to the size and diversity of WMU. Fortuitously, we had just received the copy of the famous *Leningrad Bede*, which completes the set *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile* purchased with funds from supporters of the Medieval Institute and the University Libraries. The work illustrated the fact that the our "medium" collection really contains many hidden gems and is growing rapidly.

From this unique volume, it was an easy step to demonstrate, through use of selected works, some of the diversity that already exists in our rare book collection. I gathered books for a hands-on examination, and gave examples of collections at WMU that are known for their qualities of synergism. The philosophy that motivates the current collection development policy is that, as the collections grow, individual pieces and segments of the collections need to speak to more than one audience and respond to more than one theme. By acquiring materials which naturally fit into the teaching and research environment here, Special Collections can more easily respond to its audience and resource base. In that way, it will become a more vital part of the teaching and research mission of the Libraries and the University than it already is.