

Millersburg glass auction promises to be popular

By **KATY GANZ**
Staff Writer

MILLERSBURG — It was one of the birthplaces for carnival glass and on Saturday, hundreds of collectors from around the world will be arriving in Millersburg for an auction involving more than 200 pieces of the now-prized Millersburg glass.

"I know there's people coming in from California and Canada and there's also people coming up from Texas and Florida," said auctioneer Jim Wroda.

The auction was set up with the help of Steve Maag a Realtor with Kaufman realty and an avid collector of Millersburg glass. Wroda had been wanting to stage a glass auction in the historical town for some time, he said, but only by chance was he finally given the opportunity.

"It was kind of a funky thing," Wroda said. "I was talking to some people, that it would really be cool to do a Millersburg glass auction on the courthouse steps and Steve Maag at Kaufman Realty overheard me."

Once looked upon with shame as a sign of a failed business venture, pieces of Millersburg glass have since become highly valued for their craftsmanship and color, said Holmes County commissioner and Millersburg glass historian Dave Hall.

In the last 10 years alone, Wroda has sold several thousand pieces of Millersburg glass. But he's not just an auctioneer, he's also a collector.

"Millersburg glass actually owns the highest price record for a piece of carnival glass at \$100,000," Wroda said.

The piece was a blue people's vase sold in April 2005.

"There's just a handful of those known. It's actually a coveted piece of Millersburg glass, there's only eight of them out there," Wroda said.

However, he said, none of the Saturday auction items are expected to bring in quite so hefty a price. Most items are expected to go for between \$50 and

\$20,000. Highlighted pieces include a marigold Peacock and Urn chop plate, a teal rose column vase, a blue Rosalind compote, an emerald green hobstar and feather rose bowl and a blue seaweed bowl.

"It's a really good sale," Wroda said. "There's a couple of Millersburg courthouse bowls in there that will be in high demand since we're on the courthouse steps."

But for collectors, the event is more than just an auction. Not only will a People's Vase be on display as part of the auction's festivities, but courthouse tours will be given by Hall.

Hall was involved in the first dig at the site of the original Millersburg glass factory. Today Hall spends his hours outside of county government engrossed in the history and traditions behind Millersburg glass. Hall was the featured speaker at a symposium at the Holmes County Library and is currently working on a book describing the rise and fall of Millersburg Glass.

"We will be visiting local collector's homes and the Hershberger Antiques mall over in Farmerstown is a stop because they have a lot of Millersburg glass, Maag said.

Overall, the auction ties in beautifully with the Holmes County Antique Festival's 45th anniversary, said the Holmes County Antiques Festival chairwoman, Georgie Cool.

"We were so honored because this is going to be our 45th year for our festival and we didn't have time to provide what we were going to do for the event and this was provided for us," she said.

Set for 11 a.m., the auction should be concluded by 2:30 p.m. in time for the 3 p.m. parade.

"This is really a big event to be able to do something like this on such a historical site that's really part of carnival," Wroda said. "Millersburg Courthouse is one of the most collected advertising pieces ever."

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