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Dec. 21, 2021

Vol. 45 No. 03

#### **ACROSS THE AUCTION BLOCK**

### Picasso bronze brings top dollar at Merkel auction

By Nancy KELLY

CHELSEA, Mich. — Auctioneer have spent over two antiquities, artwork,

years gathering and cat- fine estate jewelry, aloging a collection of rare and hard to find items from numerous Joseph estates. The result was Merkel and his staff an amazing selection of tion in the gallery while



Above: This Monica Silva, Santo Domingo pueblo, storage jar dated 1920-1925 closed with a final bid of \$2,300.

coins, textiles, glassware, and more. A limited number of patrons were seated by reservamost bidders followed the auction online. Prices listed here do not include the buyer's premium. With 321 auction lots, it is difficult to present more than just a small sample of the available treasures.

The top lot of the day was an original 1945 Pablo Picasso bronze titled "Femme Debout" (Standing Woman). It was #8/10 and was stamped with the foundry mark "C. Valsuani Cire Perdue". This attractive figure with dark brown patina measured 7.5 inches tall and required a final bid of



Above: This handsome 2014 Swarovski Crystal SCS horse "Esperanza", cleared a final bid of \$140.

\$20,000 to take it home. The range of art objects was diverse and fascinating. For exam- a much older pottery ple, there was an antique white nephrite Nayarit warrior figure jade buckle from the from western Mexico, emperor Chien Lung depicted seated while period, 1736-1796. The holding a knobbed club. 4-inch long figure consisted of a dragon head mounted on a cicada body. This unusual item

closed with a high bid of Another \$2,500. eye-catching figure was sculpture portraying a He is attributed to the period 100 BCE-250 CE.

See Merkel page 4



was an original 1945 Pablo Picasso bronze at \$20,000.

#### FEATURE

### Figural nutcrackers have brightened our holidays

BY LARRY LEMASTERS

More nuts are eaten during the long holiday season between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day than at any other time in the year. And most of these nuts were opened using a nutcracker.

Nutcrackers, by definition, are tools designed to open nuts by cracking their shells. There are many different designs of nutcrackers, including



screws, ratchets, and levers. While decorative wooden nutcrackers, whose mouths form the jaws of the nutcracker, are popular, most nut lovers rely on an old fashioned, metal nutcracker to crack holiday nuts.

Historians believe the first hinged lever nutcrackers date to ancient Greece. By the 1300s, hinged nutcrackers were documented in such works as the Canterbury Tales. However, it was the Industrial Revolution of the mid-19th century that allowed manufacturers to produce modern, functional metal leverstyled nutcrackers that resembled pliers with the pivot point at the end of the tool just past where the nut is inserted. Henry Quackenbush patented the first spring-jointed, lever nutcracker in 1913. Many Victorian Era dinners included nuts



Above: Cast-iron "squirrel" nutcracker that was offered on eBay for \$130.

Above: L.A. Althoff Manufacturing of LaPorte, Indiana, produced this cast iron figural dog, metal nutcracker in the 1st half of the 20th century. This nutcracker was recently offered on eBay for \$925.

that were opened using decorative nutcracker silver-plated nutcrackers. The use of nutcrackers at dinner probably led, in the late 19th century, to the rise in figurative and

designs. Specialty nutcrackers were produced throughout the Alps region of Europe as tourist souvenirs.

By the 1960s, the availability of pre-shelled packaged nuts led to a decline in manufacturing

See Nutcrackers page 4



### SINCE 1978 THE WEEKLY AUCTION & COLLECTORS **GUIDE FOR THE GREAT LAKES REGION**

# 17TH ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S DAYImage: Constraint of the second sec



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Auctioneer: Richard Leonard Richard Leonard









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### Americana & International Auction

January 13 & 14, 2022



#### Merkel From Page 1

The 16.25-inch tall figure was produced in red ceramic and featured buff details. Reported to have a professionally repaired knobbed club, he still proved desirable, drawing a final bid of \$950. A 5-inch tall terracotta bust depicting Astarte, the Canaanite goddess of love and war, from the 8th-7th century BCE left with a final bid of \$450, while an elegant large bronze seated Buddha measuring 28.5-inch tall closed at \$125.



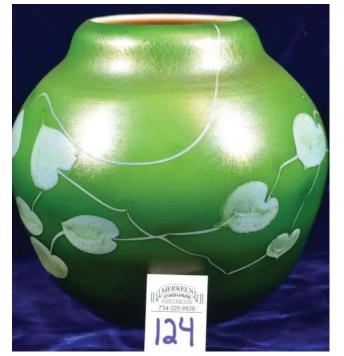
Above: A very finely crafted 18K yellow gold necklace in excellent condition left for \$1,600.



**Above:** An amazing antique cushion cut sapphire gemstone mounted in a platinum band with small diamond accent stones along the sides was claimed with a high bid of \$4,000.



**Above:** An antique white nephrite jade buckle from the emperor Chien Lung period, 1736-1796, closed with a high bid of \$2,500.





Museum-quality pot-

tery was offered and

enthusiastically claimed. An attractive

storage jar dated 1920-

1925 was attributed to

Monica Silva, Santo

Domingo pueblo. It was

made of white slip deco-

rated with rows of

inverted triangles in

black on the neck along

with black painted

designs below the rim.

Measuring 20 inches tall

by 22 inches wide, it

closed with a final bid of

\$2,300. A bright green

6-inch tall Tiffany

Favrile cased glass vase

decorated with hearts

and vines also bore the

letters "L.C.T." on the

edge in the gold area. Numbered 1239B, this

lovely collectible left

with a final bid of

Some beautiful and

unusual estate jewelry

proved to be very popu-

lar. This included an

amazing antique cush-

ion cut (rectangular

shape with slightly

rounded corners) sap-

phire gemstone mount-

ed in a platinum band

with small diamond

accent stones along the

sides. This size 8 ring

\$1,400.

**Above**: Featuring a fascinating design, this platinum Ring-Dant diamond and sapphire ballerina ring finished with a high bid of \$3,600.

was claimed with a high bid of \$4,000. A similarly colored ring had a fascinating design. It consisted of a platinum Ring-Dant diamond and sapphire ballerina ring featuring a large center stone surrounded by 28 tapered diamonds. This size 6 ring finished with a high bid of \$3,600. A solitary 1.2-1.25Ct brilliant round cut SI1 diamond in a 14K yellow gold setting was claimed with a high bid of \$2,400. A very finely crafted 18K yellow gold necklace consisting of beaded clusters and shell drops in excellent condition left for \$1,600, and a vintage Alexandrite 12K gold ring drew a final bid of \$1,100.

Nine intricately decorated rugs were presented for consideration. The highest-selling example was a Persian Qum wool and silk rug measuring 4 feet 4 inches by 6 feet 4 inches that originated in a province of Iran. This beautifully designed item was described in "like new" condition with just a few tassels missing. It closed with a high bid of \$2,100. Other lovely examples closed in the \$100-600 range.

Wall art is always appreciated when decorating a home or office, and the examples here did not disappoint. A variety of subjects were displayed, each with their own followers. The Marc Chagall "Nude with Fan" signed 1924 edition drypoint etching was from an edition of 105. It sold above estimated value with a final bid of \$1,400. An original J.J Enwright (Amer-



Above: An intricate Persian Qum wool and silk carpet in like new condition closed with a high bid of \$2,100.

Right: An original J.J Enwright (American, 1911-2001) oil that captured a fishing boat at the dock left with a final bid of \$1,100.

**Below:** A colorful and very appealing lot consisting of 24 Derriere Le Miroir folios with artwork spanning 1957-1973 was claimed for \$1,000.





ican, 1911-2001) oil painting captured a fishing boat at the dock with the village in the background. This engaging piece measured 20 by 26 inches. It was signed on the front, as well as titled "Cape Cod Boathouse" and signed in pencil on the backside of frame. It left with a final bid of \$1,100.

A colorful and very appealing lot consisted of 24 Derriere Le Miroir folios with artwork spanning 1957-1973. The variety of issues offered numerous plates in all folios, however due to their age and other circumstances the auction company was not guaranteeing that all pages were complete in all of the books. With the opportunity to attain such an unusual collection, this lot was claimed for \$1,000.

Finally, some delicate and fanciful figures produced by Swarovski Crystal were offered. The six lots included a panda family, a lion, an intricate paperweight, and a wonderful 2014 Swarovski horse "Esperanza", a piece only available to the Swarovski Crystal Society members. The horse measured 7 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches long and 4  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches tall. The mane and tail featured charcoal accents and there was silver and gold iridescence on the base. Sold without a box, this handsome collectible cleared a final bid of \$140. Information on more fine auctions from Joseph Merkel can be found at www.merkelauction.com.

**Above:** A bright green 6-inch tall Tiffany Favrile cased glass vase decorated with hearts and vines left with a final bid of \$1,400.



**Above:** The Marc Chagall "Nude with Fan" 1924 edition sold well above the estimated value with a final bid of \$1,400.

Nutcrackers FROM PAGE 1

and ownership of metal nutcrackers.

Today, lever-styled, metal nutcrackers are highly collectible and are often put on display in collectors' homes. While there are many different styles of metal nutcrackers, collectors have always preferred figural nutcrackers, such as nutcrackers metal designed like a dog, squirrel, elephant, horse, alligator, gnome, or bird. Squirrel-styled nutcrackers outnumber all of the others, perhaps because squirrels love nuts too.



Above: Antique, figural brass nutcracker, shaped like a bearded gnome with hat, that is valued at \$195. December 21, 2021

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Haley Filhart Nancy Kelly Auction Exchange and Collectors News Published weekly except one week in December (51 issues) and mailed every Thursday ISSN: 0279-0950 Published by MidCountry Media, Inc. 27 N. Jefferson St., PO Box 90 Knightstown, IN 46148 Periodicals postage paid at Knightstown, Indiana Subscription price: \$32.00 for one year \$57.00 for two years; \$82.00 for three years Canadian subscriptions are: \$151.00 per year First Class (US funds)

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### **POSTAL REPORT**

Without fail for 42 years, The Auction Exchange & Collectors News has been delivered to the USPS by 5 pm every Friday.

Currently we are delivering the newspaper to the USPS by midnight Thursday. Despite this early entry into the postal stream and our vociferous lobbying at all levels of the USPS, we are experiencing delivery problems in the following areas:

Ann Arbor MI, Caledonia MI

If you don't receive a paper by Tuesday's mail, you may call us to have a paper sent first class.

If it is after normal business hours, please call 800-876-5133 ext. 135. Please also call your Post Office to report your late delivery.



### Vintage cookie cutters bring back holiday memories

By Gayle Manley

Page 6

'Tis the Season when families pull out all the stops to create a memorable Christmas for family and friends. With so much hustle and bustle, lists and details, we relish the quiet moments to reflect on our traditions and special memories of Christmas-past. For many one favorite holiday memory started with a tin or aluminum cookie cutter.

Grandchildren were invited to Grandma's house as she baked and decorated Christmas sugar cookies. Grandma would usually roll-out and cut the dough into holiday shapes. Then gently and patiently, she would guide her young helpers as they added icing, sprinkled colored sugars, and attempted to neatly pipe frosting. Although the artistry and technique may



Above: Ideal Toy packaged charming little aluminum Mirro cooky cutters in their 1950s Betty Crocker Toy Baking Set. Photo: Courtesy of eBayer ebe

have been a bit unpolished, ultimately. Grandma's praise and laughter were all that mattered. Simple and sweet, yet joyful memories were being made that would last a lifetime. As

the Curator of the National Cookie Cutter Historical Museum, Kay Johnson, put it: "Cookie cutters are about much more than cookies."

Cookie cutters/molds of various materials and forms have been in use since the 15th century, but actual dates were not well-documented according to author and cookie cutter expert Phyllis Wetherill (1923-1995). She noted that In Europe, wooden molds

Left: This unusual one-of-

with intricate imprinted designs preceded the tin cook-

See Cookie Cutters page 7



Above: This Museum dis-

ie cutters - 1920s to pres-

ent day. Note the cop-

pertone cutters by Mirro

which were offered for a

limited time. Courtesy of

National Cookie Cutter

Historical Museum



a-kind map depicts the states of the USA in hand-made outline cookie cutters. The cutters were hand-crafted by metal artisan Al Moorhouse. Courtesy of National Cookie Cutter Historical Museum

Right: Colorful cookie cutters by Hallmark Cards appeal to children as well as seasoned collectors. For collectors, mint-on-card sets hold premium value. Shown: Seasonal Hallmark Cookie Cutter display at NCCHM. Courtesy of National Cookie Cutter Historical Museum

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#### **Cookie Cutters** FROM PAGE 6

ie cutter until approximately 1750. Within the U.S., in the early 1800s, travelling tinsmiths created handcrafted cookie cutters from tin scraps. Manufactured metal cookie cutters appeared in the latter half of the 19th century and were offered through wholesale and retail catalogs.

Likely the most significant advancement of cookie cutter development occurred between 1920 and 1940. In this period, aluminum became the dominant metal to form cookie cutters. Its attributes of light weight, malleability, heat conduction, and moisture-resistance (rust-free) made it ideal for cutter design and consumer baking.

The Mirro Aluminum Company, well-known for quality pots andpans, expanded its production to include mass-produced cookie cutters. Mirro turned out a large assortment of cutter shapes with red or green painted wooden handles, extended tops and interesting crimped edges. In a smart marketing move, Mirro influenced other manufacturers to package cookie cutters within their products as a consumer premium.

Did you ever receive or give one of those boxed children's toy baking sets (1950s-60s) as a Christmas adorable and now highly collectible miniature "cooky cutters" in toy sets sold by Ideal Toy Company. (The cooky spelling had its roots in Old World European countries.) During its years of operation, Mirro sold more than 100,000,000 aluminum cookie cutters, many of which have become family heirlooms.

gift? Mirro supplied the

Cookie making got another boost when plastics arrived in the 1940s. Plastic cutters had a raised interior design which resulted in more decorative and intricate cookies in contrast to metal "outline" cutters. It was able to cut and impress <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inch of dough in one motion.

Although many manufacturers offered plastic cutters, HRM/Educational Products Company became the most recognizable with its cherry red translucent polystyrene cutters. In 1947 HRM introduced a Hansel and Gretel cutter set. An individual cutter depicting Santa carrying a bag of toys was sold in 1948 at an affordable 15 cents. As demand for the red cutters grew, HRM added molds purchased from smaller companies and broadened their development of new designs.

In the late 1960s, Hallmark Cards entered into plastic cookie cutter design and manufacturing at their Kansas City location. Three unique mini-cutters were

Below: Want to inspire a child to be "tomorrow's" cookie cutter collector or to just

have fun? Here are examples of well-known contemporary characters portrayed in

each attached to individual Hallmark greeting cards.

Hallmark soon capitalized on the market for popular characters in their designs. In 1971, their first full cutter set introduced contained four colorful and lovable Peanuts characters in hard plastic. Over the years, the plastic composition of Hallmark's cutters, hanger styles and tints and hues changed. The National Cookie Cutter Historical Museum maintains a Hallmark cookie cutter exhibit year-round as a tourist attraction.

Cookie cutters were not only functional for bakers, they were sought by teachers and parents for use with children's activities, classroom use and general decorations. Collector and schoolteacher Kay Johnson recalled using a fun cookie cutter exercise as a reward for her 3rd grade students following a money-counting lesson. The children were provided dollar-bill shaped cookie cutters and sheets of cheese to hand-cut dollar bills. Yes, arithmetic was involved!

Vintage cookie cutters have become a hot collectible within the Farmhouse decorating trend. Canning and cookie jars are filled with cookie cutters; cookie cutters are wired to wreaths and even framed. In recent years, annual Christmas cookie exchanges have heated up as gifting

and social events. Similarly, cookie baking and decorating sessions provide a fun and nostalgic gathering during the Holiday season.

Members of the Cookie Cutter Collectors Club don't need a special reason to pull out their cookie cutters any season of the year. The national organization was originally founded by Phyllis Wetherill and then spawned numerous regional clubs around the country. If you have a passion for collecting cutters, baking or decorating cookies, or learning more about cutter history, visit their website at www.cookiecuttercollectorsclub.com for more information.

If you are planning a trip West, don't miss an opportunity to stop by The National Cookie Cutter Historical Museum for a tour of the exhibits. It is housed within the Joplin Museum complex located on Route 66 in Joplin, Mo. Visitors from the U.S. and other countries are treated to a free cookie cutter takeaway as a remembrance of their visit. School and tour bus tours can be accommodated. More information on the Museum can be found under the Museum category on the Cookie Cutter Collectors Club home page.

Whether you are a fan of the gingerbread man, stars, Santa, Rudolph or any seasonal image, cookie cutters serve many purposes, not the least of which is making memories that only grow sweeter with time. Happy



Above: The history of cookie cutters and an inventory of more than 10,000 Cookie Cutters have been preserved at the National Cookie Cutter Historical Museum (NCCHM) in Joplin. MO. Courtesy of National Cookie Cutter Historical Museum



Above: HRM's bright red cookie cutters were sold individually and in sets. Shown: a vintage boxed set valued \$20-25. Photo: Courtesy of eBayer rummaging 4

cookie cutter sets. (Collection of Kay Johnson)



Holidays to all!

Below: This gingerbread couple are custom-made copper cookie cutters donated to the NCCHM by retired coppersmith Ray Braman. They stand a whopping 3 feet tall. Courtesy of National Cookie Cutter Historical Museum

relics





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Mid Century Curtis Jere' Sailing Ship Sculpture 52" by 40", Body By Fisher Wall 3 Dimensional Wall Hanging Sculpture, 1800's Buckboard Seat in Old Paint, 1913 J.L.Smith Cast-iron Hog Oiler Hasting Iowa, Keeney's Kriss Cross Diamond Slot Machine, 1930's Mills Pinball Machine, 2-Lightning Rods w/Glass Balls One Signed W.C. Shinn, 1917



Dazey Butter Churn Clean, Old Ice Saw, Enterprize Sauage Stuffer, Industrial Hanging Leg Sock Mold Chrome/Steel, Double Round Top Shutters, Long Neck Nancy Hat Mannequin, Pair of 1800's Button Up Kids Shoes, Large Wood Duck Decoy, Utica Coca-Cola Hunting Knife, Gerber Kitchen Knife, Nice Handmade Dulcimer w/Sticks, 7" by 5" Louis Cardin Enamel on Copper Framed Painting, Fabbri Art Studio Boy Carving Rock Sculpture, F.T.W. Motorcycle Club Skull Painting, Double Leaded Colorful Glass Shades Table Lamp, Mid Century Blow Mold & Balloon Lamps Italy, 12 Gallon New England Hopp & Malt Co. Advertising Crock w Indian, Small Weed/Gold Scale, Oldsmobile Dealership Window 4' by 4', Coca-Cola Cooler on Wheels, Oldsmobile Auditorium Chair, Wrought Iron Bicycle Wine Rack, Stardust Lounge Sign Lansing 1970's Disco Dancing, 6 Dealership Signs 1962 Chevrolet Advertisements For

Cars, Gearbox Pepsi Cola Die Cast Delivery Van, Old Jointed Teddy Bear, RCA Globetrotter Radio, Tru Tone Super Heterodyne, Vintage Craig Turntable Series 5000, Smith Corona Floating Shift Typewriter, RC Car/Boat/Plane Power Chargers, RC Boat/plane/Car Speed Controls New, Large Oldsmobile STORY Dealership Sign, Brass Story Largest Dealer Award Tray & Crystal Cigar Ashtray, 1862 MKI Brass Compass, LG. Group 1937/38 AFL CIO Automobile Union Pins, 1950's Oldsmobile Inner Ring of Steering Wheel & Auto Trim, 2 Old 5 Gallon Gas Cans 1 Old Paint/1 Screw Top, Story Oldsmobile License Plate Frames & Ice Scrapers, Vanity License Plates, Laser Cut USA Symbol Key Datsun Desk Award, 2-Wood Block & Tackles, New w/Tags Oldsmobile Jacket & Oldsmobile Indy 500 Jacket, 1968/69/70 Mexican Racing Jacket, Chevy Racing Jacket, One of a Kind Detroit Michigan Hand Made Denim Jacket, Kids John Deere Coveralls 2-Charles Jourdan & Natori Designer Purses, Roseville Pottery, Several Leaded Crystal Liquor Decanters, Glass Paper Weights, Bone China Teacups, Stoneware Whiskey Bottles, Old Star Amber Bottle, Old Tin w/Oyster Tins, Box of 1976 Winchester 30-30 Shells, Old Black Powder Horn, Porcelain Gas Station Light, History of Civil War Book, Several Old Barn Lanterns, Old Armstrong Perc-O-Toaster, Sterling Silver Jewelry, Wrist Watches, Silver Salt & Pepper Shakers, Coleman Cooler, Plus Many, Many Other Items Too Numerous to Mention. Great End of Year Auction!! Don't Miss This One, Large Auction 100's of Antiques & Collectibles.

Box, Aurora Corvette Slot Car Boxed Set w/Cars Unused, Cox Piper Cub Gas Airplane in Box, 3 in 1 Model Cars, Die

Cast Cars, 1999 Diecast L.E. Autographed Joe & John Nemechex NASCAR Two Piece Set, John Deere Tractor, Remco George Barris Donut Wheelie Car, Tonka Car Hauler w/Ramp, Lionel Santa Fe Train Engine Set, Lionel Passenger

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Side View Wood Duck Decoy



Lionel Snata Fe Engine w/ Cars-Transforme





Chevy Cars in Original Box, Actual Photos of Oldsmobile Dealerships, Architect Drawing of Oldsmobile Dealerships Plazas, Bell System Porcelain Sign Original 8", Flanged 2 sided 16" by 10" Porcelain Sign Purdue Creamery Lafayette Indiana, U.S.27 Metal Embossed Sign, M-27 Road Sign Autographed, Centerliver Beer Advertisement Fort Wayne Ind., Frederick's

Premium Beer Metal Tray, Porcelain Citizen's Insurance License Plate Topper, Habana Segars

Keeney's Slot Machine



16"By10" Purdue Creamery Porcelain Sign

& Dutch Boy Paint Match Safes, Courvoisier Brandy of Napoleon Porcelain Bar Sign, Chalkware Heidelberg Beer Bar Sign, Drewerys/Stroh's/Frankenmuth/Sharp's Bar Beer Signs, 1957 Buick Salesman Interior Upholstery Book, 1954 Motors Manual New in Box, Boxes & Albums of Victorian Trade Cards, Holiday Postcards, Wiggle Picture Dancing Girl, Oldsmobile NASCAR Photos of Driver & Cars Portfolio, Old Gas Station Road Maps, Boxes Of Car Brochures & Ephemera, 1929/31 McKinley Reynolds Lansing Directories Lots of Old Time Advertising, Harrison Auto Sales Lansing Desk Match Holder, Ferguson's Gulf Station Ashtray, 1940/50's Oldsmobile Century Club Programs & Menus, Movie & Drive In Posters, Coca-Cola Book of Advertising, Beatles Concert Poster Limited Edition, Beatles Old Collector Cards, Beatles Buttons printed matter.

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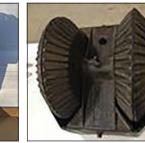


12 Gallon Stoneware Advertising Crock

Aurora Corvette Slot Car Track w/Cars



Long Neck Nancy Hat Mannequin



1913 Hog Oiler E.J. Smith Hastings, IA



6 Chevrolet 1962 Dealer **Display Posters** 

#### Page 9

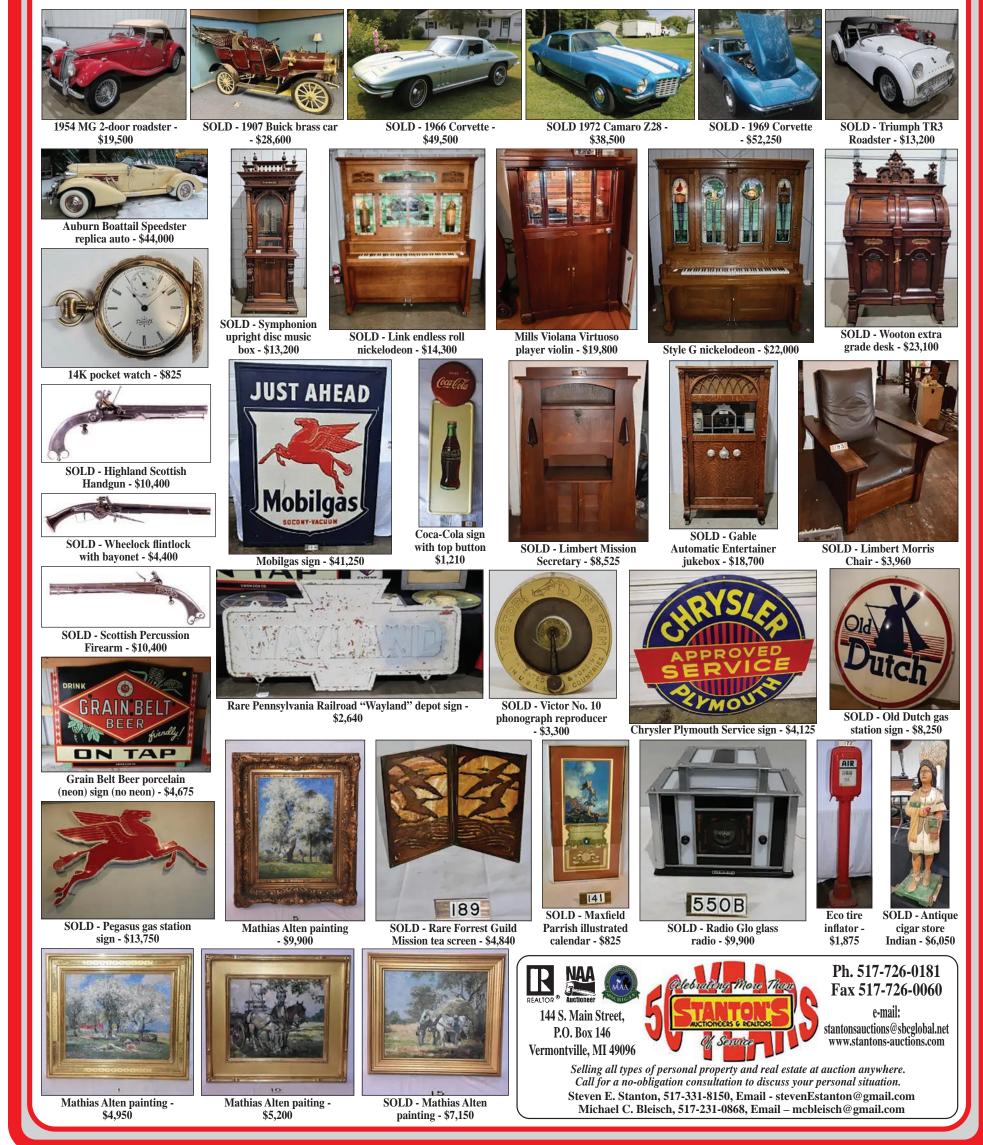
# **THANK YOU FROM STANTON'S AUCTIONEERS & REALTORS**

We want to take this time, as we wind down 2021, to thank everyone that we have had the opportunity to work with throughout this year. The response again to our auctions, have time and time again generated great results for our clients, and opportunities for all buyers that have participated in over 100 auctions conducted by our firm, proving that the competitive bidding and proper promotion that an auction provides garners the results that the sellers are looking for.

Millions and millions of dollars of real estate, farm equipment, and other types of personal property has been sold by our firm in our live and online auction formats. We have conducted auction across Michigan during this year selling assets for private individuals, companies, estates, trust departments, and museums. We have also traveled to nearly all the corners of the United States picking up collections from 24 states that we have brought back to Michigan to be sold in our market.

2021 may be ending, but we are presently working on preparing for the New Year and the auctions that we will be conducting in 2022. We are presently scheduling all types of assets as we schedule farm machinery, agricultural, and real estate sales.

We sincerely wish to thank all our sellers, consignors, buyers, bidders, and friends that we have had the opportunity to work with this year, as well as those who have followed us since the inception of Stanton's Auctioneers & Realtors in 1954. It also goes without saying that we wish to acknowledge all of our great staff and auction crew who make our services complete from sale set-up to clerking, cashiering, advertising, photography and every aspect of our system.



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Our office will be closed Dec. 24-Jan. 2. We will not print a paper dated Tues., Jan. 4th. After the Dec. 28th issue, the next available issue will be Tues., Jan. 11th with a deadline of Wed., Jan. 5th at noon. All deadlines for the month of December will remain the same (noon on Wed. for the following Tuesday publication that you would like to appear in). See page 5 of the paper for issue dates and deadlines.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT IN 2021 AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!!





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**AUCTION HIGHLIGHTS:** Lots of Christmas including rare white feather tree, 1928 Santa Christmas tree skirt; rare 19th century carved burl butter paddle; 1920 – 1960s silver quarters; American dovetailed copper collection to include rare 1700s small water heated furnace; general store items to include actual size faux food, meat, signs; lifetime collection of Great Lakes Steamships memorabilia with rare and hard to find items including 1000s of early steamer postcards and brochures in binders all individually separated, includes rare ink blotters, paperweights, souvenir items, many Put-In-Bay and Lake Erie islands, Cedar Point and other local vacation items; sailor and whalers scrimshaw-carved whales' teeth; postcard binders full of northwest Ohio local towns, large binder of Alaska and binders of other states, Halloween, Christmas Santas; 1820-40s large stoneware platters; sterling flatware; 1838 T. Fletcher Coin Silver Cup Phila, PA, other ster-



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C 1810-40 Ironstone Platter 40+ in this auction



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December 21, 2021





### Toast the holidays with glass of Tom and Jerry

#### By Barbara Miller Beem

There's the martini, shaken or stirred, garnished with an olive and sipped from an iconic wide-mouth glass. Champagne's tiny bubbles are trapped in an elegant flute. And fine wine is best appreciated when swirled in a tapered piece of stemware. When it comes to alcoholic beverages, particularly those served at social gatherings, the proper barware is often crucial, as well as specific to the drink. And so it is with the Tom and Jerry cocktail, a longtime holiday favorite for some, but for the uninitiated, something of a puzzle.

This time of year, those browsing through an antique or consignment shop are bound to come across at least one Tom and Jerry serving set, a smallish punch bowl with matching cups and most likely bearing the name of the drink. The origins of this potent potable are a bit fuzzy. Ditto as to how the drink got its name (although here are theories for that). Probably the most common mistake in identity is associating the drink with two cartoon characters of the same name. Debuting in 1940, Tom, a domestic shorthair cat, and Jerry, a wily mouse, of course, had nothing to do with the drink.

They were not the first duo with those fictional names. That distinction goes to two characters introduced in an 1821 book, "Life in London" by Pierce Egan, later adapted into an English stage play. The protagonists: two scruffs named Tom and Jerry. If that weren't enough, there's Jerry Thomas, an American bartender who further clouded the issue; when he published an 1862 book of drink recipes, he claimed the drink as his own invention.

However, there's no disputing the fact that a Tom and Jerry has been



Above: Some people maintain that Tom and Jerry cocktails are a "Wisconsin thing." Steve Knauss, owner of Connolly's, enjoys sipping his from these cups. Image courtesy of Steve Knauss

well over a century and a half. The ingredients are simple but the process is labor-intensive: Eggs, sugar, and spices (depending on personal taste) are beaten together to make what looks like cake batter, to which is added hot water (although some prefer hot milk) and spirits (generally brandy or rum).

But it's the serving sets that appeal to fans of modern mid-century design. One such collector is Jimmie Bucci, who was introduced to Tom and Jerry by his father. One day years ago, after Christmas had come and gone, the elder Bucci, who had a shop that sold "old stuff," had a Tom and Jerry set still on the shelf. Knowing that his son was attracted to such things, he offered it to him. "I thought, 'This is kind of cool," the younger Bucci recalled.

An inveterate collector, the Massachusetts resident began looking for similar sets in thrift shops, and soon after, expanded his search to online sites that offered these mid-century serving pieces for sale. "My collection evolved," he continued. Today, he estimates that he owns 30 Tom and Jerry sets.

Although there are older examples in existence, Bucci has focused his collection on those made in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s. Companies such as Hazel Atlas and Homer Laughlin, as well as Hall manufactured a wide variety of sets. Many sets were also made in Japan.

The bowls, Bucci continued, often resemble mixing bowls in shape, with a smallish capacity, generally little more than a quart or two, which is enough for one round in the matching cups. Some bowls were lidded (to keep the drink warm); other sets included matching ladles. As for the cups, they are diminutive in size and hold from four to six ounces of liquid, often resembling little coffee cups, but sometimes, more like a traditional teacup.

For whatever reason, a "merrie olde English" motif is predominant, picturing Dickensian gentlemen in top hats toasting each other; additionally, horse drawn coaches are frequently featured. Other designs are wintery in nature, picturing skaters, skiers, and sledders. Still others are decorated with poinsettias, ivy, or holly. Some examples include a few bars of songs ("Auld Lang Syne" and "Jingle Bells"). Often the lettering is florid and quaint. Most examples say "Tom and Jerry," but there are outliers that read "Egg Nog." Although most sets are decorated in the traditional Christmas colors of red and green, Bucci has examples of sets with orange, blue, and black decorations. Of his collecting strategy, he said, "I try not to duplicate, but some-



**Above:** Whereas many have enjoyed this warm cocktail during the holiday season, collector Jimmie Bucci appreciates the festive graphics on Tom and Jerry bowls and cups. images courtesy of Jimmie Bucci

Probably purchased in dime stores and gift shops, Tom And Jerry sets might have been originally sold complete or as open stock, Bucci added. Some of his finds retain their original boxes and are in excellent condition, attributable to the fact that they were only used for several weeks out of the year and then put aside with other Christmas-related items. So it is with Bucci, who incorporates them into his holiday decorations, this year arranging them in the shape of a Christmas tree on his fireplace mantel. "They really are fun," he said, pointing out that a Tom and Jerry set can be purchased "in the \$30 to \$40 range." Surprisingly, he concluded, after decades of tending bar in the Boston area, "I have never had a person ask me

for a Tom and Jerry." That might not be the case these days in parts of Wisconsin and Minnesota, according to Steve Knauss. The proprietor of a microbrewery and pub (Thirsty Pagan Brewing), Knauss now owns Connolly's, a business founded by Jack Connolly in 1949 that continues to produce batter for Tom and Jerry drinks.

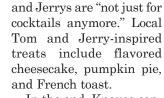
Knauss, a resident of Superior, Wisconsin, has childhood memories of opening the refrigerator door, seeing the makings for Tom and Jerrys in a mixing bowl, and thinking, "There's going to be a party." Carrying on the tradition, the Wisconsin resident now oversees the production of Tom and Jerry batter in enormous quantities (requiring 17 pallets, each holding 130 six-container cases), all concocted in two weeks. When frozen, the drink's whipped characteristic is somewhat diminished, a small price to pay for not having to make the batter from scratch. Although liquor is added (usually brandy in Wisconsin), Tom and Jerrys can be served without alcohol, which is how children are taught to love what Knauss considers to



**Above:** There's something about this cup that brings a smile to the face.

be a "delicacy." Top it off with either red and green sprinkles ("pretty") or nutmeg ("tasty"). Cheers!

Knauss adamantly maintains that Tom and Jerry punch is not related to eggnog. It is a drink unto itself, and often a non-dairy drink at that, with hot water, not milk or cream, added. "Everybody who tries it enjoys it," Knauss stated. And it is once again popping up in bars in Duluth, Minnesota, and Superior. But Tom



In the end, Knauss concluded, a Tom and Jerry is a good way to warm up, not get intoxicated. The cups are small, and it feels good to hold them. And they're meant to be sipped. Which is a good thing, because where he lives, "it gets really, really cold."



enjoyed in America for and Anchor Hocking, tin



times it's tempting."

Left: Looking rather Dickensian are these imbibing gentlemen in top hats.

**Below:** Those who enjoy Tom and Jerry cocktails have the perfect drink service for a New Year's Eve party.



Above: Very swanky, this set departs from the usual redand-green motif.



Above: Although no one knows for sure where – or when – the Tom and Jerry originated, many of the bowls and cups used to serve it feature lettering that brings to mind "merrie olde England."

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