

It takes a year to find all the antiques that will sell

By ELIZABETH ANDERSON
Dallas Post Correspondent

Be prepared to be blown away when you step into the antiques booth at the 56th Annual Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction. Ernie Ashbridge and his crew have collected a plethora of antique treasures.

Ashbridge, chairman of the booth, works at acquiring the fine antiques for a full year, starting on the next year's inventory the day after this year's event is finished. An old hand at the library auction, Ashbridge has been involved with the event for over 40 years. The library board would like to keep him there — last year the antiques brought in about \$45,000 in funds for the library. The year before, \$40,000.

The veteran chairman of the antiques booth began collecting antiques for his own pleasure 50 years ago.

"Then it branched out and I started selling the stuff," he said. "People just knew I was interested so they'd call me." It was not long before he was antiques chairman.

"I used to just come out to buy," Ashbridge said.

He says he is retired but in addition to being the chairman of the antiques auction, Ashbridge is on the board of the library, the Dallas School District, the Luzerne Intermediate Unit and the West Side Vo-Tech School. Busy retire-

ment.

His wife, Betty is also on the library board and is chairman of the Nearly Old booth at the library auction. The Nearly Old tent will contain all the still-valuable collectable items that do not quite make the antiques cut. Treasure seekers will find many riches there as well.

A few of the many exceptional finds in the antiques booth include an Armond Marsielle bisque head doll and carriage from the late 1800s and two paintings, "Show Jumper" and "Leopard" by LeRoy Neiman. The prolific modern artist's paintings sell for thousands of dollars.

Other items include a rare child's ice cream parlor set from about 1910, Royal Daulton figurines and china, Reed and Barton pewter from the 1940s, several Gone With the Wind lamps, three marble topped tables, a roll top desk, a large handmade needle point rug from the 1930s, a set of East Lake needle point chairs and table from the 1880s and a Martha Washington sewing cabinet from about 1900.

In spite of the abundance of items he has already amassed, Ashbridge will strive to unearth more up until the day of the auction. As he set off on yet another treasure hunt, he quipped, "You always need a few more pieces."



PHOTO BY ELIZABETH ANDERSON

Ernie Ashbridge and Martha Butler, library director, are reflected in a beautiful mirror donated by David Hall in memory of his wife, Kathryn. Hall donated the other items and the drop leaf game table they are set on.

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