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February 18, 2025

Vol. 48 No.11

ACROSS THE AUCTION BLOCK

First issue of Playboy wowed with \$4,750 bid

BY NANCY KELLY

Sales, LLC, shared a convincing example with his bidders that they should

consult a professional auctioneer when dispers-LESLIE, Mich. - Brad ing items. A client had Stoecker, owner of Epic brought him issue #1 and Auctions and Estate #2 of Playboy magazine and was pretty sure they were reproductions. Stoecker thought other-



Above: This rare Laing's Planetarium mechanical orrery model circa 1897 was the most-viewed item online. It drew a respectable final bid of \$2,000

wise and sent them off to CGC Services for identification and grading. They were authentic, and the results were rewarding. These were just two of the great items available at a recent online auction.

The first issue of Playboy Magazine was dated December 1953 and featured Marilyn Monroe as the "Sweetheart of the Month". There was also an article about Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey. The CGC Universal service gave the issue a 7.5 grade due to the white pages being off-white, but it was otherwise in exceptional. It soared to a final bid of \$4,750. Issue #2 was considered the holiday issue, dated January 1954. It featured Margie Harrison as a centerfold and an article about Bob Hope. Graded 8.0, it was

Right: The first issue of Playboy Magazine was dated December 1953 and featured Marilyn Monroe as the "Sweetheart of the Month". It soared to a final bid of \$4,750.

claimed with a final bid of \$800.

This auction was advertised as featuring a carefully curated selection of fine art, antiques, and iconic design, and it did not disappoint. A 1973 lithograph by Frank Stella titled "Les Indes Galantes V" led the art inventory. It was signed in pencil and numbered 58/100. Framed under glass, the print itself measured 16 by 22 inch-

See Playboy Page 4



FEATURE

Michigan Auctioneers honor champions at convention

Mich. — The Michigan ored. Auctioneers Association held its annual conventhat time several auction



MOUNT PLEASANT, professionals were hon-

Colt Johnson, 26, from Farwell, Mich., won the tion Jan. 29-31. During title of 2025 Michigan Auctioneer Champion at the 34th annual Michigan Auctioneer & Ringman Championships. Timothy Bos with Bos Auctions & Appraisal Service and co-owner of the Jackson Antique Mall, was enshrined in the Michigan Auctioneers Association Hall of Fame. Bradley Stoecker, from Leslie, Mich., was named the 2025 Michigan Ringman Champion



Above: Colt Johnson won the 2025 Michigan



Above: Bradley Stoecker, from Leslie, Mich., was

Above: Timothy Bos with **Bos Auctions &** Appraisal Service and co-owner of the Jackson Antique Mall, was enshrined in the Michigan Auctioneers Association Hall of Fame.

Colt Johnson

When Johnson was named the winner of the the Auctioneer of Championship, he said, "This is truly an honor. I don't know what to say. I've been trying at this for five or six years. Thank

Auctioneer Champion at the 34th annual Michigan named the 2025 Michigan Ringman Champion Auctioneer Championship.

you to my uncle John Schaumburg, Ill.

McConnell, my dad, Matt Johnson, and Scott Sykora, who have all been my backbone during this journey and great mentors."

Johnson received a championship buckle, trophy, and entry into the International Auctioneer Championship in July in

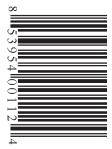
Professional auctioneering is in Johnson's DNA, as his late uncle, Darell Dunkle, was a well-respected auctioneer from 1965-2022. When Johnson was a little boy, he remembers attending the Clare County Livestock Auction with his father. Matt Johnson.

Colt is now an auctioneer for the Clare County Livestock Auction and sells every Monday.

The 2016 Clare High School graduate attended the World-Wide College Auctioneering in of Mason City, Iowa, when he was just 15. After graduating from auction school, he began working

with Sykora Auction Service and is celebrating his 11th work anniversary with the firm. Johnson also works at the Clare County Livestock, which he says, "it is the highlight of my week". He enjoys all auctions, but his favorite types of auc-

See MAA winners Page 12



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





We have multiple other quality auctions currently taking place. To bid & view 1,000's of photos visit johnpeckauctions.com "Award Winning Auctioneers Since 1979" (989) 345-4866



Shipshewana Antique & Misc. Auction Wednesday, February 26th @ 9AM

Bid on these and MANY MORE great items in Row 4, Spaces 11-30



Early Triumph Phonograph



Unusual Advertising Radio Lamps



1820 Queen Ann 2-pc Tiger Maple Highboy



Vintage Quilts



Unusual Inlaid Box



1920s Raggedy Ann Dolls



1840 Early Painted Stepback Cupboard



Pair of Hardware Store Display Figures



1820s Grain Painted Blanket Chest (Original)



John Rupp 2-pc Painted Corner Cabinet



Signed Base/Shade Jefferson Lamp



Signed Tiffany Studios Lamp





Painted Sheraton Chest

16 Tin 1840s Pie Safe







1780s Tallboy Chest

Preview More Items on AuctionZip.com - Auctioneer ID # 1945

Shipshewana Auction • 345 S Van Buren St., Shipshewana, IN • (260) 768-4129 • www.shipshewanaauction.com

Playboy FROM PAGE 1

es. In excellent condition it drew a final bid of \$3,600. Not far behind, a lithograph by Alexander Calder titled "Quilt" was from an edition of 600 published by the Founders Society of the Detroit Institute of Arts and printed by Mourlot Studio of Paris. The print measured 30 by 22 inches, signed in pencil, and was rehomed with a final bid of \$3,300. A Native American painting depicting three ghost-like images walking through water that was created by JoAnne Bird was done in lovely natural colors and drew a final bid of \$1,100.

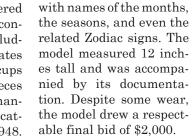
A limited number of dinnerware sets were offered, but one really stood out. The Herend "Rothschild Bird" pattern was named for the Rothschild family. Allegedly, Baroness Rothschild lost a valuable necklace which was later found in the garden near a tree with songbirds. There are different pairs of birds on each item, but each is pictured in a tree with a gold necklace. The family fell in love with



Above: The Herend "Rothschild Bird" pattern dinner set featuring pairs of birds on branches each with a gold necklace was taken home with a final bid of \$3,250



A circa 1897 Laing's Planetarium orrery manufactured in Detroit drew 3.130 views online. Stoecker said the item was one he had never seen before. It depicted a mechanical model of the sun with the earth and its moon suspended on arms that revolved around it. The base was marked



chairs.

Adrian

of

taken with a final bid of

There was great inter-

est in a Franklin Library,

a division of The Franklin

Mint, set of leather

bound "100 Greatest

American Literature".

The set was in excellent

condition, including

embossed gilt decoration

and attached ribbon

bookmarks. Some of the

authors included Twain,

Hemingway, London,

Faulkner, Emerson, Poe,

Steinbeck, and many

more. This much appre-

ciated collection was

taken with a final bid of

Melville,

Masterpieces

Whitman,

\$1,400.

There were many eye-catching furniture options available, including а Laverne International set of four "Champagne" These Mid-Century Modern acrylic chairs were designed in 1962 and featured navy blue fur textured cushions. Measuring 32 inches tall, the eye-catching set was rehomed with a final bid of \$1,900. A massive 8 1/2-foot-long Pearsall gondola style sofa from the 1960s would command attention in any room. Featuring a walnut frame and trim, reupholstered this unmarked classic was

\$1,500.



Above: A unique 36-inch-tall plaster table lamp with double rectangular shade went home to an appreciative buyer with a final bid of \$250.

Eastern art were well received. A bronze throned Buddha was offered with four other figures representing the king, the queen and two guards. The set was purchased in Thailand and the tallest piece stood 20 inches. This possible alter decoration drew a final bid of \$1,200. Dating back to the Qing Dynasty, 19th century, a pair of two lidded bowls with wood bases were described as Chinese Famille Rose porcelain with polychrome enameled decoration. Measuring 7 inches tall without their bases they also secured a \$1,200 high bid. There were many enchanting pieces of Chinese art, including a delicate hand-carved jade blossom sculpture on a carved wood base that depicted blue blossoms on an intricate white leaf structure. It measured 4 inches tall by 6 inches long and was claimed with a final bid of \$130.

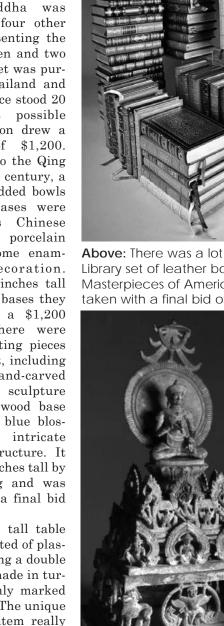
Two unusual items of

A 36 inch tall table lamp constructed of plaster and sporting a double rectangular shade in turquoise was only marked "Capri 1955". The unique form of this item really stood out. It went home to an appreciative buyer with a final bid of \$250.

Information on upcoming events and sales for Epic Auctions can be found at https://www.epicauctionsandestatesales. com/



Above: A massive 8 1/2-foot-long Adrian Pearsall gondola style sofa from the 1960s was taken with a final bid of \$1,500.



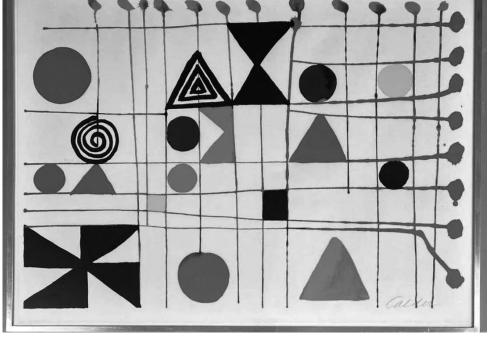
Above: There was a lot of interest in this Franklin Library set of leather bound "100 Greatest Masterpieces of American Literature" that was taken with a final bid of \$1,400



Above: Possibly an alter ornament, this bronze throned Buddha offered with four other figures drew a final bid of \$1,200.



Above: A set of Mid-Century Modern acrylic Laverne International "Champagne" chairs was rehomed with a final bid of \$1,900.



Above: Published by the Founders Society of the Detroit Institute of Arts, this lithograph by Alexander Calder titled "Quilt" was rehomed with a final bid of \$3,300

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THE ACCTION EXCHANCE Image: Constraint of the second constration constration constration constraint of the second constraint
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------ Unless otherwise noted ------

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MARCH 4	. TUES., FEB. 25
MARCH 11	TUES., MARCH 4
MARCH 18 T	UES., MARCH 11
MARCH 25 T	UES., MARCH 18
APRIL 1	UES., MARCH 25
APRIL 8	. TUES., APRIL 1
APRIL 15	. TUES., APRIL 8
APRIL 22	TUES., APRIL 15



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Multiple areas have reported late deliveries for the week of 1/14/2025.

Our staff members will continue to address the late delivery reports we receive. We are constantly striving to rectify the late delivery problem. Please call our customer care center at (800) 876-5133, Ext. 0 or email Kphipps@midcountrymedia.com or Skopp@midcountrymedia.com to report late delivery in your area. Please, also contact USPS at 1-800-ASK-USPS or 1-800-275-8777.

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While we agree that the physical copy of the paper is the top priority, we do want to remind everyone that in the event your paper does not arrive by the issue date, the current issue is available to view on the website www.EAuctionExchange.com. The online issue is free to subscribers and totally keyword searchable. Thank you for your continued patience & support as we work through the issues with USPS.



February 18, 2025		THE	THE AUCTION EXCHANGE – www.eauctionexchange.com								
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ensure accuracy of	alendar is provided as a service for the calendar but always refer to th	e complete Ad to verify	the Calendar information.	to		3 MIC	CHIGAN				
	he Auctioneer in writing we reserve Ø INDICATES THE AD APPEARS I AUGOTIONEED (CDV)	IN SECTION 2 OF THE PA	PER		Wed., Feb. 26		Stefek Esta	te Sales	Roseville, MI	Miscellaneous	
DATE TIME	AUCTIONEER/SRV		TYPE PAGE/S	EC.	Sat., Mar. 1	10am	Rowley's A	uction	Lapeer, MI	Miscellaneous	1
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Sat., Feb. 22 10am	Kendall Tobias Auction	Hastings, MI	Antq., Coll., Misc.	11	May 1 & 2	9am	Pook & Poo	ok, Inc.	Downingtown, PA	2 Day Miscellar	neous
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Fri., Feb. 28 8am	Stantons Auctioneers	Hastings, MI	Firearm	11	•	•	John Peck		Online	Firearm, Militari	C
Sat., Mar. 15 9:30an	n Stantons Auctioneers	Hastings, MI	Antique	11	Mar. 8 & 9	•	JM Hobby		Online	Railroad	
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Thu., Feb. 27 10am	Braun & Helmer Auct.	Tipton, MI	Estate	10	Every Wed.	9am	Shipshewan	a	Shipshewana, IN	Antique., Misc.	1

need to Contact Us?

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Masterpieces & Marvels Auction

February 26th, 3pm ET

Tiffany and Co., "Palm Leaf with Crown" Window Est. \$80,000-\$150,000

Charles William Bartlett, "Hawaiian Fisherman" Est. \$10,000-\$20,000 Archaic Chinese Patinated Bell Est. \$5,000-\$7,000





Dentzel Hand Painted Carved Wood Carousel Rabbit Est. \$15,000-\$20,000

The New Century Musical "Puck" Slot Machine Est. \$15,000-\$20,000







Attrib. Melchers, Carved Wood Cigar Store Indian Est. \$30,000-\$50,000

Catalog, photos, and more: stefeksauctions.com

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SUN., MARCH 9 SALE INCLUDES: *Many rare brass trains in HO scale! Lots of custom painted and decaled HO scale models! *Hundreds of new-in-the-box HO scale locomotives, both decorated, custom painted, and undecorated! *Hundreds of HO scale new-in-the-box freight cars! Custom painted cars! *N and O scale items! HO scale buildings and parts!



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EQUIPMENT: 580 Case Construction King Fork Lift Tractor, Gas ~ Chicago 1014 Metal Brake ~ Box & Pan Metal Brake SHOP & TOOLS: Ladders, Fiberglass & Aluminum ~ (2) 20 ft Aluminum Picks ~ Scaffolding ~ Wheel Barrows ~ (3) 12 ft Work Benches ~ Steel Racks ~ Roof Jacks ~ Metal Formers ~ Ladder Jacks ~ Portable Air Compressors ~ Air Hoses ~ Hand Tools ~ Forks ~ Shovels ~ Power Cords ~ Small Table Saw ~ Floor Drill Press ~ Cable Pulleys ~ Tool Boxes ~ Tool Belts ~ Bar Clamps ~ Portable Hand Cement Saw ~ Walk Behind Cement Saw ~ Tool chests ~ Ladder Winch ~ Chain Saws ~ Slate Cutters ~ Shop Vac ~ Leaf blowers ~ Ropes ~ Safety Harness ~ Quantity of Nails & Screws ~ Coils of Nails ~ Hole Saws ~ Electric Power Wire ~ Quantity of Battery Power Drills, Nailers, Sanders, Saws ~ Chains & Binders ~ Pry Bars ~ Nailers ~ Staplers

BUILDING MATERIALS: Roofing Supplies ~ Colored Sheet Metal ~ Roofing Covers ~ Trim Coil ~ Skylight ~ Caulking MISCELLANEOUS: Office Supplies ~ Banquet Table ~ Desk Supplies ~ Desk w/ 3 Drawers on Each Side ~ Large Wood Desk for Blueprints ~ Island Counter ~ File Cabinets ~ Office Chairs ~ Blueprint Reader ~ Work Tables ~ Storage Cabinets











Notes: Preview at 8:00 sale day only. Food and Restrooms Available. Terms: Cash, check, or major credit cards with identification. WBAS LLC is a Class D Auto Broker and all Secretary of State Paperwork will be done on site and fees will apply. All purchases must be paid for on auction day. The above information is believed to be accurate but is furnished for convenience only and is not a representation or warranty by the auctioneer. All items sold as-is, where

~ Many More Items Too Numerous to Mention! ~

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AMERICANA AUCTION

Thursday, May 1 & Friday, May 2, 2025 at 9am



Pook & Pook is always accepting quality consignments. Please email photographs to info@pookandpook.com or call (610) 269-4040 to speak with an appraiser.

Pook & Pook is seeking consignments of period furniture, fine art, antique firearms and militaria, jewelry, coins, toys, games, dolls, advertising, textiles, porcelain, pottery, Native American and ethnographic material, antiquities, silver, pewter, glass, folk art, decorative accessories, couture, books, ephemera, historic real estate, and vintage automobiles.



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Since 1978 The Weekly Auction & **Collectors Guide for** Michigan, N. Indiana and N.W. Ohio

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COMING AUCTION

LOCATION: 239 E. NORTH ST.

Lutheran Church, located 2 blocks east of M-43 (North Broadway).



puters and more. If you would like to participate, contact us imme-

diately so we can include your items in our newspaper and online





tions, appraisals, financing or gov't programs of any type or nature. Cash only. A 5% buyers premium

2010 Ford F150 pickup, 2WD, clean-good runner, 2014 Chevy Cruz, clean-good runner; 2006 Chevy Equi-

nox-needs some TLC; New 5X8 Karavan trailer w/drop tailgate; Mustang 940 skid steer-works good; B&S 8500/5500 generator; NIB DeWALT power unit; Husqvarna 24 HP-48 in. deck riding mower; antique brass bed; antique Walnut 4 way inlay wardrobe; antique dresser w/tear drop pulls; Pine 4 door kitchen cabinet (newer); Pine TV stand; Pine 2 glass door tall cabinet; 1+ in. thick solid wood coffee table (unique); Conquest 80 LP gas furnace; Pine portable bar; 46 in LG TV; 42 in Samsung TV; 4 other small flat screen TV's; 3 cushion sofa; New Haier small air conditioner; Pair of CF folding chairs; wood kitchen table & chairs; portable sewing machine; Ninja air fryer; Ninja XL air oven; roasters; Gotham copper skillets; microwaves; set of Rachel Ray pots & pans; Cuisinart skillets; Quantities of the following- fans-coolers-coffee pots-mixers-clocks-sheets-comforts-towels-toaster ovens; and lots of misc. small household items; misc. jewelry & watches; misc. hand tools. NOTE: Household first, then vehicles and Real Estate at approx. 1:00 PM.

ESTATE OF RON HARDESTY

TERMS ON PERSONAL: CASH, CHECK OR CREDIT CARD W/4% FEE. Settlement before removal.

February 18, 2025

Collectors on the lookout for Ohio's FraMae pottery



Above: Large, 19-inches tall, FraMae "Ravens on Cornstalk" art pottery vase that was produced in 1982. Collectors of this pottery can find a wide range of decorative pieces most of which are still very affordable

Wiltjer.

BY LARRY LEMASTERS

Frank and Anna Mae Steel founded FraMae Art Pottery in 1979 in Sheffield Lake, Ohio. The pottery's name is a combination of "Frank" and "Mae," and it took them a couple of years of trial and error to begin producing pottery they were proud of.

In fact, at one time, they realized that only about 20 percent of their pottery was actually making it through firing in the kiln, and what they had did not meet their standards. Thev destroyed all of the pottery they had made up to that time and started over.

Finally, in 1981, they developed a color and glaze that met their approval and produced pottery that truly represented the pottery they had been imagining. This new line of pottery was a deep, rich brown glaze that became their signature color and glaze.

In April 1981, Frank and Anna Mae drove to California with 50 pieces of FraMae pottery to attend a meeting of the American Art Pottery Collector's Club. All 50 pieces of their work sold at this meeting, and many backlogged orders were taken.

FraMae's earliest pieces are marked "FraMae Hand Made" or "FraMae Hand Painted" along with the year of production. In 1982, the company's marketing codes were changed and pieces began being marked such as "FraMae W682," which indicates a piece of FraMae's Wildlife Line

FraMae "Lighthouse" vase handmade by Frank Steel. This beautiful "marine" vase is valued at \$65

Above: Vintage,

Right: Bottom of "Lighthouse" vase showing marketing code for FraMae Art Pottery. "M682" represents "Marine June 1982."

(the "W") that was produced in June 1982.

Each piece from 1982 on was marked with an alphabet letter based on FraMae's design category, such as W = WildlifeLine, A = Aviary, F =Frontier, etc. Today, FraMae Art



Pottery has an active following, and it is a highly collected small art pottery. Fortunately, FraMae Art Pottery

remains affordable on the secondary markets, making the collection of these pieces both fun and assessable.

MAA winners FROM PAGE 1

tions are farm equipment and cattle auctions.

Timothy Bos

Bos was a former semi-professional tennis player who later applied his athleticism to men's figure skating, where he completed a certification program with the United States Figure Skating Being enshrined into Association. He then

High School, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, United Way, YMCA, Irish Hills Chamber of Commerce, America Red Cross, Jackson County Fair, Jackson Symphony Orchestra, and countless others.

He has received several awards, including 2012 Realtor of the Year, the 2016 Outstanding Service Award for Girl Scouts Heart of America, and the 2017 Ambassador Award from Jackson High School. Bos has been an asset to the Michigan Auctioneers Association, dedicating hundreds of hours to committee work and providing educational seminars. He was elected President of the organization in 2015. Since 1951, thousands of auctioneers have become members of the Michigan Auctioneers Association, and only 45 members have been inducted into the Hall of Fame. The MAA is hon-

ored that Bos will forever be remembered and treasured with the highest possible recognition any auctioneer can achieve.

Bradley Stoecker

In addition to winning the 2025 Michigan Ringman Champion title,

presence secured his position as 2nd Runner-Up among Michigan's finest auction professionals. The competition featured 16 professional auctioneers from Michigan, Indiana and Ohio.

"This recognition is an

and online real estate and personal property auctions, estate sales, and appraisals, serving clients across the state with professionalism and expertise.

Established in 1951, the Michigan Auctioneers Association is dedicated

the Michigan Auctioneers Association Hall of Fame requires a rigorous qualification process. Those who make it are ultimately voted on by the Hall of Fame committee. Being inducted into the Hall of Fame is the highest recognition any auctioneer can receive in the auction industry.

"Tim Bos has been and continues to be such an asset to the public with his wide range of expertise and talents. His reputation within the industry and community is impeccable, and his contributions to the Michigan Auctioneers Association are enormous," said Executive Director and Hall of Famer, Tricia coached a young man who finished in fifth place in the Junior Olympics.

In 1984, he met Bonnie Kennedy, and the two embarked on a professional and personal journey. In 1987, he graduated from the Reppert School of Auctioneering in Decatur, Ind. In 1988, the Jackson Antique Mall was born, and 39 years later, the mall was recognized as a premier location in lower Michigan.

Over the years, Bos has made significant contributions to his community and has helped raise millions of dollars with various charitable organizations, including, but not limited to, Jackson Stoecker was 2ndRunner-Up the in Michigan Auctioneer Championship.

The Michigan Ringman Championship evaluates a ringman's ability to work with the auctioneer, engage bidders, and maintain high energy throughout a live auction. Stoecker's expert bid-spotting, crowd interaction, and ability to generate excitement earned him the championship title.

Additionally, in the Michigan Auctioneer Championship, which highlights the best bid callers in the state, Stoecker's outstanding auctioneering skills, professionalism, and stage

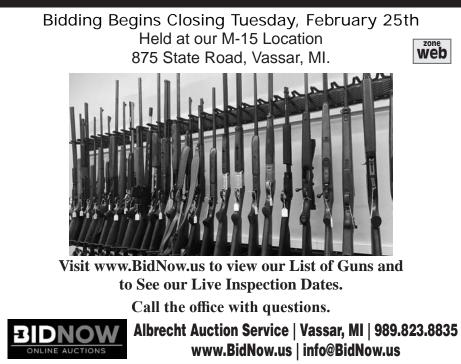
incredible honor," said Stoecker. "The Michigan Auctioneers Association brings together the best in the industry, and I'm grateful to be recognized among such talented professionals. Winning the Ringman Championship and placing in the Auctioneer Championship reaffirms my dedication to providing top-tier auction services."

Stoecker and his wife, Rachel, reside in Dimondale, Mich., and they run Epic Auctions & Estate Sales, which is based in Leslie, Mich. With decades of experience in the auction industry, Stoecker leads a team specializing in live

to enhancing Michigan's Auction Industry through education, promotion, advocacy, and networking. The MAA is the professional association for auctioneers in Michigan, continuing to be one of the leaders in the industry and is proving to continue in that direction in the future. The Michigan Auctioneers Association is the largest representation of auctioneers in Michigan, providing a forum for networking and sharing ideas and experiences. For more information about the Michigan Auctioneers Association and the auction industry in Michigan, visit www. FindMichiganAuctions. com.

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zone 3 MIO, MI 48647

Preview 8:30 AM Day of Sale

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Page 14 These cloth dolls strike a pose with collectors

BY DONALD-BRIAN JOHNSON

Some dolls cry. Some say "Mama." Lots of them open and close their eyes. And diapered baby dolls often put those tiny diapers to practical use.

Fabric dolls, with their flexible wire underpinnings, just bend. For buyers in the 1940s and '50s, that was enough. The same holds true for today's collectors. These dolls don't really need to "do" anything. Just pose them and, when the mood strikes, change the poses. The dolls won't mind.

Fabric dolls have been around for ages, whether dolling up Egyptian tombs, or being dragged around in the dust by those Little House On The Prairie girls. Early cloth dolls have a folk art look, as many were handmade.

Although cloth-covered dolls with concealed wire allowing armatures pose-ability had been available from the 1930s onward, their widespread popularity came as Spanish souvenir dolls. In the early 1950s, companies including Larrea, Nistis, Roldan, and, most notably, Klumpe, released imaginatively designed bendable fabric dolls that tourists gleefully snapped up and brought home. The dolls, most less than a foot tall, initially offered humorous interpretations of standard Spanish clichés (bullfighters, flamenco dancers, and cigarette girls). Soon, however, the roster included hundreds of varied characters, from dentists and ballerinas to the occasional bagpipers and snake charmers.

To satisfy growing interest from consumers not fortunate enough to travel to Spain, U.S. importers, including Effanbee and John J. Schneider brought bendable fabric dolls stateside. According to a 1956 Schneider sales catalog. the possible uses for Klumpe dolls were so varied that the dolls



Above: Annalee "Valentines."

any recipient."

"As the American pubbecomes better lic acquainted with these charming Klumpe Character Dolls, the artistic uses ever increase. Aside from becoming more and more the ideal collection for the young and old, starting with one or two, then adding new models (for birthday, Christmas, anniversary, and any sort of an excuse to add another-such as bridge prizes), we suggest to you these other uses that have created such a furor with our customers:

"Gift Shops suggest that this item is 'different,' and would be fully appreciated by the recipient, showing the fine handmade workmanship and detail. For the sport-loving, outdoor type, the 'Boy and Girl Skiers.' For the romantic type, the 'Bride and Groom.' For the those who like them a little naughty: the 'Moulin Rouge Can-Can Dancer,' or the 'Drunkard In Full Dress.' For the world traveler, the 'Gypsy Queen Dancing.' For the religious, the 'Choir Boy Kneeling on a Cushion.'

"By looking over the Klumpe list, one can find best-selling Four Sisters a doll for each occasion designs were created by suiting the personality of Aileen Bullard Franklin.

Spain wasn't the only country filling the doll

carriages. Portugal produced the "Maria Helena" dolls, noted for their oversize feet, which helped them maintain freestanding balance. On the high end were Italy's more realistic Lenci dolls, produced in Turin from 1919 until 1944. Exquisitely hand-stitched by Elena "Lenci" König, Lenci dolls are noted for their "sideways glance." That downcast gaze gives the dolls a forlorn look, and author Dare Wright featured her own childhood Lenci doll, "Edith," in the best-selling photo book, The Lonely Doll.

In the United States, designers quickly joined the fabric doll parade. Some companies operated on a limited scale, making their dolls the most sought-after today. Among those with an interesting backstory: the "Four Sisters" dolls, created in Independence, Mo. These handmade dolls were indeed the work of four sisters the Bullards. Although each sister achieved artistic acclaim, the Her "Little Troll" elves, and "Charles Dickens Character Dolls" first emerged in the 1950s, and proved holiday perennials.

Also climbing aboard the holiday express were the Byers' Choice "Carolers." Their mouths always open in song, the limber, elongated Byers dolls are particularly well-suited to wintry action poses. The first Byers' Choice dolls were created by Joyce Byers in 1960s, the their hand-crafted stylings intended to capture the spirit of traditional Christmases. The Byers' Pennsylvania enterprise began in a garage workshop staffed only by family. Today, more than 80 employees create thousands of Byers' Choice Carolers each year.

The most ubiquitous mobile dolls, however, are those created by Annalee. Named for their Barbara designer, Annalee (Davis) Thorndike, the rationale behind their creation is clearly stated on each doll's hangtag:

"We hope you'll enjoy your doll's whimsical

Below: "Bagpipe Duo," attributed to Klumpe



Above: Annalee "Waiter.'

charm for many years. Its mobility and flexibility allow you to create your own ideas in positioning, resulting in the best of display and decoration."

Annalee Davis began creating fabric dolls as an outgrowth of her interest in puppetry. Although her initial handmade dolls were sold through local craft guilds, Annalee's design dreams were put on a back burner following her marriage to Charles "Chip" Thorndike. From their Meredith, N.H. home, the two operated "Thorndike's Eggs and Auto Parts." In 1950, with the poultry farm failing, Annalee turned again to dollmaking. Her first design studio: the converted chicken coop.

Like most bendable dolls, those by Annalee have molded felt bodies, with painted faces.

Expanding in 1964 to a 34,000-foot "Factory in the Woods," Annalee quickly cornered the market on holiday celebrations. The seemingly limitless lineup of seasonal dolls, ranges from a string of Santas, elves, and reindeer, to broom-riding Halloween witches and egg-hiding Easter bunnies. A company highlight came in 1975, when Annalee dolls decorated the White House Christmas tree.

Unlike many mid-century dolls, flexible fabric dolls remain in remarkably good condition, despite the passage of years. The reason is simple: these were dolls to look at, not dolls to play with. Other than dust, and occasional felt fleabites, fabric dolls of the

past continue to present a pleasing picture.

Also pleasing are the prices. Dependent on the intricacy of their costuming and accessories, Klumpe and Klumpe-like dolls are generally less than \$75; Byers' Choice, less than \$100. Four Sisters dolls top out at \$200. Priciest by far are Lenci dolls: rare editions can reach \$1,000 or more. The best deals are dolls by Annalee, with many vintage pieces from the 1970s still available at less than \$25. And they are plentiful: a typical day's Annalee inventory on eBay offers nearly 10,000 choices.

Identifying the maker of a fabric doll is often catch-as-catch-can, as many imported dolls had only long-since-vanished hang tags and labels. Unmarked dolls of similar style are often lumped under the "Klumpe" banner, although Klumpe dolls are generally distinguished by their "V"-shaped eyebrows. Lenci made things easier, with the company's marking indicated on the doll's foot. Easiest of all to recognize: Annalee. Since 1986, each Annalee doll has been outfitted with an attached and dated cloth tag.

Bendable fabric dolls are particularly winsome examples of mid-20th-century consumer-oriented design, capturing the irresistible innocence of an earlier time. As Annalee Thorndike herself once put it, "it's the 'positive-ness' of the face. It's the smile. If you smile, someone's got to smile back."

Photo Associate: Hank Kuhlmann

Donald-Brian Johnson is the co-author of numerous books on design and collectibles, including "Postwar Pop," a collection of his columns. Please address inquiries donaldbrian@msn. to: com

practically sold themselves:

Below: Klumpe "Bellboy".

Below: Roldan "Travelin' Man."







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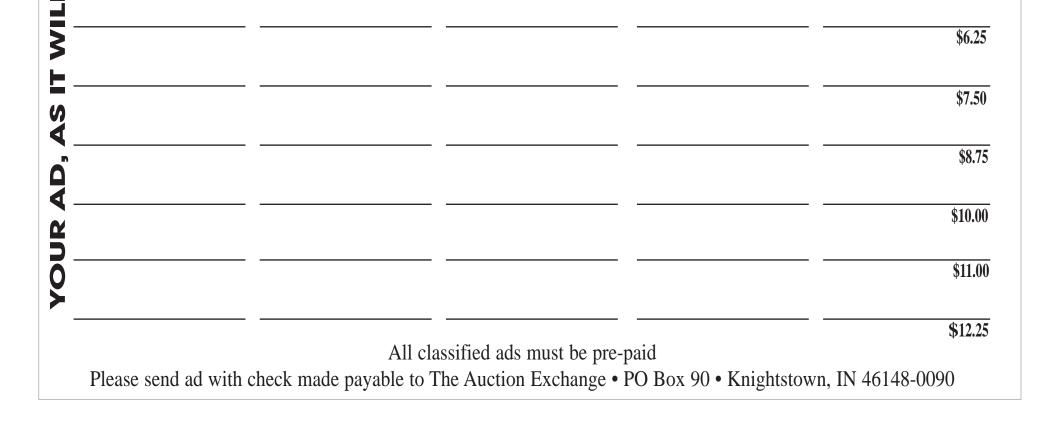
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