

Bachman Reflects On Auctioneering Through The Decades

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LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) — While growing up, whenever Harry Bachman wasn't accompanying his dad to livestock and farm auctions, he and his four brothers conducted "pretend" auctions. Harry always served as the auctioneer.

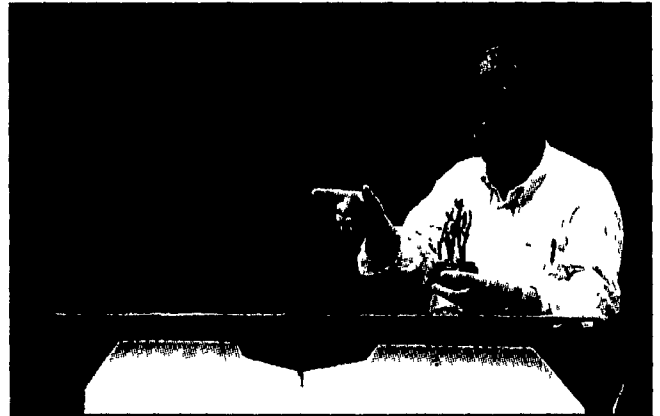
It is not surprising that Bachman decided upon an auctioneering career early in life.

After he was graduated from Cornwall High School in 1964, Bachman headed off to auction school in Mason City, Iowa. For two weeks — morning, noon, and night — he and 80 classmates "learned to count properly, chanted tongue twisters and riddles, and heard how to take care for our voices."

Schooling was the fun part. More difficult was finding an auctioneer who would allow him to serve



Most people would not be content to spend weekends working furiously to make sure things run smoothly during auction day, but it's part of the package for Harry and Sandra Bachman, who work together as a team for about 40 years. Harry is a well-known and respected auctioneer and Sandra clerks and oversees the office bookwork.



Harry Bachman, vice president of the Pennsylvania Auctioneers Association, switches easily between selling livestock and household goods.

a two-year apprenticeship as required by Pennsylvania law.

Established auctioneers were reluctant to take on an apprentice. In essence, that was training the competition. Auctioneers knew after that apprenticeship, the novice would become a licensed auctioneer, in competition for their business.

But Ammon "Windy" Boyd took the chance, and allowed Bachman to assist him.

In 1968, Boyd died unexpectedly.

"I was at the right place at the right time," Bachman said of the opportunity to conduct the auctions that were already in Boyd's calendar.

Bachman breezed through the required final test to become a licensed auctioneer.

"I was glad to get out and get going," Bachman said.

But auctioneering remained a part-time job for him until 1978. Like most auctioneers, Bachman needed a full-time job to provide money for his family. He worked for a tractor company.

Eventually trying to manage two jobs grew too hectic, and Bachman quit his full-time job to concentrate on auctioneering.

"It was a scary choice. You got to get auctions in order to get a pay check," Bachman said.

"The first couple years were slow, but I got enough auctions to keep food on the table," Bachman said.

"If you do a good job for someone, someone else hears about and asks you (to auctioneer for them). It sort of mushrooms. It's like being an undertaker.

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