Ladeezzzz and Gentlemen! Boyzzzz and Girlzzzz! Come one, come all to see the exhibit *Rides and Spangles: Michigan Circuses and Carnivals* in the Clarke Historical Library.

The Library’s circus tent will open to the public for its premiere performance at 7:00 p.m. on the evening of Tuesday, September 15. The opening acts will feature four men well-schooled in Michigan circuses and carnivals, who will speak in the Park Library Auditorium:

- 92-year-old Bill Thomas, the last living member of the Flying Melzoras, an internationally respected trapeze troupe from Saginaw
- Jim Elliott of Elliott’s Amusements, Inc., a carnival based in Mason
- Joe Skerbeck of Skerbeck Bros., Inc., Michigan’s largest carnival, based in Escanaba; Joe is a ninth-generation descendant of the Skerbeck Circus family
- Curt Pollic, son of John Pollic (John Pollic’s papers are housed in the Clarke Library)

A reception and an opportunity to view the exhibit will follow these presentations. The exhibit will run through January 2010. An e-catalog will be available online beginning in September at www.clarke.cmich.edu.

This exhibit was inspired by the papers of John Pollic. John Pollic was from Grand Rapids. He, his father Henry, and other associates owned and operated several circuses from at least 1910 to 1927. Although the Great Depression ended Pollie’s circus, John became a carnival concessionaire specializing in games of chance, notably Bingo, Poker, and I Got It.

Pollie’s extensive papers, measuring 17.5 cubic feet, comprise the only known collection of a carnival man meticulously maintained business and game accounts.

Beyond the opening-day presentations, the Library has scheduled two additional programs about carnivals and circuses. On Tuesday, September 29 at 7:00 p.m., Erin Foley and John Polacek will speak in the Park Library

*Continued on Page 2*
Auditorium. Foley is the archivist at Circus World Museum, which houses the papers of the Ringling Bros. and Gollmar Bros. circuses. Polacsek has long had an interest in Michigan circuses.

On Tuesday, October 13 Patricia Pagel, the current national president of Circus Fans of America Association, and Mike and Karen "Janke" Janczewski will speak in the Park Library Auditorium at 7:00 p.m. They will discuss circus fans, model building, and miniature circuses. "Janke's Circus," Mike Janczewski’s model mechanical circus will be on display throughout the exhibit and is sure to delight young and old. A reception will follow their presentations.

The exhibit is curated by Clarke archivist and CMU assistant professor Marian Matyn. Marian expanded upon the knowledge she gained processing the Pollie papers by doing extensive circus and carnival research during a sabbatical. She is currently writing a book about Michigan circus history which will be published by Michigan State University Press. For further information about the exhibit or her forthcoming book, or if you have information to share, please contact Marian by mail at the Clarke Historical Library, by email (marian.matyn@cmich.edu), or by phone (989.774.3990).

Marian and "plush" (stuffed dragon toy), courtesy of Elliots Amusements, Inc.

Michigan Authors and Michigan Books on the Radio

During the coming year, the Clarke Historical Library and CMU Public Broadcasting will share a sampling of interesting presentations made by authors who live in Michigan or have written about our state, made possible in part by a grant from the Michigan Humanities Council. Local history, fiction, gospel music, and a wide variety of other subjects will be discussed by knowledgeable and thought-provoking authors. We hope you will be able to join us and listen to each program when it airs the last Tuesday of each month at 8:00 p.m., or listen on the web at www.wcmu.org. Programs for the fall and early winter include:

September 29—Jean Alicia Elster, Who's Jim Hines?

Jean Alicia Elster, BA, JD, is the author of the novel *Who's Jim Hines?* which was written for children ages 8 and older. Released in August 2008, it is now in its second printing. *Who's Jim Hines?* was selected as a 2009 Michigan Notable Book by the Library of Michigan. Ms. Elster is also the author of the children's book series, "Joe Joe in the City," published by Judson Press. The...
first volume in that series, *Just Call Me Joe Joe*, was released in October 2001 and is now in its second printing. The remaining volumes are: *I Have A Dream, Too!* (May 2002), *I’ll Fly My Own Plane* (September 2002), and *I’ll Do the Right Thing* (January 2003).

Ms. Elster was awarded the 2002 Governor’s Emerging Artist Award by ArtServe Michigan in recognition of the series. In addition, *I’ll Do the Right Thing* was awarded the 2004 Atlanta Daily World Atlanta Choice Award in the category of children's books.

**October 27—Deborah Smith Pollard, When the Church Becomes Your Party: Contemporary Gospel Music**

Deborah Smith Pollard, PhD, is the host and producer of *Strong Inspirations*, a weekly gospel radio show airing on Sundays from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. on FM 98 WJLB in Detroit, Michigan. She was given the Stellar Award in 2005, a prize that annually recognizes the “announcer of the year.” Smith Pollard writes “Static Free” for GOSPELflava.com, a regularly appearing column in which she addresses any and all matters relating to gospel radio. Dr. Pollard won a 2009 Michigan Notable Book Award for her novel, *When the Church Becomes Your Party: Contemporary Gospel Music*. The book focuses on the influence of church and gospel singing on the community as well as in the broader arena of pop culture.

**November 24—Hugh Fox, author and emeritus professor in the Department of American Thought & Language at Michigan State University**

Hugh Fox is listed in *Who’s Who: The Two Thousand Most Important Writers in the Last Millennium* and *International Who’s Who*. He has published 85 books and has another 30 works (mainly novels and plays and one composition on archaeology) on his shelves that have not yet been published. Fox spent his childhood studying violin, piano, composition, and opera. He received a MA in English from Loyola University in Chicago and a PhD in American Literature from the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign). He was a professor of American Literature from 1958 to 1968 at Loyola University of Los Angeles. He became a professor in the Department of American Thought and Language at Michigan State University in 1968 and remained there until he retired in 1999. He studied Latin American literature at the University of Buenos Aires and spent a year as an archaeologist in the Atacama Desert in Chile in 1986.

**December 29—Larissa Niec, Shorn: Book One of the Sky Seekers**

Jacqueline Carey, bestselling fantasy author, says, “Shorn is a striking debut, filled with skilled world-building, complex psychological tension, and a fine sense of nuance too seldom seen in fantasy.” Larissa Niec, the novel’s author, graduated from Grinnell College with a bachelor’s degree in psychology, Niec moved to Cleveland, learned to knit, and entered a doctoral program in clinical psychology. During her postdoctoral training at the Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, writing fiction became an outlet to manage the emotional challenges of working with traumatized children. Currently, Niec teaches at Central Michigan University and directs a clinic for young children with emotional and behavioral problems. She has a number of nonfiction publications in the areas of child mistreatment and child development. *Shorn* is her first novel.

**January 26—Steve Miller, Andrea Billups, A Slaying in the Suburbs: The Tara Grant Murder**

Stephen and Tara Grant appeared to be a happy couple. But their marriage was troubled and held together only by their children. One night, Stephen lost control and murdered his wife. He buried her body in a nearby park, where his children often played. He killed his wife in a fit of rage. His subsequent trial was a media event. *A Slaying in the Suburbs* follows the story of this suburban Detroit murder and the steps leading up to and following the horrific event. Coauthors Steve Miller and Andrea Billups each report for the *Washington Times* and have written for *People* magazine. Miller resides in Lansing, Michigan.
Friends of the Library

The CMU Friends of the Library is a membership organization that supports, through contributions and volunteer activities, the programs of the University Library, the Clarke Historical Library, and Off-Campus Library Services.

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