



Dear Dr. Book

Dear Dr. Book,

As a Colorado Rockies fan, I have saved the newspaper clippings from all the games I have attended. However, I have noticed that the clippings from the inaugural season are yellowing. What is the best way to save my Rockies Treasures?

Devoted Rockies Fan

Dear Devoted,

Newsprint is one of the cheapest types of paper manufactured and is intended for daily reading and then to be tossed away. The process of paper degradation that you have noticed is due to the acidification of the paper, caused by the reaction of the paper to its environment and the natural chemical decomposition of the paper itself. As the acidity of the paper increases, the paper will become brittle and will eventually crumble. Unfortunately in newsprint this process happens fairly quickly as you can observe by the discoloration of the daily newspaper if it is left out on the doorstep in the sun all day. The exposed part of the newspaper will begin to darken while the newsprint underneath will remain the natural color.

The first decision you must make is the intrinsic value of your newspaper clippings. Are the actual clippings themselves of great value to you or is the record of the games you have attended (and hopefully watched the Rockies win) of most importance?

If you want to keep the newspaper clippings, I suggest you deacidify the newspaper. Deacidification sprays are available in conservation product catalogs. These sprays will stop the future disintegration of the paper, but will not reverse any damage that has already taken place. The ideal time to treat the newspaper would be the day it is published so that no degradation is allowed to take place.

The conservation catalogs also carry pH-testing pens to determine if paper is acidic or alkaline. If you are also collecting Rockies programs, etc., you should test their paper to determine the pH value, and if acidic, you can also spray the programs to prevent any paper damage.

If the account of the games is more important than the actual newspaper, you can photocopy the articles on acid-free paper, usually available at copy centers when you ask for it. Again the pH testing pen comes in handy to make sure the paper is really acid-free.

Storage of the newspaper clippings is also important. The now-acid-free clippings or the photocopies should be kept in preservation quality (acid-free) scrap books or folders so you can enjoy the accounts of the games again and again in the future.

For information on preservation topics, please write to "Dear Dr. Book" in care of the *University Libraries Newsletter*, Colorado State University Libraries, Fort Collins, CO 80523 or visit the Libraries Preservation Services Web site at: <http://lib.colostate.edu/preserv/>.

