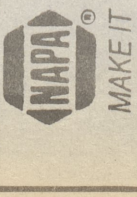


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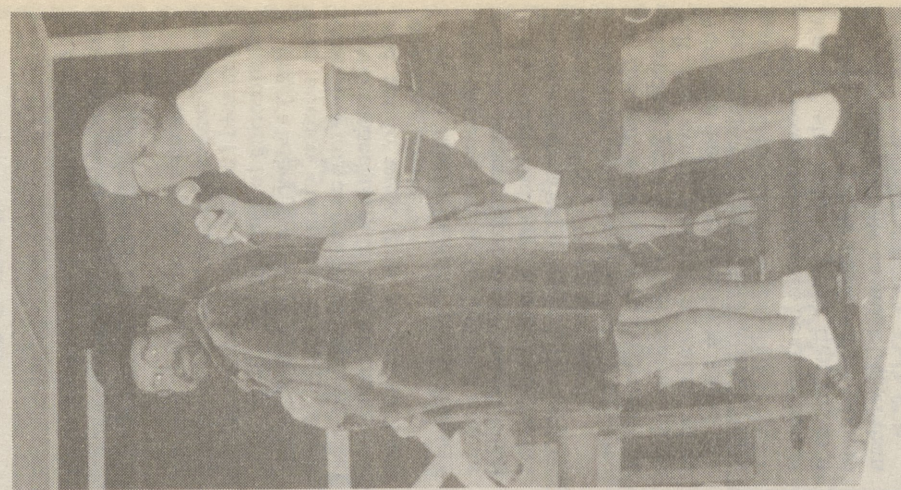
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The Dallas Post

Taking the bids is fast-paced, hot and fun



Items going across the block have changed over the auction's nearly five decades. In the old days people donated livestock, dogs or kittens, which are logistically impossible to handle today. "The antiques people and other volunteers make sure every item has a card identifying it, but sometimes we have no clue what something is," Alcher said. "One year we sold a lamp which we thought was pretty ugly, but it turned out to be an heirloom. As the price went up, it started looking better and better, and eventually went for a very good price."

Occasionally some rather strange items are donated, Alcher said. One year a local pathologist donated a free autopsy to be sold across the block. Someone bought it and donated it again the next year. After the autopsy made the rounds of the auction for several years, the pathologist finally called the library and asked that someone use it because he had to carry it over on his books every year.

Kerry Freeman, above left, and Dave Duncan are two of the stalwarts of the auction block each year. At left, State Sen. Charles D. Lemmond often takes a turn on a weekend evening.

Auctioneer schedule
THURS., JULY 6
 6-6:30: D. Spurlin
 6-30-7: Shaskas
 7-7:30: Rothschild
 7-30-8: Alcher
 8-30-9: Bachman
 8-30-10: W. Spurlin
 9-30-10: D. Spurlin
 10-10-30: Carboni
 11-11-30: Duncan
FRI., JULY 7
 6-6:30: Alcher
 6-30-7: Townsend
 7-7:30: Boback
 8-30-8: Freeman
 8-30-9: Killen
 9-30-9: Duncan
 9-30-10: W. Spurlin
 10-10-30: Rothschild
 11-11-30: Freeman
SAT., JULY 8
 4-4:30: Rogers
 4-30-5: Carboni
 5-30-6: Smith

After a while you develop a good rhythm to keep things moving," Dr. Alcher said. "You develop your own style. Some of our people like to joke back and forth with the audience. When the bidding gets spirited, everyone gets into it, especially when Sue Hand's painting goes across the block. It's hard work, especially when it's hot - we can do only 30-minute shifts." Sometimes the auctioneers become confused what the last bid was, he added. Or they might have trouble seeing the bidders. "People waving at their friends can fool us," he said, chuckling. "It's easier, now that the bidders hold up numbered cards." One snag which nobody has learned to circumvent is Mother Nature. It rains at least one evening - usually Friday - during the auction. Unless it's a heavy downpour or thunderstorm, the auctioneers continue the sale, while the audience settles down underneath umbrellas and keeps right on bidding, Alcher said.

Auctioneer committee co-chairman
Dr. Craig Alcher
 "It's hard work, especially when it's hot - we can do only 30-minute shifts."

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