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Honoring all area veterans

By EILEEN GODIN
Dallas Post Correspondent

Wanting to put meaning behind the word "memorial" in the name Back Mountain Memorial Library, a local Eagle Scout presented a monument to honor



Santora

World War II veterans on Tuesday evening.

Eagle Scout Andrew Santora of Shavertown said the library was named in 1945 in honor of all who served during World War II. Santora, however, noticed there was nothing on the grounds stating so.

An Eagle Scout project is a project designed for young men to demonstrate leadership skills, an understanding of Scout law and showing that they are an upstanding person within their community, he said.

Armed with determination, supportive family and friends and inspired by a unique friendship with World War II veteran 88-year-old Jack Evans, of Trucksville, Santora set out to create an outdoor memorial next to the gazebo behind the library.

A soft breeze ruffled the white sheet covering the square shaped monument during the dedication ceremony. Evans, sitting proudly

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CELEBRATING THE FOURTH OF JULY



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Four-year-old Cameron Corcoran, of Dallas, is delighted with fireworks his father, Sean, allowed him to hold. Cameron and his family are prepared to celebrate the Fourth of July holiday today. In the United States, Independence Day, commonly known as the Fourth of July, is a federal holiday commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, declaring independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain. Independence Day is commonly associated with fireworks, parades, barbecues, carnivals, fairs, picnics, concerts, baseball games, political speeches and ceremonies and various other public and private events celebrating the history, government and traditions of the United States. Independence Day is the national day of the United States.

Tales from the block – understanding fine art of auctioneering

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK
Dallas Post Correspondent

Editor's note: Charlotte Bartizek served as co-chairperson of the Back Mountain Memorial Library auction, with her husband, Ron, in 2001. It's been said that the Bartizeks are such staunch supporters of the auction that they are the first to set up their lawn chairs on the auction grounds each year.

Going to the library auction leaves me dumbstruck, in awe of the men and women who stand on the stage each year for hours, yelling and gesturing. Saying things I can hardly understand. Getting people to spend money in a heartbeat.

How do they do that?

Maybe you've wondered what makes a good auctioneer. So I asked a few of them what it takes to work the block.

Surely, I thought, it takes a large, booming voice and some training.

"Well, you know me; my voice goes up and up and up, the pitch goes higher and higher the more excited I get," says 28-year veteran volunteer auctioneer Joe Killeen.

Killeen became very excited the first year he auctioneered in 1982 when one of the items he sold went for \$2,000.

IF YOU GO ...

The 65th Annual Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction will be held July 8, 9, 10 and 11 on the library grounds, Huntsville Road, Dallas. For more information about this year's auction, please see the special section inside today's edition of The Dallas Post.

"The price just kept going up," he said. "I'd never been an auctioneer. I'm not a professional but they told me that, as auction chairman that year, I would be the prime-time auctioneer, too!"

So much for training and experience.

Well, certainly an auctioneer would have to have some knowledge of antiques and be careful to be precise and accurate when on stage, I thought.

Killeen volunteers, "I don't always read what's on the card. I look and say 'What's a Limoge?' Or the card says to start the bidding at \$200. I'll say, 'Who'll give me a buck?'"

Killeen keeps the audience engaged; he likes the interaction with the people.

"I always have fun. I just let it go and think of myself as the warm-up act," he admits.

With the crowd a little warmed up, the business of getting people to spend serious money for a good cause falls to people like Jeff Townsend.

"I always wear my favorite straw hat while auctioneering," he said. "I've worn it for 27 years."

While trying to get \$500 more on the already \$4,000 bid for a Sue Hand painting, Townsend offered to "throw in my hat to the next \$500 bidder." The extra incentive worked and Townsend



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK FILE PHOTO/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Veteran volunteer auctioneer Kerry Freeman always enjoys the spirit of the auction by getting involved with the items he is auctioning.

lost his hat.

I'm beginning to realize that the fine art of auctioneering has a lot to do with the ability to make personal sacrifices and be creative.

Few can top the next two auctioneers when it comes to stage presence and creativity.

"I'm a real ham and such an actress," says Carol Sweeney who has made dressing herself in costumes from the Attic Treasures booth a part of her act. "Everything I wear can be bought at the auction. I only provide the shoes," she notes.

One year, she wore a wedding dress and Clarence Michael, the other auction chairman, wore a

tuxedo.

"It breaks things up a little and I enjoy doing it," laughs Sweeney.

Kerry Freeman, the 1977 chairman and a virtual fixture on the block, says you have to be a showman to be effective. These days his signature hat is a black bowler but I've seen him with a lamp shade and a doily on his head. He freely models clothing on stage, regardless of gender appropriateness, poses and demonstrates items for sale, including an antique toilet.

Of course, all showmen pay the price for their antics. One late Sunday afternoon when the auction was still held on Main Street, Freeman and Killeen, who had

done 12 to 13 spots, were hot and hoarse from yelling. Through the crowd strolled Jack Stanley, an old Rotarian, with a huge Styrofoam cup.

"It was full of Manhattans and got us through the rest of the night," Freeman remembers. I guess that would be called a cup of inspiration.

While some auctioneers may be inspired and most are creative and entertaining, Sonny Smith, who started auctioneering 30 years ago with Bill Spurlin, Bob Richardson and Joe Stager as part of the Back Mountain Jaycees, has rhythm.

Smith loves the feeling of rhythm he feels with the audi-

ence, the flow of the crowd coming and going.

"And I used to have a kind of a signature golf club when I was up there," he said. "I'd beat the club on the block to get their attention."

The crowds were smaller then and, with fewer auctioneers, the men had more auction time apiece.

"I guess they got tired of me beating up on the block and I had to get rid of the golf club," Smith laments.

So you need to have rhythm. Smith and the auctioneers enjoy working the block with each other.

"We still have a great bunch of guys that all work together well," Smith said. One of the auctioneering talents must be the ability to cooperate.

Rhythm, creativity, a little training, some experience, people skills and the desire to have fun all come in handy.

Well, I thought I was getting somewhere with these postulates about the fine art of auctioneering, until someone told me about the "Doctor Auctioneers" who are Dr. John Rothschild, Dr. John Shaskus and the late doctors Dr. Craig Aicher, Dr. Vincent Carboni and Dr. Lester Jordan. Always drawing good audiences from their thankful patients, the doctors' nightly totals looked good. It takes a faithful following to be a good auctioneer.

So I've made a composite of the ideal auctioneer.

An untrained amateur, he/she must be cross-dresser, willing to take off or put on clothing at a

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