

Baltimore, Maryland

27th Summer Antiques Show Sizzles a Second Time

by Robert Kyle

The Three Musketeers did it again. The trio of young show promoters, known as the Palm Beach Group, convincingly confirmed that last year's dramatic resurrection and rebirth of a middling 26-year-old downtown Baltimore event was no accident. One for all and all for one certainly translated into giving many dealers more financial security and increasing Baltimore's tourism revenue.

From August 30 to September 2 the Baltimore Convention Center was once more pulsating with people from all over the country who collectively re-energized the Baltimore Summer Antiques Show, the Labor Day weekend show launched by Frank Farbenbloom and his Sha-Dor company in 1980.

The Palm Beach Group presented its first Baltimore show last year. The town hasn't seen this much excitement since Cal Ripken's streak. Now the new promoters—Robert Samuels, Kris Charamonde, and Scott Diamant—have started their own streak of two big wins since purchasing the show in October 2005.

"We brought in a lot of high-end collectors, people who actually spent a great deal of money," said Kris Charamonde, co-managing partner. "A couple of our exhibitors were in seven figures, which didn't happen last year." Seven figures? In Baltimore? With aggressive promotion and a budget to back it, the Palm Beach Group boys demonstrated that buyers are out there, you just need to inform them of your show and have desirable merchandise from reputable dealers.

For instance, M.S. Rau Antiques, New Orleans, Louisiana, displayed a Paul Revere coffeepot priced around \$1.8 million. It sold. Standing 11", it's one of only three armorial coffeepots Revere produced prior to his career change to become a Revolutionary. His other two similar coffeepots are in museums.

"I talked to Albert Levy, and he told me he had one of his best shows he's ever had, bar none, and he exhibits at some of the best shows in the world," Charamonde said. Levy is based in Palm Beach, Florida.

"We were able to bring in those types of collectors and sell that type of artwork or antiquity," Charamonde said. "We were selling antiquities in excess of a half million dollars this year, which was even a surprise to me. That was a goal we always had, but we didn't realize we'd reach it this fast."

One of the strategies was to upgrade the quality of dealers, which in turn would appeal to a more sophisticated level of buyer. "What we did last year and again this year, we brought in a lot of higher end exhibitors who really saw some great performances this year because we started to advertise regionally instead of promoting the show in the Baltimore area," Charamonde said.

"We started to really go after the higher end collectors in Virginia, Delaware, D.C., and Pennsylvania, and our strategy really worked," he said. "In checking the comp tickets that came in, which we had given to some of those collectors, the majority of them were from far-away places. People actually drove several hours to get to the show. Not just



A passerby checked out a large 19th-century painting of a nude, *Orientalist Beauty* by Albert Aublet (French, 1851-1938). The 91" x 56" oil on canvas was offered by Basking Ridge, New Jersey, dealer Jay Chatellier for \$75,000.



A life-size red-painted bellhop on a stand was seen in the booth of Peter Nee of Millwood, Virginia.



Rita K. Balee of Stonehouse Antiques & Design, Wayne, Pennsylvania, has been doing this show for 18 years. She described this as "very good" for her, but it could have been better if she had sold bigger pieces. "I sold a lot of smalls, porcelain, and jewelry but no furniture—and furniture is my thing!" she said, adding, "But I'll take it any way I can get it." In front of her is a 19th-century Italian carved wood sheep, one of two, priced at \$2500 for the pair. The game table is English, circa 1820, made of Brazilian rosewood, and tagged \$5800.



Soon after the show opened on Thursday, Jonathan Daniels of Daniels Antiques, Hallandale, Florida, sold the two antique gaming machines (shown to his right) to the same buyer. The one at left is a Mills Jumbo Poker machine. Used in saloons and bars where cigars were prevalent, it does not pay out money but is a penny machine from which a winner gets coupons for free cigars. A straight, for instance, awards the player ten cigars. Next to Daniels is a 1929 Mills baseball machine. The machines were sold in the neighborhood of \$20,000 for both. The sale, said Daniels, increases the total gaming machines he sold in the last six months to 20. Discussing their scarcity, Daniels said, "There's not a retail store in America where you can find these."



One of the most desirable early gaming machines is the elegant 72" tall Watling's Jackpot. It was made in 1904 and accepts nickels. Daniels Antiques had this one priced at \$50,000, give or take a few nickels.

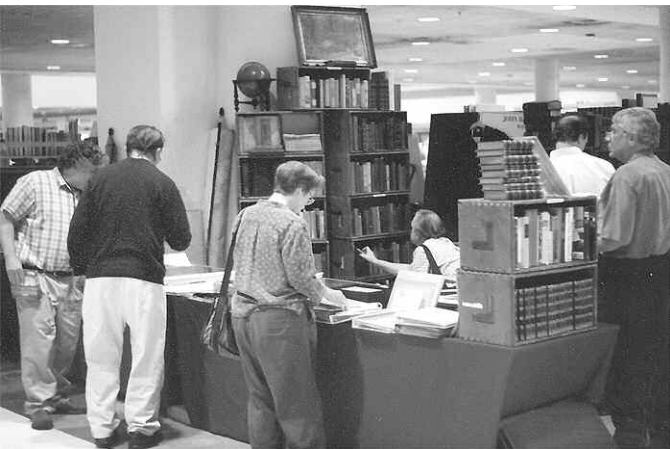


Peter Broda stood next to a pair of circa 1930 torchères priced at \$1800. The glass is yellow torchères supported by gilt brass. Broda was assisting dealer Roy Rover of Easton, Pennsylvania. Early in the show and during setup, they had sold jewelry and sterling, Broda said.

one or two people but many thousands. It was extraordinary! We couldn't believe how well we were able to pull from neighboring states this year."

Buyers were treated to more

dealers this year. When word circulated of the success of last year's show, a waiting list quickly formed. The promoters accommodated these dealers this year by adding at least 100



With 60 book dealers included in the roster, the book section created a show within a show. This photo, taken on opening day, Thursday, shows the popular booth of the John Bale Book Company, Waterbury, Connecticut. Its proprietor, Dan Gaeta (far left), was pleased. "It was a very good show, better than I expected," he said. "All of the booksellers I spoke with were abuzz with positive comments," he said. His sales ranged from about \$20 to \$1500 and included fine bindings and local history. "There was consistently heavy traffic, especially Saturday and Sunday."



This flock was so life-like that this reporter thought they were actually mingling and manuring in the booth. Upon closer inspection they proved to be on canvas, not on the floor. The 35" x 40" 19th-century *Sheep and Shepherdess* by Cornelius van Leemputten (Belgian, 1841-1902) was priced at \$14,500.

more exhibitors, making the total about 550. Included were about 60 book dealers.

Located in a separate section of the show, which had a lower, cozier ceiling and a Starbucks added nearby, the booksellers stayed busy. "It was constant heavy traffic, especially Saturday and Sunday," said Dan Gaeta of the John Bale Book Company, Waterbury, Connecticut. "It was one of our better selling shows. Mixing book dealers with high-end antiques dealers works," he said. "The other booksellers were abuzz with positive comments," he added.

"We love the book fair," Charamonde said, "and we subsidize it. I don't think the book dealers realize that the rate they pay for the square foot is the lowest in the event. We subsidize them because we feel they add a tremendous element of charm and academic



This 18" x 24" painting, *A New Story* by Louis Moeller (1855-1930), was priced at \$60,000 by Michael A. Latragna of Rochester, New York.



The pottery behind Susan Libby may resemble majolica, but it's actually Awaji. The Wilton, Connecticut, dealer and her husband, Thomas, specialize in the ceramics made on the Japanese island of Awaji, where the first kiln was established in 1831. Influenced by international trends and design changes, the potters produced their own version of Art Nouveau and Deco, the focus of the Libbys' inventory. She said they got more interest than sales at this show, and they tend to sell more at Modernism shows. Prices ranged from \$150 to \$12,000. They trade as Cannondale Antiques. Thomas is working on a book about Awaji.



"A beautiful show" was the description heard over and over by dealers and visitors alike. When the promoters asked the Baltimore Convention Center if they could expand this year by adding over 100 additional dealers, the capacious downtown structure had no problem accommodating them.



Malvern, Pennsylvania, dealer Gordon Converse held one of his specialties, a bargeware teapot. Dated 1880, its price was \$15,500. The chest below is Pennsylvania cherry marked \$3800. The clock is French, circa 1800, signed Rebel. The re-named dial is by G. Merlet. He was asking \$18,000 for it. The oil painting, *Hon fleur harbor* by Maurice Courant (French, 1847-1925), was priced at \$10,500.



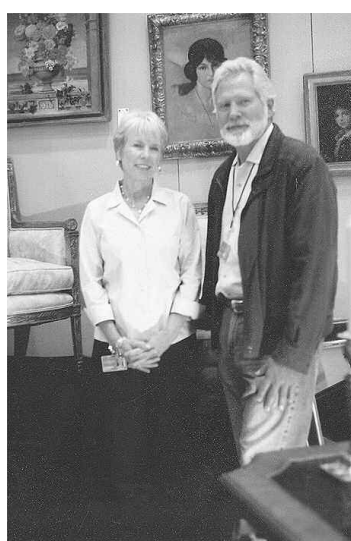
Neil and Jan Rasmussen bought the marble-top table at the show and were taking it home to use. On top, a marble bust of a woman was marked \$1295. Next to it a bronze by Emmanuel Villanis was marked \$2895. The painting of a New England fall landscape by Robert Wood was priced at \$12,950. The dealer said Wood eventually moved to Texas and California where his paintings are popular.



Early in the show, Essex Antiquarians, Essex, Massachusetts, put sold tags on a pair of marble-top stands. On top is a circa 1830 Rose Medallion urn converted to a lamp. Its price was \$2950.



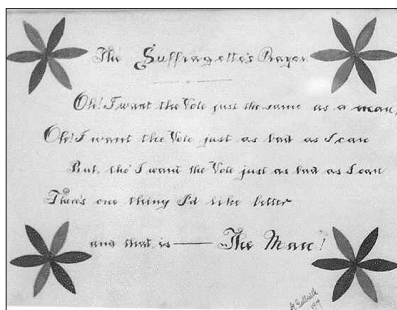
The Needle's Work Antiques, Morton, Illinois, had several samplers to choose from. This one, dated 1732, made in England by French-born Leah Bouhault, has this part of Psalm 37:37 in King James English, "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." The sampler had a price of \$3340. Dealers Dawn and Bruce Lewis said the alphabet on it has 24 letters, with no J or U.



Not only new to the show, Neil and Jan Rasmussen hadn't been any farther north on the East Coast than Miami. From Menlo Park, California, they brought a wide variety, most of which went back on the truck. "As a dealer for approximately forty years, I know that when you're the first time on the block it takes a while for people to get accustomed to you," he said. "I think we're experiencing a little bit of that. We had a fairly OK show, but it could've been better." He said after the show they were headed to Brimfield, then to Moosehead Lake in Maine to relax.



Robert and Judy Milberg of Setauket, New York, brought an unrelated mix of merchandise and sold it. "I deal in an eclectic blend, and I sold quite a bit of it," he said. Sales included Chinese items such as snuff bottles, mid-century Italian glass, oil paintings, American and European ceramics, mid-century modern furniture, Scandinavian rosewood glass-top tables, and a mid-century floor lamp. "I did very well last year, and this year is comparable," he said. They're shown standing with a circa 1860 Japanese porcelain vase priced at \$5000 and a French Art Deco table marked \$4000. The cowhide on the floor was not for sale, but people wanted it anyway.



This unusual "Suffragette's Prayer" was dated 1914 and available from Carlson & Stevenson, Manchester Center, Vermont, for \$750. Although its intent may have been longing for the right to vote, its author seems to have had another priority. It reads, "Oh! I want the vote the same as a man/ Oh! I want the vote just as bad as I can/ But, tho' I want the vote just as bad as I can/ There's one thing I'd like better/ and that is—The Man!"



Butler & Butler Antiques, Sarasota, Florida, brought plenty of smalls and this year, like last, did very well with them. An example of the bronzes included, from left, a dog by Mene, \$895; bears with cub by Moselsio, \$1150; and a seated bear by Luc, \$895.



Outside, dealer John Orban (left) of Cadiz, Ohio, and Charles Bojack (center) try to figure how to load a circa 1850 French commode, which was bound for Florida. "We had more serious buyers on the first and second day," Bojack said. "The first couple of hours were like a feeding frenzy. We about emptied half our booth." The weekend, he said, had more "casual and spontaneous" buyers.



The white carpet, shipped by rail from Florida, not only gives the show class and brightens the hall, it also makes walking the long aisles easier on the feet. Buyers who felt the need to take a break found rows of chairs to be convenient rest stops.



Sheila G. Parish of Tutto dal Mondo specializes in jewelry and sterling silver. Larry, her husband, set up his own booth across from hers with a collection of vintage advertising tins. He brought a few over for this photo. Sheila held open a large yellow tin, designed to look like a trunk, which held Glycerole "for oiling and dressing shoes," it reads. Priced at \$350, it may have been a salesman's container. In front of Larry is a circa 1875 Moses cough drop tin for \$540 and a small tin with a scale on the lid for biscuit maker William Crawford & Son. Its price was \$1450. The dealer said biscuit is another name for cookie, for the British.

This 1790 silver tureen made in London by Andrew Fogelberg and Stephen Gilbert was available from Tutto dal Mondo, Penn Valley, Pennsylvania, for \$18,000.

