

Rare snuff bottle sells for 10 times more than anticipated

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DuBOIS - An area auctioneer recently sold a rare antique for 10 times more than anticipated.

Randy L. Zufall, owner of Zufall Auction Service in DuBois, assisted David Cordier, owner of Cordier Antiques and Fine Art in Camp Hill, in an eBay live catalog auction last month. As a result, Zufall sold a Chinese snuff bottle for \$15,000.

Cordier, owner of Cordier Antiques and Fine Art located in Camp Hill, holds the eBay live auctions twice a year. They are held once in the spring and once in the fall and take approximately six months to prepare. The spring eBay live auction held on May 26-27 in Camp Hill was the auction where the Chinese snuff bottle was sold.

Zufall described an eBay live catalog auction as an event where people can place bids on items via eBay on the Internet or in person at the auction. Even though they are not physically at the auction, the eBay feature allows people bidding on the Internet to bid on the same item as people at the auction, simultaneously .

The snuff bottle is made of glass and is hand-painted in order to display landscape scenes under the glass. Another reason this particular piece is so popular is because it was painted by Chinese master painter Din Nir Chung and is estimated to be from the 18th century.

The market value for the bottle was originally \$3,000 to \$6,000. However, because a portion of the cork stopper is missing and the remainder of the cork is stuck in the neck of the bottle, it was valued in the catalog as \$1,000 to \$1,500. To the surprise of most involved in the auction, the opening bid was for \$13,000. When the bidding for the bottle was complete, a person from Singapore had won it for \$15,000.

With a knowledge of antiques, collectibles and rare pieces, auctioning has always been a forte for Zufall. He established Zufall Auction Service in February of last year and has had experience with auctions for much longer. Zufall served in the U.S. Army for 25 years of his life and during that time he worked as a "picker" for other antique dealers. A picker is someone designated to go to different auctions that the dealer may not be able to attend and buy items on behalf of the dealer. The experiences of being a dealer as well as a picker have allowed for Zufall to make himself knowledgeable from both ends of the auctioning spectrum.

"I really can't understand why more people don't attend auctions," Zufall said. In search of reason, he asked several people and came across a common answer. Most people claim they cannot understand what the auctioneer is saying during the bidding process. It was because of this claim that Zufall made a promise to himself that he would make himself a comprehensible auctioneer.

Zufall recommends attending local auctions to everyone. A helpful way that one can find auctions in their area is by visiting the Web site www.auctionzip.com. It is at this Web site where a zip code can be entered and auctions as close to a 30-mile radius within the entered zip code will be shown. Specific auction categories are also available in the searches with conjunction of using zip codes. One can search from antiques to real estate, along with several other options. These searches provide auction seekers with dates, times and descriptions for auctions in the area.