

SEPTEMBER 2007

toycollector

M A G A Z I N E

VOL. 1, NO. 4



GO! SPEED GO!

Original voice actors reveal the inside story of the classic Japanese animation legend

COLLECTING STILL BANKS

Prices keep moving in one direction — up

DOCTOR WHO

The evergreen British series and its toys

BETTY BOOP

The comic world's first "it" girl

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Monday 10th - Tinplate & Plastic

A high quality tinplate and plastic sale, approximately 500 lots, with a good variety of items ranging from the early 20th century through to recent issues. Interesting sections of military, road vehicles, robots, tractors and novelty items.



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Tuesday 11th - Specialist Diecast

Approximately 650 lots to include the Michael Bowen Collection of Dinky and Corgi models. Other sections include TV & Film, Matchbox, Scalextric and Slot Car, British and Continental diecast. Also 100 lots of waterline and other model ships featuring some very rare Bassett-Lowke models.



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Wednesday 12th - Specialist Diecast Featuring the Norfolk Collection

A high quality sale of approximately 500 lots of Dinky, Corgi, Matchbox together with an outstanding collection of white metal models by Pathfinder Models, Lansdowne, Kenna and others.



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Thursday 13th - General Military & Civilian Figures & Equipment, Dolls & Teddy Bears

Starting with approximately 200 lots of general military, civilian figures, equipment and militaria. Followed by 400 lots of antique and modern dolls and teddy bears featuring the Johanna Clayden Collection of bisque and wax dolls. Also a large quantity of vintage Star Wars.



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Saturday 22nd - Train & Toy Sale

Over 700 lots to include The Norfolk Collection of Hornby Dublo 2 and 3 rail Locomotives, Sets, Rolling Stock and Accessories. Also modern issues by ACE, Williams, MTH, Weaver and Bassett-Lowke.



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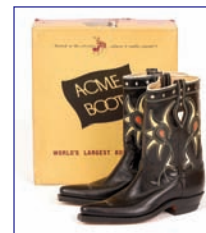
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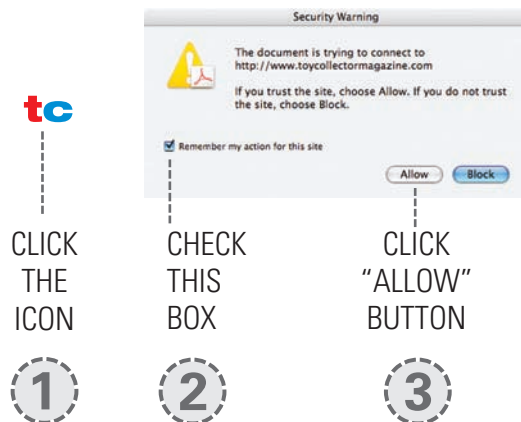
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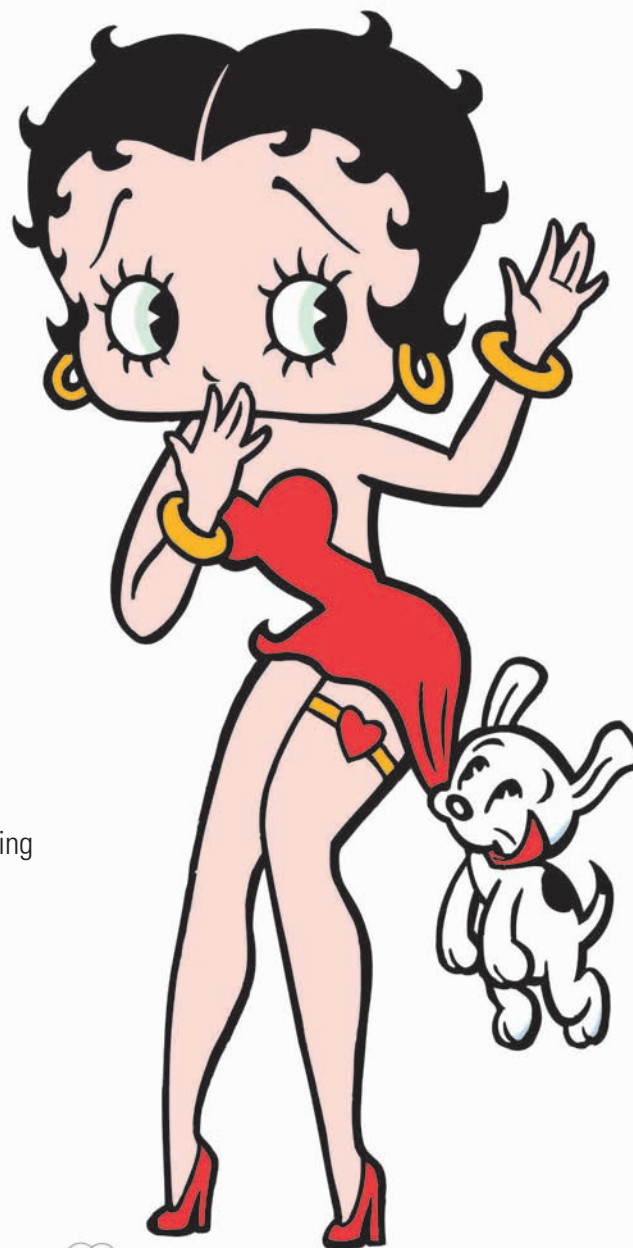
CONTENTS

- 17 THE SCOOP ON BOOP BY EILEEN SMITH
The comic world's first "it" girl continues to charm collectors

- 24 STILL BANKS BY ALAN JAFFE
A money-saving solution for penny-wise collectors

- 30 MADE IN JAPAN BY ALAN JAFFE
Celluloid toys are fragile works, often exhibiting a fantasy theme

- 36 NO HELMET REQUIRED BY KARLA KLEIN ALBERTSON
Many motorcycle buffs get their kicks from toys that replicate the real thing



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CONTENTS

43 DOCTOR WHO BY DR. ARNOLD T. BLUMBERG

A time-traveller with a Tardis full of toys

50 GOOD PRICES, CHARLIE BROWN! BY SUSAN BRANDABUR

Original Peanuts strips rival fine art at auction

56 GO! SPEED RACER GO! BY CHUCK MILLER

The voices of Speed and Trixie reveal the classic series' back story

74 REINVENTING OLD-SCHOOL VIDEO GAMES BY KARLA KLEIN ALBERTSON

"By pressing down a special key, it plays a little melody"



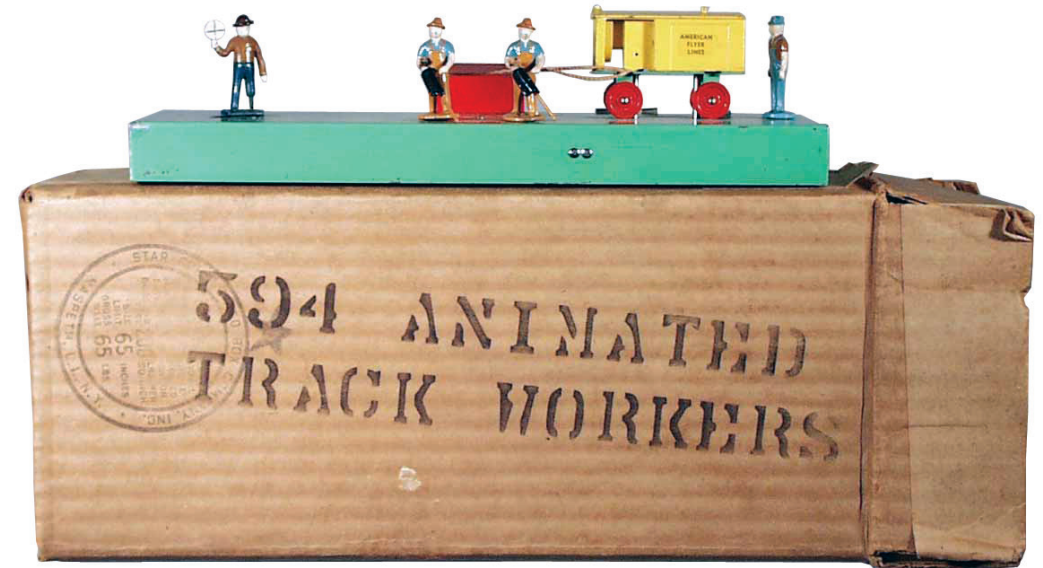
CONTENTS

80 TO REBUILD THE PAST BY SHARON VERBETEN

Father and son are piecing together Lionel's past and sharing it with the world

88 THE HOUSE THAT LLOYD BUILT BY GENE FRIEDMAN

Three siblings carry on their father's legacy at Lloyd Ralston Gallery



GILBERT AMERICAN FLYER TRACK GANG IMAGE COURTESY LLOYD RALSTON GALLERY



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EDITOR'S NOTES

What was it about *Speed Racer* that had us all glued to our TV screens as kids? It certainly wasn't the sophistication of the product. For perfect artwork and flawless sound synchronization, Disney had the market cornered with such postwar classics as *Peter Pan*, *Lady & the Tramp*, and *The Jungle Book*. From a Western perspective, *Speed Racer* was so strange and different for its time, it might just as well have come from another planet.

The characters had exaggeratedly large "doe" eyes, and their speech could be so overly dramatic it begged to be parodied in the schoolyard (e.g., Speed's "Ah-ah-ah!" gasp whenever a crash was imminent). Plus, you had to wonder when the naive

Speed would wise up and choose another line of work. Every time he showed up at a racetrack, there was some bad guy or sinister situation awaiting him. It was a pattern even a grade-schooler could recognize.

So, what was it about *Speed Racer* that captivated children and made it a pop-culture legend? I

say it was its unpretentious simplicity and cast of unlikely but likeable characters that included a pet chimp and the mysterious Racer X, who introduced suspense at a level most boys and girls could understand.

Although primitive, *Speed Racer* was in the vanguard of modern animation. Together with *Astro Boy*, it was one of the first examples of exported Japanese anime, featuring such cutting-edge techniques as wide-angle overhead shots and 360-degree rotations around the subject – unheard of in American cartoons of 40 and 50 years ago.



In this month's cover story, Chuck Miller interviews Peter Fernandez and Corinne Orr, the original "voices" behind Speed, Trixie and other characters. You'll enjoy the back story that traces the enduring series from its earliest days through to the 2008 major motion picture *Speed Racer*, directed by the Wachowski brothers of *Matrix* fame.

Other must-read articles this month include Eileen Smith's beautifully researched piece on Betty Boop collectibles, and Arnold Blumberg's expertly written story on merchandise associated with sci-fi evergreen Doctor Who. Celluloid toys, still banks and original Charles Schulz Peanuts art help round out our fourth issue of *Toy Collector Magazine*.

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— CATHERINE SAUNDERS-WATSON

toycollector

M A G A Z I N E

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CATHERINE SAUNDERS-WATSON

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BYLINES

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

ALAN JAFFE is a Philadelphia writer and editor, and the author of *J. Chein & Co.: A Collector's Guide to an American Toymaker*. His in-depth articles on antiques, auctions and collecting have been carried by Gannett News Service and have appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Chicago Sun-Times* and other publications.



EILEEN SMITH says she was born curious. That trait led her to a career in journalism, as well as an appreciation of antiques. A graduate of the Perley Isaac Reed School of Journalism at West Virginia University, she has reported and edited for a number of newspapers, including *USA Today*. Her work also has appeared in *This Old House* magazine, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Elegant Wedding* and more than 50 other publications. She has won numerous awards and was a finalist for an Investigative Reporters and Editors Award. She is also a *Jeopardy!* champion. Eileen Smith lives in Wilmington, Del., where she lives with her husband and cat.



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DR. **ARNOLD T. BLUMBERG** is curator of Geppi's Entertainment Museum at Camden Yards. He authored Gemstone Publishing's *The Big BIG LITTLE BOOK Book: An Overstreet Photo-Journal Guide* and co-authored the second and third editions of *The Overstreet Comic Book Grading Guide*. He also co-authored the *Howe's Transcendental Toy-box* series of Doctor Who merchandise guides and *Zombiemanía: 80 Movies to Die For* from Telos Publishing. He maintains websites at apanelwithnoborders.com, zombiemanía.com, and cinejunkie.com.



KARLA **KLEIN ALBERTSON** began her career with an eye on antiquities with a master of arts degree in Classical Archaeology from Bryn Mawr College. She writes the Antiques column for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and contributes to *Maine Antique Digest*, *Early American Life* and other publications. Karla has interests in rock music history, Silver Age comics, martial arts, motion picture memorabilia and surf/skate/snowboard culture.

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SEPTEMBER 2007

PAGE 11

BYLINES

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

CHUCK MILLER is an award-winning freelance writer and author of *Warman's American Records* collector guides. He spent 10 years as a collectible-records columnist for *Goldmine* magazine and has interviewed scores of top recording artists. Chuck's articles on pop culture, toys, sports, history and animation have appeared in many publications, in the United States and abroad.



band, Bill, and their young daughter, Stella.

SUSAN BRANDABUR writes about fine art and antiques in the secondary market and also about post-war decorative arts and interiors. She has been a contributor to *Art & Auction*, *Interior Design*, *International Auctioneers Magazine*, and antique trade publications. Susan lives in the beautiful city of San Francisco with her architect husband,

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A renowned antiques writer, appraiser and lecturer, **GENE FRIEDMAN** has also been a dedicated collector of antiques for more than 50 years. His vast knowledge is conveyed each week in a long-running *Reading Eagle* column. Gene also covers antiques for various national trade publications. Gene is a graduate of Albright College with a B.S. in economics. For 27 years he was a reporter and columnist for the *Reading Times*. He also worked in Washington on the House Foreign Affairs Committee as staff director of Inter-American Affairs.



SHARON VERBETEN is former editorial director of *Toy Shop* and *Antique Trader* magazines. She has written about and presented programs on antique toys nationwide for the last 10 years. In 2001 she authored *The Best of Barbie: Four Decades of the World's Favorite Doll*. Sharon is an avid collector of spinning tops, tinlitho gameboards, and vintage valentines.

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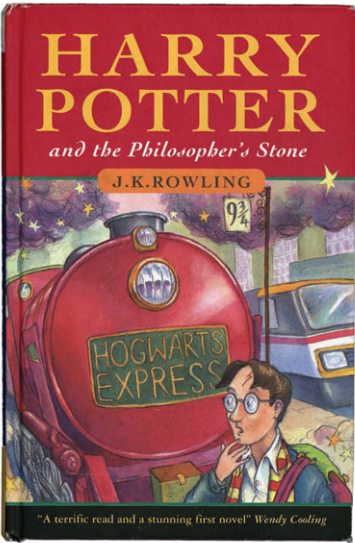
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THERE’S NOTHING HOTTER THAN POTTER Fictional phenom Harry Potter cast a magic spell over bidders at Bonhams’ June 26 auction of books, maps, manuscripts and photography as a rare first edition of the initial book in the Potter series hammered \$18,000. Entered in the London event with a presale estimate of \$10,000-\$14,000, the tome was purchased by an

absentee bidder, Bonhams told *Toy Collector Magazine*. As for the anonymous consignor, she reportedly purchased the book 10 years ago after seeing it in a bookshop window, and paid for it with tokens she had won as a school prize.

Printed by Bloomsbury in 1997, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* was issued in a limited first run of only 500 to 1,000 copies. At the

time, no one - including Bloomsbury and 12 publishers who had passed on it - believed author J.K. Rowling would go on to become one of the most successful writers in the history of publishing. An estimated 469 million Harry Potter books were purchased during the decade following the release of *Philosopher’s Stone*, which, on its own, has sold 107 million copies.

COMING UP FOR BID

In Homestead Auctions’ Sept. 7-8 sale:
an 8-inch Bing tin limo, unusual green/red/black color scheme, estimate \$2,000-\$2,250.

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SOLD!
Dinky Prewar No. 28 Castrol Van
Sold for \$931 through LiveAuctioneers.com.
Vectis Auctions Ltd.
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SOLD!

1956 Lionel 2341 Jersey Central FM Diesel
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AmbroseBauer Trains
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COMING UP FOR BID

In Philip Weiss Auctions’ Sept. 8-9 sale:
a 1938 Tipp Co. tinplate camouflage searchlight truck, 7½ inches long, estimate \$200-\$400.

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SOLD!

Mattel Francie doll, possible prototype.
Sold for \$5,880 through LiveAuctioneers.com.
McMasters Harris Auction Co.
July 28, 2007



DROP IT IN THE SLOT

BY CATHERINE SAUNDERS-WATSON
ITEM IMAGE BY MORPHY AUCTIONS



THIS EXTRAORDINARY coin-operated Unicum Chocolate vending machine is one of very few examples known to exist. Standing 5 feet 8 inches tall (inclusive of stand), the painted cast-iron dispenser was made by the Berlin-based firm Gischol & Spenler. When a coin is deposited, the dapper, top-hatted gent rolls his eyes from side to side and dances – note the riveted tin legs visible through the glass window. As the dance is performed, a chocolate sweet is made accessible from the dual-handled pull-out tray.

Agewise, it appears to be from the late Victorian era; the floral design on the pedestal suggests the Aesthetic period (circa 1868-1901). In exceptionally fine condition, the rare machine is as complete as any collector could ever hope for, in that it has retained its original key and a supply of coins suitable for use with the machine. Estimated at \$40,000-\$60,000, the dispenser is one of many rare articles from a private collection of black memorabilia to be sold during Morphy Auctions' Sept. 5-8 Fall sale. [C](#)

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THE SCOOP ON BOOP

THE COMIC WORLD’S FIRST “IT” GIRL CONTINUES TO CHARM COLLECTORS

BY EILEEN SMITH



With a composition head and jointed limbs, Cameo’s 1930s Betty Boop doll is garbed in the strapless short frock she wore in cartoons before censors demanded more modest attire. Photo courtesy of Morphy Auctions.

AFTER 77 YEARS, Betty Boop still possesses the winsomeness of a little girl, the pluck of a great dame and curves that captivate boys of all ages.

“She projects as a real person – plus, she’s cute,” said Tommy Sage, toy expert and co-founder of Morphy Auctions in Adamstown, Pa.

Boop was born in 1930, the creation of animator Grim Natwick of Fleischer Studios. In the fashion of the day, he first drew Boop as an animal, a perky pooch who made her debut in the Talkartoon Dizzy Dishes. Over the next three cartoons she went from French poodle to sex kitten as her long ears morphed into hoop earrings and her curly topknot

was tamed into a bob with spit curls.

Her name changed, too, from Dangerous Nan McGrew to Nancy Lee and then, in 1931, to Betty Boop, a moniker as indelible as her trademark red lipstick. In the early days, she had a boyfriend, the aptly named Bimbo, who wasn’t good for much beyond holding up a squirrel and stealing his fur coat in Bum Bandit.

Bimbo faded into oblivion. But you can still take Boop to the bank.

“She has a tremendously broad appeal because she’s not overtly sexual,” said Leonard Ellis, a devoted collector in Arlington, Texas. “She has that little-girl aura.”

Ellis – also known as Boopman – is the author of *The Definitive Guide to Betty Boop: Memorabilia with Values*, a full-color paperback published in 2003 that includes descriptions of more than 3,000 Boop-



This 1932 boxed set contains two jigsaw puzzles featuring Betty Boop, Koko the Clown (left) and her boyfriend Bimbo (right). Courtesy Leonard and Janet Ellis.

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themed items ranging from toy banks to comic books. (Currently out of print, the book has become a collector's item, selling for as much as \$50 on eBay and Amazon.com.)

His expansive collection includes lunchboxes, clocks, figurines, plates and advertising memorabilia. He owns two 12-inch tall dolls made by Cameo Doll Co. in the 1930s, both with composition heads and jointed wood arms and legs, one in a painted black dress with heart-shaped Fleischer decal and the other in a green dress.

"Anything from the 1930s is highly valuable, especially the composition dolls," he said. "A doll with a composition head and a cloth body is very hard to find and might sell for \$1,000 in poor condition and \$5,000 in great condition."

Ellis shares his ardor for Boop



Here's a fine example of 1930s Japanese glazed children's china, in this instance featuring Betty Boop, Mickey Mouse and Betty's dog, Pudgy. Photo courtesy of Leonard and Janet Ellis.



A very rare prewar Japanese tin and celluloid wind-up, Jolly Betty came in a paper-labeled box also featuring Mickey Mouse. This example sold for \$8,250 in Morphy's Fall 2005 sale. Morphy image.

collectibles with his wife Janet. In fact, he introduced himself at the engineering firm where they both worked when he noticed several Boop miniatures on her desk.

"I went to a trinket shop and bought her a Betty Boop pen and said, 'Here's something to add to your collection,'" he recalled. "We've been married for 15 years and collecting the whole time."

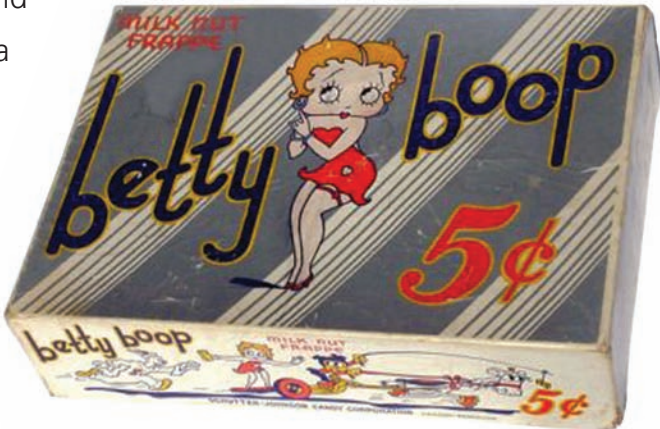
In the beginning, Boop showed lots of skin, vamping through such cartoons as *Minnie the Moocher* (1932) in a short, strapless dress,

garter belt and high heels. In *Popeye the Sailor* (1933), she wore only a grass skirt and strategically placed lei.

The ensuing boopla from censors resulted in a toned-down look: a

knee-length frock with short sleeves and a demure ruffled collar. Boop kept a tidy house like any good suburban homemaker, and walked her dog Pudgy.

Ellis said Boop appeals more to women collectors, who embrace her unapologetic femininity. But men appreciate her worldly wink, implied sexuality and sense of humor. Both



This colorful candy box once held Betty Boop Milk Fruit Frappes. In this depiction, Betty is a blonde. Photo courtesy Leonard and Janet Ellis.

genders admire her resourcefulness as she unfailingly wriggles from the grasp of leering lechers.

“People tried to take advantage of Betty,” Ellis said, “but no one ever succeeded because she had a brain that matched that good heart.”

Collectors should be wary of vintage memorabilia that mysteriously appears on the market. Ellis points to widespread faking of Boop cookie jars in the 1990s, when tricksters stamped Vandor greenware with the McCoy mark before firing and passed the jars off as sweet discoveries from the 1940s.

“All of a sudden, Betty Boop cookie jars started to appear, never before seen,” he recalled.

The cookie soon started to crumble for the frauds – but not before some collectors were burned. “People paid some very high prices

> **LEARN MORE** KANE AND QUESTEL PUT THE BOOP-BOOP-A-DOOP IN BETTY

BEHIND BETTY BOOP’S celluloid curves and little-girl voice were two flesh-and-blood gals: Helen Kane, the Broadway babe who inspired Boop; and Mae Questel, the vaudeville veteran who put words in the icon’s rosebud mouth.

With her saucer-like eyes and Bronx baby voice, Kane was the unwitting muse for Fleischer Studios animator Grim Natwick’s most famous creation. On stage, Kane was the toast of Broadway in the 1928 production *Good Boy*. In that play, she launched the tune *I Wanna Be Loved by You*, which would become the unofficial Boop anthem with its saucy boop-boop-a-doop line.

Kane’s least successful performance was a real-life courtroom drama in 1932, in which she sued studio head Max Fleischer and Paramount for \$250,000, claiming Boop’s singing style and signature boop-boop-a-doop were wrongfully lifted from her. Kane lost when the judge ruled that other enter-



Shall we dance? This Betty Boop and Mickey Mouse celluloid toy is from the Leonard and Janet Ellis collection.

tainers – chiefly a little-known singer known as Baby Esther – had used the line years before Kane picked it up.

Kane’s fortunes faded along with the flapper fad. She performed rarely

after 1935, dubbing Debbie Reynolds in the 1950 film *Three Little Words*, singing *I Wanna Be Loved by You*. Her final bow was on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1965. She died the following year at age 62.

Fleischer heard Questel sing on a vaudeville stage and recruited her to provide a coquettish squeak to match Boop’s dizzy dame persona. From 1930 until 1939, she loaned her vocal cords to the cartoon character in more than 150 animated shorts.

Occasionally, Questel performed in front of the camera – she was the card-playing pal of Woody Allen’s mother in *New York Stories* – but a withered arm limited her range of roles. Not so in front of the microphone. She added a nasal tone to her high-pitched delivery to provide verbiage for Popeye’s girlfriend, Olive Oyl, for more than 20 years.

Questel last reprised Betty Boop in 1988, in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* She died in 1998 from complications related to Alzheimer’s disease. She was 89.

for the jars on eBay, from \$500-\$1,000,” Ellis said.

In the 1930s, Paramount promoted Boop through such playthings as soft, all-fabric boudoir dolls, of which few remain. Children delighted to strings of Christmas tree lights fashioned after Boop and other comic icons, including Dick Tracy and Little Orphan Annie.

In recent years, King Features helped to transform Boop into a billion-dollar baby through licensed products and partnerships with such stellar brands as Coca-Cola and Chevrolet. Theresa Brigner, who sold Boop memorabilia in her Arizona gift shop for years, launched bikerbetty-boop.com, the first licensed Web site and a retailer of new products, including dolls and figurines.

“I’m 57 years old and I’ve been a Betty Boop fan since I was a child,”



A Paramount cartoon character Christmas tree light set teams Boop with six other popular comic stars: Andy Gump, Dick Tracy, Kayo, Moon Mullins, Little Orphan Annie and Smitty. This frosted-glass version is unused and in its original box. Photo courtesy of Morphy Auctions.



she said. “The Betty Boop motorcycle image is really popular with motorcycle enthusiasts worldwide. She’s also an angel and a devil, a surfer, a singer, piano player and a diva. She’s a cowgirl and a charming toddling baby.”

In Japan, Boop was the centerpiece for a recent ad campaign by Orient Bank.

“The Japanese have always loved Betty,” Ellis noted.

Indeed, some of the most collectible memorabilia was manufactured in Japan in the 1930s, when an unlicensed toymaker teamed Boop with another local favorite, Mickey Mouse. “There’s a celluloid toy in which Mickey Mouse rides a motorcycle with Betty Boop in the sidecar,” Ellis said.

In the 1930s, Cameo also produced a green color variation of their Betty Boop painted, composition-head doll. Courtesy of Leonard and Janet Ellis.

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BY LEONARD ELLIS
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At a September 2005 sale at Morphy’s, a 10½-inch Boop celluloid whirligig made in Japan in the early 1930s – identified on its lithographed box label as “Jolly Betty” – spun to \$8,250. “I believe it’s the only known example with a box,” said Tommy Sage.

Sage expects the market for Boop to grow as she continues to win new fans. His two children, ages 5 and 7, enjoy watching Betty Boop cartoons.



There’s a regal air to this cel depicting Betty Boop in the role she played in the 1934 production *Poor Cinderella*. Morphy’s Image.

This August, Boop attracted admirers at the Heritage Comic and Comic Art auction at Geppi’s Entertainment Museum in Baltimore. A daily strip drawn by Bud Counihan and dated 11-16-34 brought \$7,170.

“She’s very much in demand with comic book collectors, people who also like Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Porky Pig,” Sage said. “Betty has hung in there with the best of them.” **tc**

STILL BANKS

A MONEY-SAVING SOLUTION FOR PENNY-WISE COLLECTORS

BY ALAN JAFFE

TOY IMAGES BY BERTOIA AUCTIONS

STILL BANKS ARE LIKE second-stringers, second fiddles, opening acts, or vice presidents. Mechanical banks get all the attention, with their fancy names and moving parts and hundred-thousand-dollar bids.

But don't underestimate the still bank. It is a toy with a rich heritage and plenty of future earning power.

And it's a burgeoning field. The Still Bank Collectors Club of America boasts more than 500 members (including associates in Canada, England, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Holland, Austria and Australia). A

LEFT: The painted Beehive is a very desirable bank made by Kyser and Rex in the late 1800s.



BACKGROUND IMAGE COURTESY OF STOCKPHOTO / VERONICA BUSCH

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FOR STILL BANKS

recent still bank convention in Kansas City drew 150 participants, 40 of whom were attending their first convention, said Ken Russell, a collector for 45 years.

Still banks are also drawing interest from novice collectors, because they are still affordable and offer a range of materials and a staggering variety of forms.

"They are one of the few areas [of antiques] where you'll see a younger person collect," said Rich Bertoia, coordinator and cataloguer at Bertoia Auctions in Vineland, N.J. "The rare ones can get into the stratosphere, but there are hundreds and hundreds of examples to choose from for a beginning collector."

Because the production costs were minimal, still banks were mass produced from the early 19th through the 20th century. On eBay, the banks – particularly the cast-iron animals and



The Kyser and Rex Apple still bank was meant to hang on a wall.

houses – have become "a dime a dozen," Bertoia said. Collectors scan the Internet for scarce versions of toys and

to upgrade their current examples.

Those are the two guiding principles that apply to still banks, and most other collecting areas, for that matter: rarity and condition.

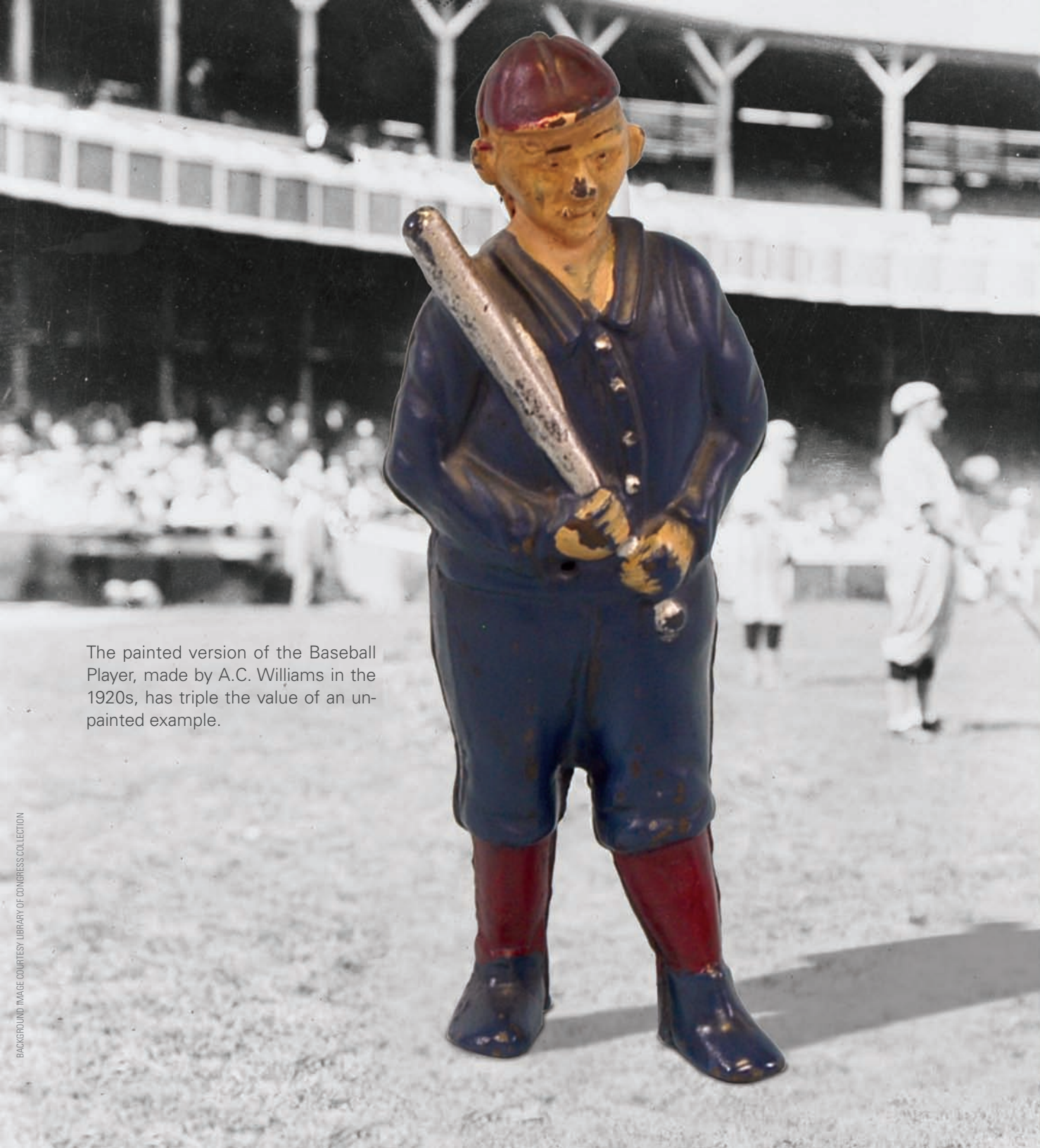
"Always try to buy condition," said Russell, an Abilene, Kans., high school track coach and semi-retired painting contractor. "And don't buy poor condition – unless it's rare."

Bertoia spun it this way: "It's all about condition, condition, condition. Any still bank, regardless of rarity or common nature, will command a great price if it's in near-mint condition. So when the opportunity arises, you really have to jump on it. Everybody wants the nicest one on the block."

But "if something rare comes on the market and you really don't like the condition, step up to the plate anyway" and upgrade later, Bertoia advises.

Among the hot categories are painted cast-iron banks and building banks – and painted buildings. They combine the appeal of architectural objects with a folk-art feel, Bertoia said, "and they make absolutely phenomenal collections."

They are also among the most difficult to find. "The factories did not



The painted version of the Baseball Player, made by A.C. Williams in the 1920s, has triple the value of an unpainted example.

paint many of them. They just wanted to push them out to the market. So if they did a white building with blue trim, they probably made thousands of white buildings with blue trim. Yet maybe one day they made five with blue and painted red trim. So today, those are the hot ones.”

Two Baseball Player banks made in the 1920s by the A.C. Williams Company are among the stills coming up for sale at the Vineland auction house in November. The estimated value for the unpainted example is \$300; the painted player, with blue uniform and red sox, is expected to go for three times as much.

A menagerie of painted cast-iron animals, all from one collection, will also go on the block in the fall sale at Bertoia’s. “There’s a green elephant, red lions, blue donkeys – colors that don’t make sense for the animal. But they were whatever the guy at the foundry felt like painting that day. And that’s the draw.”

Even cast iron can be brittle, Bertoia said, and some banks had fragile points that kept breaking. The companies would have limited runs of the more delicate designs – the hardest to find now, of course – and would turn to shapes “with more stamina,” like a sturdy building or small animal.

More delicate were the ceramic banks from the 1800s,



The stenciled date on the painted Cupola bank makes it highly desirable.

which previously were popular with collectors but have dwindled in interest in recent years, Bertoia said. The redware pottery banks were made in New England by numerous manufacturers, including “the crazed potter” of the Arts & Crafts movement,

George Ohr, who produced still banks as a small cottage industry. Other lines came out of Zanesville, Ohio, the nation’s pottery hub.

“When you get into the earlier redware, those are still commanding huge money. But they just don’t come out on the market,” and few survived into the 21st century. “They chipped easily. You had a metal coin going into a pottery slot; if it cracked, boom, it was thrown away.”

Lead still banks remain highly desirable among collectors, Bertoia said. Made mainly at the turn of the 20th century in Germany, they are highly detailed, carefully hand-painted toys. And because lead was so malleable, they could be shaped into a nearly endless array of forms.

Some of the lead banks fall into the “semi-mechanical category,” Bertoia said. A simple mechanism

might cause a jaw to open when the coin was dropped. They’re not quite mechanical banks because there is no lever or complex animation, yet they’re not completely still.

Among tin still banks, the early American examples are the most desirable. And the most popular forms made by George Brown and other manufacturers in the late 1800s were churches and other simple building structures. The tin house banks were often made to the scale of real houses, Bertoia said.

Of the later toy media, glass banks have had a resurgence in recent years. “Because of the invention of glass injection molding, they were able to form glass banks into any shape in the world,” Bertoia said. Many glass banks were produced in the 1930s and 1940s in Pittsburgh and

elsewhere in Pennsylvania, but some of the nicest were produced in South America. Some collectors have spe-



The City Bank With Dormers, a rare painted piece, was made in the 1890s by Thomas Swan.



RIGHT: The whimsical Potato bank was designed by Mary A. Martin, circa 1897.

cialized in 1950s glass figural banks.

The finest banks in any category have become very hard to find. “They’re mainly in the hands of collectors now,” Russell said. “You’ll see a few at auctions.” Russell tries to pry them from the shelves of fellow collectors. “I pester them ... It takes time and patience,” he said. “But if you’re going to do this, you have to get out and be aggressive.”

Bertoia also said it has become

much harder to land the great still banks. “You have to go to auctions. You have to wait for the big collections to break up.”

And as the rare pieces show up, the prices continue to climb. Russell believes the rising level of mechanical bank values has lifted the price of still banks. Bertoia isn’t so sure. “Most of the still bank collectors strictly collect still banks. There is that crossover collector who collects both. But me-





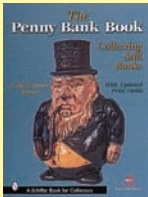
The painted Battleship Oregon was made by J. & E. Stevens in the early 1900s.

chanical banks are really the cream of the crop for cast iron. So if somebody can afford great mechanical banks, they surely can afford still banks. And if that’s their interest, it’s almost not a matter of price, it’s a matter of availability. There simply is not enough supply for the demand for great-condition still banks.”

A one of a kind, two-faced man bank brought \$16,000 at auction

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about 15 years ago, Russell said, and he estimated its current value at \$75,000. A Chanticleer bank – a rooster’s body with a human head based on an opera character – was valued at \$7,000 six years ago and sold for \$10,900

at auction recently, he said, while early pottery banks are reaching the \$20,000 range.

Bertoia Auctions recently sold a painted Ives Palace bank for more than \$10,000. That tends to be the high range for still banks, Rich Bertoia said.



“There are not many at that level. There are plenty at the \$5,000 level.” The rare painted buildings often fall between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

But there are many wonderful and whimsical banks to be had for a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, including those depict cannons and armored cars, fruits and vegetables, devils and churches, taxi cabs and battleships, and banks that depict bank buildings.

The experts advise collectors to keep an open mind and not limit themselves to “niche” categories. “I like



The popular, painted Alphabet bank was made in the early 1900s.

anything from lead to glass to pottery to wood to tin. I like them all,” Russell said. “If it has a slot in it and it appeals to me, I’ll probably buy it.”

Bertoia is the same. “I like to collect right across the board ... That allows you to expand the collection and go to an auction or show and come home with something. It keeps your collecting fever alive.” **tc**

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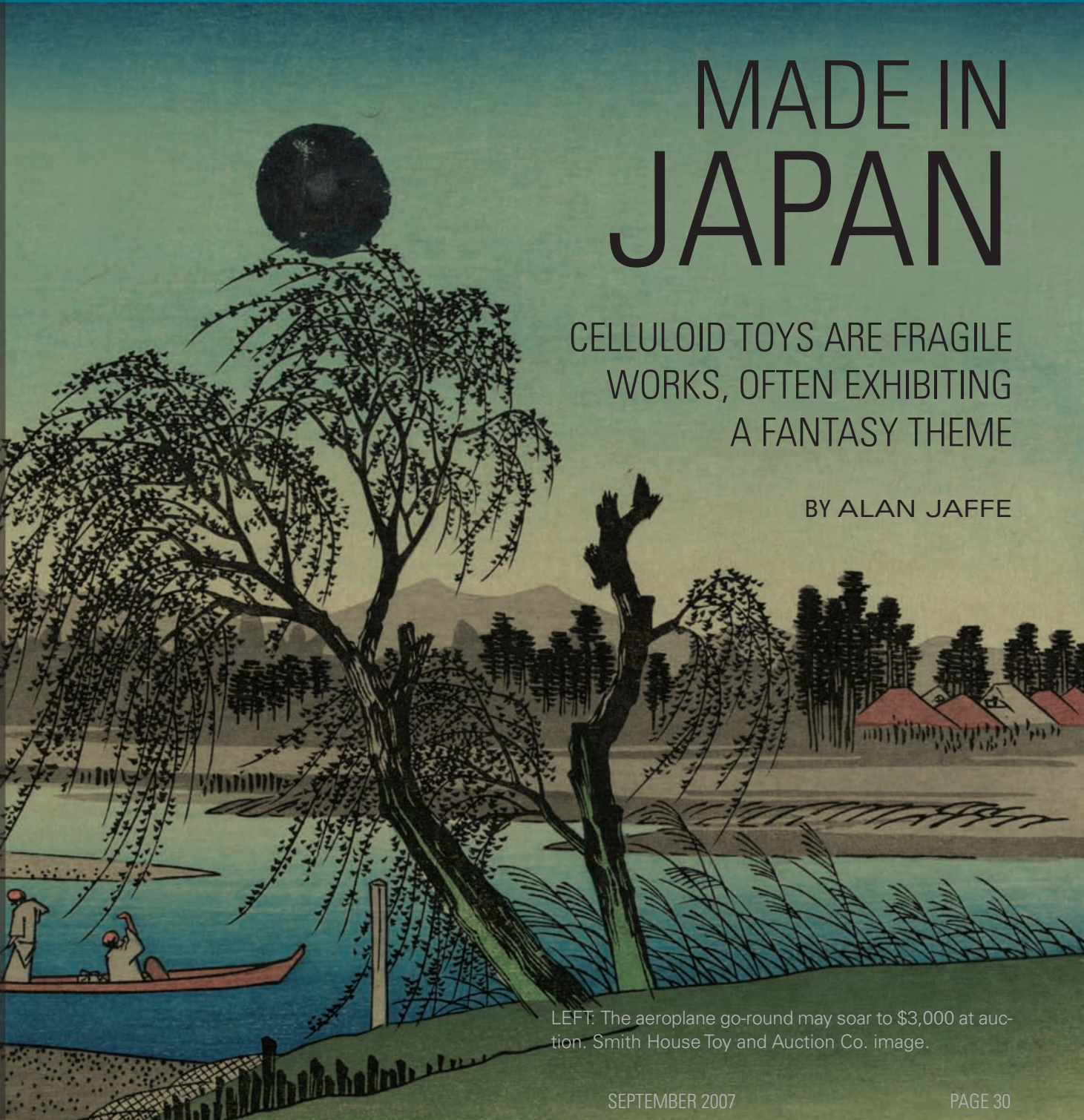
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RIGHT: The details in the Two-Faced Devil, made by the A.C. Williams Company, make it a favorite bank of many collectors.

MADE IN JAPAN

CELLULOID TOYS ARE FRAGILE WORKS, OFTEN EXHIBITING A FANTASY THEME

BY ALAN JAFFE



LEFT: The aeroplane go-round may soar to \$3,000 at auction. Smith House Toy and Auction Co. image.

BACKGROUND IMAGE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTION

WEEKS AFTER Bill Silverman died, dozens of packages of antique toys continued to arrive at his New Haven, Conn., home from Italy, Japan and China. Right up until he passed away last March at age 61, he was still hunting down and buying rare pieces from around the world.

“For him, I’d be reluctant to call it a hobby,” his son Jesse Silverman explained. “It was more like a compulsion.”

At the core of the collection are large, mechanical, pre-World War II toys made of the early molded plastic known as celluloid, or a combination of tin and celluloid, many in their original boxes with colorful graphics and often cryptic names from the whimsical realm of celluloid.

“For Mahim” is an India-

themed windup pachyderm with two turbaned riders – one on the back, one on the trunk. An image of the Taj

Mahal adorns a cylinder that revolves as the toy advances.

“Boo Tong” reads the box for

the toy pig pushing a tin cart of chicks. On the side of the cart is the English translation: “Happy Pig.”

“Coxcomb” proclaims the box of a sad-faced celluloid jester. “Lovely Boy Drummer” is just that: a cherubic musician.

There are several wondrous go-round toys. One 14-inch-tall piece, probably from the 1920s, has six monoplanes and pilots that fly around the hub. A stranger conglomeration has celluloid globes that orbit the top of the toy, a tin butterfly shape cut out at the center, tin seesaws with celluloid riders, and lithographed planes and dirigibles soaring in the background. The base is blanketed in tiny lithographed flowers. Another go-round bears a plastic elephant strumming a guitar while lithographed children playing instruments dance by.



“For Mahim,” with its original box, is expected to bring an estimated \$3,500 when it parades across the auction podium. Smith House Toy and Auction Co. image.



The extremely rare drumming soldier has a celluloid head and tin body and drum. Smith House Toy and Auction Co. image.

The figural pieces include a sailor – a U.S. Navy man, according to his cap – dancing with a woman in a cloth gown. There’s also a man playing a tin piano and reading tin sheet music under a twirling plastic umbrella – a sort of celluloid Liberace.

There is a very rare soldier with a tin body and celluloid head, a policeman with a stop-and-go sign, a blue celluloid elephant skipping rope, and a girl on a dog-drawn cart. A celluloid Santa, a Mexican on a burro, and a rocking horse rider are among the non-mechanicals in the collection.

Celluloid’s appeal lies in its ethereal texture, bright colors and adaptable forms. It can take on the shape and detail of flesh or fur or feathers or fins. And its lightweight,

fragile feel is unlike any other toy medium. But its unique qualities also account for its high mortality rate. Craig Thompson of Smith House Toys, the company that will be auctioning the majority of the Silverman collection, noted, “It’s so delicate, you look at it the wrong way and it cracks or breaks. And it’s almost impossible to repair.”

It is also highly flammable and produces a noxious gas when it burns.

None of which deters collectors, said Kathy Barrett, an Illinois dealer and buyer. The celluloid toy market has grown steadily for 20 years, partly because the pieces ap-



A popular motif in early Japanese celluloid was the dancing couple — often featuring an American sailor, people Japanese designers would recognize from visiting ships.

peal to people with a range of interests, from holiday items to animals to

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carnival themes to dolls, or to accompany other kinds of collections.

Celluloid’s qualities also prevent imitation. “Nothing takes the pleasure out of your shelf more than seeing it reproduced,” said Barrett.

Her business partner at Global Toy Merchants is her husband, Rex, who was born and grew up in Occupied Japan as the son of missionaries. “He collects Japanese toys because it’s part of him,” Kathy explained. Rex also became a friend of Japan’s leading antique toy authority, Teruhisa Kitahara.

The Barretts were friends of Bill Silverman’s, too. “There’s going to be fabulous stuff” in the upcoming auction, Kathy Barrett said. “(Silverman) had a very

good eye. And he was buying very enthusiastically because he knew he was sick. ... There will be something for everyone in that sale.”

Thompson had known Silverman since the late 1980s. “He was a fixture on the East Coast show circuit” as a collector and a dealer. Silverman sold commercial real estate

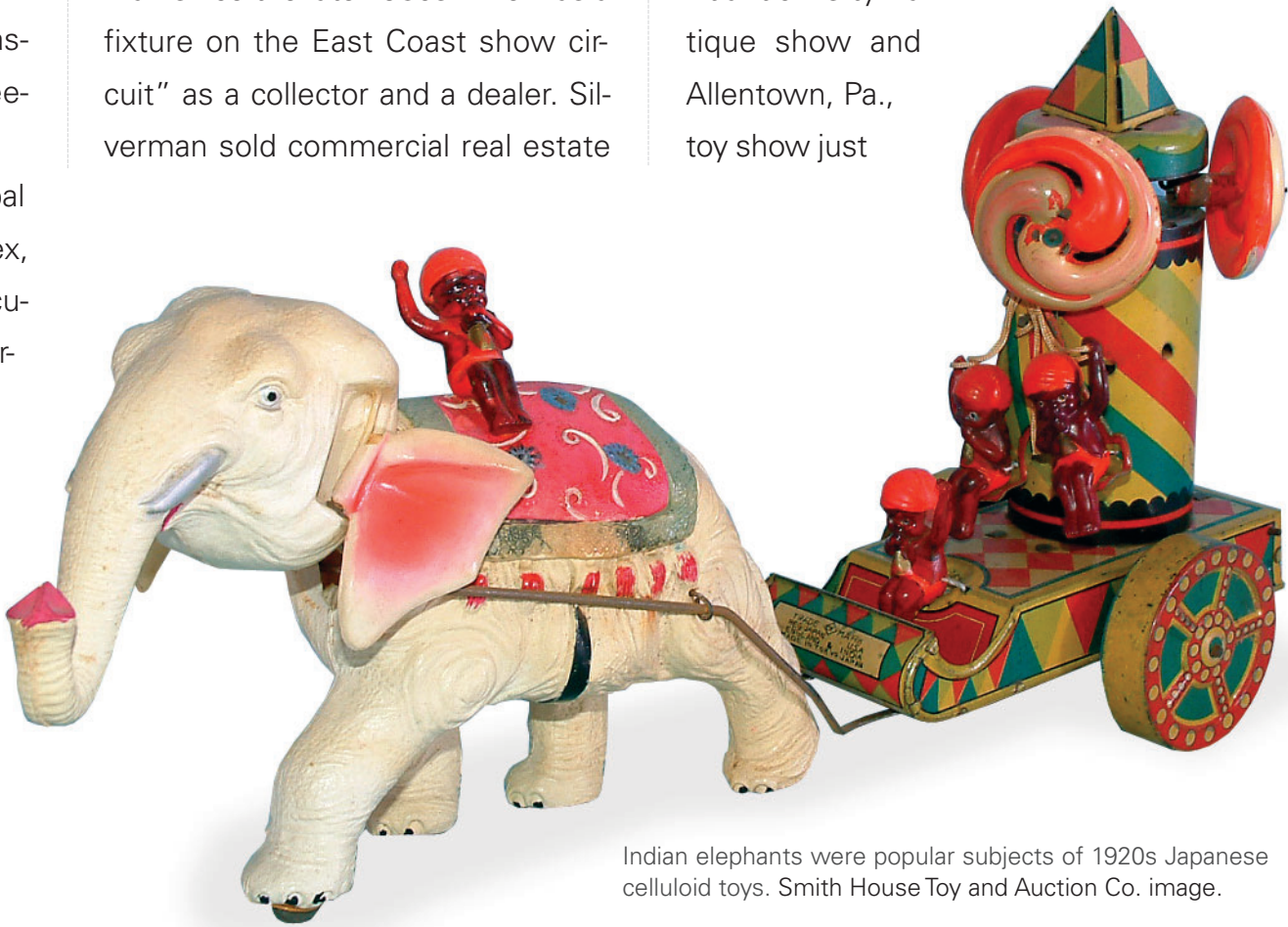
in the New Haven area to support his toy habit, Thompson joked, but his devotion to toys truly seemed to keep him going. His colleagues in collecting recalled seeing Silverman at the Atlantic City antique show and Allentown, Pa., toy show just

months before his passing.

His toys were displayed throughout his house, Thompson said. The celluloid was prominently on view in cases downstairs, while the whistles and noisemakers were kept in the master bedroom.

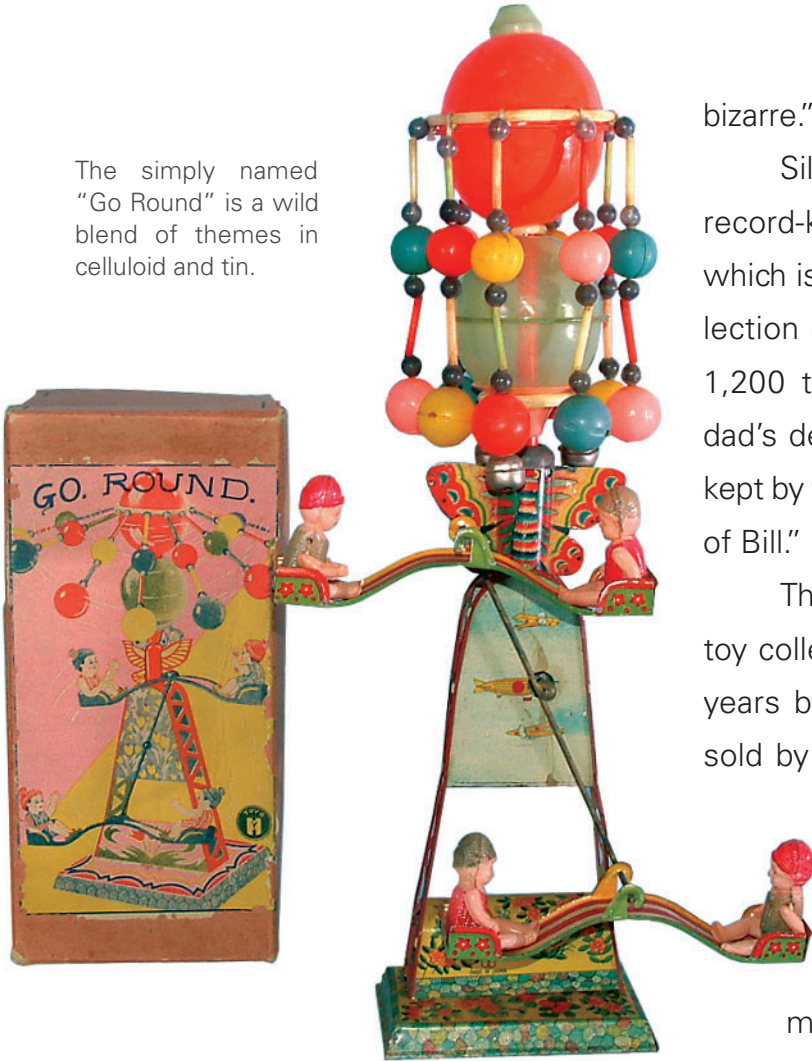
Other pieces were overtaking the upstairs office, his son Jesse said. “My dad was independent and, thankfully, one of a kind,” a man who seldom wore socks and despised his cell phone – “although he was on it 14 hours a day. He was physically incapable of not answering a phone call.”

“I don’t think society could handle two Bill Silvermans,” Jesse continued. “He very much did things his own way – and his ways were



Indian elephants were popular subjects of 1920s Japanese celluloid toys. Smith House Toy and Auction Co. image.

The simply named “Go Round” is a wild blend of themes in celluloid and tin.



bizarre.”

Silverman was a relentless record-keeper, his son said, which is how he knows the collection consisted of more than 1,200 toys at the time of his dad’s death. Some toys will be kept by the family “as a memory of Bill.”

The extraordinary celluloid toy collection amassed over 15 years by Bill Silverman will be sold by Smith House Toys in a phone and online auction running from Oct. 21 through Nov. 9. More than 40 toys made of celluloid, many of

Silverman’s Japanese and German clickers and noisemakers, and an array of pre- and postwar Japanese lithographed whistles will be offered.

Placing presale estimates has

has proved difficult on many of the pieces, said Thompson, because “so little of this stuff hits the market.” Silverman had eclectic taste and a keen eye for “very uncommon” pieces, so there is little sale history for the toys. The aeroplane go-round and “For

Mahim” may go over \$3,000, Thompson said. “But they are much rarer than many tin toys that sell for much more.” **tc**

To contact celluloid toy dealers Kathy and Rex Barrett, write to P.O. Box 254, Medinah, Illinois 60157, or email rexbar@earthlink.net.



The comical “Boo Tong” seems to be happy-go-lucky Japanese Porky Pig.

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THE EVOLUTION OF CELLULOID

HOLDING A PIECE of gentle, airy celluloid, it's hard to imagine its sometimes deadly history. Julie Robinson, the author of two books that explore celluloid's past and collectibility, said the substance was invented in 1869 and first used in knobs, dresser sets, women's cuffs and collars, photo albums, storage boxes, pinback buttons and dentures.

In the 1880s, German doll manufacturers realized celluloid was a more practical material than porcelain, which was heavy and easily broken by little girls. The new lightweight, waterproof thermoplastic could be formed into balls, rattles or flesh-colored, chubby baby dolls that children could cuddle and bathe, Robinson said. The American Viscoloid Co., which started in

1901, hired a German artist to create molds for roly-polys, holiday toys and tiny animals.

Integral to the production of celluloid was camphor, distilled from trees grown almost exclusively on Formosa (now Taiwan), an island under Japanese sovereignty from 1895 to 1945. American attempts to grow camphor trees failed, and by 1911 Japan held a monopoly on camphor export and, hence, celluloid production. After World War I, Robinson said, Japan began creating its own celluloid toys, copying German and American designs at first, and exporting cheap kewpie dolls, fish, ducks, geese and other simple toys. By the 1920s, however,



One of Robinson's favorite celluloid toys is a 1920s rattle by the Viscoloid Company. Photo courtesy of Julie Robinson.

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Japanese toymakers were adding mechanical components, then combining celluloid and tin, to create a spectrum of innovative, colorful, sometimes bizarre playthings.

On the boxes and toys in the Bill Silverman collection, many read, "Made in Tokyo, Japan," which was a center of toy production in the 1920s and '30s, Robinson said. A lot of the companies were no more than small garages and shelters where a tiny assembly line would dip a tube of celluloid into hot water with a paddle, wrap it around dowels, and blow it into forms that would be sealed together. These were not modern factories, Robinson explained, and the construction and hand-painting were often quick and crude.

The Japanese continued making celluloid toys through the post-war years, and

they can be identified by the marking "Made in Occupied Japan."

In the West, however, celluloid had fallen out of favor by the late 1920s. The substance was highly flammable and emitted a noxious gas when it burned. The celluloid used in film resulted in movie house disasters, and many children were being injured in household accidents after holding their toys too close to open flames. By the 1940s, American companies had phased out celluloid in favor of safer, thicker, new plastics. One of its few contemporary uses? The ping-pong ball.

Julie Robinson is the author of *Celluloid Collector's Reference and Value Guide* and *Celluloid Dolls, Toys and Playthings*. Her Web site is www.celluloidforever.com.

NO HELMET REQUIRED

WHEN THEY'RE NOT RIDING, MANY MOTORCYCLE
BUFFS GET THEIR KICKS FROM TOYS THAT
REPLICATE THE REAL THING



BY KARLA KLEIN ALBERTSON

Hubley Indian motorcycle florist's van, circa 1932, part of the distinguished Hegarty collection, sold at Sotheby's in October 2001 for \$126,750. Image from Hegarty Collection of Antique Toys, courtesy Sotheby's New York.

Whether tin or cast iron, American made or imported, an endless array of collectible antique and vintage toy motorcycles is available to today's collectors, many of whom are, themselves, owners of full-size bikes.

Tom Sage Jr., general manager of Morphy Auctions in Denver, Pa., says most of the motorcycles made of cast iron were produced by Hubley. "They were right here in the Lancaster, Pennsylvania area – that's one of the reasons they show up around here. Other manufacturers of cast-iron bikes were Kilgore (Westerville, Ohio), Champion (Geneva, Ohio) and Arcade (Freeport, Ill.)"



Collectors dream of tin toys with original packaging. This Japanese I.Y. Metal Toys friction motorcycle in near-mint condition with rare original box sold for \$8,800 in June 2006. Image courtesy Morphy Auctions.

"Most of the good tin ones are German," he continued, mentioning as an example Lehmann, established in 1881 in Brandenburg. Lehmann made a series of four or five very desirable examples, including the Echo and Halloh. But there were also English- and French-made tin bikes, as well as many produced by American manufacturers. "Marx made a bunch of motorcycles," Sage said, "and Hoge [famous for their clock-work Popeye rowboat] made a really good one, which we sold three sales ago in the box."

Sage went on, "Most collectors are interested in the actual production toys. Some of the companies made very realistic motorcycles, especially some of the German firms. The



Mickey takes Minnie for a spin on a German-made wind-up motorcycle by Tipp & Co., circa 1930. The choice toy combines famous fantasy riders with accurate machine details, right down to the Dunlop Cord tires. Image courtesy Geppi's Entertainment Museum at Camden Yards. Original Disney production background image from "The Picnic" (released by Walt Disney in 1930) courtesy Cuckoo Comics (cuckoocomics.com).

lithographed engines are really correct. But they also made some fantasy ones, too.” The Japanese, who were big players in the tin action-toy field after World War II, made both accurately detailed and imagination-based machines.

Who collects? “In that field, mostly guys – macho guys,” said Sage. “You can see them coming 20 miles away.” He noted that many buyers ride in on their Harleys. Above all, he said, “Most collectors care about whether they are early motorcycles – and the more realistic-looking, the better.”

“For most of those guys, it’s a crossover appeal. They collect actual motorcycles as well as toys. One of the most famous of these guys was Steve McQueen. He collected both – he had very large motorcycle and toy motorcycle collections.” Sage cited

expert collector Gary Cenname of Pittsburgh as another perfect example: “He’s into Harley-Davidsons and Indians, and he also collects toy motorcycles.”

In a recent interview with *Toy Collector Magazine*, Cenname talks about what attracts him to motorcycles in general: “The simplicity and the beauty of how they were built – that’s what I’ve always liked. What I do is try to find something pretty much complete, rather than put something together.” The result on the macro side is a small but choice collection of early motorcycles, some of which he can ride.

Turning to the micro side of his collection, he said, “I only collect American [full-size] motorcycles, but I collect early European motorcycle toys.” Favorite manufacturers include the well-known German firms of



This well-cast Hubley toy motorcycle with its sportily dressed removable rider has a Harley-Davidson label on one side of the gas tank, and aluminum handlebars. It sold in October 2001 for \$14,400. Image from Hegarty Collection of Antique Toys, courtesy Sotheby’s New York.

The 1938 Hubley cast-iron Popeye Patrol motorcycle toy in near-mint-plus condition had its original pull string, clicker, and rubber tires. From the Bob Brady collection, it brought \$17,920 in March 2006. Image courtesy Morphy Auctions.

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M&K (Muller and Kadeder, Nuremberg), Gunthermann (Nuremberg), and G&K (Greppert and Kelch, Brandenburg).

When asked where he finds the toys, Cenname replied, “[Antique] shows, motorcycle shows, the antique motorcycle club – you’ve got to be all over the board. You have to look privately and ask a lot of questions on a local level – you never know.” The toy search also takes him on trips to Europe. A true motorcycle enthusiast, he said, “I collect memorabilia too – posters, fobs, pins, banners.”

Continuing on the subject of who collects, Tom Sage at Morphy Auctions recalled an important toy from the Bob Brady collection that sold in spring 2006: “We had a Popeye Patrol motorcycle that was in really mint condition. It

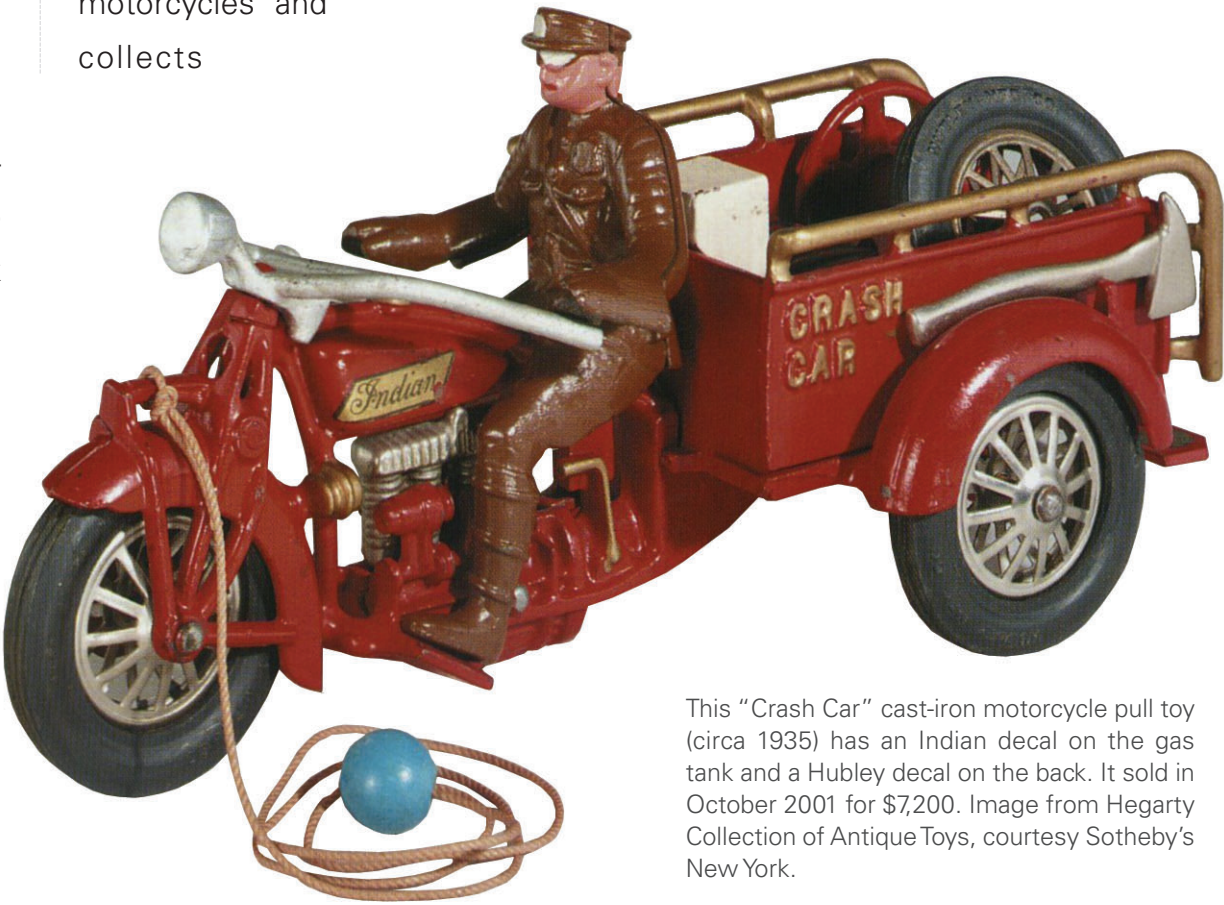
went to a motorcycle collector, not a comic collector – another guy who has Harleys, rides regular motorcycles and collects

guys are interested in that kind of thing, but generally, on that piece, motorcycle guys will buy it and pay

Most of all, he emphasizes the importance of condition: “I’ve been in this business for 30 years, and my theory is, anything that’s made to be collectible never really is. Things that people collect are things that should have been broken and thrown out. Kids got the toys for holidays or birthdays, immediately threw the box out, started playing with the toy, and broke the toy.”

Although \$100,000-plus prices have been paid for both tin and cast-iron motorcycles, Sage says the latter generally bring higher prices at auction “because there are fewer of them. Ultimately, however, it doesn’t matter whether it’s tin or iron, it just depends on what it is, the condition, and who wants it at the time.”

Sage concluded, “Condition is the most important factor, rarity is



This “Crash Car” cast-iron motorcycle pull toy (circa 1935) has an Indian decal on the gas tank and a Hubley decal on the back. It sold in October 2001 for \$7,200. Image from Hegarty Collection of Antique Toys, courtesy Sotheby’s New York.

more money for it than a comic character collector will.”



1932 Hubley Indian with sidecar and clicker exhaust noise, sold by Sotheby's in 2001 for \$20,300. Image from Hegarty Collection of Antique Toys, courtesy Sotheby's New York.

second. Years ago, it was probably the opposite, but today, condition drives the market more than anything.'

"This is true in any field. I tell good customers to buy mint-condition common things rather than rare things in bad condition. If someone tells me they want to spend \$50,000, I say don't buy 50 \$1,000 pieces, try to buy five \$10,000 pieces. That top 5 percent of the market is what increases in value more than anything else." **tc**

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THE GREATEST CHALLENGE facing a collector is finding toys that have survived in a pristine and unrestored state. Condition played a key role in the success of one of the major toy sales in the early 21st century. While Sotheby's New York no longer conducts toy auctions, collectors still talk about the Oct. 12, 2001 sale of the Covert and Gertrude Hegarty collection, which grossed more than twice its million-dollar estimate.

The Hegartys were charter members of the Antique Toy Collectors of America, and gathered their 19th- and early 20th-



The version sold by Morphy Auctions in 2004.

WHY CONDITION IS KING



The Hegarty version, in top condition, sold at Sotheby's.

tury American toys between the 1940s and the late 1960s, when the getting was good. The couple had moved from banks into tin and cast-iron transportation pieces, including bell, clockwork, and firefighting

items. Wisely, they bought only the best-available examples and upgraded for condition whenever the opportunity arose. Four motorcycle toys from the sale are illustrated here including one of the auction's top lots, the Hubley clockwork Indian motorcycle "Say it with Flowers" van that sold for \$126,750. A similar van with rare civilian driver, also in excellent condition, sold at Morphy Auctions in spring 2004 for \$45,100.

DOCTOR WHO

A TIME-TRAVELLER WITH A TARDIS FULL OF TOYS



BY DR. ARNOLD T. BLUMBERG

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BACKGROUND IMAGE COPYRIGHT (STOCKPHOTO) / JOSEF KLUBICK

HE TRAVELS IN TIME and space in his TARDIS – a time machine from his home planet Gallifrey that has been disguised (permanently and by accident) as a British police telephone box, but is much bigger inside than out. He is often accompanied by young human – female – companions through whom the audience can experience the excitement and wonder of discovering the universe with the help of this 900-year-old Time Lord. He is the Doctor, star of the long-running UK sci-fi series *Doctor Who*, and with the show's recent rebirth on BBC Television, the Doctor has once more taken his place as one of the premier pop culture icons.



The story of *Doctor Who* merchandising truly begins with the Daleks. The pepperpot-like, war-mongering cyborgs from the planet Skaro first appeared on the show in its second-ever serialized story, appropriately titled *The Daleks*. They were introduced in the show's debut year, 1963, but their first story aired from December 21, 1963 to February 1, 1964. So it wasn't until Christmas of '64 that stores flooded with Dalek toys – coordinated conveniently enough with the Daleks' spectacular second appearance in "The Dalek Invasion of Earth" on November 21 to December 26 of that year. "Dalekmania" gripped the U.K., and *Doctor Who* was on its way



The original clockwork Daleks were first released in 1965 and available in black and blue versions. Photo courtesy of David J. Howe and Telos Publishing Ltd.

to becoming a permanent British cultural institution. In the years that followed, *Doctor Who* was aggressively marketed through a wide variety of toys and collectibles, including one of the

most extensive libraries of fiction and non-fiction tie-in books this side of *Star Trek* and even an original series of audio dramas launched when the television show was off the air in the 1990s. But as the decades passed,

one thing that eluded dedicated *Who* collectors was a cohesive collectible line of toys that celebrated the vast scope of the series and did so with quality and accuracy.

Daleks had been manufactured in all sizes and shapes since the very beginning, but rarely with anything approximating an accurate sculpt. An infamous array of action figures released by the Dapol toy company in the late 1980s and early '90s were, for a time, the only such toys available to *Who* fans, but the generally poor production quality of the figures and the frequent glaring errors – the one-handed villain Davros was offered with both hands intact, and the six-sided console in the TARDIS was released with five sides in Dapol's play set – left most collec-

tors yearning for another option.

In 2003, the landmark 40th anniversary generated a surge in mer-

chandising and media coverage, not least because the BBC announced in September of that year that at long



There seems to be a pattern emerging here. Every single one of these 1960s-vintage, boxed *Doctor Who* games and toys prominently features the Daleks. Photo courtesy of David J. Howe and Telos Publishing Ltd.

SEARCH EBAY NOW
FOR DOCTOR WHO

last *Doctor Who* would be returning to television screens by 2005. This triumphant return naturally prompted many fans to ask the inevitable question: When would new toys materialize and who would be making them?

For several years, Product Enterprise had been acclaimed for their line of accurate, different-sized Daleks and related *Who* toys, but while Product Enterprise would retain the license to produce classic series toys after the show's return, the BBC would award a license for toys based on the new series of adventures to a different manufacturer. The new *Doctor Who* aired in the UK in the spring of 2005, and by Christmas of that year, the first new

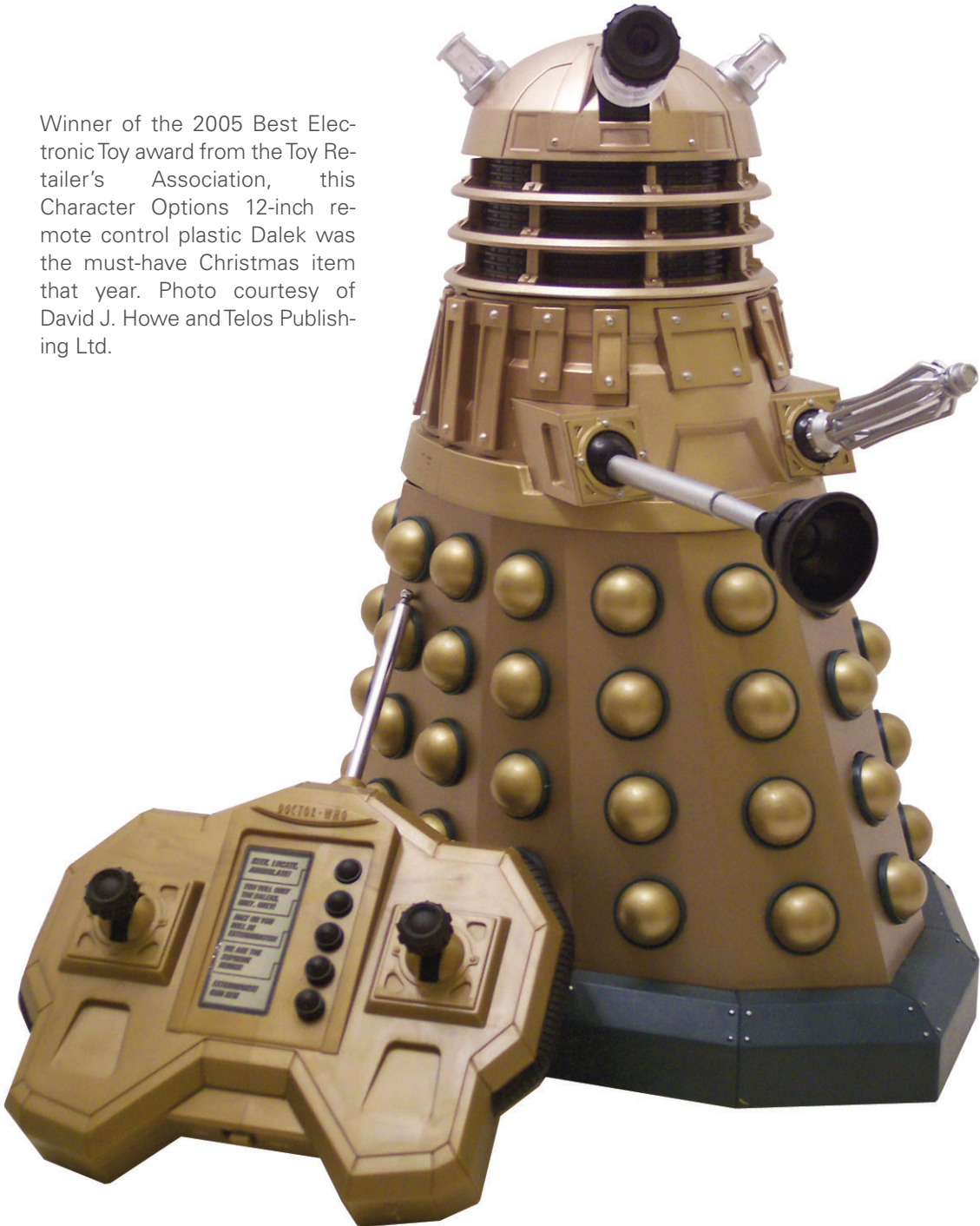
Who tie-in items rolled out to stores across the U.K. and internationally via online merchants. However, it was the debut of the new toy line from Character Options that not only buried forever the memories of the Dapol line but also brought about an exciting renaissance in *Doctor Who* toy collecting.

In January 2005, Character Options announced that it had been granted the Master Toy License by BBC Worldwide to manufacture *Doctor Who* toys, and with their first releases over the course of the next year, they won the admiration of generations of *Who* fans with their quality, attention to detail and superb variety of design. Although initially plagued by a variety of



logistical and production-related problems, the company still managed to introduce a small slate of toys in time for the 2005 holiday season, and the most celebrated item was, of course, another Dalek.

The foot-tall remote control New Series Dalek offered by Character Options at the end of 2005 was an instant hit. The must-have holiday gift won the Toy Retailer's Association Award for Best Electronic Toy of the year and established the standard for the new line, blending excellent playability with deadly accurate sculpts. In addition to the standard Dalek, a Toys 'R' Us exclusive "Assault" variant with a claw arm was released, and a year later an all-black



Winner of the 2005 Best Electronic Toy award from the Toy Retailer's Association, this Character Options 12-inch remote control plastic Dalek was the must-have Christmas item that year. Photo courtesy of David J. Howe and Telos Publishing Ltd.

A collection of Series 1 and 2 action figures from the Doctor Who toy line. The figures include the Tenth Doctor in his brown trench coat, Rose Tyler in her purple shirt and black pants, three Cybermen in their silver suits, the Beast in its brown fur suit, the Weeping Angel in its white stone-like form, and the Sontaran in its blue and red armor. The figures are posed in a group, with the Doctor and Rose in the foreground, the Cybermen and Beast in the middle ground, and the Weeping Angel and Sontaran in the background. The figures are set against a plain white background.

A selection of Series 1 and 2 action figures from the quickly growing Characterisations *Doctor Who* toy line. Photo courtesy of David J. Howe and Telos Publishing Ltd.

SEPTEMBER 2007

The rarest of the 12-inch remote control Dalek variants from Character Options, this Imperial Guard Dalek was a U.K. Woolworths exclusive. Photo courtesy of David J. Howe and Telos Publishing Ltd.



version was also available. So far the rarest of the 12-inch Daleks is the Woolworth's Exclusive "Imperial Guard" Dalek.

But although the original 12-inch Dalek and several 5-inch scale remote control Daleks – available in 'Battle Pack' box sets with semi-articulated action figures of the Ninth Doctor and his companion, Rose – were the stars of Christmas 2005, the best was yet to come. In 2006, Character Options rolled out their action figure line with several assortments or "waves" of carded figures that thankfully put to rest fears that these toys would resemble the limited figures included in the early Battle Packs. The range incorporated the



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FOR DALEK TOYS

new Tenth Doctor, companions Rose and Captain Jack, and a wide range of monsters and additional characters seen throughout the first two series of the new show (it's important to note for U.S. fans not familiar with British television terminology that individual runs of episodes are not called seasons as they are in this country, but series. *New Doctor Who* has just completed series 3 in the UK and will air series 4 in early 2008).

In 2007, the range continued to grow and the company also revised its card labeling strategy, breaking up

waves of figures by referring to the series in which they debuted. The success of Character Options' line of *Doctor Who* toys reinvigorated the Who collecting community, with the 12-inch Daleks and the centerpiece of the action figure line – the electronic TARDIS play set – garnering a substantial portion of the praise.

The last piece of the puzzle fell into place this summer when the company announced that 2008 would see the launch of a new line of classic series figures as well. Doctors, companions and monsters from the original 1963-1989 run will soon join the already extensive array of figures and play sets covering the new *Who* adventures, and fans will witness the culmination of all their toy collecting dreams. The only problem remaining will be ... where to find a TARDIS to store all this stuff? **tc**

> LEARN MORE

DOCTOR WHO: A QUESTION OF CHARACTER

While most of the new *Doctor Who* toys are widely available from multiple vendors, there are a few rare variants and repackaged figures that pose a challenge for completist collectors. Here are five intriguing tidbits about this extensive line:

1. Cassandra and Chip – Multiple versions of the very flat Cassandra exist, but this extremely rare two-figure package included her assistant, Chip.

2. Too Many Screwdrivers – There have been multiple releases of the popular replica Sonic Screwdriver toy based on the Doctor's trusty device with variations in packaging as well as widely different color/paint schemes.



Taking the title from the Daleks as the Christmas 2006 must-have toy, this life-size Cyberman helmet allows kids to become an emotionless automaton without any messy conversion process. Photo courtesy of David J. Howe and Telos Publishing Ltd.

3. The Sycorax Leader – Considered one of the harder-to-find early figures on an original card.

4. Gray-Suited Auton – Previously available in two different styles of black suit, the mannequin-like monster recently turned up in gray thanks to a Woolworths-exclusive boxed set.

5. Imperial Guard Dalek – The rarest of the 12-inch remote-control Daleks, this Woolworths exclusive may become more plentiful via recent international distribution in the collectors' market.

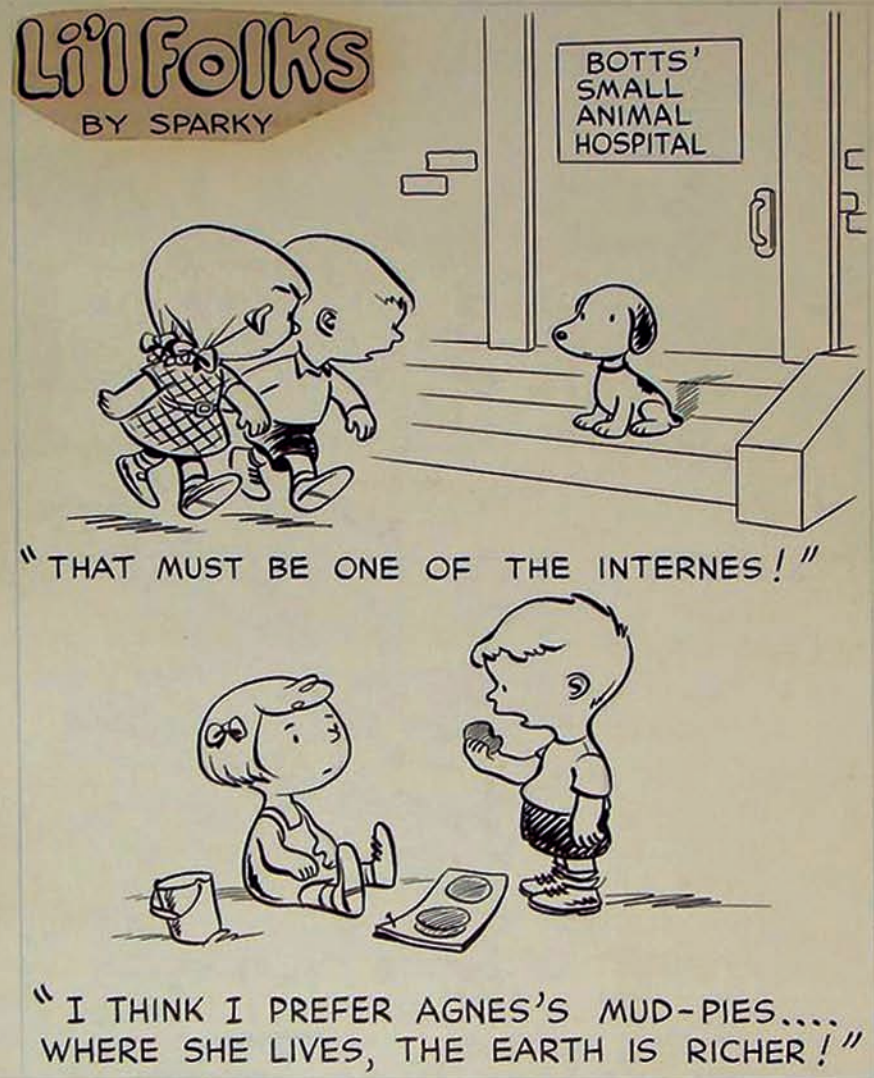
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GOOD PRICES, CHARLIE BROWN!

ORIGINAL PEANUTS STRIPS
RIVAL FINE ART AT AUCTION

BY SUSAN BRANDABUR

BETWEEN THE DEBUT of the now-classic *Peanuts* comic strip in 1950 and the final strip printed the day after its creator's death in 1997, Charles Schulz drew more than 18,250 *Peanuts* cartoons. At the end of his life,

LEFT: A comic page for *L'il Folks* – the predecessor to *Peanuts* – sold for \$24,860 in Philip Weiss Auctions' March 25, 2007 sale. Image courtesy Philip Weiss.

the series was in active publication in 75 countries, 2,600 papers and 21 languages every day, according to his lengthy *New York Times* obituary. Philosophers like Umberto Eco devoted articles and whole books to deconstructing the meaning of Schulz's work, picking apart the psyches of his youthful characters. But most of us just read and enjoyed the *Peanuts* kids' capers, year in and year out, and nowadays the original artwork from

which the much-beloved strips were printed have been selling for increasingly high prices at auction.

Jean Schulz is the widow of "Sparky," as Charles Schulz was nicknamed at his birth in 1922 (after a horse, Spark Plug, in the then-popular *Barney Google* cartoon series.) She is as passionate a champion and custodian of her late husband's work as any artist could hope for, and chooses her words carefully when discussing

him. "I don't want to put words in his mouth," she will say when recalling his response to something.

When they married in 1973, the cartoonist moved into a new studio. "For the first time, he began having the original (strip art) returned to him. Sparky reported visiting the syndicate in the 1950s and seeing the original cartoons in the wastebasket or on the floor under a leaky roof. It appeared that in the early days, the syn-

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FOR ORIGINAL COMIC ART

dicate placed no value on the original artwork for cartoons. The only ones saved during the first couple of decades were those retrieved from the discard pile or given to people who requested them."

"Charles was very generous," said Jean Schulz. "He would give



This artwork for a *Peanuts* daily strip from June 25, 1957 is one of three strips that came from an East Coast consignor who had corresponded with Schulz. It will be offered Sept. 9 at Philip Weiss Auctions, estimate \$8,000-\$12,000. Image courtesy Philip Weiss.

original strips to friends or fans, but before 1973, this must have taken place by his instruction to the syndicate or to an editor to send them on, as he never got them back once he sent them off for publication. In those days there was no market for them."

The publisher Fawcett put out small collections of reprints beginning in 1951. The originals that were chosen for these 4 inch by 6 inch books would have a Fawcett stamp imprinted on verso. Other originals might have a United Features Syndicate stamp on the back.

"The short story," according to Jean Schulz, "is that none were returned to Charles before 1973, when we started cataloguing them and keeping them in a proper safe in the studio."

For years, Schulz would fulfill



A Sunday strip featuring the Great Pumpkin is to be sold in October 2007 at Philip Weiss Auctions. Weiss says seasonal representations like the Great Pumpkin are desirable to collectors of both comic art and holiday material. Image courtesy Philip Weiss.

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SEARCH EBAY NOW
FOR PEANUTS

requests to donate the originals to charity auctions. “That was the only condition under which they were sold – he never sold any himself and never authorized their sale except for charity,” Jean Schulz emphasized.

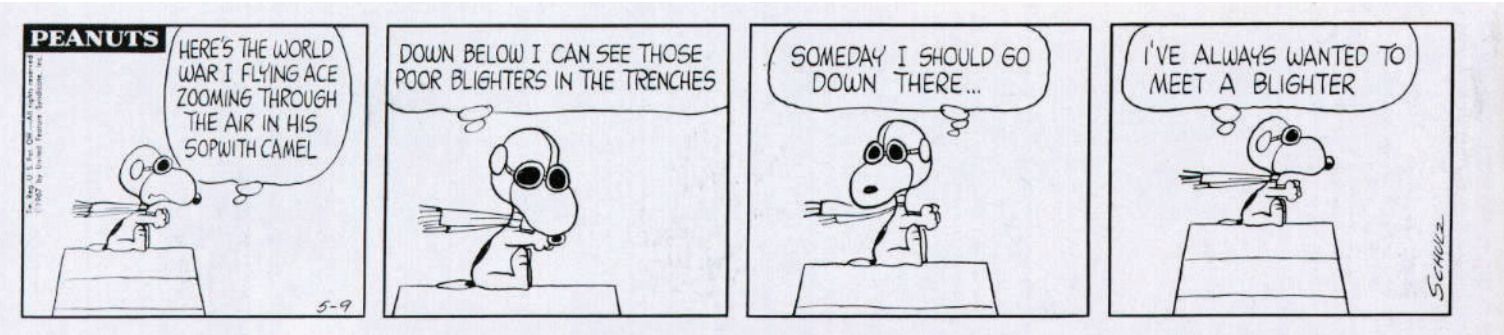
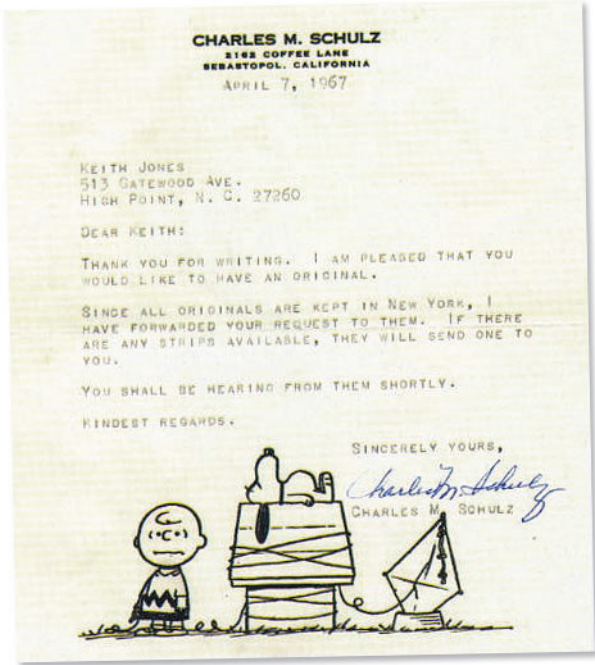
THE MUSEUM

In the 1990s, as *Peanuts*’ 50-

year anniversary approached, the cartoon historian Mark Cohen and Charles’s attorney Edwin Anderson, both friends, approached the Schulzes with the idea of creating a museum. Known for being a bit self-deprecating, Charles was then still absorbed in the day-to-day creation of the strip. “Sparky didn’t see himself as a museum piece,” said Jean Schulz. “I don’t want to suggest that he was disingenuous about the value of his work, the significance people placed on it, but I think he didn’t un-

derstand it. Or perhaps he felt it just wasn’t his business. His job was just to keep creating the cartoon – let others make of it what they wished.” But the museum plans went forward and the institution, located in Santa Rosa, Calif., where Schulz lived, is now a thriving resource for Schulz fans and historians.

Because of the fragility of originals when exposed to light, the museum rotates selections from the roughly 7,000 exam-



Shown here is a Charles Schulz *Peanuts* daily strip from May 9, 1967 (LEFT) together with an original mailing envelope and signed, typewritten letter Charles Schulz sent to a collector (ABOVE). The strip and letter sold for \$50,000 at Russ Cochran’s June 2007 auction, with a presale estimate of \$12,000-\$15,000. Images courtesy Russ Cochran’s Comic Art Auction.

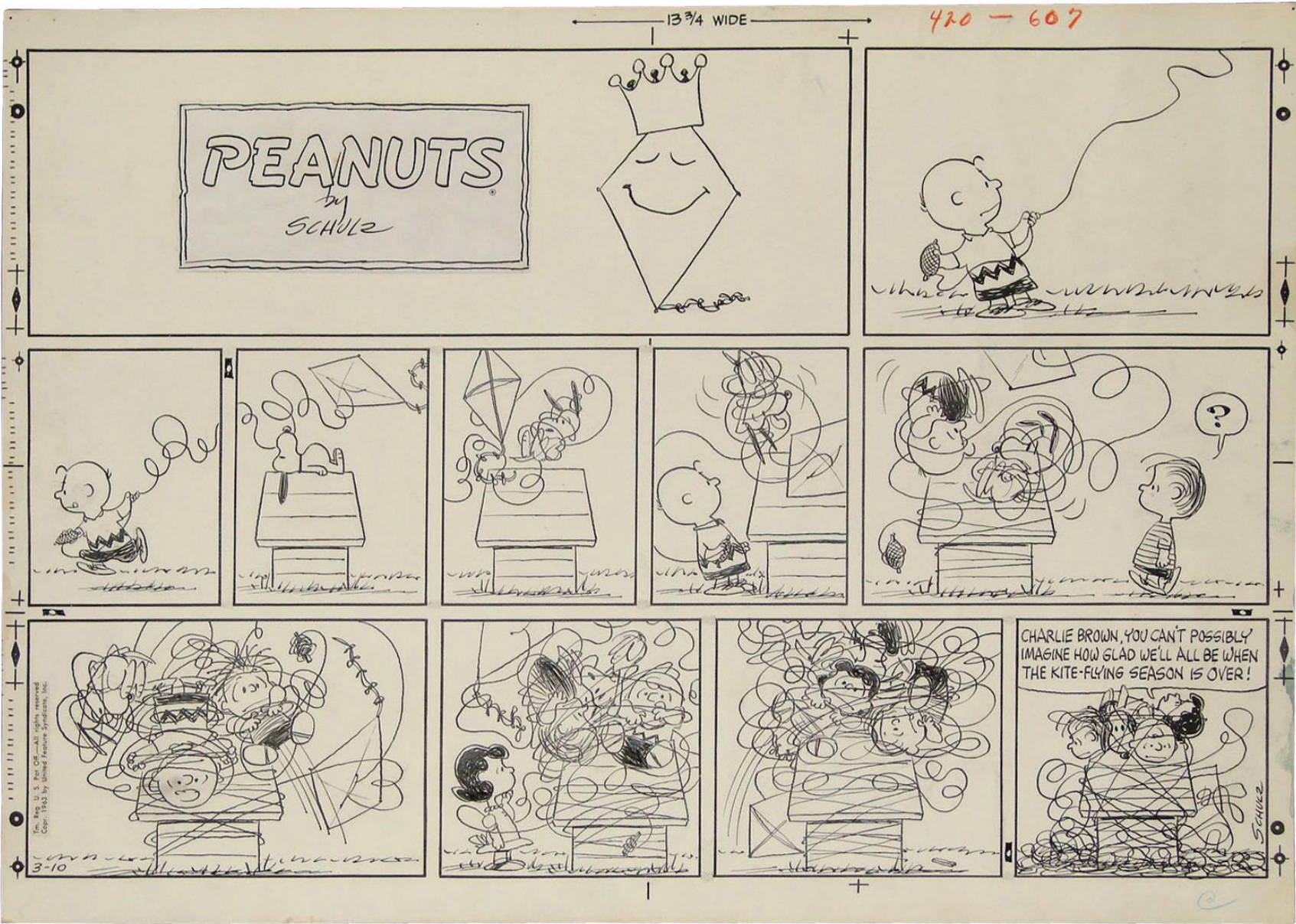
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SEARCH EBAY NOW
FOR CHARLES SCHULZ

ples in its collection. “At any given time, visitors can view 60 to 80 originals, and we change them three times a year,” said Jean Schulz.

“The size of the originals varied during the 50 years he created them, but they generally comprised four six-inch squares.”

The museum does occasionally purchase original strips when they appear at auction, but the acquisitions committee takes what Schulz describes as a disciplined approach to adding to its collection, to fill in gaps in chronology or augment subcollections for certain characters or plot lines. A link on the museum’s Web site instructs potential donors or sellers of Schulz works the institution



A Sunday strip from March 3, 1963 with Charlie, Snoopy, Lucy and Linus tangled in a kite will be up for bid Sept. 9 at Philip Weiss Auctions and carries a presale estimate of \$8,000-12,000. Image courtesy Philip Weiss.

may be interested in acquiring, and whom to contact for information.

COLLECTING

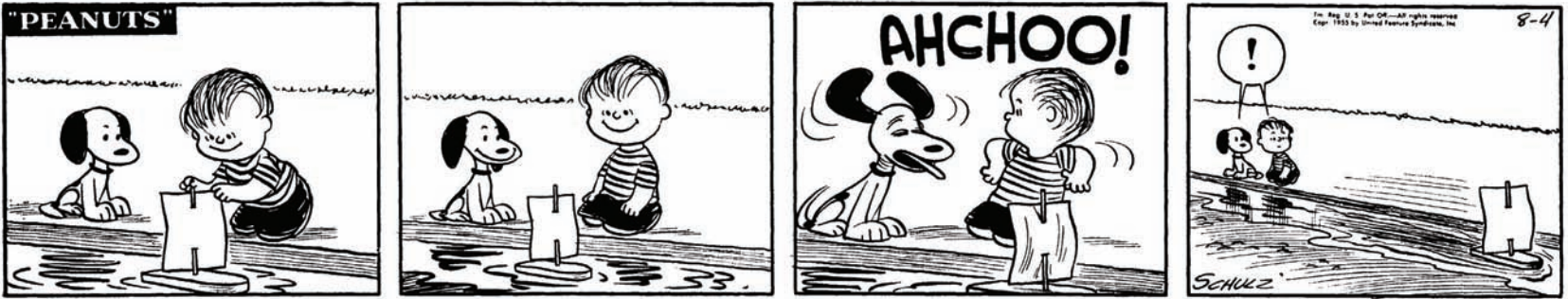
According to auctioneer Phil Weiss, of Philip Weiss Auctioneers in Oceanside, N.Y., collectors of Schulz material vary from those who target various artists to those who focus only on Schulz and yet others who specialize in only one Peanuts character, like The Red Baron. “The Great Pumpkin strips are very desirable, as are those that feature popular characters, alone or in combination,” said Weiss. See illustrations for examples of Peanuts art in upcoming or recent sales at Philip Weiss Auctions and other companies. **tc**

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SEARCH EBAY NOW
FOR SNOOPY



One of Jean Schulz’s favorite strips manages to convey both Lucy’s jaded world view and what philosophers have called Schulz’s “zen” sensibility. PEANUTS © United Feature Syndicate, Inc. Image courtesy The Charles M. Schulz Museum.



This early strip shows Snoopy when he was “still a dog.” PEANUTS © United Feature Syndicate, Inc. Image courtesy The Charles M. Schulz Museum.



Another Jean Schulz selection, with Charlie and Snoopy, illustrates Charles Schulz’s terrific wit and his wry take on the self-delusion that occasionally comes with being human. PEANUTS © United Feature Syndicate, Inc. Image courtesy The Charles M. Schulz Museum.

GO! SPEED RACER GO!

FORTY YEARS ON,
THE VOICES OF SPEED AND TRIXIE
REVEAL THE BACK STORY BEHIND
THE NOW-CLASSIC TV SERIES

BY CHUCK MILLER

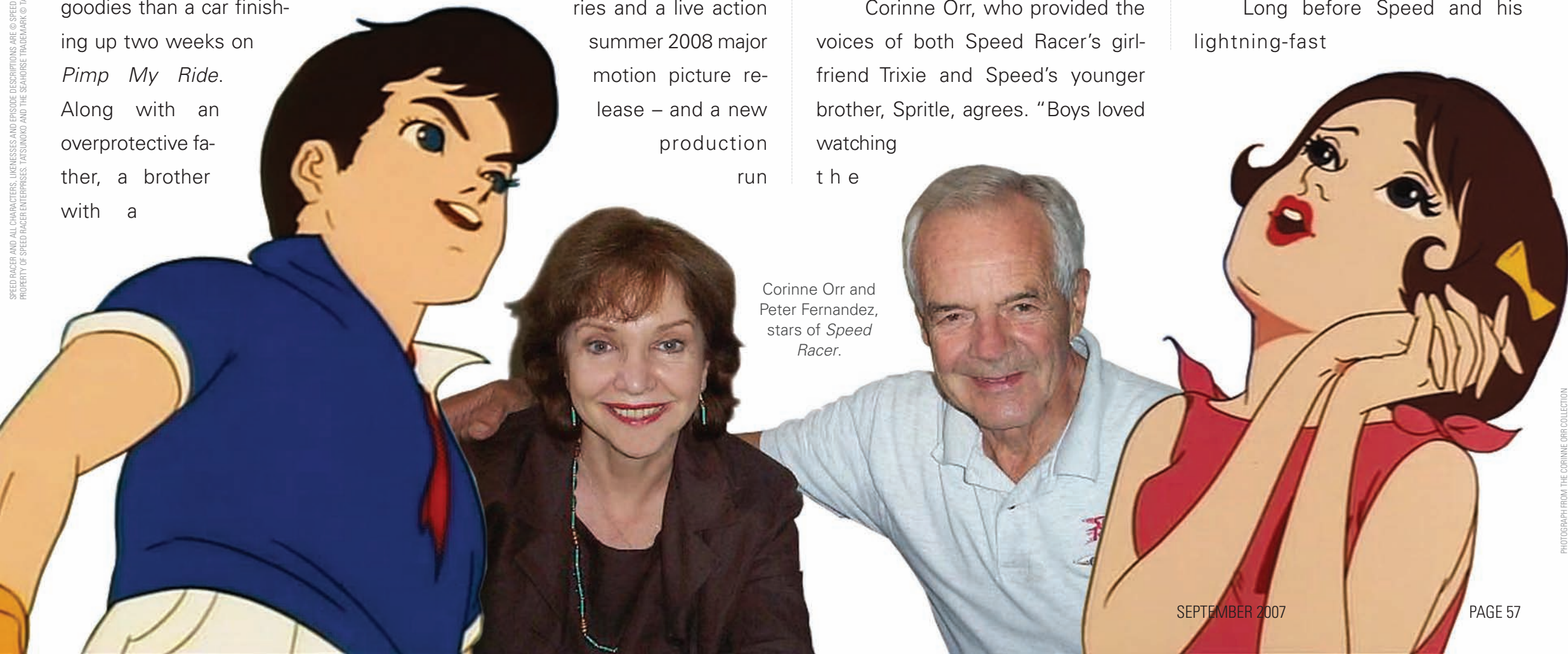


HIS SKILLS WERE unmatched by any driver on the Grand Prix Circuit. His car could leave the Batmobile standing in the dust in a drag race, and boasted more gizmos, gadgetry and gee-whiz goodies than a car finishing up two weeks on *Pimp My Ride*. Along with an overprotective father, a brother with a

mysterious past, an adventure-seeking girlfriend and a rear-trunk-hiding younger brother and chimpanzee, *Speed Racer* has grown from a 1968 syndicated-strip cartoon series to a marketing bonanza, all culminating in a brand new television series and a live action summer 2008 major motion picture release – and a new production run

of collectible tie-in toys. “*Speed Racer* was the first cartoon I worked on that had a family that you felt really was a family,” said Peter Fernandez, who provided the voice for Speed Racer in the original cartoon. Corinne Orr, who provided the voices of both Speed Racer’s girlfriend Trixie and Speed’s younger brother, Spritle, agrees. “Boys loved watching the

show to see Speed Racer and his *Mach 5* – that’s one reason why *Speed Racer* is so loved – but the other is the family connection, with Mom and Pops Racer, two brothers, the mysterious Racer X, and Spritle and Chim Chim the monkey.” Long before Speed and his lightning-fast



Corinne Orr and Peter Fernandez, stars of *Speed Racer*.

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PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE CORINNE ORR COLLECTION



This 1967 book-and-record set from Japan, featuring the adventures of Speed under his Japanese name of “Go Mifune,” can sell for \$300 or more in near-mint condition. Photo from the collection of Ohtani Kenta.

Mach 5 burned up the Saturday television circuit, the character was originally known as Go Mifune, and appeared in an early Japanese comic

book, or manga, drawn by artist Tatsuo Yoshida. Yoshida, along with his brothers Kenji and Toyoharu, created Tatsunoko

Production Co. in 1962, and their first effort, the 1965 cartoon *Uchū Ēsu* (*Space Ace*), was a moderate success. While *Space Ace* was still on the air, Yoshida crafted several issues of manga featuring the adventures of Go Mifune, an international race car driver and his racing family, who won races and fought crime around the world. Eventually the racing stories, under the manga title of *Mach Go Go Go*, became the most popular manga of its day.

With the success of the *Mach Go Go Go* manga, Yoshida and his brother Toyoharu (now using the pen name “Ippi Kurri”) developed an animated series based on the manga, which would be produced by their Tatsunoko company. In September of 1966, *Mach Go Go Go* premiered on Japan’s Fuji Network as a Sunday

evening program. It proved popular and enjoyed a 52-week run. In the early 1960s, Japanese animation studios like Tatsunoko and its competitors, Toei Animation and Mushi Productions, were able to export their popular cartoon TV shows to English-speaking TV stations and networks, who in turn



RIGHT: Racer X, Speed’s older brother Rex, left home when he had a falling out with his father, Pops. In addition to directing and portraying Speed, Peter Fernandez voiced Racer X.

If you need one new TV series for kids . . .

This cartoon is the one for 1968!



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This trade advertisement for *Speed Racer* touted the show as having “the appeal of wheels to capture youngsters!” In addition to the 52-episode package, the advertisement also mentioned that the three-part episode “The Most Dangerous Race” could be run as a 90-minute movie special. Photo courtesy Chuck Miller.

redubbed and retitled the programs for their Saturday morning kids' TV schedules. *Tetsuwan Atom*, redubbed as *Astro Boy*, became the first Japanese anime (animated cartoons) to appear on an American TV network, when NBC aired the show in 1963. Other anime shows crossed the Pacific Ocean, including *Tetsujin-nijūhachi-gō 28* (as *Gigantor*) and *Jan-guru Taitei* (as *Kimba the White Lion*).

And like the other programs, *Mach Go Go Go* was picked up by an American distribution company, Trans-Lux, whose previous television series included shows like *The Mighty Hercules* and *Felix the Cat*. Trans-Lux had already imported the Japanese cartoon *Gigantor*, and saw potential for syndicating the *Mach Go Go Go* series.

At that time, voice actor/director Peter Fernandez was part of Titra



Pops Racer, Speed's father and the designer-builder of the *Mach 5*, voiced by Jack Curtis.



This original production cel and matching production background from the episode “The Car Destroyer” is one of the few surviving cels from the 1968 series. Image courtesy anime-cel.com.

Studios, a New York City recording company that provided English translations for various foreign movies, including several Godzilla films and the Danish monster classic *Reptilicus*.

American audiences in the 1960s wouldn't give two katana about Japanese TV shows in their original dialect, and companies like Titra were employed to “Americanize” popular

RIGHT: Arch-villain Cruncher Block, owner of the Mammoth Car featured in a memorable episode.

Japanese anime into a product American kids would understand and enjoy.

“I had written most of the dubbing scripts for Astro Boy and Gigan-tor for a man named Fred Ladd,” said Fernandez, in an exclusive interview with *Toy Collector Magazine*. “I also worked on a lot of feature films with an editing company, Zavala-Riss. In 1967, Trans-Lux commissioned us to convert this new ani-mated series from Japan to English for American tel-evision. I asked, ‘What are the instructions from the

client?’ in terms of how close they wanted the American series to match the Japanese series. I was told there weren’t any instructions; they just wanted the series ‘Americanized.’”

With that, Fernandez had free reign to rename all the characters – gone was “Go Mifune,” who was re-named “Speed Racer.” His girlfriend, “Michi Shimura,” became “Trixie,” while his parents Daisuke and Aya Mifune were now “Pops” and “Mom Racer.” “The translations sent to me

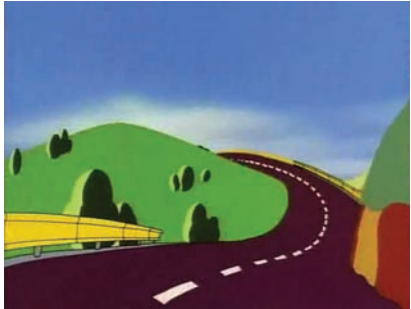




Speed Racer’s popularity remains strong worldwide; this Argentinian comic book from the 1980s features Speed’s adventures as “Meteoro, El Ray de las Pistas” – translation: Meteor, the King of the Tracks. Photo courtesy Chuck Miller.

from Japan were very poor in those days,” said Fernandez, “so I had the opportunity to make up the dialogue of the characters, and being the director also, hire the cast. I gave myself the two best parts, Speed Racer and Racer X.”

Fernandez brought in three reliable voice actors for the project. Jack Curtis, who voiced Pops Racer and the police detective “Inspector Detector,” previously worked with Fernandez on several radio shows in the 1940s and 1950s. Jack Grimes, an accomplished voice and stage actor who appeared in the films *Lady on a Train* and *Weekend at the Waldorf*, would provide the voice for Speed’s mechanic, Sparky, as well as for Chim Chim, the pet monkey of



Speed’s younger brother, Spritle. Also joining the *Speed Racer* project was Corinne Orr, a Montreal-born actress who voiced all the female and juvenile parts, including Trixie and Spritle. “I originally was part of a daily TV show, *Chez Helene*,

with the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corp.),” said Orr. “After several years in the theater, I came to New York and started dubbing voices at Titra. I was one of the few actresses who had a ‘multi-voice.’ I could play many parts.”

The voice credits on the *Speed Racer* series, however, listed only Jack Curtis, Jack Grimes and Corinne Orr; in a cost-cutting move, Fernandez left himself off the voice credits list. “We were budgeted for only

three cast members at \$125 each an episode, and I didn't think I could do the series with only three actors. So I called Jack Grimes, whom I had known since we were kids, and he had a vast amount of radio credits. I said 'Jack, I have this acting job, but there's not enough money in the budget – if you sign on, I'll split my

fee with you.' Jack and I each did every episode for \$62.50 apiece. And being only three guys and one gal in the cast, we had to do all the villains and all the voices. Most of the voices we made up on the spot. Every voice actor has a couple of distinctive 'trick' voices, but *Speed Racer* provided us with a challenge to come up with voices we never dreamed we could do."

"We all liked working with each other on the series," said Orr. "Today, if you're working as a voice actor, you go in, you do your lines and you leave ... You never meet anyone in the show. During *Speed Racer*, there was a lot of camaraderie. We worked hard and we respected and liked each other."

Everything was re-translated at the Studebaker Building, a New York City office complex at 1600

Broadway. The Zavala-Riss Company, founded by Pablo Zavala and Sheldon Riss, took care of film editing, while Titra Studios was in charge of sound for voice dubbing. Essentially, a film would enter 1600 Broadway as anime and leave 1600 Broadway as a cartoon.

"All of the recording sessions were in New York City," said Orr. "That building is now a big condominium. Everything has been torn down and condos have been put up."

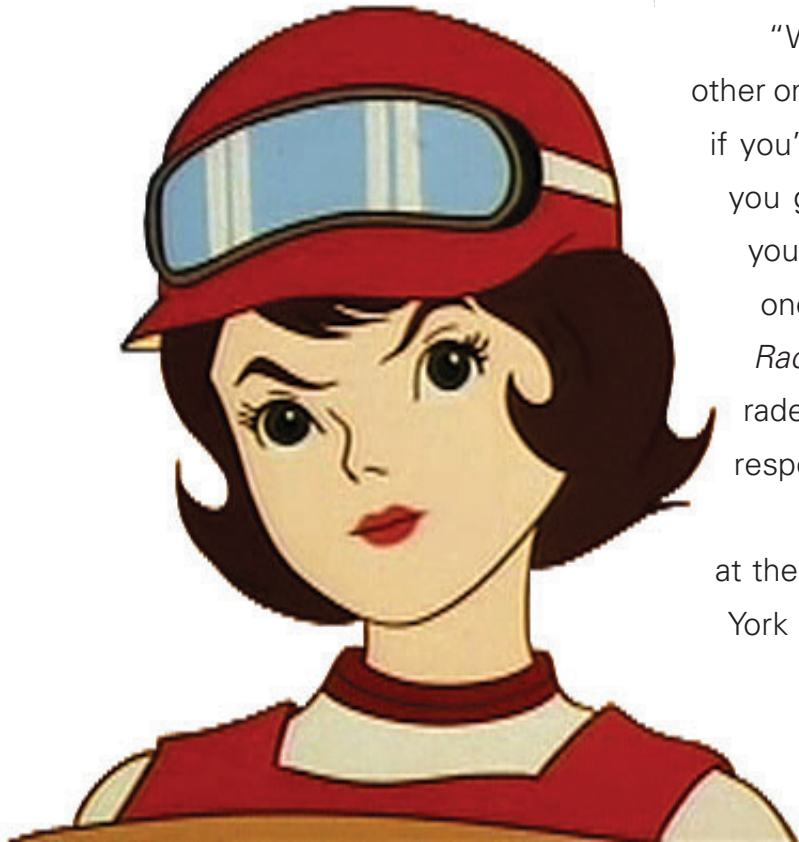
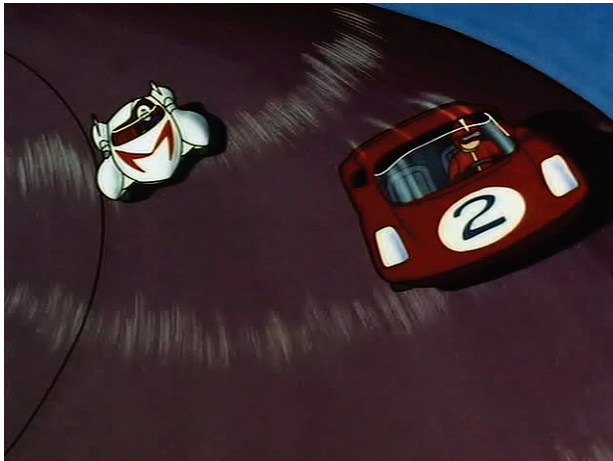
The series may have focused on the adventures of Speed Racer and his family, but Speed's futuristic car – rebranded from its original

name of the *Mach* to the *Mach 5* – was as popular as any other character on the show. A white Grand Prix speedster with several built-in safety and defensive gadgets, all accessible from the touch of steering wheel buttons,

the *Mach 5* was arguably the most identifiable car among the Saturday morning set.

As the series progressed, Fernandez noticed

there one of the recurring characters in *Speed Racer* was a mysterious masked secret driver who was equally as fast as Speed, and with a car (the *No. 9 Shooting Star*) that was a neck-and-neck contender to



Speed's *Mach 5*. Eventually that mysterious driver became "Racer X," with a storyline that encompassed the entire 52-episode run. Unbeknownst to Speed, Racer X was Speed's older brother, Rex Racer, who had left home to form his own racing team.

"The episodes came in sporadically from Japan for dubbing," said Fernandez. "I might get one for a week and three the following week, and it would

take me two days to write a script before I could go into the studio. I never knew myself what was coming up in the next episode. For instance, when a mysterious character showed up, I

didn't know what to call him, so I called him Racer X – only because I couldn't think of anything to call him. It was a big surprise to me, when I learned from the Japanese scripts that this 'Racer X' was really Speed's brother. I gave Racer X the name Rex

Racer, because Rex was the only name I could think of that had an X."

Because the shows were dubbed, Fernandez had to both match up the words

to the characters' mouths, and make sure all the dialogue was spoken in the short amount of "talking time" on the screen. This resulted in another iconic Speed Racer trait - the charac-

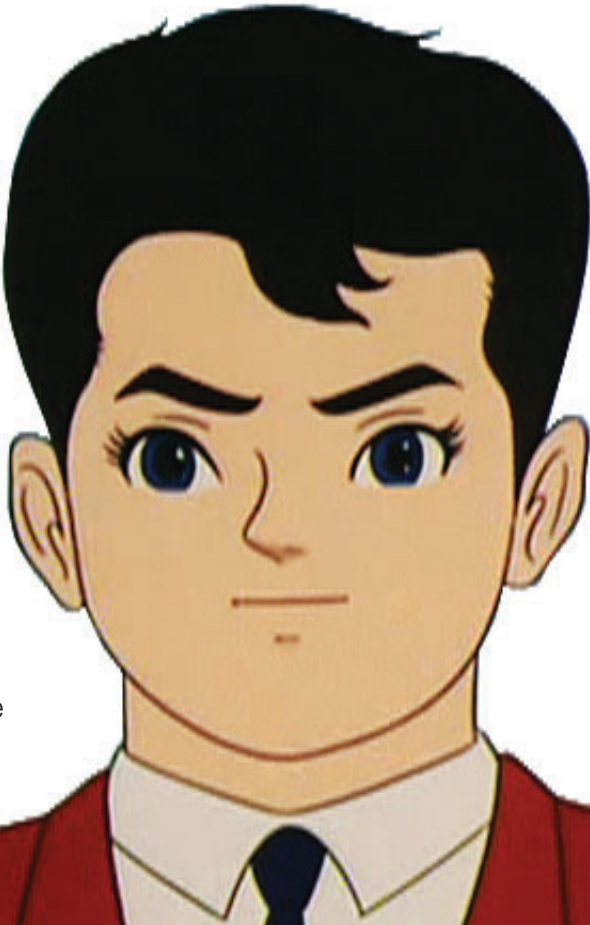
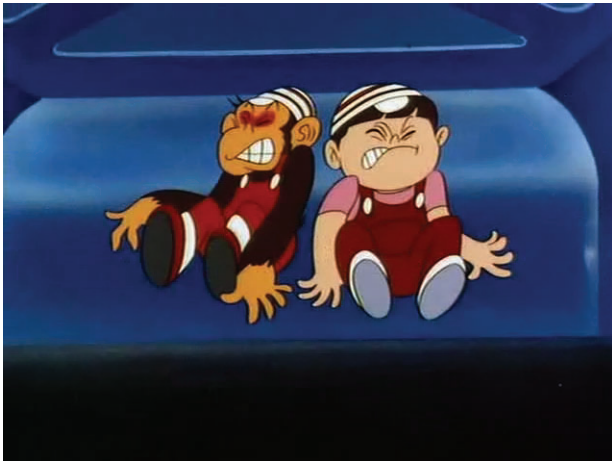
ters' frenzied staccato diction.

"Peter got the shows from Japan, along with a very loose translation of the broadcast," said Orr. "It wasn't really the best English translation, so he had to rewrite the episodes and make a story out of them. When you dubbed film, you would do three to four lines at a time, and we had to match the mouths on the screen. And because there were so many lines of text, we would rattle the lines off quickly. Boy, we

really concentrated back then."

"The dubbing was all done in loops," said Fernandez, describing a technique where the voice actor tries to match his words with the lip patterns on an already-completed film. "We were working from a 16-mil-

limeter print, and we would have a white grease pencil and mark off in the script what would be a loop. Having been actors for years, we wanted the loops as short as possible so that only one or two lines would go by. Once in a while, there was a long speech



in which there didn't seem to be any (natural) break. You'd have to memorize each line so you could take your eyes off the page, look at the screen, and fit yourself into that loop. Sometimes it became rather challenging to memorize a long speech and match it to the finished product."

What made things even more daunting for the voice actors was that Zavala-Riss had a second show, *Marine Boy*, on the production line. For *Marine Boy*, the voices would be recorded first, then the tracks would be sent to Japan for animation, employing the opposite for-

mula used to create *Speed Racer* episodes.

"The four of us worked on *Marine Boy* at the same time as *Speed Racer*," said Fernandez. "The voices were recorded first, and then it was shipped to Japan to be animated. I tried to get a *Ma-*

r i n e
Boy script done on the same day as a *Speed Racer* script. We could do a *Speed Racer* script in one day, and a *Marine Boy* script in an

hour."

Speed Racer wrapped up its 52-episode run in 1968, and the American voice actors went to other projects. During the 1970s, Fernandez and Orr, together with Jack Curtis, appeared on the radio anthology series *CBS Radio Mystery Theater*, which aired from 1974 to 1982. Fernandez continued working as a voice actor and editor, with post-

Speed Racer credits including the shows *Galaxy Rangers*, *Courage the Cowardly Dog* and *Kenny the Shark*. Orr has remained a popular voice actress – that's her voice you hear as the Snuggle Bear on every Snuggle

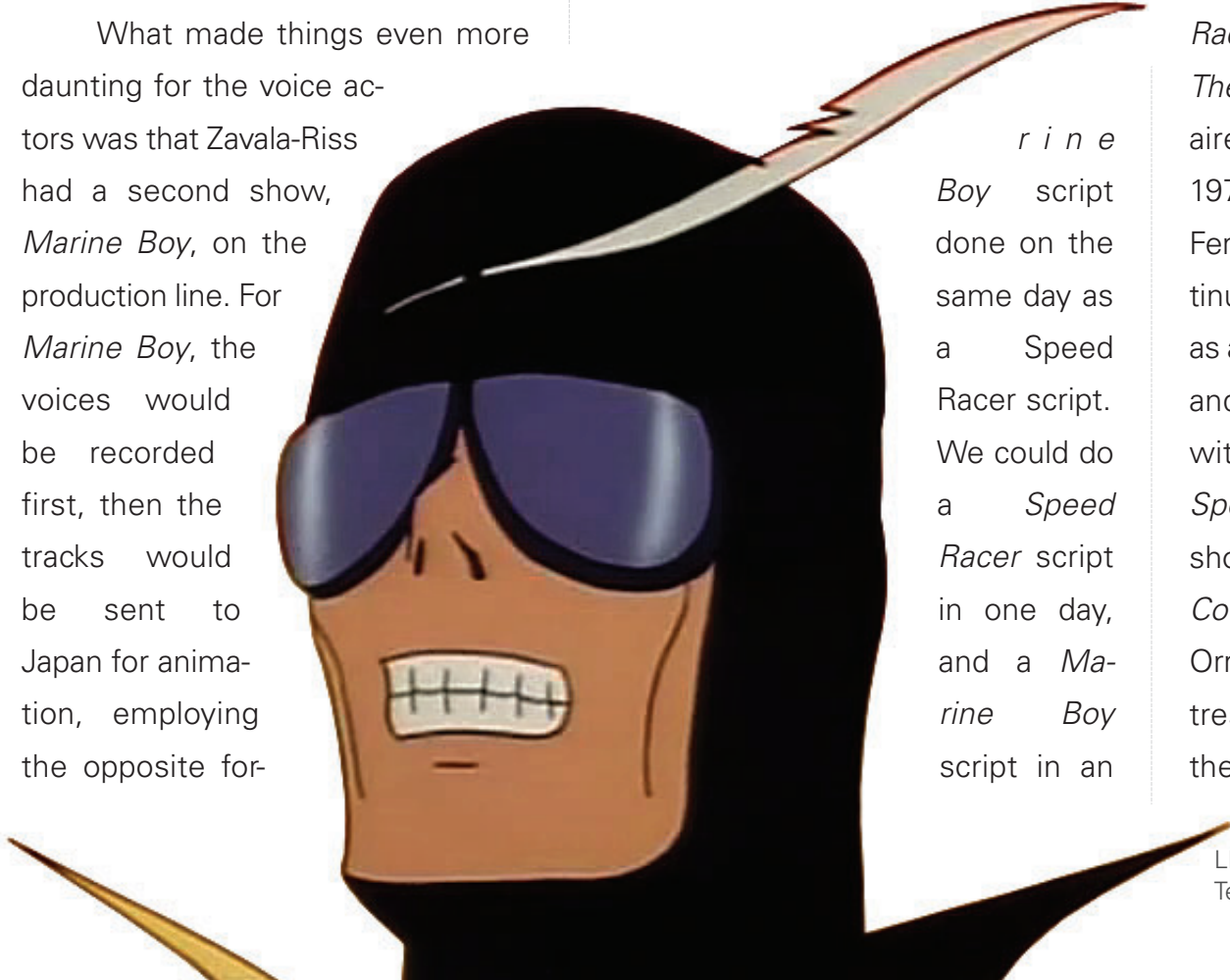
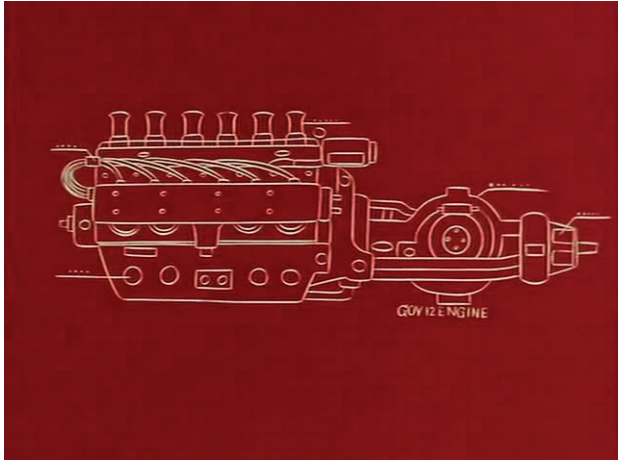
Fabric Softener commercial.

As for *Speed Racer*, Trans-Lux held on to the series until 1969, when the company sold off its animated television holdings to concentrate on manufacturing illuminated stock market tickers. Trans-Lux's film catalog

was purchased by independent distributor Alan Gleitsman, whose Alan Enterprises continued to syndicate *Speed Racer*

to independent TV stations throughout the 1970s.

In 1986, another production company, Color Systems Technology, bought the entire Alan Enterprises catalog in a multimillion dollar trans-



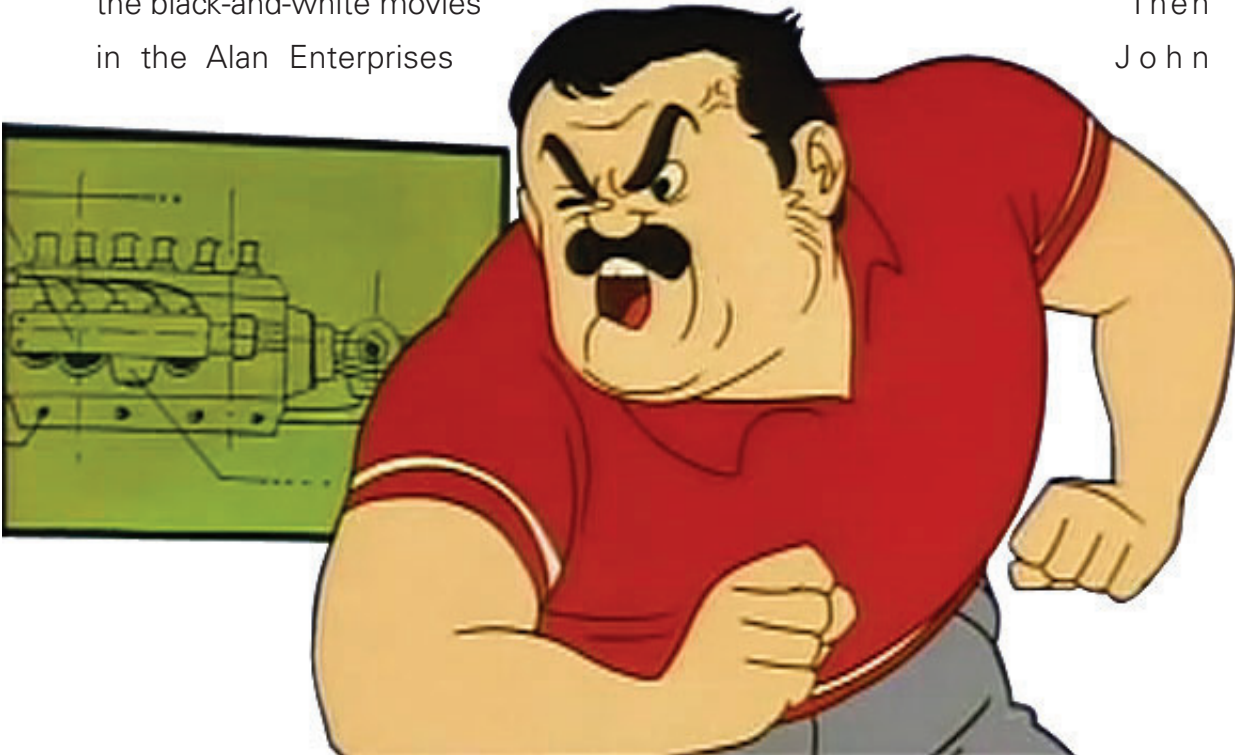
LEFT: Captain Terror led the Car Acrobatic Team against Speed Racer.

action, and Gleitsman went from television syndicator to millionaire philanthropist. From 1989 until his death in 2006, Gleitsman oversaw the Gleitsman Foundation, bestowing humanitarian awards to such proponents of social activism as Nelson Mandela, C. Everett Koop and Ralph Nader.

Speed Racer's time with Color Systems Technology was brief. The company hoped to “colorize” the black-and-white movies in the Alan Enterprises

catalog, but the less-than-enthusiastic public response to colorized movies forced Color Systems Technology into bankruptcy. The broadcast rights to *Speed Racer* went into limbo. Broadway Video purchased the rights to some episodes through a bankruptcy auction, while Caputo Publishing acquired the rest of the episodes, and released a comic book series and VHS tape series.

Then
John



Several companies manufactured Mach 5 model kits; this rare set from Streamline Pictures was built with cold-cast resin and requires expert detailing and painting. Photo courtesy Chuck Miller.

Rocknowski entered the picture. A former toy distributor for Mattel, Rocknowski became part of a television distribution company called Harmony Gold. While there, Rocknowski and Carl Macek, the president of Harmony Gold, cleverly converted three previously unrelated Japanese anime series - *The*

Super Dimension Fortress Macross, *Super Dimension Cavalry Southern Cross*, and *Genesis Climber Mospeada* - into one wildly successful 65-episode series called *Robotech*. The success of the *Robotech* series, both domestically and worldwide, helped to cement a working relationship between Rocknowski and Tatsunoko

Productions. By 1992, Rocknowski created Speed Racer Enterprises, to manage the American rights for the *Speed Racer* series and its characters (Tatsunoko still holds the rights to the series and characters in Japan).

John's son Jim Rocknowski, currently the executive vice president of Speed Racer Enterprises, remembers watching the cartoon as a child. "I came home from school and watched the show every day on Channel 52 in Southern California [KBSC-TV Channel 52, now KVEA]. It was a cool show. I enjoyed the car and the family and the mysterious Racer X. Cars and little boys go hand in hand."

From the start, Speed Racer Enterprises tried to reel in all the episodes from the bankruptcy holdings, and then attempted to strike new licenses for toys, model kits,

clothing and memorabilia. Very few tie-in items were produced during *Speed Racer's* initial run before the existence of Speed Racer Enterprises. Because the original show was syndicated, it did not run in all markets, therefore there was a risk that toys would have languished on shelves in markets where the 30-minute episodes did not air.



"There were some very small (licensing) deals still in place when we acquired the *Speed Racer* property," said Jim Rocknowski. "There was a comic book line with NOW Comics, there was a guy in Florida who made T-shirts, and a videotape company (VidAmerica) that produced home VHS tapes of *Speed*

Racer episodes. Alan Enterprises and Trans-Lux weren't merchandising people ... My dad figured it out, and made a deal with Tatsunoko in 1991. That's when

he formed Speed Racer Enterprises. In 1991, I was selling life insurance with Prudential. He called me and told me what had happened, and I quit Prudential that day to join Speed Racer Enterprises."

Immediately Speed Racer Enterprises cranked up the *Speed Racer* licensing machine. Die-cast replicas of the *Mach 5*, the *Shooting Star* and several other vehicles were produced by Johnny Lightning/Playing Mantis. Model kits of the *Mach 5* were created by Streamline (in cold cast resin) and Polar Lights (in styrene). Speed Racer bobbleheads were now available from Funko, while Hollywood Huggables issued bear-shaped beanbag dolls dressed in Speed and Trixie racing clothing. Speed Racer collectors, who previously could only acquire Speed Racer toys from Japan or from Latin Amer-

ica (where the show, rebranded as “Meteoro,” is still popular today), could now get *Speed Racer* snow-globes, action figures, slot cars, limited-edition sericels, and much more.

In 1999, the Child Safety Network used the Speed Racer character as its promotional face for child safety, and spent \$650,000 to build a full-scale *Mach 5*. In 2003, a San Diego car company also made several driveable *Mach 5* replicas, and one of those was later sold to Dallas radio broadcaster Russ Martin.

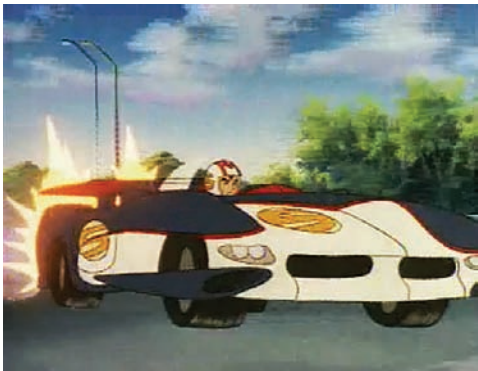
“I drove one of those replica *Mach 5*s,” said Peter Fernandez. “It was built on a Corvette frame. I was told it could have reached 185 miles per hour, but I was afraid to drive it over 35 mph. The Child Safety

Network wanted to make Speed Racer and the *Mach 5* a symbol for child safety, however I always questioned whether it was safe to put Spritle and Chim Chim in the trunk all the time. The full-scale *Mach 5*s didn’t have a trunk – that was where the gas tank was located.”

“We took a test drive of one of the *Mach 5*s in Los Angeles,” said Corinne Orr. “After we drove it, we signed the dashboard. People stared and waved at us on the highway. It

was such a pretty car.”

In addition to all the licensing of Speed Racer-associated merchandise, Speed Racer Enterprises also found that cable channels were willing to re-air the original series. In 1992, Speed Racer was part of the MTV lineup. A few years later, the series went to the Cartoon Network. By 2004, it was a regular broadcast on the Speed Channel, a racing-oriented cable network.



The 1993 Speed Racer featured a re-designed *Mach 5* and more Americanized characters, but Racer X remained faithful to the original Tatsunoko interpretation.

While the 52 original episodes remained popular, there were some attempts to re-introduce a new *Speed Racer* animated series to television. In 1993, *The New Adventures of Speed Racer*, a syndicated cartoon series, was produced by Murikami-Wolf-Swenson, famous for bringing the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles to the big screen. Unfortunately, fans never warmed to *The New Adventures of Speed Racer* (the *Mach 5* looked more like a souped-up Ford Escort), and the show was cancelled after 13 episodes.

In 1997, a new *Mach Go Go Go* animated series aired in Japan; five years later, the show appeared in America as

RIGHT: Home-made 1:32 slot cars.



Speed Racer X, but only lasted 12 episodes. One episode from this series, “The Silver Phantom,” later appeared as an extra on a 2002 high-end *Speed Racer* DVD boxed set.

Although only 52 original episodes of *Speed Racer* were produced, the series has remained in print on VHS tapes, DVD and laserdisc formats. In the mid-1980s, while still owned by Alan Enterprises, several episodes of *Speed Racer* were sold with episodes of *The Mighty Hercules* as part of Continental Video’s “Cinema Kid” line of children’s films. From 1988 to 1992, two companies - NOW Comics and VidAmerica - released those *Speed Racer* episodes that were under their ownership. From 1993 to 1995, Family Home Entertainment released 12 episodes of *Speed Racer* on both

video and laserdisc. The company also issued four episodes of *The New Adventures of Speed Racer*, the 1993 remake of the classic series.

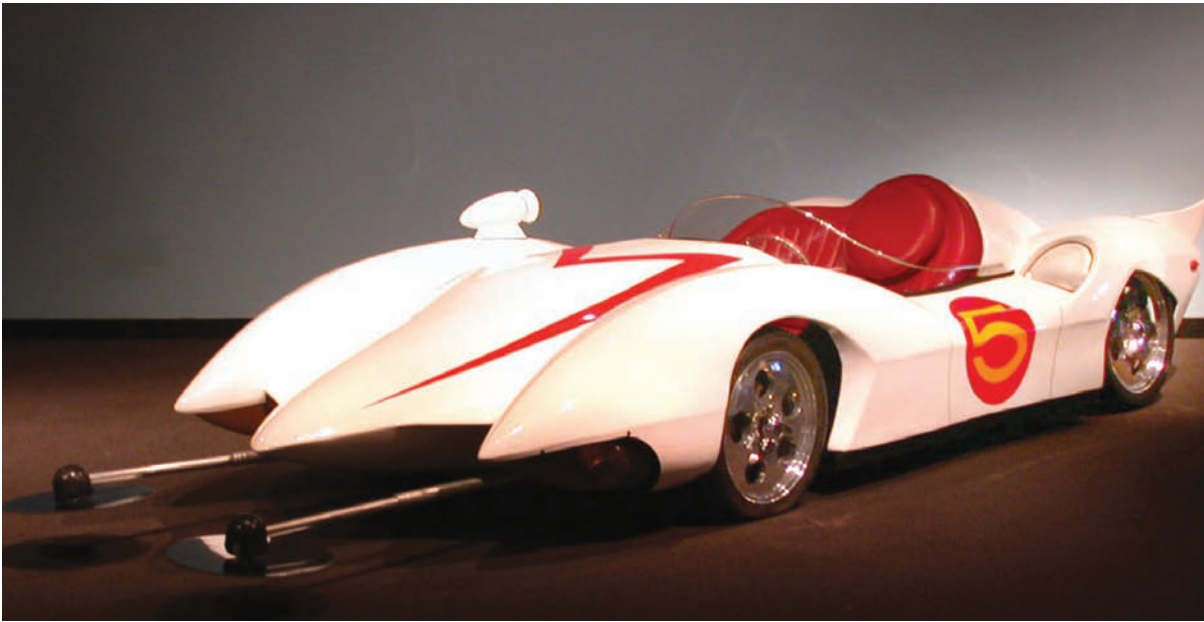
In addition to a full-season DVD boxed set produced by Speed Racer Enterprises, five different DVD sets were released by Artisan/Lions Gate Entertainment. These sets are notable for their unique packaging and bonus prizes in each box. Volume 4 contains a die-cast *Mach 5* car, while volume 5 has a collectible license plate. Volume 2 comes with a musical bonus. When pressed, a secret button on that particular edition’s box plays the *Speed Racer* theme song.

Currently, Speed Racer Enterprises is involved in several projects designed to bring Speed and the *Mach 5* back with new adventures. In 2008, *Speed Racer: The Next Generation*, a sequel to the original pro-

gram, will premiere on the Nicktoons Network. This 26-episode series features the son of Speed Racer, who enters a special racing academy for

school, and the younger Speed will have possession of his own car, now titled the *Mach 6*.

For everyone who grew up with



This life-size model of the *Mach 5*, complete with deployed buzzsaw blades, is on display at the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles. Photo courtesy Petersen Automotive Museum, Los Angeles, Calif.

the most gifted drivers. An adult Spritle, voiced by Peter Fernandez, will be one of the headmasters at the

the classic series, the next-generation series will be a logical extension of what they remember from child-

hood, said Jim Rocknowski. “They’ll know why Speed’s son races the *Mach 6*,” he said. It’ll make perfect sense. This new series does not discard the classic series, and all the characters from the original series will make appearances throughout the program run. The New York City animation company Animation Collective is working and writing the series. They’re integrating some of the classic parts of the old series into the new show.”

The new *Speed Racer* series is scheduled to appear in May 2008 – at the same time



as a long-awaited live-action *Speed Racer* motion picture hits movie theaters. The film, produced by Joel Silver and directed by Larry and Andy Wachowski (*The Matrix*), will feature Emile Hirsch as Speed, who, with the support of his parents, Pops and Mom Racer (John Goodman, Susan Sarandon), his girlfriend Trixie (Christina Ricci) and the mysterious Racer X (Matthew Fox), continues his high-speed adventures on the international racing circuits. Peter Fernandez will also have a cameo part in the



From 1995 to 2005, several different lines of Speed Racer-related die-cast cars were manufactured by Johnny Lightning. This die-cast re-imagines the *Mach 5* as a NASCAR-style stock car. Photo courtesy Chuck Miller.

movie, finally realizing a promise that producer Joel Silver made to him over 15 years earlier. "In 1990, someone strung three episodes of *Speed Racer* together as a movie and released it in theaters. There was a lot of TV coverage around the world at this so-called premiere, so I was in the lobby of this theater in Los Angeles doing interviews. Suddenly this big guy came up to me, he said to me, 'I just wanted to shake your hand, I'm Joel Silver and I'll be producing a live-action film based on *Speed Racer*.'"

"I said 'That's great, will there be a part in for me?'"

"He said, 'No – but I want you to do the promos for the film.' Fifteen years later, he finally got around to making the film – and he gave me a cameo part in the picture."

"[The Wachowskis] were al-

ways very big fans of *Speed Racer*," said movie producer Joel Silver. "When they were kids, it was the first time they had seen Japanese animation, which made them understand there was a different kind of animation out there in the world. Having grown up on Hanna-Barbera, Fred Flintstone and Yogi Bear, this was the first time they saw something that was really different. And at the same time they wanted to make a film for their nieces and nephews, friends and their fami-

lies. They've made a lot of R-rated movies and they've never really made films for everybody. And it was an opportunity to make something that was a big family movie, a big fresh idea, and to do something that they've always loved, *Speed Racer*, and so here we all are."

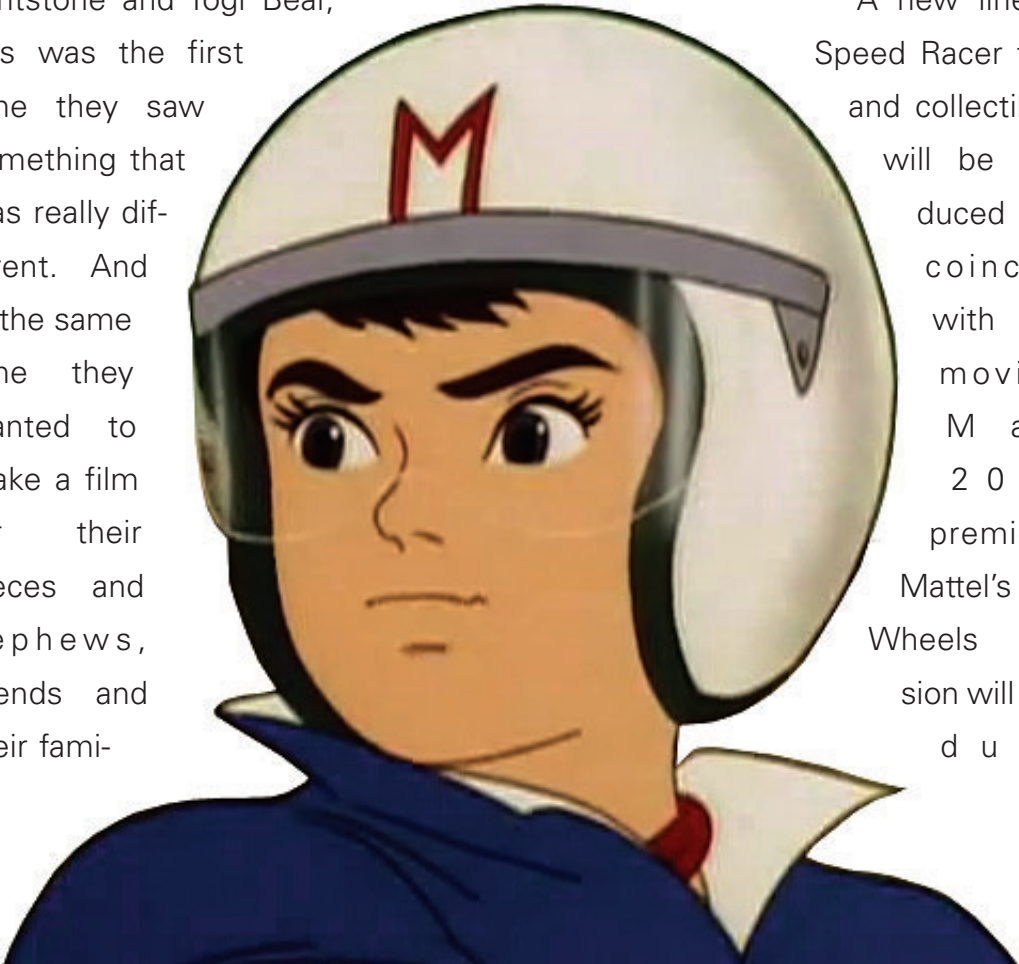
A new line of Speed Racer toys and collectibles will be produced to coincide with the movie's May 2008 premiere. Mattel's Hot Wheels division will produce

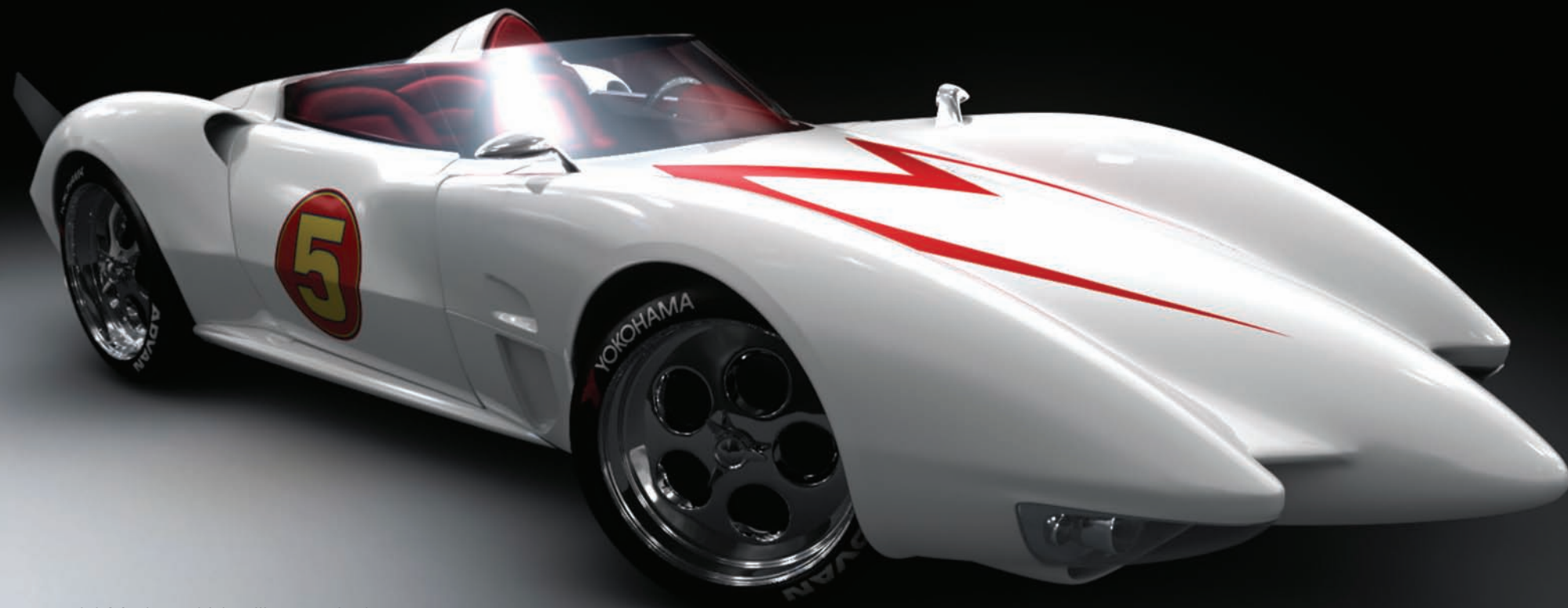
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various die-cast vehicles, race sets and track sets based on the film, while Mattel's Tyco division will create remote-controlled *Mach 5s* and *Shooting Stars*, among other cars. Speed Racer-themed board games, puzzles and UNO card decks are also scheduled for production.

These days Fernandez and Orr are fixtures at anime and sci-fi conventions, and will be guests of honor at the New York Anime Festival in December. "When we go to conventions, fans are so happy to meet us," said Orr. "They shout at us, 'Hi Trixie, Hi Speed!' I met one fan in Las Vegas at an auto show who's a NASCAR driver today. Another fan of the show later grew up to design cars for a major corporation." **tc**





The new 2008 model *Mach 5*, which will appear in the new *Speed Racer* live-action film. Notice that the *Mach 5* rides on quality Yokohama tires. Photo credit: courtesy Warner Bros.

> LEARN MORE

10 THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT SPEED RACER

1. The *Go Speed Racer* theme was originally composed as *Mach Go Go Go* by Koshibe Nobuyoshi and Yoshiyuki Yoshida. With English words by Peter Fernandez, the cartoon intro has been covered by several singers and bands, including Matthew Sweet, Everclear and Liz Phair.

2. Speed Racer actually appeared on the hood of a NASCAR vehicle, as driver Tony Raines piloted the *Speed Racer*

#74 BACE Motorsports Chevrolet to a 13th place finish at the 2003 Ford 400 in Homestead, Fla. A motor-sports-themed television network, on which reruns of *Speed Racer* would premiere later that week, sponsored the car for that race.

3. The chassis design of the *Mach 5* most closely resembles the Chaparral 2C. Chaparrals were a line of specialty race cars designed by Texas oil magnate Jim Hall. In 1980, a Chaparral driven by Johnny Rutherford won the Indy 500.

4. *Speed Racer* was immensely popular in Spanish-speaking countries, where Peter Fernandez' scripts were dubbed in Spanish and the show renamed *Meteoro*.

5. Alpha Team, a studio recording

group, created a dance track called *Go, Speed, Go*, featuring dialogue and sound effects from the original TV series.

6. There is a real *Mach 5* race team competing in Japan's Super GT 300 class series. Tetsuji Tamanaka and Takeuchi Hironori drive the *No. 5 KUMHO MACH-GO 320R*, operating under the name "Team Mach." Another driver in the Super GT 300 class series, Yasutaka Hinoi, changed his name to Go Mifune, Speed Racer's Japanese name, for the 2005 racing season.

7. In the 1970s film *Slap Shot*, the Hanson Brothers, three hockey goons, are big fans of *Speed Racer*, and ask their new coach if the local TV stations carry *Speed Racer* episodes for them to watch.

8. Speed Racer has appeared as a commercial spokesperson twice. In 1996, Speed drove a Volkswagen GTI to victory after the *Mach 5* has been sabotaged. Corinne Orr returned to voice Trixie

in this commercial, which featured all-new animation. In 2005, footage from the *Speed Racer* episode "The Desperate Racer" was used, along with new vocal tracks, for a GEICO insurance commercial. Neither Fernandez nor Orr was involved.

9. The Speed Racer character reflects the influence of two pop culture icons. The character bears a resemblance to Elvis Presley, who starred in the 1966 racing film *Spinout*; and Speed's original Japanese name, "Go Mifune," was an homage to Japanese actor Toshiro Mifune.

10. Although the Wachowski Brothers pioneered the "bullet-time" camera special effect in films like *The Matrix* (in which a character remains stationary as the camera pans around from another angle), that same "bullet-time" technique appears in the opening credits of *Speed Racer*. As Speed leaps out of the *Mach 5* – the camera pans from the *Mach 5*'s front to the car's side, with Speed in mid stride.



> LEARN MORE

THE POWERS OF THE MACH 5

SPEED RACER'S *MACH 5* was not only a super-fast car, it also had several hidden devices and tricks, all available to Speed Racer by pressing one of several lettered buttons conveniently located on the *Mach 5*'s steering wheel.

Pressing the following buttons on the 1967 "classic" *Mach 5* offered the following racing options:

A The car is raised in the air by internal jacks, for easy undercarriage repairs. In mid-race, the powerful jacks can actually help Speed "jump" over an opposing car or obstacle.

B Special grips are applied to the tires; 5,000 additional horsepower is distributed between the wheels for added traction.

C Twin buzzsaws deploy from the front of the *Mach 5*, to cut down any off-road rugged terrain.

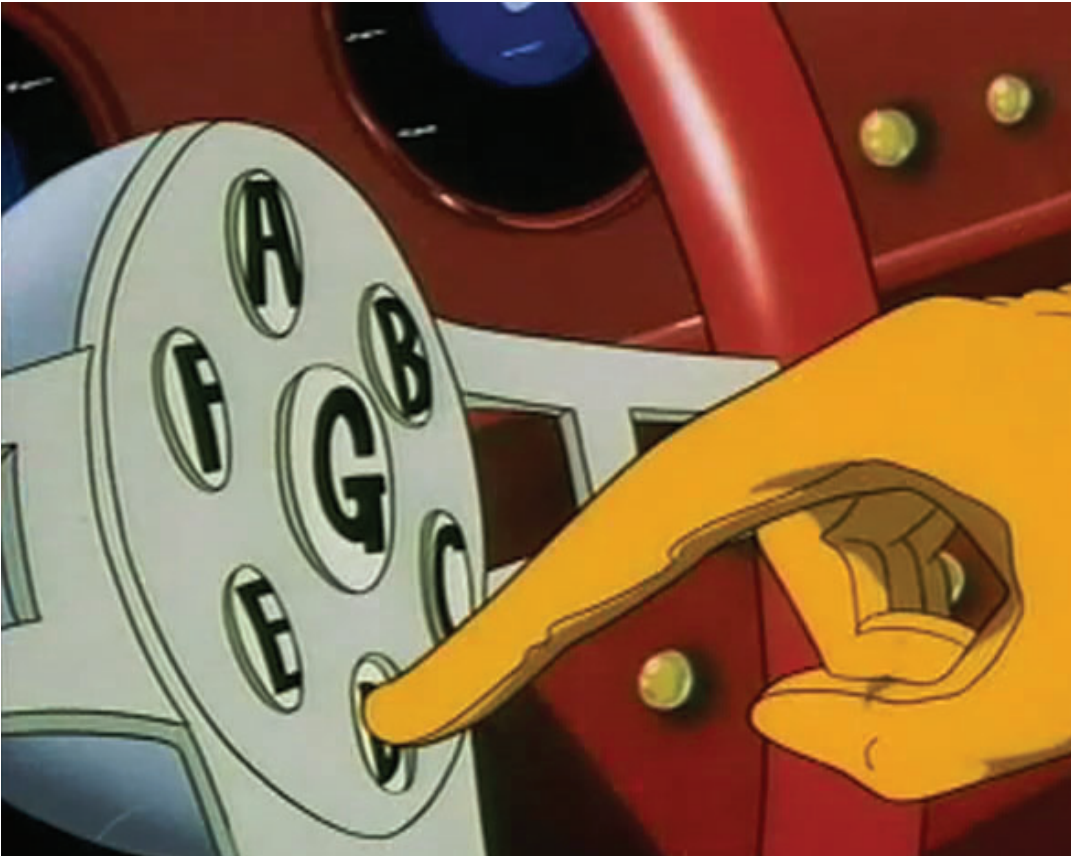
D A bulletproof deflector shield appears over the cockpit, protecting Speed from flying debris, bullets, and poisonous gases.

E The *Mach 5*'s headlights emit infrared beams, allowing Speed to see obstacles clearly in foggy or dark conditions.

F An underwater protection system is deployed. The *Mach 5*'s deflector shield engages, oxygen is pumped into the cockpit, and a periscope camera rises above the water surface.

G An electronic bird-shaped homing device is released from the *Mach 5*; the device can record pictures or voices, and can either return to Speed or be sent to a specific location.

While the 1993 edition of the *Mach 5* in *The New Adventures of Speed Racer* had generic rectangular buttons on the



steering wheel, the *Mach 5* from the 1997 *Speed Racer* anime series restored the lettered buttons and their specific functionalities - although the "B" button now

produced "monster truck" tires on the *Mach 5*, and the "E" button deployed a grappling hook and rope, in case Speed ever wanted to swing over a chasm.

REINVENTING OLD-SCHOOL VIDEO GAMES

"BY PRESSING DOWN A SPECIAL KEY, IT PLAYS A LITTLE MELODY"

BY KARLA KLEIN ALBERTSON



THE RELEASE EARLIER this year of *8-bit Operators: The Music of Kraftwerk Performed on Vintage 8-Bit*

Video Game Systems has made collectors aware of an interconnected underground world making music on vintage toys. The instruments listed by the artists are lo-bit handheld gaming devices, vintage video game consoles, and obsolete 8-bit home computers helped out by homemade synth cartridges and hacker-influenced techniques.

Kraftwerk - German for “power

station” – was a visionary 1970s/’80s improvisational band from Dusseldorf that played electronic music and drew acclaim for its chart-topping

Computer Love. So it’s no surprise that today’s cutting-edge 8-bit artists – working under pseudonyms like Bubblyfish and Bit Shifter – would cover their songs.

In April, executive producer Jeremy Kolosine (a.k.a. Receptors) reached a larger audience for *8-bit Operators: The*

Music of Kraftwerk when he was interviewed on NPR’s *Weekend Edition Sunday*. Kolosine, who covered



8-bit Operators: The Music of Kraftwerk Performed on Vintage 8-Bit Video Game Systems, issued this year on Astralwerks, includes 15 covers of songs by the legendary German electronic group.

RIGHT: An image from Halo syncs perfectly to music by the Los Angeles Philharmonic during Video Games Live’s first concert at the Hollywood Bowl two years ago. Image courtesy Video Games Live, photographer John Hessler.





Circuit benders at the April Bent Festival in Los Angeles participate in on-site soldering sessions. Bent Festival image courtesy of The Tank; photograph by Daniel Greenfeld.

Kraftwerk’s *Trans-Europe Express* for the CD, laid out a bit of history: “Not to go back too far, but originally when arcade games in the 1970s were put into arcades along with pinball machines and the like, there had to be

soundtrack to go along with it. So that was digital music that was made with the chips that were available in those arcade games.”
He continued, “Currently the genre of chiptunes and bitpop entails

mostly Gameboy artists who are taking game-oriented devices – be they handheld devices or joystick-operated devices such as Atari or Nintendo systems – using the chips that are provided to make music of a new kind.”

“The exploration is part of the fun, and there’s an emotional attachment to a lot of these sounds. The sounds were first introduced to people along with video games and tiny little figures that you invested these emotions into. People hear this music for the first time and strange emotions appear – nostalgia and sort of retro futurism (are some

of) the words that get tossed around a lot.”

The beauty of it from Kolosine’s standpoint is partly affordability. Using old consoles picked up for

under \$100 on eBay, anyone can put together an 8-bit studio. The 8-bit Web site also has links to artist-created cartridges that help make the music, such as the Little Sound DJ, described as “the Gameboy/Gameboy Color tool of choice for amateur and

professional musicians and composers.” With the right gizmo and a bit of know-how, you can turn an Atari 2600 from your parents’ attic into a



My Mother Was an Asteroid’s *Jumpin Jack Flashcart* may sound like a busy afternoon on the arcade floor to the uninitiated, but it’s music to the ears of old-school gamers.

The familiar figure of small hero Link flashes on screen as the orchestra plays music from *Legend of Zelda*. Image courtesy Video Games Live, photographer Kevin Loh.



> LEARN MORE

MUSICIAN AND TOY COLLECTOR TOMMY TALLARICO

FOR KIDS NOW in their twenties, video-game soundtracks may be the first music they remember hearing. The sounds also made an indelible impression on their moms and dads, who listened from a distance as their children absorbed themselves in electronic toys. Now a new type of live performance takes the music from classic games beyond the limitations of chips and console speakers.

Video Games Live bills itself as an “immersive concert event.” The video game music is translated into arrangements for a full orchestra and choir, then coupled with light shows, visual footage, and interactive segments. The soundtracks are drawn from some of the most popular games of the past 15 years including Mario, Zelda, Tomb Raider, Halo, Myst, and Warcraft; and even includes a retro arcade medley from classics like Donkey Kong and Space Invaders.

The talent behind the project comes from musician entrepreneurs Tommy Tal-

larico and Jack Wall of Mystical Stone Entertainment, both well-known composers of video-game music. In a recent interview with *TCM*, Tallarico revealed, “I have a huge Spider-Man collection, pop culture if you will – action figures, statues, comic books. I think it’s all connected.”

The musician has little home time with his collection. The ongoing series of concerts has traveled to cities in North and South America, Europe, and Asia with many sell-outs including Seoul’s Olympic Park Stadium in May and Washington’s Kennedy Center in June. He said, “We have booking agents

around the world. This year alone we’ve played Spain, New Zealand and Korea.

We’re going to Brazil for three weeks in September.”

The hard work has been worth it, according to Tallarico, who hosts the shows on stage and even plays guitar with the orchestra toward the end of the show. “It’s the first time anything like this has really been done,” he said. “Our show has the power and emotion of a symphony orchestra, but it’s combined with the energy

and excitement of a rock concert – and mixed with the technology, visuals and

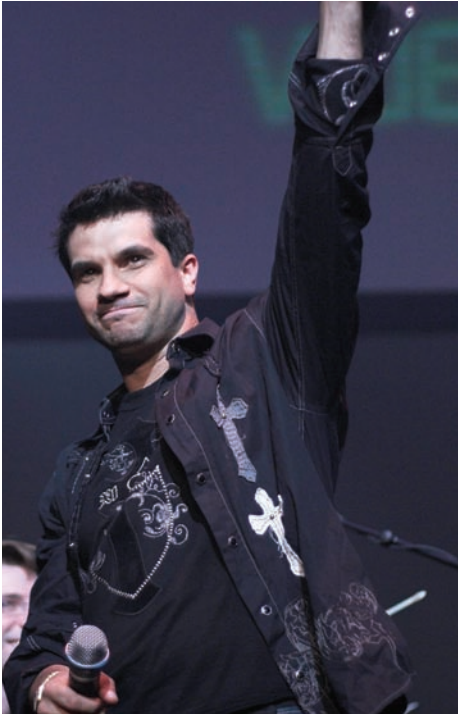
interactive fun that video games provide ... all of that in one big presentation.’

“We had two goals. One was to prove to the world ... how culturally significant video-game music had become. It’s not just a bunch of bleeps and bloops like it was 20 years ago when I first got into it.” (In fact, major film composers like Danny Elfman and Howard Shore have written music for games.)

“The second goal was to introduce a whole new generation of people – the 40-and-under crowd – to a symphony performance.” The presentation makes use of major orchestras all along the tour itinerary, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic two years ago and the National Symphony in Washington earlier this year.

“And they’re really into it,” Tallarico said. “We encourage yelling and screaming during the performance. Symphonies absolutely love it – they’re blown away. They’ve never had a reception like that.”

For more info: www.tallarico.com and www.videogameslive.com.



Tommy Tallarico hosts Video Games Live onstage and plays guitar with the orchestra. Image courtesy Video Games Live.



A Bent Festival performer in New York plays to the crowd. Bent Festival image courtesy of The Tank.

four-track synthesizer.

Mike Rosenthal who organizes the four-day Blip Festival for such music in New York City, as well as the tech-oriented Bent Festival discussed below, agreed on the basic appeal: “People grew up immersed in this

stuff – that 8-bit, blippy sound speaks to them on a deep level. It’s taking back a pure and total part of our childhood and turning it into something crazy and new.”

The last four-day Blip Festival in November 2006 brought in 1,300

people to hear around 40 performers from around the world. The three-day Bent Festivals held in April 2007 in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and New York, according to the Web site, celebrated “the art of modifying existing circuits (and creating new ones) for the purpose of creating music, art, and mischief.”

With participants described by one visitor as “grown-up children who like to break their toys,” the festival includes performances, interactive displays with knobs and switches, and hands-on workshops for circuit-benders wanting to meddle with anything from Gameboys to a Barbie karaoke machine.

The Bent Web site offers this definition: “The term ‘circuit bending’ refers to the act of modifying the circuitry of battery-powered children’s toys to create strange, new and unin-

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tended sounds for creative purposes.” Ready to learn? The Solid Logic workshop focused on “a brief intro to electricity, resistance, capacitance, RC timing and basic CMOS digital ICs.”

A comment by full-time circuit-bender Pete Edwards at this year’s New York Bent Festival summed up the attraction to the hobby: “I’ve been doing this full time for seven years and I’ve never gotten bored because there’s always something new. If nothing else, it’s funny and fun. Sometimes it’s musically beautiful; sometimes it’s really complex and interesting. There are just so many levels of appeal.” **tc**

TO REBUILD THE PAST

FATHER AND SON ARE PIECING TOGETHER LIONEL'S HISTORY AND SHARING IT WITH THE WORLD

PROJECT ROAR PUBLISHING

THE LIONEL HISTORY ENCYCLOPEDIA SERIES

AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE TO LIONEL'S POST-WAR OPERATING

Joseph P. Algozzini & Emanuel

THE LIONEL HISTORY ENCYCLOPEDIA SERIES

AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE TO LIONEL'S PROMOTIONAL OUTFITS

1960 - 1969

John W. Schmid

projectroar.com

FORM 392A

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

THE LIONEL CORPORATION

TO G. Sussman FROM P. Papa DATE September 9, 1961

Re: Set #19343 @ \$9.40 Each

The above set is an Army Five Unit "027" with a 221 diesel locomotive and a 1010 transformer.

W. Sethre suggests I advise you that to date sales on this number have been poor.

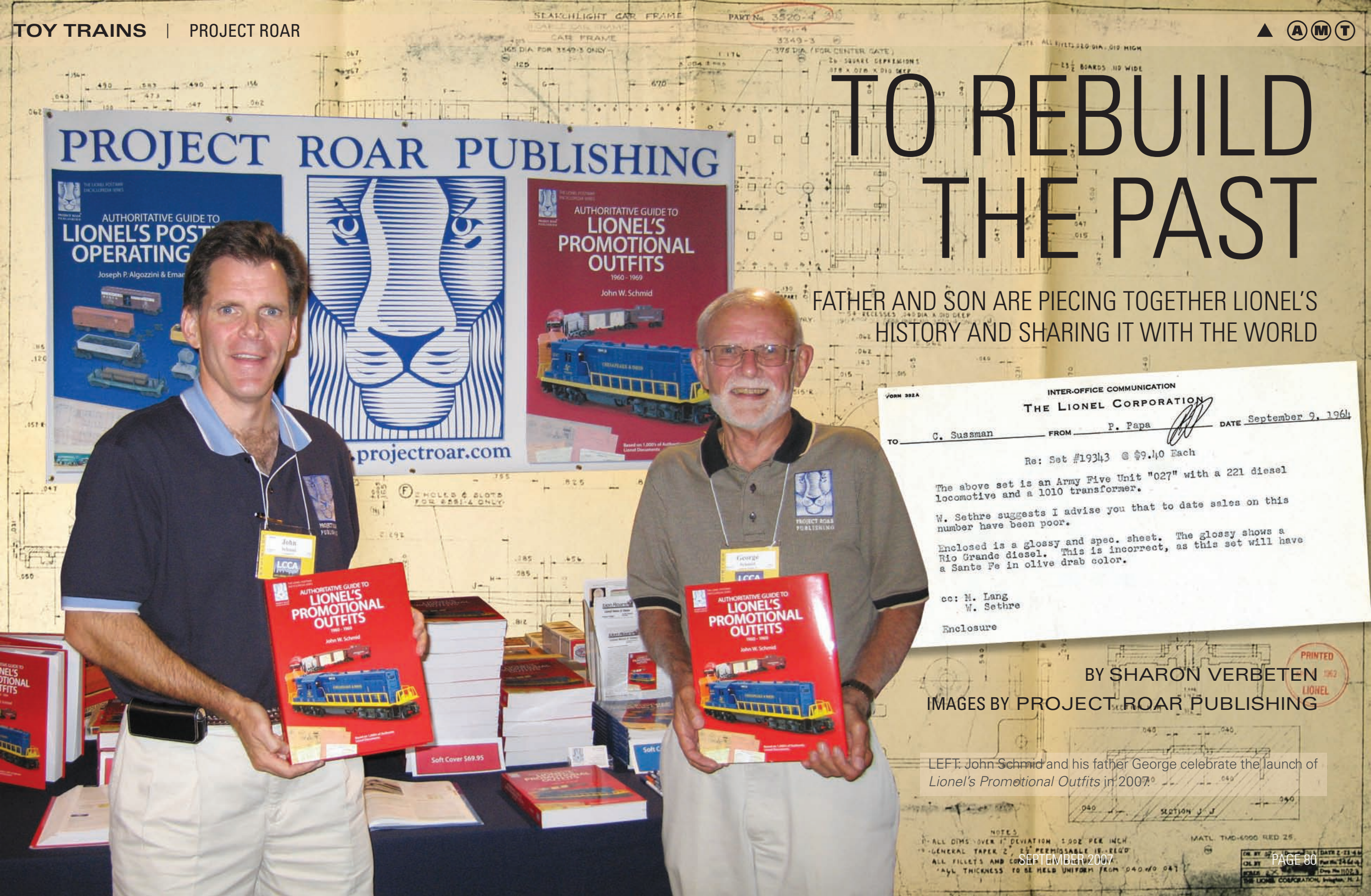
Enclosed is a glossy and spec. sheet. The glossy shows a Rio Grande diesel. This is incorrect, as this set will have a Santa Fe in olive drab color.

cc: M. Lang
W. Sethre

Enclosure

BY SHARON VERBETEN
IMAGES BY PROJECT ROAR PUBLISHING

LEFT: John Schmid and his father George celebrate the launch of Lionel's Promotional Outfits in 2007.



THE WORLD OF TRAIN collectors is a close-knit one, where the names and faces of key players are familiar to all. So when an unknown bidder paid \$43,000 for a pile of papers at a 2001 Stout Auctions sale, waves of hushed chatter and speculation swept through the room.

This wasn't just any pile of papers. Winning bidder George Schmid knew the documents were historically significant, but it was not until later that he and his son realized they had purchased the mother lode – thousands of pages of Lionel company documents, including factory orders for all outfits manufactured between 1960 and 1966.

"Initially, my father and I did not comprehend the full significance of what we now owned," said George's son, John Schmid, president of Project Roar Publishing in Winfield, Ill., the company spawned from that impulse purchase.

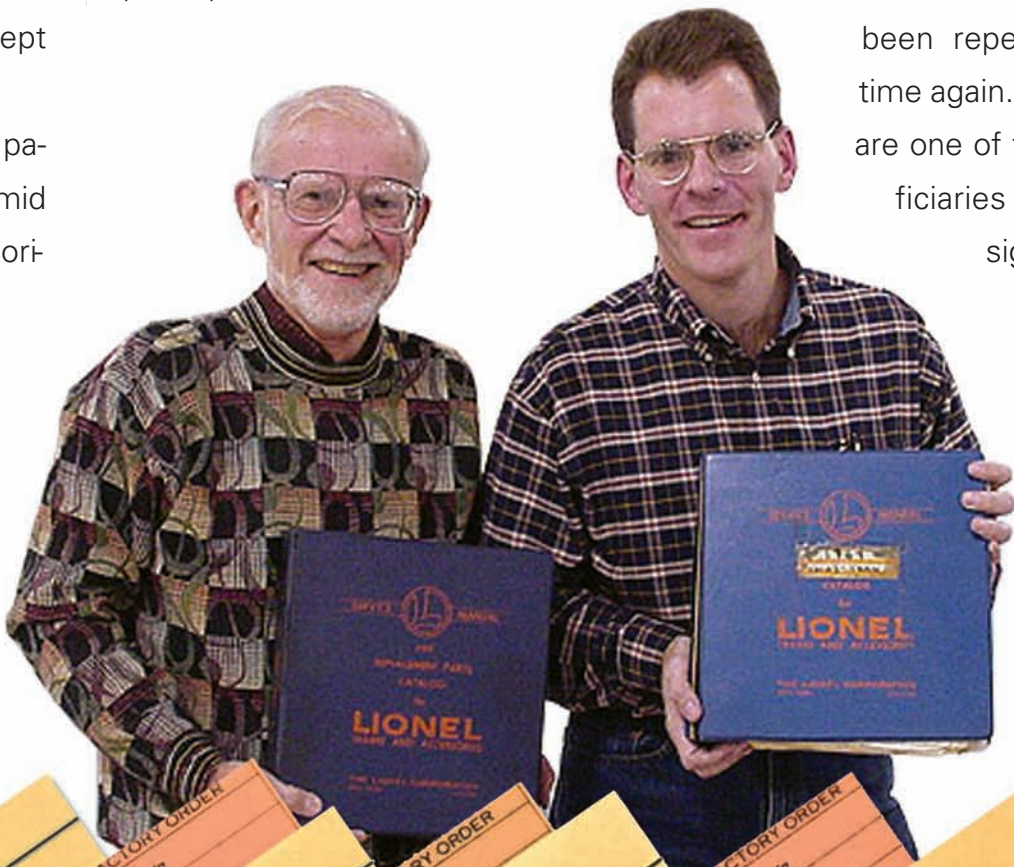
"Acquiring these documents began another stage in the journey of giving back to the hobby what it has given to my father and me," said John, 42. "Joshua Lionel Cowen's dream of using trains to bring fathers and sons closer has been repeated time and time again. My father and I are one of the many beneficiaries of Cowen's insights and hopes.

"This is the classic train collector's story," he added – one that starts with a sale, a successful

bid and a desire to share.

The Stout Auctions sale of the Richard Kughn collection in November 2001 was an eagerly anticipated one, with buyers hoping to buy anything belonging to the former owner of Lionel. After the second day of bidding, George, a longtime collector from Illinois, walked away with the archive of documents, leaving many scratching their heads. "The buzz was, 'Who the heck are they?'" John recalled. "We got hounded...[with people asking], 'What are you going to do with these documents?'"

The Schmidts had no intention of squirreling away their treasure. "Many collectors feared that these





John Schmid traveled hundreds of miles to photograph this perfect example of Sears' famed set no. 9836 (Lionel's no. 12885-500) from 1965.

rare documents would again be buried away or, even worse, be lost in storage," John said. "Instead, we decided to publish this information as a way of helping others and enabling

the toy train community to learn more about Lionel and its promotional outfits."

It was all part of what John called his dad's grand scheme. "He

believed very much in stewardship ... to give back to the collector community some of the friendship and fun."

For many years, John and his father shared an affinity for trains. "It was Christmas all year long," John said, as every year massive train layouts filled their basement. His father, he added, "infected his three children with the train bug."

But after the fateful auction, John caught the historical bug, and suddenly, he realized their shared enthusiasm could become a business.

"I sat down, wrote a business plan and gave it to [my dad] and said, 'Here's how we can make this a business,'" said John, who had no previous publishing experience but had an MBA that would help him with the marketing and business end of the

venture.

"It was kind of like a perfect storm," John said, looking back to 2001. His father had retired after decades in manufacturing, the documents came up for sale and they both seemed motivated to forge ahead. In 2002, John left his full-time job in software sales to take the helm of the new undertaking, which they named Project Roar Publishing. The Schmidts had contacted several hobby publishers, none of whom expressed much in-



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JUST WHAT’S IN THERE?

The first question people ask the Schmids is pretty basic: Just what is in the Project Roar archive, anyway?

John Schmid laughs. “It took years to figure all this stuff out,” he admits. “But eventually we got things categorized into sensible groupings that help us with our research — and help us reconnect the dots when we get new bits of information.”

The categories run the gamut of typical manufacturing documentation:

- Blueprints
- Component parts indices
- Production control files

- Factory orders
- Engineering specifications
- Change orders (affecting future production)
- Production planning records
- Parts cards

To decipher the information, John turned to numerous former Lionel employees. “I still haven’t figured out every code, and probably never will, but we know enough to make sense of the information.”

What’s still out there for discovery? “Change Notices — they help explain why Lionel made things the way they did. But I’ve been told they were discarded.”

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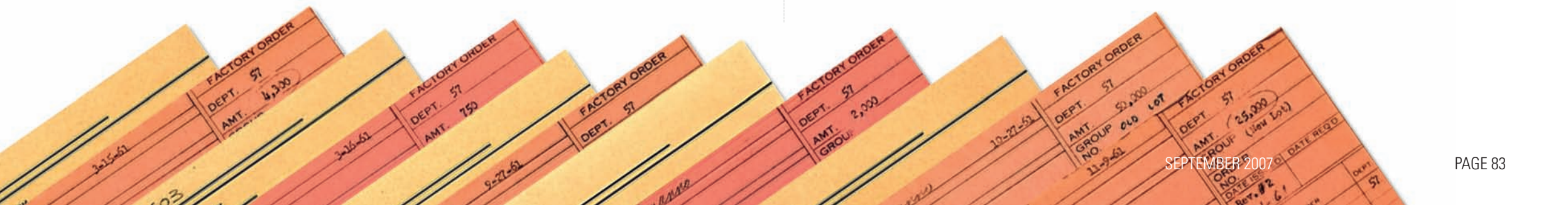
terest in reprinting the papers, so launching their own independent publishing company was the logical solution.

“Every day was a new adven-

ture,” said John. “We found discovery after discovery that had been locked away for



The no. 19201 (2) was the seventh of nine outfits to include the extremely rare no. 910-1 Navy Cardboard Display (also known as the Atomic Sub Base). It alone drives the value of this outfit to more than \$15,000 in like-new condition.



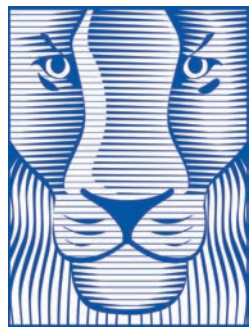


Because of its orange and black color scheme, this has become known as the Halloween General. The Schmids uncovered that it was actually a Lionel no. X-507NA originally sold to Druggists' Service Council and advertised in that firm's Gifts Galore catalog.



years waiting to be documented, including the different use of suffixes for boxed and unboxed items, the outfit number of the Halloween General, item variations not previously known and outfits produced in quantities as low as six."

At first, John said, Project Roar planned on photographing the documents and turning them into a book. But they wanted to take it one step further and photograph actual train sets, which would translate to considerable time and expense. The Schmids sought out collectors and asked to photograph their train sets. At the same time, they continued to buy sets of their own to add to their





Set no. 19328 came with two rare and valuable paper items—the no. X625-20 Cardboard Scenic Set and no. 903 Set of (2) Sheets Trading Cards. The 19328 included both a steam and a diesel locomotive — a rare combination for Lionel set design.

collection and archives.

While the Schmidts were relative unknowns at the Stout auction, they knew they'd have to raise their profile to get the type of cooperation needed to produce the caliber of books they had in mind. "I'm trying to build the Mercedes of collector books," John said.

They decided not to be "closet collectors" anymore. "We had to be proactive to make ourselves known," John said. "I went out and started to build a virtual team," which included published authors in the train field, such as Roger Carp, senior editor of Kalmbach Publishing's *Classic Toy Trains* and Joseph Algozzini, whom





Outfit no. 19434 was one of the 14 outfits purchased by Sears in 1965. When Lionel ran out of inventory, the company often substituted items in train outfits. In this outfit, with all its substitutions, more than 150 possible configurations are possible.

than six years ago. “One major part of our journey has ended with the publication of this volume,” John said.

With access to substantial documentation on Lionel sets from the 1960s, Project Roar Publishing was able to cover a majority of the post-war era’s production. “But the

biggest question I get is when are we going to do 1945-1959, the rest of Lionel’s postwar era,” John said. “Unfortunately, these records for complete train outfits have not surfaced. I’m confident that they did do them, since I have seen a few. But somehow they were destroyed, lost

or buried in somebody’s basement.” Anyone with documentation, sets or

photos from this era is welcome to contact Project Roar at www.projectroar.com or by phone at 630-653-7627.

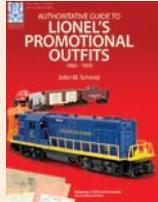


John said the goal going forward is to release three to four books per year. “Many more books will be coming,” he said, “as we continue to give back to the hobby what it has given to us – enjoyment, cooperation and friendship. That’s what the hobby is all about.” **tc**

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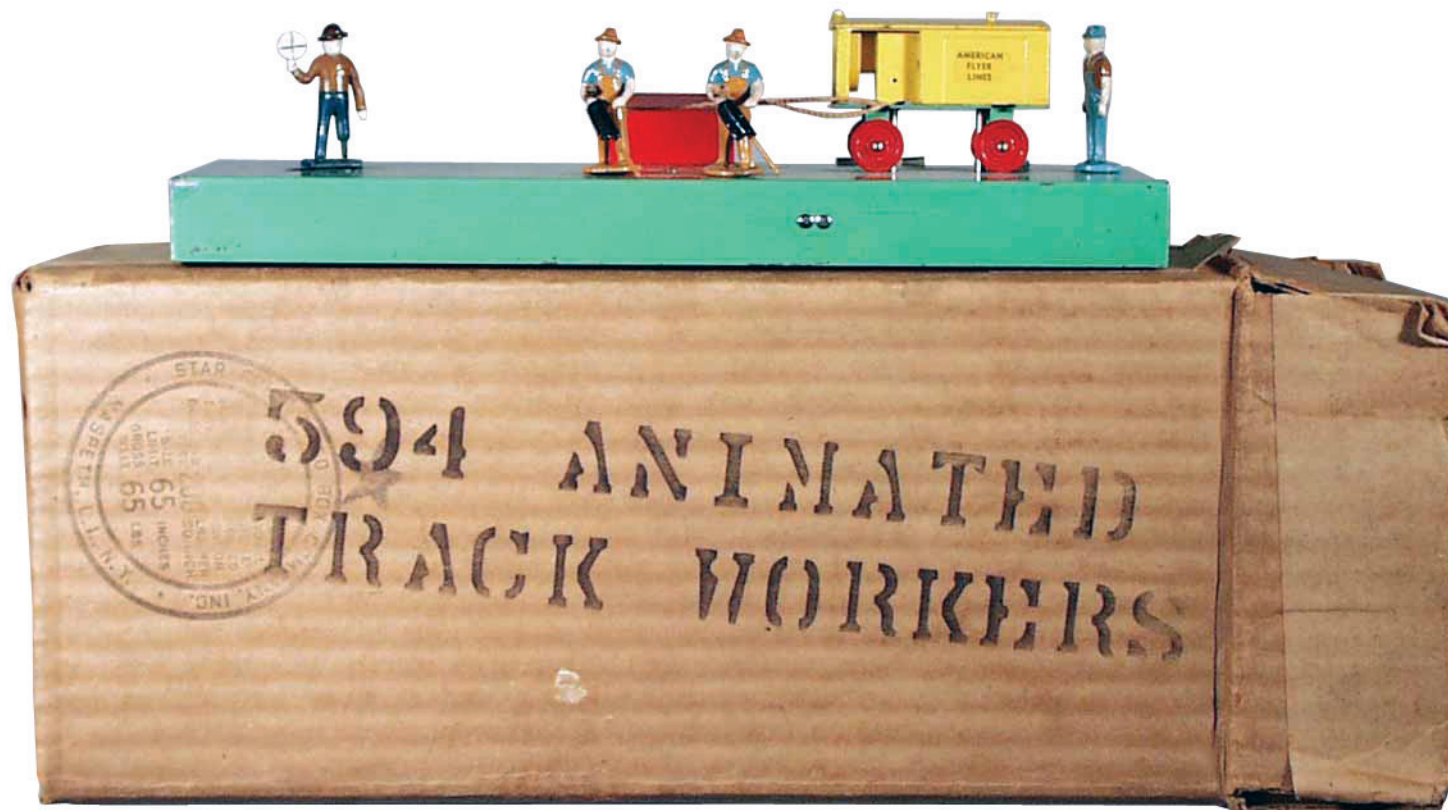


THE HOUSE THAT LLOYD BUILT

THREE SIBLINGS NOW CARRY ON THEIR FATHER'S LEGACY AT LLOYD RALSTON GALLERY

BY GENE FRIEDMAN

IMAGES BY LLOYD RALSTON GALLERY



SHELTON, CONN. – Following in the footsteps of their late father, the adult children of pioneering toy collector and dealer Lloyd Ralston have continued to develop Lloyd Ralston Gallery into a thriving international business specializing in the auction of trains and toys. The sons, Glenn and Jeff, and daughter, Terry, are the principals behind the successful operation, which moved in 2004 from its former base in Stratford, Conn., to its present 4,000-square-foot gallery in Shelton.

It's been a family business since the 1960s, with Lloyd moving from the status of an outstanding dealer/collector to establishing his own gallery in 1978. Lloyd's personal collection was vast and included Ives trains, cast-iron toys, Halloween and Christmas toys.

LEFT: An Internet bidder doled out \$1,760 for this A.C. Gilbert Co. American Flyer S gauge no. 594 animated track gang in original box.



A boxed Lionel Mickey Mouse handcar, with Mickey and Minnie figures, rolled to a stop at \$1,210, selling to an Internet bidder.

Lloyd never wielded the gavel himself, leaving the actual auctioneering duties to the professionals. He encouraged his elder son to enter

that area of the profession, and in the late 1980s Glenn did just that, obtaining his auctioneer's license after taking a private course in Massachusetts. It was just one more intelligent step, spearheaded by the firm's patriarch, to ensure a capable next generation would be in place to run the family business.

A year after Lloyd's death in 1996, the company moved to a 9,000-square foot gallery in Stratford. After eight years there, operations

were shifted to the Shelton building. "It was a business decision," Glenn said. "The Stratford site was air conditioned, with seating for 300 people, but who needs seating for 300 in this day with the Internet?" Cyberspace, and LiveAuctioneers.com, in particular, keeps them hopping, with 40 to 75 percent of their sales attributable to Internet buyers.

A good portion of the Ralston

team's time is spent on the telephone, answering questions about merchandise in the online catalogs. They produce 10 to 12 catalog sales a year, Glenn said.

As a youth, Glenn built up his own standard gauge Lionel collection. Asked if he had any outstanding pieces left, he laughed and said, "Not anymore. I put three kids through college." He said he sold "in bits and



From the rare side of the track, a paint sample beige-yellow-colored Pennsylvania caboose was claimed by a mail bidder for \$2,200.

A gallery buyer paid \$1,210 for this Lionel no. 6817 flat with scraper.



pieces for the last eight years” to finance the educations of three children, now 25, 22 and 19 years old. All have been “drafted” to work in the family business.

While Glenn serves as presiding auctioneer, brother Jeff, who

amassed a “premier collection of Dorfan (and related Fandor) trains” that he sold about 12 years ago, is in charge of phone inquiries and oversees post-auction customer service. Sister Terry, who handles incidental and follow-up work, has never col-

lected trains but clearly has a good all-around knowledge of the specialty from growing up around them.

While the Internet is a powerful medium for selling, personal contact is essential when it comes to securing a collection. Meeting with potential and con-

firmed consignors, and arranging for the safe transport of collections has required driving from California to Maine and 22 states in between, Glenn

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said.
In May, Lloyd Ralston Gallery auctioned part one of the collection of Irving Davis of Beverly Hills, Calif. Davis’ collection of Tootsie Toys and toy vehicles is so large, it had to be split into two sessions. The first sale grossed \$289,000, inclusive of buyer’s premium. The Ralston company has had good luck with Tootsie



RIGHT: The July sale’s top lot, at \$3,740, a Lionel no. 2356 Southern ABA which favored the Internet against an unusually large cadre of on-site gallery bidders.

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Toys, selling the well-known Gates Willard collection in 2005. The second part of the Davis collection will be auctioned on Sept. 8, with real-time Internet bidding through www.liveauctioneers.com.

A major sale of toy trains was held on July 21. The inventory included 300 pieces of postwar Lionel, including four boxed postwar Madison cars that had never been run on a track, as well as 40 similarly fresh postwar engines. The auction grossed \$148,500, with the Madison cars contributing \$2,860 to the coffers.

A phone bidder paid \$2,090 for this Lionel no. 746 N&W loco and tender.



Glenn said there was an unusual reversal at the July sale, with three-quarters of the bidding taking place in the gallery including 50 buyers on the floor, who competed with phone and absentee bidders, and a legion of 450 Internet bidders. Glenn observed that with the availability of the Internet, there is no longer a need for printed catalogs – people become accustomed to seeing the catalogs online, which saves the cost of purchasing a hard-copy book.

Glenn said Ralston’s best individual sale was a Lutz floor train, which made \$49,500

in 2002. “A man called to make an appointment to bring in some trains for possible consignment,” Glenn said. “He was an antique dealer who brought them out of a house. He showed up with five banana boxes containing the Lutz train set, some Lionel pieces and rusty track. I told him the Lutz was a great train set and would be the star piece in the next train sale.”

“When he phoned after the auction and found out how much it brought, he told me to call him anytime I needed to be told what a great guy I was,” Glenn added with a laugh. Another noteworthy consignment Glenn recalled was a Marklin train collection from an anonymous consignor who had “never monkeyed



This Lionel no. 773 Hudson loco and no. 2426W tender chugged to \$1,900 in a battle won by a phone bidder.

with” any of the contents. Some of the goods had been purchased in the 1950s and had had many years in which to appreciate in value. The collection was sold entirely through LiveAuctioneers, a company with which Lloyd Ralston Gallery has had a working association since 2004.

To inquire about the Sept. 8 auction call 203-924-5804, or e-mail lrgallery@sbcglobal.net. **tc**

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