

SENIOR SCAPE: Collectors Show

Collectors Show reveals many surprises

By Sylvia Dickens

What did you think of the Collectors' Showcase Event held at the Holland Trail Retirement Community last Wednesday? What? You didn't go?

Too bad, because you missed seeing some interesting and unique collections by several Seniors' Centre members. From duck decoys to vintage buttons, there was a lot to see and plenty of stories to enjoy.

Lise Boily

One day, Lise Boily discovered that she absolutely loves tiny footwear. Her first pair was baby moccasins made from suede and fur that she found on a native reserve in Quebec. That was almost 40 years ago. These are her favorites, along with a pair of tiny knitted cowboy boots.

"I just fell in love with that little moccasin. It was so cute," she said gleefully as she put it on the floor next to her own small feet to show me.

Since then, she's made her criteria only footwear under 3-4 inches and consisting of various types of materials. Her collection now includes leather, plastic, and knitted shoes. She even has a pair of wooden clogs and a pair of fur mukluks. She has denim sneakers, satin booties, needlepoint slippers, cotton and lace booties, Santa boots, rawhide slippers, ceramic ballet slippers and porcelain old fashioned baby shoes.

She even has a pair of paper Christening booties that she was given as a gift for attending the happy event.

Her oldest pair is red velvet Chinese slippers that she purchased from an antique store in Quebec. Her collection, which now amounts to 47 pairs, was acquired mostly in Ontario and Quebec.

What was her surprise? Perhaps you recognize her.

She teaches the French program at the Senior's Centre, a service she has been providing for the past 10 years. Her next session starts in January if you're interested in refreshing your French.

Michael Varcoe

Another Senior's Centre member, Michael proudly displayed his handmade wood turned items including bowls, a vase, a cutting board and two cremation urns. The beautiful urns were created for his father-in-law and mother-in-law. Interestingly, 20 years ago his father-in-law provided him with the lathe that Michael used to create his urn.

All his projects are work intensive as he creates each small piece and fits them together to make the end product. The wood is quite unique. Ziricote, for instance, is \$38 a board foot (12 inches x 12 inches x 1 inch thick) but a lot is wasted.

The more types of wood he uses, the more interesting the piece. Apart from the common Canadian woods, he uses various colored ones from the Honduras, Cuba, South America, Africa, Burma and Europe.

One of his bowls has 64 pieces in 7 different woods: African mahogany, cherry, maple, Spanish cedar, wenge, zebra wood and padauk.

He demonstrated the amazing characteristics of Spanish cedar by turning one of the urns. Suddenly the cedar changed from a very dark to a very light wood simply by altering the direction of the light. It made these pieces truly unique.

What was his surprise?

He was instrumental in establishing the Workshop at the Seniors' Centre, and especially in finding an effective air cleaning system to dispel the wood dust created by the saws and sanders.

David Dauphinais

In 1987, David began collecting duck decoys and currently has original ones from the 1870s to the 1950s. He brought a small sampling of his collection, which included a P.E.I. Brant duck, and surprisingly different decoys from Gananoque, Prince Edward County and some Toronto Harbor Decoys that were built by a boatbuilder in the early 1900s. George Warren was famous for his decoys and ran shooting club activities on Lake St. Clair.

What was his surprise?

His knowledge of his collection. He had so much more to tell, but our time ran out.

Other items on display were vintage fishing tackle, milk bottles, coins, and cooking artifacts. Fred Ash, who you'll often find in the Workshop, brought his beautiful Inuit wood carvings.

For more information on the Aurora Seniors' Centre and all it has to offer, drop by 90 John West Way, visit the web site www.auroraseniors.ca, email auroraseniors@rogers.com or call 905-726-4767 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday.