Museum toy auction brings windfall of $10K

Lorina Zuern donated her beloved husband’s extensive farm toy collection to the Mercer County Museum. The collection is now on view as part of the museum’s fourth addition.

‘Keeping history alive’
BY KATHY TANDERG

Sunday’s duplicate farm toy auction benefiting the Mercer County Museum brought in an excess of $10,000, all of which will benefit the museum.

The toys sold were part of the extensive, longtime farm toy collection of the late Herbert “Herb” Zuern. The collection and several other items were donated to the museum by Zuern’s wife of 65 years, Lorina, following his death Dec. 3, 2012.

Mercer County natives Herb and Lorina could often be found at farm auctions in North Dakota and South Dakota, where Herb found many of his treasured collection. He kept his treasures on display in a special temperature- and humidity-controlled room at the couple’s farm, located northwest of Hazen.

Lorina, who attended the auction with a family member, enjoyed seeing the enthusiasm of collectors like Herb as they bid on the toys.

“I’m glad the toys are being sold to people who will probably be enjoying them like Herb. I think they will,” Lorina said.

The Mercer County Historical Society and board of directors manage the museum and see to the building, and are caretakers of the historical artifacts on display.

MCHS board president Blake Wiedrich expressed great appreciation to the Zuerns for their generous gifts to the museum.

“No one recognizes that the collection is on display for all people to come and see,” Wiedrich said.

Wiedrich said accepting the collection meant having a proper place to display it, and the newest addition was just beginning the construction phase.

This meant there was still ample time to design a location for the many new, lighted display cabinets that took to display the toys.

Once the room was ready for displays, the process of unpacking, sorting, cataloging, and organizing the displays began.

During the process it became clear that there were many duplicates in the collection.

“Lorina gave (the museum) permission to auction the duplicates and use the proceeds for the museum,” Director and Display Chairperson Peggy Wolff said earlier.

Wiedrich expressed appreciation to the many volunteers and board directors of the MCHS for the countless hours they put into the project. He also expressed special thanks to Mark Hafner, Cal Wagner, and Murel Spier.

“If it wasn’t for them, we’d still be struggling with the toy collection,” Wiedrich said.

Wiedrich also mentioned that each community in the county donated funds to assist with the building addition and display cabinets.

“We want people to understand that this is the county museum. Just because it’s located in Buda, it doesn’t mean it’s a Buda museum. This museum belongs to everyone in Mercer County,” Wiedrich said.

Wiedrich said proceeds from the auction will be placed into the MCHS general fund until the next board meeting.

“It will probably be moved into the building fund, but that’s to be decided,” he added.

In addition to auction proceeds, M&A Concessions donated their profit for the day of $180. Wolff Auctioneers and employees donated their services for the sale.

The Mercer County Museum is located at 108 7th Ave NE, between the Buda Fire Hall and Mercer County Fair Grounds.

The museum is open almost every Wednesday and on Sunday afternoons from Memorial Day through Labor Day or by appointment. Groups are welcome for further information, call 873-5070.

Mercer County Historical Society
2016 Directors
Blake Wiedrich, president
Murel Spier, vice president
Renee Lindemann, treasurer
Susan Neuberger, secretary
Jean Bornemann

Peggy Wolff
Lani Meyhoff
Betty Helm
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Memberships
Memberships are an important part of the MCHS. Memberships are also another way to raise funds for the museum.
MCHS offers one year memberships as well as Lifetime memberships. With Lifetime membership it is a one-time due paid.

Memberships are as follows:
Individual one year membership - $5
Individual Lifetime membership - $500 (one-time payment)
Business one year membership - $25
Business Lifetime membership - $500 (one-time payment)