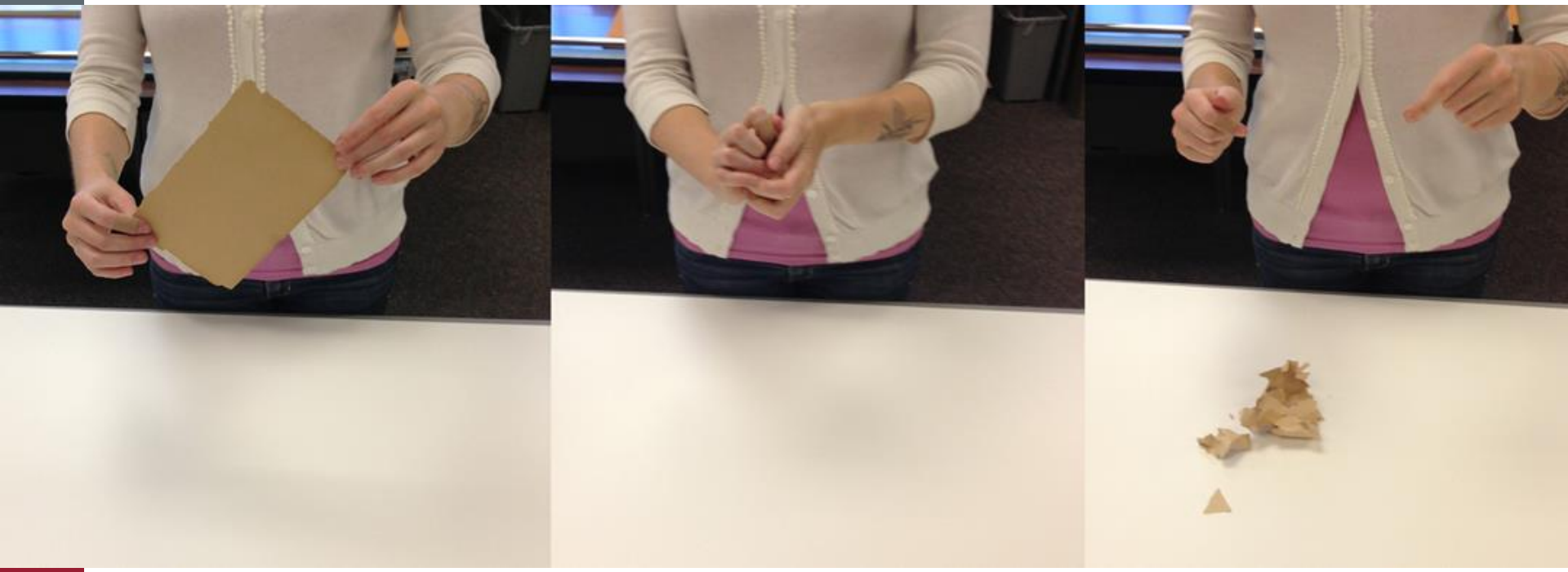
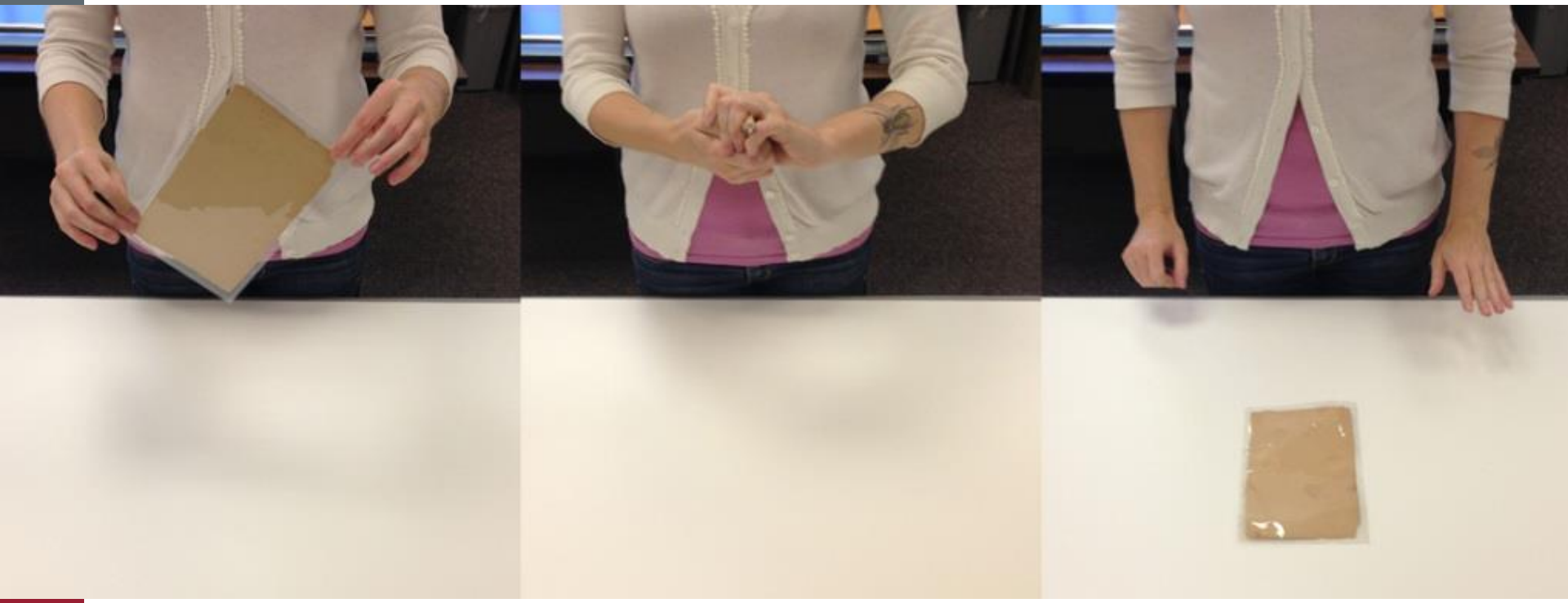
Encapsulation

Why should you use it?

- Allows items to be viewed without causing handling damage.



- Photos from Miami University Special Collections and Archives



- Photos from Miami University Special Collections and Archives

Why should you use it?

- Allows items to be viewed without causing handling damage.
- Gives the protection of an enclosure without having to be taken in and out of that enclosure.
- Protects items from the atmosphere.
- It can also provide a psychological protection: When a patron sees that an item has been carefully encapsulated, they will often be more careful with it.

When should you use it?

- Use for things that will be handled often.
- Use for things that are fragile.
- Use for things that are hard to handle without causing tears. This includes large items as well as very fragile or brittle things.

When should you not use it?

- Do not use with anything that has pencil, charcoal, pastels, or other media that may lift and shift with the static charge in the polyester film.
- Don’t use on very thick items.
- Remember that encapsulation is only for single sheets.
- It’s often not worth it for items in good condition.

Polyester Film

- Polyester film is inert, so it will not harm documents.
- The DuPont brand name is Mylar, which is a term often used interchangeably with polyester film.
- Sheets, sleeves, folders, and rolls of polyester film in various sizes can be found in most archival supply catalogs.
- The usual thicknesses are 3 mil to 5 mil (.003 inches to .005 inches)

Things to watch out for

- Moisture and humidity can become trapped in a plastic encapsulation. Check over encapsulated items in the event of a water disaster.
- The acidity of very acidic items can become trapped in the encapsulation, causing deterioration to accelerate. Only encapsulate very acidic things if they will be handled often, or if you include a buffer to absorb any acidity.

Encapsulation Sizes

- Mylar sleeves are sold in standard photo and paper sizes, but custom enclosures are needed for anything that is an unusual size.
- There is a certain amount of cheating you can do for items that are only slightly larger than the standard sleeves sizes.

Encapsulation Prep

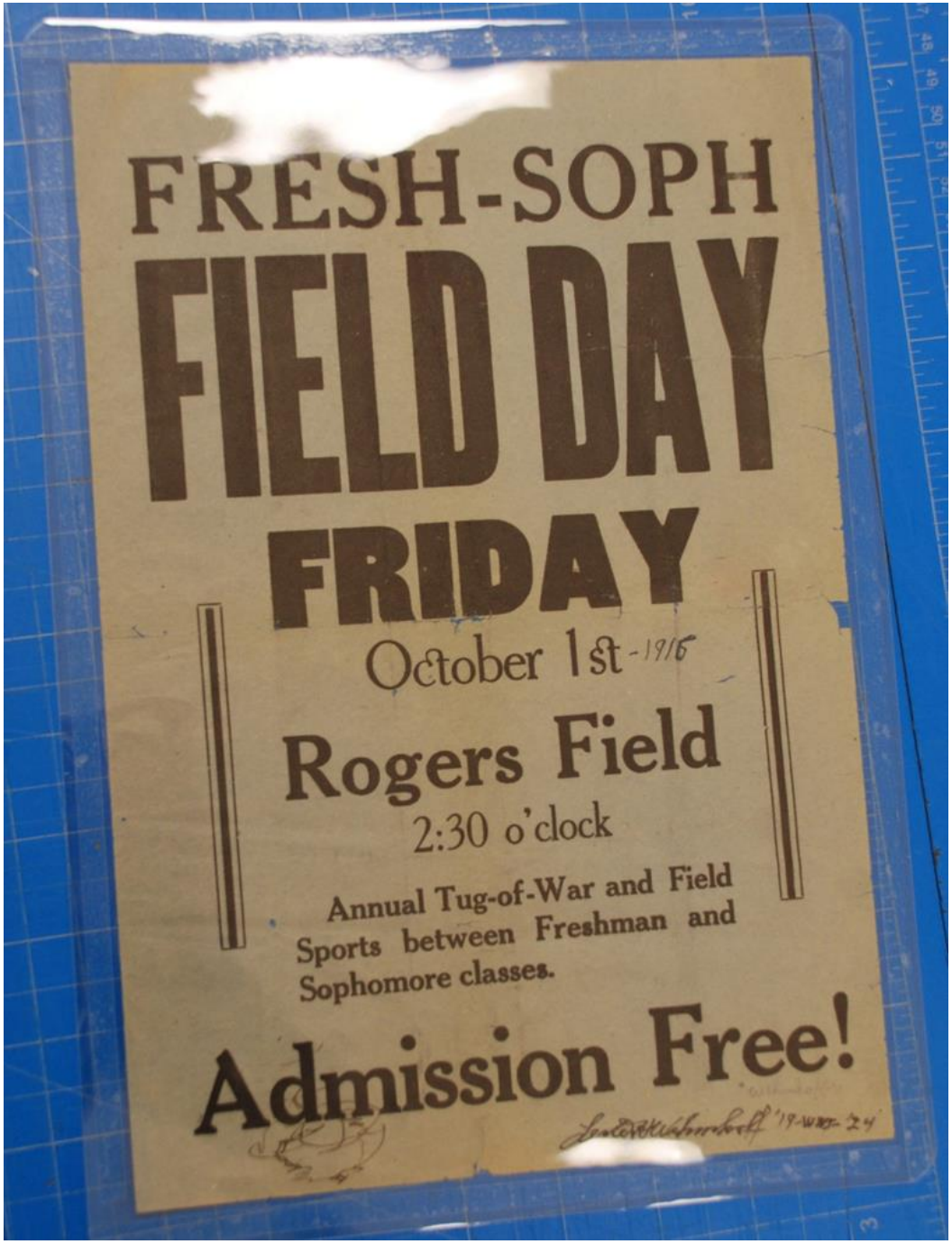
- Before encapsulating anything, make sure it is clean and free of tape, paper clips, staples, and other things.
- Some scanners can't scan encapsulated items. Make sure anything you encapsulate has already been digitized if you plan to do so.
- You want the item to stay in the encapsulation.

Encapsulation methods

- Tape
- Sewing
- Heat welding
- Ultrasonic welder

Encapsulation methods: Tape

- Use double sided tape to seal the enclosure.
- Leave a generous margin, because the tape can migrate
- The ONLY acceptable tape for this is 3M Scotch Brand Double-Sided Tape #415


FRESH-SOPH
FIELD DAY
FRIDAY
October 1st - 1916
Rogers Field
2:30 o'clock
Annual Tug-of-War and Field Sports between Freshman and Sophomore classes.
Admission Free!

Encapsulation methods: Sewing

- Use a zigzag stitch
- Familiarity with a sewing machine is helpful
- Best method for combining another material with Mylar for the enclosure.


Salt Springs
Rapid
Lake of the
Big I.
Goose I.
Pine R.
Clear Lake
Athabasca Lake
Elk River
59
58
113
112
111
110

Encapsulation methods: Welders

- Heat welder: This is how pre-made sleeves are made.
- Minter Ultrasonic Welder: Uses sound waves to weld a seam in the Mylar.

Helpful Sources

- NPS Conserve O Gram: https://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/conserveogram/13-03.pdf
- CCI Notes: http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1439925170708
- NEDCC Preservation Leaflet: https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/5.-photographs/5.6-storage-enclosures-for-photographic-materials
- SHN Tutorial: http://www.sustainableheritagenetwork.org/digital-heritage/encapsulation-demonstration-tutorial