ANTIQUES ROADSHOW™ INSIDER
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APRIL 2015
News, Trends, and Analysis from the World of Antiques and Collectibles

ON THE LOOKOUT

Photo courtesy of Rago Auctions

CASTLES IN THE AIR

A **Wendell Castle** laminated and carved walnut desk sold for $183,750 and a **Paul Evans** sculpture-front cabinet brought the same price to pace a three-day sale at Rago Auctions in February. The event moved 1,064 lots and earned $5.371 million, including buyer's premium. Castle (b. 1932) created the desk shown above in 1977 in Scottsville, N.Y. It measures 29½ inches high by 70 inches wide. Other top lots included a laminated lamp table, also by Castle ($135,750), and a **George Ohr** vase with a pink volcanic glaze ($68,750). See also p. 5.

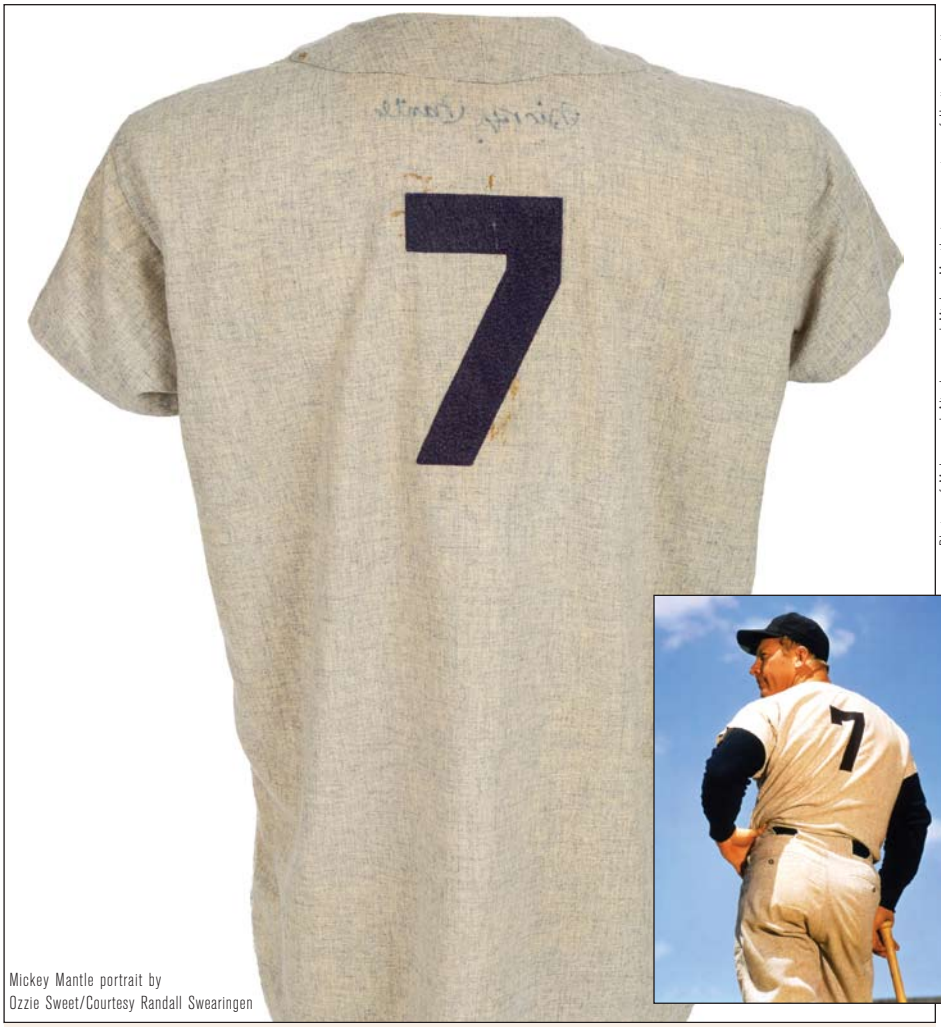
HOLY BIDDING WAR!

An unrestored edition of **DC Comics'** ***Batman #1***, originally issued in 1940, sold for $237,300 at Philip Weiss Auctions in Lynbrook, N.Y. in February. The comic is in impressive condition, having been graded 7.5 out of 10 by CGC. It entered the sale estimated at $100,000–$150,000. According to a Weiss Auctions release, the buyers were Metropolis Collectibles owners Stephen Fishler and Vincent Zurzolo, who in 2014 paid the highest amount ever for a comic book: $3.2 million for a CGC-certified 9.0 copy of *Action Comics #1* (Superman's debut).

ON THE INSIDE

KNOCKOUT KEEPSAKES

Boxing gloves from Ali's most controversial fight, a game-used Babe bat, and Koufax and Mantle jerseys duked it out in a wild winter sports auction.



Photos of Muhammad Ali gloves and Mickey Mantle jersey courtesy of Heritage Auctions

Mickey Mantle portrait by Ozzie Sweet/Courtesy Randall Swearingen

Vintage game-used sports memorabilia continues to draw standing-ovation prices, as illustrated by the most recent sale at Heritage Auctions. One-of-a-kind treasures that changed hands at eye-popping prices included gloves used by Muhammad Ali in his 1965 knockout of Sony Liston and a Mickey Mantle 1954 game jersey. (The photo of Mantle above is a later shot, from the early 1960s, by Ozzie Sweet.) See p. 4 for details.

THE FIRST WORD

A MODEL FIND

Photo by Ozzie Sweet

Many of you know that at *Antiques Roadshow* events, appraisers are forbidden from soliciting their guests' objects to consign or sell at auction. It's a good rule—it keeps things "pure," so to speak. However, nothing prevents you from contacting any appraiser after the show ends and asking for help selling an object or collection. That's exactly what happened with the eye-catching item shown here: a **Stebbins & Walker seeder model** measuring 7¼ inches tall by 11 inches wide by 12¼ inches deep.

This small seeder produced an enviable harvest for its owner.

Toy expert Noel Barrett appraised this beauty last summer. In the weeks after the show, the owner, who lives in Alabama, contacted him, hoping to sell. Barrett agreed and put it into a sale at his Carversville, Pa.-based company, Noel Barrett Auctions. He gave it an estimate in line with his appraisal at *Antiques Roadshow*: $3,500–$4,500.

Luckily for the toy's owner, Barrett's estimate was conservative: It sold for $11,800.

The Stebbins & Walker model was made in America in the middle to late19th century. As the photograph above shows, it's an amazingly crafted brass, metal, and wood model of a horse-drawn seed spreader. It still has its brass plate indicating the maker: "Stebbins & Walker Model Makers Rock Falls, Ill."

The details make it especially desirable, from the hinged brass covers for the dual wood seed chambers to the cast metal seat. "It appears fully complete," Barrett says, "except for a wood lever that operates the tilt/control bar near the plate."

That's about as close to perfect as you could hope to see in such a great old piece. It's the kind of find that keeps us all out there treasure-hunting, don't you think?.

Larry Canale

—Larry Canale, Editor-in-Chief

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BLAST FROM THE PAST

REMEMBER WHEN...

...people used **cameras** to take pictures? Sure, many of us still do. But with the decent image quality we get from our smartphones and iPhones, convenience is winning out.

Yet there's nothing like the quality that a nice film camera delivers.If you're drawn to old cameras, now is a great time to hunt. Prices are very reasonable, and the supply is healthy. Even if you don't plan to use one, they're great pieces to have around, just for display. That said, if you have one sitting on a shelf in your office or family room, you'll no doubt feel the temptation to go out and find some film, load it up, and relive the "good old days" of photography.

Here's the type of model that might get you into it (left): a Leica R4 with an Elmarit-R lens (135mm, f/2.8), Leitz 340 SCA flash, camera strap, and manual. The lot got away for $214 at Skinner Inc. Even better, how about the classic above: a Hasselblad 500C, complete with a Zeiss Planar lens (80mm, f/2.8) and Zeiss Sonnar lens (150mm, f/4). The lot included two 12-exposure backs, a Gossen Luna Pro meter, leather bag, and various accessories. A bidder picked this one up for $615—not bad for a Hasselblad, the "Rolls Royce" of cameras. —*L.C.*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Uncle Al: An Einstein Story

A reader relates her memorable meeting with an icon.

"A GENTLE MAN, A KIND MAN"

After a friend of mine bought me a subscription to *Insider* as a gift, I got your March issue, with Albert Einstein featured in the cover story and in "The First Word." I read the sentence, "How often do you get to know someone who stood face to face with Albert Einstein?" and I thought, I did!

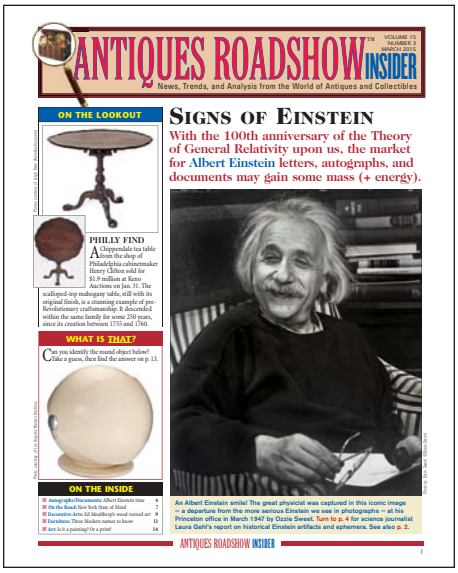
I was living in New Jersey at the time, and I was 9 or 10 years old. My science teacher, whom I adored, had polio, and walking wasn't easy for her. The other kids used to make fun of her, but I stayed after school and washed the blackboards. I learned a lot from Mrs. Stein; she had a unique way of teaching science—it was like storytelling. She made it interesting.

One day she asked me if I'd like to go and meet a dear friend of hers. She said my mother would have to sign a permission slip, and she did. So on a Saturday, we pulled up to 112 Mercer St. in Princeton, and I got nervous. Yep, it was him: Albert Einstein. It was a fall day, I smelled wood smoke, and the air was crisp. I was introduced to "the man," and he took my hand and kissed it. I knew I was never going to be the same again.

I sat in a corner on a couch by the fireplace playing with one of his cats while Mrs. Strein talked to him. Then he came over to me, knelt beside me, and said, "Child, come and join us in conversation," to which I responded, "I'm a kid; what could I possibly have in common with you?" He answered, "Can you swim?" to which I replied, "No." He said, "Neither can I. Let's talk; I'm sure we will find other common ground."

Well, that started several years of visits and lots of warm and funny conversations between us. We sailed in his "leaky boat" and bailed out a lot of water, and his housekeeper would come out on the lawn screaming in German because neither of us wore life preservers—our code for bravery, I guess. I watched him deliver a litter of kittens to a mother cat that otherwise would have died. And he had the first herb garden, before we knew what they were. When I asked him if he liked living in Princeton, he joked, "The people here should be put in mason's jars, with holes poked in the top so they could breathe, so I could observe them."

He was a gentle man, a kind man, and he allowed me to call him "Uncle Al." And I simply adored him.


ANTIQUES ROADSHOW INSIDER
News, Trends, and Analysis from the World of Antiques and Collectibles
ON THE LOOKOUT
PHILLY FIND
WHAT IS THAT?
ON THE INSIDE
SIGNS OF EINSTEIN
With the 100th anniversary of the Theory of General Relativity upon us, the market for Albert Einstein letters, autographs, and documents may gain some mass (+ energy).
An Albert Einstein smile! The great physicist was captured in this iconic image – a departure from the more serious Einstein we see in photographs – at his Princeton office in March 1947 by Ozzie Sweet. Turn to p. 4 for science journalist Laura Gahl's report on historical Einstein artifacts and ephemera. See also p. 2.
ANTIQUES ROADSHOW INSIDER

These are just a few of the memories of Albert Einstein that I have. There are others, too. And as I read the articles in your magazine, I thought, "Here's all this memorabilia going for hundreds of thousands of dollars, but I had a real relationship with Albert Einstein." Try putting that on the auction block!

—Carole Hemingway, Maine

PRIZED POSSESSIONS

AN EARLY SELFIE

I have been collecting what some people call "Photographica"—and what I call "stuff"—since 1952. I agree with you [see "The First Word," January 2015] about the multiple levels of nostalgia connected with collectibles. Mechanisms, images, books, peripherals, and data all weave individual spells. Also, levels of involvement create variations; looking at a fine camera may create joy, but handling it generates pleasure of a different scope and intensity.

The pinnacle of my collection is a unique self-portrait by Oskar Barnack, inventor of the Leica camera. I bought it from the estate of Nikolai Nylander, to whom Barnack had sent it in 1931 "as a little return" for a Leica image Nylander had made and entitled *Reval*. (Reval is the former name of Tallinn, capital of Estonia.)

If you don't use this submission, the exercise is still a success; the floodgates are open. So thank you!

—Paul Comon, Paul's Photos, Torrance, Calif.


HO-HO-HO!

I am 65 years old, and my older sisters are 69 and 71. When we were little girls at Christmas time, out came our Santa Claus figure. By now, he's been through a lot. He lost his hat many moons ago, for example, and we added the Christmas stocking to his arm years ago. And Santa's right leg is actually an old Alka Seltzer bottle, which replaced his lost stuffing. Our daddy, Arthur, was so happy when he fixed "our Santa," and we were even happier. We'd love to share his picture with all of your readers,

—Jean Mahoney
New York State

AUCTION NEWS & TRENDS

Going Deep

There's no slumping in the sports memorabilia business. Check out these all-star numbers.

By Larry Canale

The sports memorabilia market has taken plenty of punches over the past three decades. After the hobby boomed in the 1980s, all kinds of unscrupulous individuals tried to cash in. The result: countless fake autographs infiltrated the marketplace, prompting a highly publicized FBI investigation.

It was in the 1990s that authentication services began sprouting up, providing serious study of autographed items as well as game-used equipment, uniforms, and vintage cards.

While the sports collecting universe is still a tricky marketplace, buyers are feeling confident, judging by the lofty numbers being posted at sports auctions in recent years.

As *Antiques Roadshow* appraiser Leila Dunbar put it, "Collectors and investors alike appear to be adding to their portfolios with blue-chip memorabilia."

At a Heritage Auctions sale on Feb. 21 in New York, we saw plenty of blue-chip memorabilia, and it brought lots of green. Bidders spent more than $9.8 million on vintage sports treasures at the sale, which took place in New York. Chris Ivy, director of Heritage Auctions' Sports Collectibles department, wasn't exaggerating when he said, "The atmosphere was decidedly festive and collectors were in a bidding mood."

Nothing got them in a more "bidding" mood than the boxing gloves worn by Muhammad Ali and Sonny Liston in their second fight. In that controversial 1965 rematch, Ali won by a knockout moments into the fight, and onlookers wondered if Liston had taken a dive. Ali—who had only recently changed his name from Cassius Clay—stood

Front and back views of the Ali and Liston 1965 rematch gloves.

over Liston and challenged him to get up. (Neil Leifer's famous photograph, shown above, captured the moment.) But Liston, once known as a "killing machine," stayed down for the count. Ali's right hook instantly was dubbed "The Phantom Punch."

Fifty years later, both sets of gloves highlighted the Heritage sale. The lot wound up approaching seven figures, finally landing at $956,000. By comparision, the pair of gloves Ali (Clay) wore to beat Liston in 1964 sold for $385,850 at SCP Auctions in 2012.

Back to the Heritage sale: The auction of theAli/Liston gloves elicited a loud reaction from the crowd. So too did a trio of highly desirable baseball items.

One of them was Babe Ruth's 1921 home run bat. The Bambino himself, per provenance accompanying the bat, wrote that he used it to hit his 57th and 59th home runs of the season. The signed document, typed on Hotel Ansonia stationery and dated Oct. 13, 1921, starts out: "To my friend 'Fred P. Weber,' Phoenix, Arizona." Ruth then goes on to write: "It gives me great pleasure to present you with this—my trustworthy bat with which I batted out my 57th and 59th home runs at the Polo Ground, New York City on September 26, 1921 and broke my own world's home run record."

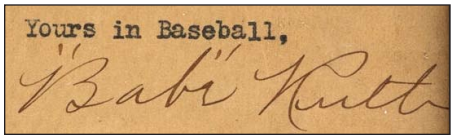
Ruth ended the note by writing "Yours in Baseball" and signing his name.

The Hillerich & Bradsby Model R2

Larry Canale, Insider's editor-in-chief, is author of several baseball books, including two with photographer Ozzie Sweet. He spent six years as editor of Tuff Stuff *and currently writes columns for* Sports Collectors Digest *and NationalPastimeMuseum.com.*

Photos courtesy of Heritage Auctions

Above is the barrel of the 47-ounce warclub Ruth used in hitting his record-breaking 59th HR in 1921. Below is a detail from a Ruth-typed and -signed letter describing the bat. Below right: This signed 1911 Joe Jackson photo fetched an astounding $179,250.



bat is a real war club—far bigger and heavier than what today's players use. It weighs 47 ounces and measures 35¾ inches long.

Bidding on the Ruth lot rose to $717,000, helped by authentication from Mears and PSA/DNA (bat) and Spence Authentication (Ruth letter).

The next-highest items were jerseys. A Sandy Koufax Brooklyn Dodgers jersey from 1955, his rookie season, drew a final price of $573,600. The size 44 garment was made by MacGregor and bears Koufax's number 32.

A Mickey Mantle jersey, meanwhile, brought a winning bid of $406,300. (See photo below right and on p. 1.) It dates to 1954, making it one of the earliest Mantle jerseys known to exist. Like Koufax's jersey, this one is a size 44 but was made by Wilson.

Another baseball item that drew heavy interest was an early signed photograph of Shoeless Joe Jackson that originally was part of the personal collection of

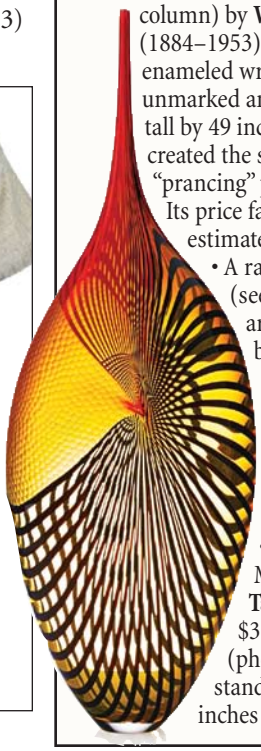
Cleveland Plain Dealer photographer Frank W. Smith. The Heritage catalog notes that the photograph only recently emerged "from more than a half-century of storage." Authenticated by PSA/DNA, the Shoeless Joe photo fetched $179,250. The Smith collection also produced signed photos of Christy Mathewson ($92,613) and Napoleon Lajoie ($16,730).

Above left and right: Koufax and Mantle jerseys worn early in their careers.

ON THE LOOKOUT

THE MAGIC OF MODERN

Another trend that keeps climbing: Mid-Century Modern and 20th Century Design. We referenced one hot name in the category, Wendell Castle, on p. 1, per a recent Rago Auctions sale. Here, we'll look at other highlights from the same auction.



• A stallion weathervane (photo, top of column) by **William Hunt Diederich** (1884–1953) sold for $59,375. The enameled wrought-iron piece is unmarked and measures 40 inches tall by 49 inches wide. Diederich created the stallion—shown in a "prancing" pose— in the 1930s. Its price far exceeded the pre-sale estimate of $10,000–$15,000.

• A rare **Kendrick** vase lamp (see photo above) dating to around 1905 and made by **Tiffany Studios** and **Grueby** sold for $50,000. The work stands 12½ inches tall and bears Tiffany's Acorn shade plus an electrified oil font.

• *Coronato,* a sculptural Murano vessel by **Lino Tagliapietra,** fetched $37,500. Dating to 2000 (photo at left), the vessel stands an impressive 36 inches tall.

Photos courtesy of Rago Auctions, Lambertville, NJ

Getting to Know Him

You've been watching him as *Antiques Roadshow*'s ebullient host for 10 years. As the series prepares to hit the road for its 20th tour, an *Antiques Roadshow* "insider" gives you more insight into Mark L. Walberg.

Photo by Jeff Dunn for WGBH

By Sarah K. Elliott

In working with Mark L. Walberg for the past 10 years—yes, as of the current Season 19, he's been host of *Antiques Roadshow* for a full decade—I've discovered that he's a man of many talents. So when *Insider* asked me to write about what he's like, about what makes him special, I came up with a long list of traits and characteristics—too many to fit into this space. But I'll try.... Here's my list of **The Top 10 Things You Should Know About Mark L. Walberg**.

1) Mark is a happy camper. Not only is he an affable guy "in real life" (off camera), but he's an enthusiastic lover of the great outdoors. Mark's camping skills were useful when, on a cloudy summer day in 2008, we shot a field segment about vintage Coleman equipment in Wichita, Kansas. Mark, excited about this segment, had volunteered to pitch the tent we'd brought for set-decorating purposes. (Please note: setting up props is not part of a reality TV host's job!) Thankfully he knew what he was doing. Midway through the taping, it began to rain and the "prop" tent became a useful shelter!

I've used several of Mark's tips when I've set up camp with my own family, such as his recommendation to give each camper his or her own mess kit to use and maintain throughout the trip. Mark points out an all-in-one kit—plate, fork, spoon, knife, and cup—can be easily found online or bought inexpensively from an Army surplus store (generally for under $20). Vintage kits from World War I or II are collectible and still functional, though they may cost a little more.

"This cuts down on trash you'll have to carry out and it's a chance to teach younger campers how to take care of their equipment," Mark says. "And they're fun to use!"

2) He may be a California guy now, but at heart, Mark is a Southern gentleman. In fact, he hails from Florence, S.C. "When I first moved to California from South Carolina after my 19th birthday," he says, "I sold shoes for Nordstrom. No one could understand a word I said! It wasn't a conscious thing, but eventually that accent went away."

Those linguistic ties to his childhood hometown aren't completely gone. Whenever we visit a state south of the Mason-Dixon line, that old Southern drawl comes right on back, y'all!

3) He's a proud papa. If you spend a little time with Mark, you'll know right away how important his children are to him. He beams when he talks about his son Morgan, a recent Virginia Military Institute grad and Navy pilot-in-training, and his daughter, Goldie, a member of Ballet Met II in Columbus, Ohio. Mark lightheartedly boasts about his close-knit kids: "Goldie knows more about the military than any other ballet dancer I've ever met, and Morgan knows every song in *Rent*."

4) Entertainment runs in the family. Mark comes from an extended family of musicians and performers. His wife, actress Robbi Morgan Walberg, was part of the original Broadway cast of the musical comedy Barnum, and—take note, horror fans—played a doomed camp counselor in the movie Friday the 13th. Mark's grandfather was a professional musician and bandleader, and his grandmother started out as a singer before retiring to raise her family. Add to that his in-laws' roots in Vaudeville, and he's part of a real show biz bloodline.

5) He can always name that (show) tune. This entertaining family

Photo by Sarah K. Elliott

Sarah K. Elliott has been a producer at Antiques Roadshow *since 2007 and is senior producer of the specials* Antiques Roadshow, Celebrating Black Americana, *and* Antiques Roadshow, Treasures on the Move.

Pictured: Walberg at New York's historic Apollo Theater (left) and throwing out the first pitch at an Albuquerque Isotopes game.

background may account for Mark's ability to recognize almost any song from stage, screen, or Top 40 radio. I've often been impressed by his encyclopedic-jukebox brain. In fact, this summer in New York City, he played a friendly game of "name that song" between takes with some of the Apollo Theater's stage crew. He held his own against folks who had seen more musical talent than most, right there under the bright spotlights of the legendary performance venue.

"Being the host on *Antiques Roadshow* allows me to experience things, and in this case, places, steeped in history," he said. "I was overwhelmed to be standing on the same stage where so many greats got their start."

6) When he hasn't been discovering America's hidden treasures with *Antiques Roadshow*, Mark has been on the hunt for every city's savory local flavors. My camera crew has eaten a lot of meals together over the past 10 years, and early on in our travels together, Mark proposed that we endeavor to always try to enjoy a town's independent, regional eateries. This has meant avoiding national restaurant chains or any franchise we have on our own home turfs. It's a rule I've been happy to follow, as we've experienced such delectable delights as sandwiches stuffed with fries in Pittsburgh, mouth-watering steaks in El Paso, award-winning *pinot gris* in Oregon, and so much fantastic barbeque in cities like Kansas City, Austin, and Raleigh that I've lost track.

7) Mark is a game (and sports) lover. This will not be surprising if you're familiar with Mark's history as the host of such game shows as *Russian Roulette*, *The Moment of Truth*, or, more recently, *The Game Plane*. But his interest in games goes beyond his professional aptitude to a personal appetite and appreciation for play and competition. He's a regular basketball player back home in Los Angeles, a skilled poker player, and an enthusiastic fan of most American sports, always willing to throw his hat into the ring for a chance to play.

One highlight for Mark last summer was at an Albuquerque Isotopes baseball game during our visit to the city in July. "I've always loved baseball, and throwing out the first pitch in Albuquerque was a blast. Truthfully, though, I had more fun practicing with my producers than actually doing the pitch."

8) Mark is a true "people person." If you've ever been to an *Antiques Roadshow* event, you know that Mark is the TV host with the most welcoming handshakes, high-fives, and hugs for guests. "The time I've had interacting with the people attending *Antiques Roadshow*—that's been my favorite part of the job," he recently told me.

9) Mark has an incredible ability to memorize a large number of names and a huge pile of facts quickly. He discovered this hidden talent early in his career when he was working as the warm-up guy for a talk show pilot. While entertaining and interacting with the audience, he agreed to try to memorize and recite every person's name—about 150 of them—and he did it! Then Mark asked them to switch seats. He amazed those in attendence when he not only remembered their names but told them who they sat next to prior to the seat change.

"I remember things I find interesting," he says. "I've learned how to choose to be interested in whatever the subject is, and that improves my memory."

10) For this modern craft of television making, Mark is up for just about anything. Just about. "I'm a courageous host," he says in recalling some of his more physical *Antiques Roadshow* shoots, "but I'm afraid of heights!" A 76-foot-high, nearly vertical water slide in Orlando was, understandably, the limit to his amenable disposition about "getting the shot" for a segment.

Typically, though, this guy has a can-do attitude for everything thrown at him. For example, he really can ride a horse, which he did in Austin, Texas, when he and appraiser Bruce Shackelford discussed antique Mexican parade saddles. He has taken a bobsled down the training track at Utah Olympic Park, driven beautiful vintage cars in Michigan, fly-fished on the McKenzie River in Oregon, rode an antique fire engine in Phoenix, took a coal car through the old mine tunnels in Beckley, W.Va., and more.

So there you have it: 10 things you now know about Mark L. Walberg. I hope you've enjoyed watching our host as much as I've enjoyed working with him these past 10 years.

Walberg walks with a new friend while taping a segment on parade saddles. (For a little fun with an alternate photo taken moments earlier, see p. 16.)

Photos by Sarah K. Elliott

ENAMORED WITH COLOR

The block prints of Frances Gearhart are a vibrant celebration of our western landscape.

By Pete Prunkl

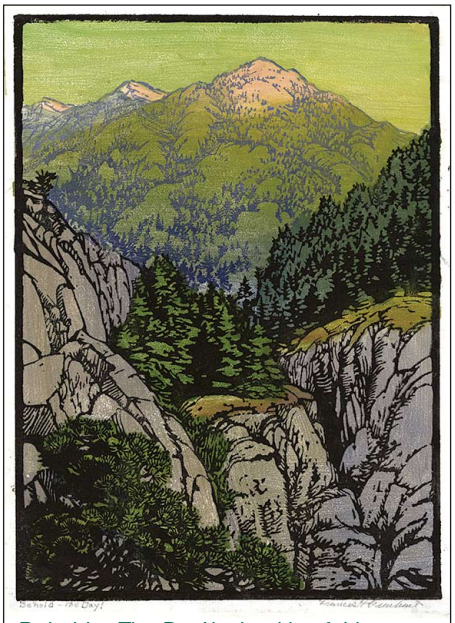
Like publisher Joseph Pulitzer, declining eyesight prematurely ended the career of Frances Gearhart (1869–1958), one of the early 20th century's most gifted and popular artists. Before the loss, her primary subject matter included the dramatic mountains, secluded forests, and tranquil coast of California, Oregon and Washington.

Gearhart memorialized nature's wonders in color linoleum block prints, an ideal medium for the walls of an Arts & Crafts bungalow. Her output from around 1918 through 1940 was small, perhaps no more than 250 memorable and evocative scenes. With approximately 50 prints per scene, that means a lifetime production of perhaps 12,500 signed and numbered prints.

Her artistic vision and superb execution put Gearhart among the elite of America's block print artists (see "The Big Five" sidebar). "There is a depth to her compositions that is not often seen in woodcuts or linocuts," says Harold Leitenberg, developer of a website showing 195 examples of her work. "Gearhart obviously loved the California landscape. No other artist working in color block prints has ever done a better job of portraying both its serene and stark beauty."

"I feel like she is taking me by the hand and leading me through the picture, almost beyond the picture," says Susan Futterman, co-curator of a 2009-2010 exhibition of Gearhart's work (see "Sources & Resources," p. 10). "There is always a path through the trees or through the water. I feel like I am being led through the picture. Gearhart's subject matter is distinctly American, but her choice of colors, color contrasts, and tone are reminiscent of Japanese prints."

Frances Gearhart was largely a self-



Behold – The Day! is the title of this c. 1930 print as well as the title of the book that accompanied the 2009-2010 Frances Gearhart exhibition in Pasadena. The print measures 13 1/8 x 9 ½ inches.

Photo courtesy of The Annex Galleries

At 14½ x 11¼ inches, *In Glacial Majesty* (c. 1935) is one of Gearhart's largest prints. It sold at Rago Auctions in 2011 for $5,185.

SISTER ACT

Frances was not the only artistic Gearhart. Her sisters **May** (1872–1951) and **Edna** (1879–1974) also were well-known artists. All three sisters lived together in Pasadena; none married. Of the three, May had the most thorough art education. She studied with Rudolph Schaffer, Arthur Dow, Hans Hofmann, and Benjamin Chambers Brown. From 1903–1939, she was supervisor of art education for the Los Angeles City Schools. Some think it was May who taught Frances how to make block prints. Edna taught art at Los Angeles High School and excelled in drawing.

Photo courtesy of The Annex Galleries

May Gearhart completed this small (3 x 2 7/8 inches) aquatint and etching in 1929. *Take It or Leave It*, signed in the lower right, has a $400 price tag.

REDUCTION BLOCK

Linocuts can also be produced through **reduction cutting**. In this method, an entire scene is carved into one block, inked with a light color, and printed. The artist then removes (reduces or subtracts) some of the block, re-inks the block in a darker color, aligns the paper with first color on the press, and prints the second color. For every additional color, more sections of the block are removed. The darkest color is saved for last and has every preceding color printed under it.

BIG FIVE

Asked about Frances Gearhart's place among the Arts & Crafts block print artists, dealer Steven Thomas replies, "I always put **Arthur Dow** at the top of the heap because he was the seminal figure, but **Gustave Baumann**, **Margaret Jordan Patterson**, **Frances Gearhart**, and **Edna Bel Hopkins** among others are the upper echelon." Gearhart, he adds, "has always brought strong prices, and the recently published books have only heightened interest in her work." —*P.P.*

In recent issues of Insider, *North Carolina-based Pete Prunkl wrote features on furniture designer Warren McArthur (January 2015), shirred rugs and Lalique (February 2015), and word turning artist Ed Moulthrop (March 2015).*

Photo courtesy of the Book Club of California

The Gearhart sisters planned to issue the book *Let's Play* in 1927, but it wasn't published until 2009.

taught artist, although she attended summer art courses given by seascape painter Charles Herbert Woodbury and noted author and artist Henry Rankin Poore. Her academic training was as a high school English teacher and she spent 20-plus years in the classroom before retiring around 1923. Her artistic preferences gradually evolved from watercolors to wood blocks to linocuts (the term artists use for linoleum block prints).

Gearhart's method for creating linocuts came from Arthur Dow, the American master teacher and wood block pioneer. Dow simplified the complex division of labor of 18th-century Japanese wood block printing by making the process more artistic and less uniform. By 1900, artists had applied Dow's wood block techniques to linoleum blocks. With no natural grain, this soft, inexpensive material was much easier to cut than wood.

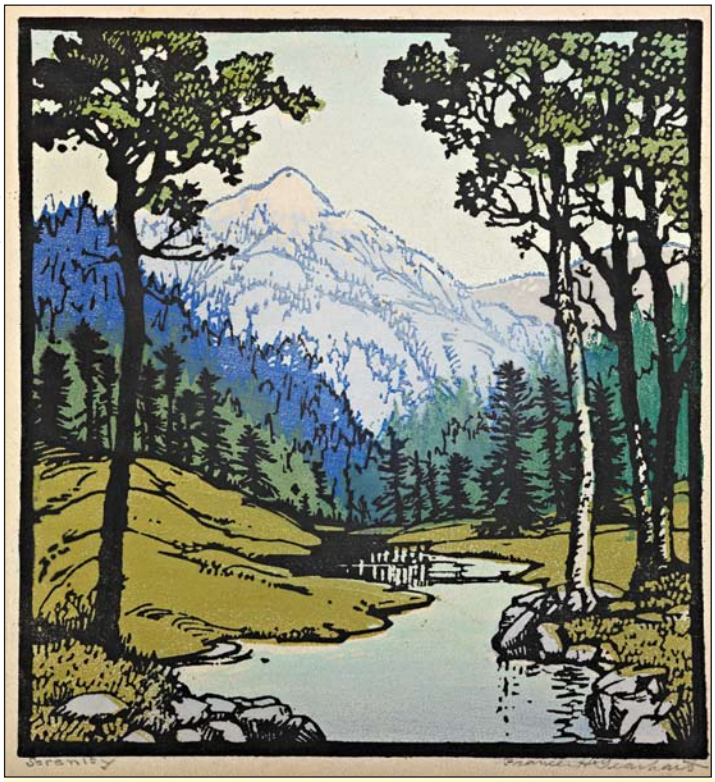
Like the Japanese, Dow taught his students to use a separate carved block for each color. Gearhart applied that rule except for her picture's finishing touch. Like the Japanese but unlike Dow, she preferred to use a key block as the final step in the printing process. A key block has the darkest ink of the entire picture; it overlays every other color and provides rich detail. Look at any of Gearhart's prints and a strong, defining dark blue, not black, outline dominates the entire landscape. "Blue makes the print pop," says Futterman.

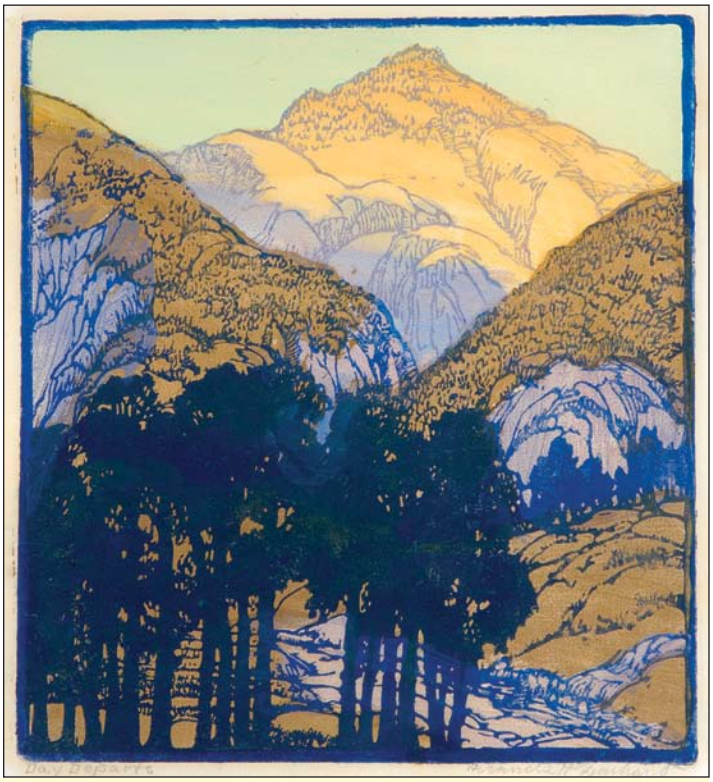
Gearhart's mesmerizing landscapes were never forgotten by the Arts & Crafts community. For years, a handful of her prints surfaced at every Arts & Crafts Conference in Asheville, N.C. Collectors take note: Gearhart's earliest linoleum block prints were small, 2 x 3 inches. As she gained experience, the blocks increased to just over 14 x 11 inches in the 1930s.

HOME-FIELD ADVANTAGE?

Although collectors love her, Gearhart's hometown largely ignored her. The Pasadena Museum of California Art, for one, never had an exhibition of her works. That changed when Futterman, a resident of Pasadena, made a discovery that thrust Frances and her sisters into the spotlight.

Futterman found a large collection of Gearhart works that puzzled her: color block prints of children, not mountains.





Photos courtesy of Rago Auctions, Lambertville, NJ

Above left: Frances Gearhart's aptly titled *Serenity*, a work that dates to around 1928. The 10 x 9-inch piece sold at Rago Auctions in 2012 for $6,875. Above right: *Day Departs*, a Gearhart work from around five years later (c. 1933). The artist used a key block to produce the strong blue/green trees in the foreground. The 11 x 9¾-inch work drew $3,240 at Rago Auctions in 2006.

Photos courtesy of Rago Auctions, Lambertville, NJ

Art expert Susan Futterman learned that Gearhart often brushed the ink on a block to create color variations; note the sky in the work above left, a c. 1922 piece titled *High Skies*. The 8½ x 9-inch print brought $1,500 at Rago Auctions in 2012. Above right: *Incoming Fog*, a work Gearhart completed c. 1929. Titled and signed in pencil, this 10 x 11-inch print sold in 2011 for $6,100.

They were clearly a set, but for what purpose?

Inquiries led her to the Cotsen Foundation in Los Angeles, which at one time had the same collection of prints. Cotsen's founder donated the prints to a children's library at Princeton University that he had established in honor of his wife. Futterman eventually traveled to Princeton and found the missing prints along with poems and a cover design. It was then she discovered they were intended for a book, *Let's Play*, that Frances, Edna, and May Gearhart (see "Sisters Act") had planned to publish in 1927. The Great Depression seems to have scuttled that idea.

"Edna or May or both did the drawings; Edna wrote the poems and Frances cut the blocks and did all the printing," says Futterman, who worked tirelessly to get *Let's Play* published. With financial help from friends, supporters, the Arts & Crafts Research Fund, and the Book Club of California, she succeeded. Let's Play became available as a limited-edition book in 2009.

Let's Play was the centerpiece of the first exhibition of Gearhart's work in Pasadena in late 2009 and early 2010; it was co-curated by Futterman and Roger Genser. The Pasadena Museum of California Art published an exhibition book with photos, commentary, and some of Futterman's research in 2010.

Even after seven years of research, a tantalizing question remains unanswered. How did Gearhart capture the images she later transferred to a linoleum block? "We have seen tons of watercolors, but none exactly match the prints," Futterman says. "We've seen no photographs, so we don't know."

Thankfully, Futterman is continuing her research. "I'd love to do a bigger, more comprehensive book on Frances Gearhart," she says. "That was always my plan."

SOURCES & RESOURCES

Here's a selective list of sources for more information on the art of Frances Gearhart.

AUCTIONS

• **Rago Auctions** (RagoArts.com): 333 North Main St., Lambertville, NJ 08530. Phone: 609-397-9374.

• **Swann Auction Galleries** (SwannGalleries.com): 104 East 25th St., New York, N.Y. 10010. Phone: 212-254-4710.

• **Treadway Gallery** (TreadwayGallery.com): 2029 Madison Road, Cincinnati, OH 45208. Phone: 513-321-6742.

BOOKS

• ***Behold the Day: The Color Block Prints of Frances Gearhart***, by Victoria Dailey, Nancy E. Green, and Susan Futterman (Pasadena Museum of California Art, 2010)

• ***Let's Play***, by Frances, May, and Edna Gearhart (Typecraft, Wood, and Jones, 2009)

GALLERIES

• **The Annex Galleries** (AnnexGalleries.com): 604 College Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95404. Phone: 707-546-7352.

• **Roger Genser, The Prints and the Pauper** (ifpda.org): P.O. Box 5133, Santa Monica, CA 90409-5133. Phone: 310-392-5582.

• **Steven Thomas Inc.** (Woodblock-Prints.com): P.O. Box 41, Woodstock VT 05091.

One of eight Gearhart *Let's Play* woodcuts that sold at Swann Auction Galleries in 2014 for $25,000.

Photos courtesy of Swann Auction Galleries

INTERNET

• **FrancesGearhart.com:** Harold Leitenberg consulted with dozens of authorities before constructing this comprehensive website. Here you will find photos of 195 Gearhart linoleum block prints with titles, dimensions, and year printed. Leitenberg adds a biography and links to galleries and auction houses that sell Gearhart prints.

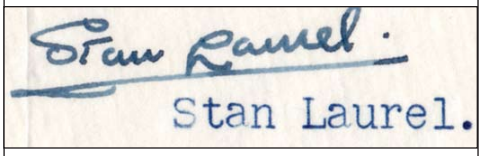
• **TwoRedRoses.com:** The Two Red Roses foundation has 12 of the 25 woodblock prints from the Gearhart sisters' *Let's Play* book; photos are included on its website. The foundation also purchased eight woodcuts from *Let's Play* for $25,000 at Swann Auction Galleries in 2014.

Laurel was consistent in signing his name, as the example above (detail at left) illustrates. Note the paraph (flourish) and the period after his name.

IN-PERSON SIGNATURES

Consistent with Stan Laurel's autograph over the years is his use of the **paraph** (a written flourish) under his name and the fact that he always added a period, or full stop, after his signature.

Another characteristic of Laurel's autograph is that he almost always signed in fountain pen, favoring blue but often signing in black. (Authentic examples appear above and below.) He almost never signed in ballpoint pen. There are, however, some authentic Laurel pencil autographs in existence, but solely on album pages.

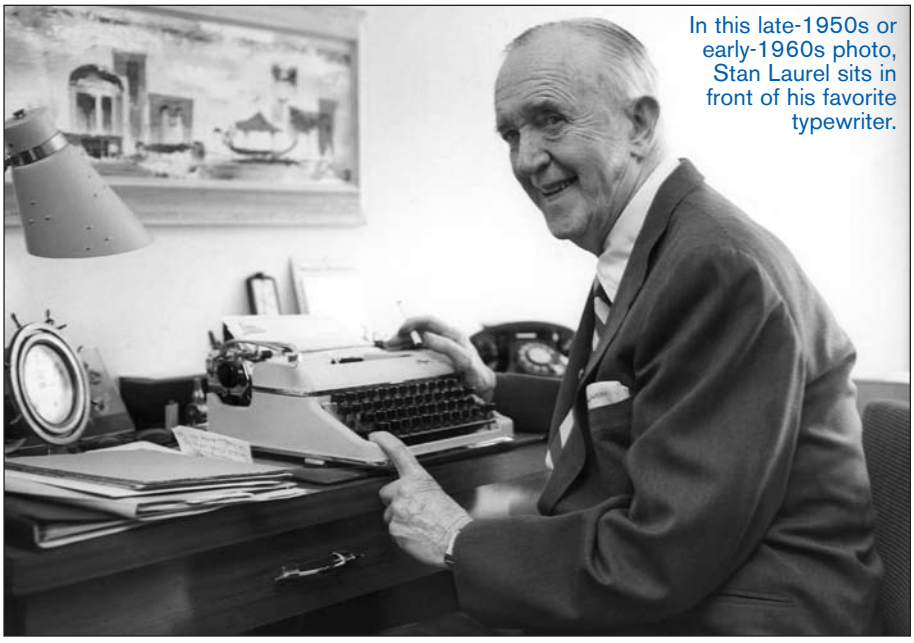


SECRETARIES AND FORGERIES

Stan Laurel never used secretaries to sign his name, but it should be noted that in the early days, major Hollywood studios systematically sent out non-genuine autographs to answer the large volume of fan requests. The easiest fake autographed photo to detect is the "pre-print." These photos include facsimile autographs reproduced in the printing process. Another common method of mechanically "signing" photos is through the use of the rubber stamp. Starting in the silent film era (1890s, extending through the 1920s), rubber stamps were the most common method for studios to respond to fan requests for autographs. —*B.H.*

LETTERS FROM STAN

Comic great Stan Laurel would have loved e-mail, judging by the nonstop flow of letters he typed and mailed. Now, thanks to the work of a fan with a collecting spirit, Laurel's archive of letters is fans to enjoy.



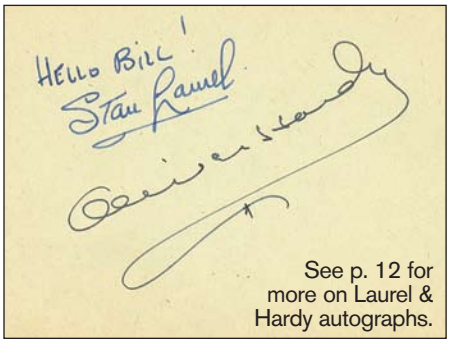
In this late-1950s or early-1960s photo, Stan Laurel sits in front of his favorite typewriter.

By Bernie Hogya

Today, you can read the accumulated letters of such great men as Mark Twain, Albert Einstein, and Thomas Jefferson, thanks to auctions, websites, museums, and other repositories. Why not Stan Laurel? To me, he was just as important. Besides, Einstein never made me laugh. Not once.

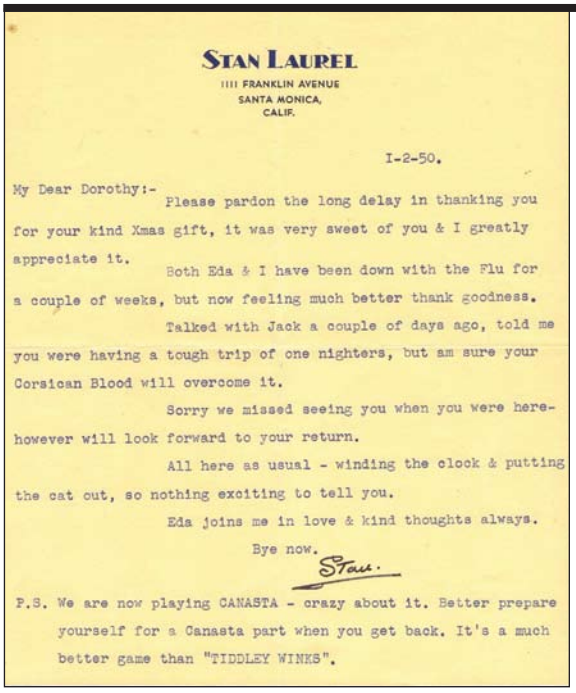
Stan Laurel was born Arthur Stanley Jefferson on June 16, 1890 in England and died 50 years ago (Feb. 23, 1965) at age 74. In between, he lived an illustrious life, but he never wrote an autobiography. As a result, fans have had to rely on third-party interpretations by biographers.

There had to be a better way… and there was. Laurel's prolific output of letters practically writes his life story—in his own words. It was just a matter of finding, organizing, and sharing them. So several years ago, I started the Stan Laurel Correspondence



See p. 12 for more on Laurel & Hardy autographs.

Bernie Hogya, who was introduced to Laurel & Hardy as a child by his father, started The Stan Laurel Correspondence Archive Project to celebrate the comedian's life. A New York ad agency director, he helped create the long-running and successful advertising campaign "Got milk?" and also authored The Milk Mustache Book.



STAN LAUREL
1111 FRANKLIN AVENUE
SANTA MONICA,
CALIF.

1-2-50.

My Dear Dorothy:- Please pardon the long delay in thanking you for your kind Xmas gift, it was very sweet of you & I greatly appreciate it.

Both Eda & I have been down with the Flu for a couple of weeks, but now feeling much better thank goodness.

Talked with Jack a couple of days ago, told me you were having a tough trip of one nighters, but am sure your Corsican Blood will overcome it.

Sorry we missed seeing you when you were here- however will look forward to your return.

All here as usual - winding the clock & putting the cat out, so nothing exciting to tell you.

Eda joins me in love & kind thoughts always.

Bye now.

Stan.

P.S. We are now playing CANASTA - crazy about it. Better prepare yourself for a Canasta part when you get back. It's a much better game than "TIDDLEY WINKS".

This 1950 thank-you note mentions Laurel's love for the card game canasta. "It's a much better game than 'Tiddlywinks,'" he wrote, spelling it as "Tiddley Winks."

Archive Project to do just that: collect and catalog his letters. So far, the Archive includes more than 1,250 Stan Laurel letters. Anyone can view them, along with those I've collected myself, at LettersFromStan.com. *[Ed. note: The site launched in 2007; at this writing, the author is working on a redesign. Relaunch date: June 16—Laurel's 150th birthday.]*

The online archive does more than simply present Laurel's letters chronologically. Each one is complemented by a transcription, pertinent historical information, unpublished photos, and period press clippings that create a comprehensive picture of Laurel's life.

A MAN OF WORDS

Beginning with his early days in British vaudeville, when he worked with Charlie Chaplin, and extending through his years performing with Oliver Hardy, whom he met at Hal Roach Studios in 1926, Stan Laurel became a master of comedy. He simply loved to make people laugh. He also loved to write letters, and is known to have written several thousand after Hardy's death in 1957.

Sitting at his trusty Olympia model SM-4 typewriter, Stan would type out his daily correspondence. He told jokes, discussed politics, and reminisced about his Hollywood past with friends, family, and strangers alike. Some highlights:

• **Movie talk:** Among the most enticing to collectors are letters Laurel wrote about his films. Example: *"Have you seen*

A CLOSER LOOK

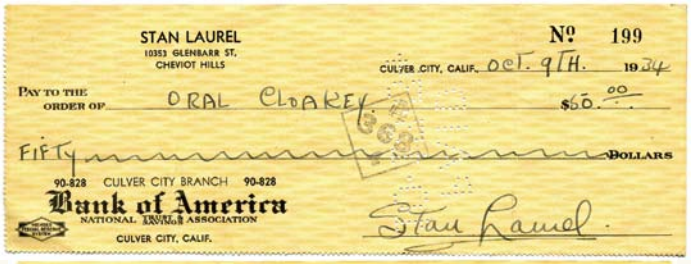
SIGNS OF STAN

Laurel & Hardy autographs have been desirable to generations of collectors. Here's a sampling of items you'll find with a signature from the comedy duo or, in much greater supply, from Stan Laurel.

• **Album pages and signed checks:** Laurel may have signed tens of thousands of items, but there's enough demand that his autograph on an album page or signed check regularly sells for $125–$250. Album pages that include Oliver Hardy's signature as well can reach or exceed $400. (Pictured below: checks signed by Laurel and Hardy.)

• **Letters:** A standard typed letter signed (TLS) by Laurel with "average" content usually sells for $125-$225, while letters carrying unique content—especially those mentioning his association with Hardy—can sell for many times that amount. A completely handwritten autographed letter signed (ALS) usually sells for more than a typed letter and, again, depends on content for price.

Over the years, Laurel signed many contracts and legal agreements. While they're not common on the autograph market today, they do show up from time to time.



STAN LAUREL
10353 GLENBARR ST.
CHEVIOT HILLS

No. 199

CULVER CITY, CALIF. Oct. 9TH. 1934

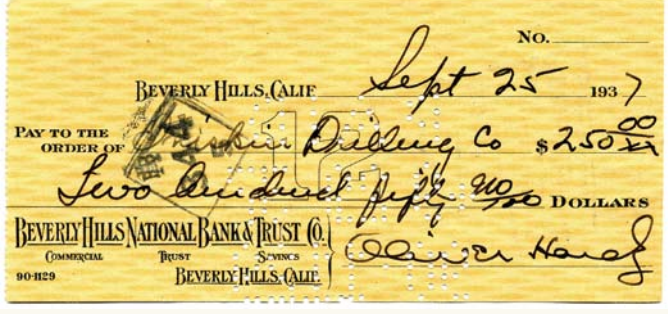
PAY TO THE ORDER OF ORAL CLOAKEY $50.00

FIFTY DOLLARS

90-828 CULVER CITY BRANCH 90-828

Bank of America
NATIONAL TRUST & SAVINGS ASSOCIATION
CULVER CITY, CALIF.

Stan Laurel



No.

BEVERLY HILLS, CALIF. Sept 25 1937

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Hal Roach Studio Co $250.00

Two Hundred Fifty and no/100 DOLLARS

BEVERLY HILLS NATIONAL BANK & TRUST CO.
COMMERCIAL TRUST SAVINGS
BEVERLY HILLS, CALIF.
90-1129

Oliver Hardy

Photographs: There are authentically signed Laurel & Hardy photographs in existence without personalized inscriptions, but these are the rarest of the rare. Laurel believed it was just as important to personalize an autograph as it was to sign it. Therefore, Laurel-signed photos from every era commonly feature a handwritten inscription. They run the gamut from personal notes to close friends to a simple "Hello!" and the name of the recipient.

Probably the most popular Stan Laurel signed item is the classic 1930s Bud "Stax" Graves portrait of Laurel & Hardy (pictured above). Signed Graves photos can fetch in excess of $1,000 at auction and occasionally double that amount, depending on size and personalization. Graves portraits signed only by Laurel usually sell for $250–$800.

The earlier the photograph, the more valuable. Snapshot photos signed later in Laurel's life are much more plentiful and therefore much more affordable to the collector.

Photos without a personalization are more in demand and usually command a higher price tag. Yet non-personalized Laurel & Hardy items are more often forged. The good news: Perhaps more so than any other celebrity, Laurel's autograph remained remarkably consistent over time.

—Bernie Hogya

One Laurel letter in the author's archive references the sad end, at age 31, to actor Carl Switzer's life. That's Switzer, as "Alfalfa," in the photo at right, a publicity still promoting *Our Gang* film shorts.

any of our latest pictures? We have one running at the Embassy Theatre in New York—Two Tars. They are giving it quite a lot of advertising so I guess it must be going O.K. Everything here is just as usual, working hard and still trying to make funny pictures. What do you think of the Talkies? Up to now I don't think so much of them—of course they are not perfected yet by a long way—I think will take quite a while before they are. It is a wonderful thing, but I like the silent ones better."

Laurel and Hardy's first "Talkie," *Unaccustomed As We Are*, premiered in April 1929, just nine months after he wrote that letter.

• **Advice:** Laurel didn't discriminate when it came to correspondence. Politicians, fellow actors, long-time friends, little kids; he felt that each deserved a response. Here's an example of a letter he wrote to a 12-year-old fan, Gary, in 1958: *"Note you need some activity for the club—why don't you try amateur theatricals? Am sure there must be some talent among your members for acting, singing, and dancing. You could put on little shows. I used to do this when I was a kid and got a lot of enjoyment out of it. In the summer time, I put on shows in the back yard for friends and neighbors and had a wonderful time entertaining them."*

Can you imagine the thrill for a young boy to receive entertainment advice from Stan Laurel?

• **His old friend:** Although he spent six decades bringing laughter to the world, Laurel felt profound sadness when Oliver "Babe" Hardy died on Aug. 7, 1959. Two days later, he wrote this passage in a letter: *"The news came as a shock to me. However, I think it was a blessing—poor fellow must have been really suffering. They discovered recently he had a bad cancer condition, so under the circumstances there was no hope of his ever recovering. What a tragic end to such a wonderful career."*

• **Academy honors:** Laurel kept Hardy in his thoughts in a letter about the Honorary Academy Award he received for "creative pioneering in the field of cinema comedy," accepted on Laurel's behalf by Danny Kaye on April 17, 1961. Stan wrote: *"Needless to tell you I'm very thrilled to receive such a wonderful tribute. Only wish poor old Babe had been here to share this great honor which he helped make possible."*

One of the things we learn from Laurel's letters is how humble, kind, and generous he was. It really comes out in letters like that.

• **Colleagues in film:** Laurel also wrote about other actors he knew and worked with. For example, Carl Switzer, with his ever-present cowlick, played "Alfalfa" in *Our Gang*. In 1959, Switzer was killed at age 31 during an argument over a small amount of money another man owed to him. Later, Laurel wrote this about the killing: *"That was a terrible thing about 'Alfalfa' Switzer wasn't it? All over a few dollars debt he had to lose his life. I knew him very well as a kid in 'Our Gang' films, used to see him every day on the Roach lot for several years, it's hard to believe that this could happen to him. What a tragedy."*

• **Politics:** Laurel wrote about national news events, too. From a letter in late November 1963: *"We … were very saddened over the tragic death of our beloved President, a sickening affair. Incredible that such a thing should happen in the U.S. What a loss."*

A CLOSER LOOK

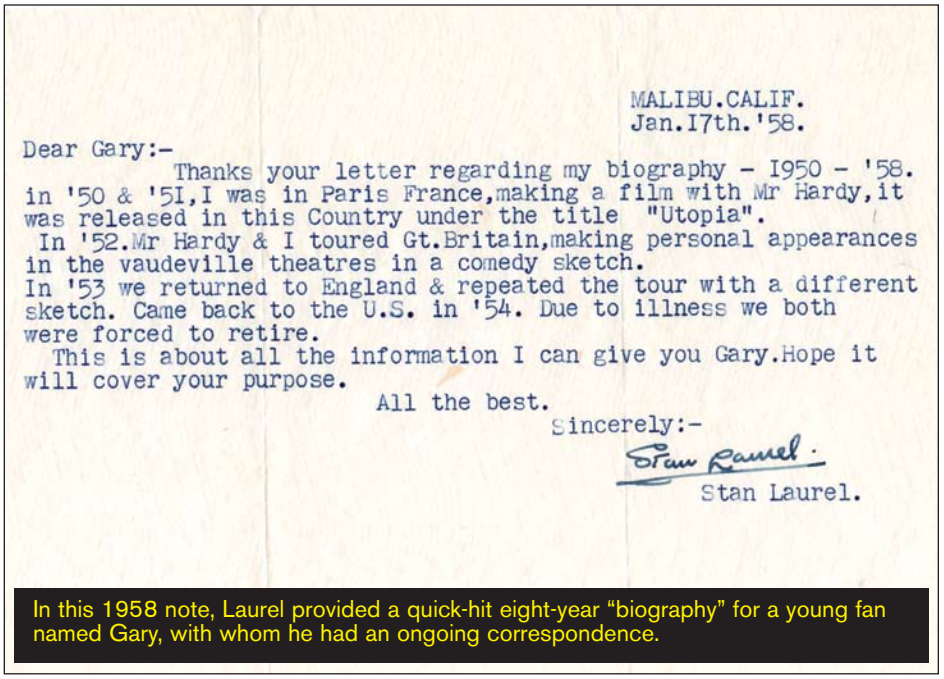
STAN'S STATIONERY STORE?

Considering that he loved writing letters, Stan Laurel's answer when asked what he would have done if he hadn't become a comedian isn't surprising. "I would really have enjoyed owning a stationery store, running it myself," he once wrote. "I don't know why that is, but outside of my work, my favorite thing to do is just go out and visit stationery stores." —*B.H.*

One of Stan's prized possessions was an autographed photo of John F. Kennedy inscribed to him. He had it framed and hung it on the wall of his Santa Monica apartment.

A few years earlier, Laurel supported Kennedy's bid for the presidency, and he was happy JFK won. In this letter, written shortly after the 1960 election, Stan makes his view known with a joke: *"On election day, two birds [are] sitting on a telegraph wire and chatting. 1ST BIRD: who are you voting for? 2ND BIRD: I guess I should go for Nixon, everybody seems to think he's for us!"* (As in, Nixon's for the birds. Get it?)

• **Humor:** Because he was a comedian first and foremost, it's natural that Laurel's sense of humor often comes across in letters. Among the many examples is this self-effacing bit: *"Yes, I've been to Grauman's Chinese theatre many times. Babe and I also appeared in an act on the stage there one night. The reason we didn't sign our names in cement was, we were never asked—they probably saw our act!"*



MALIBU.CALIF.
Jan.17th.'58.

Dear Gary:-

Thanks your letter regarding my biography - 1950 - '58. in '50 & '51,I was in Paris France,making a film with Mr Hardy,it was released in this Country under the title "Utopia". In '52.Mr Hardy & I toured Gt.Britain,making personal appearances in the vaudeville theatres in a comedy sketch. In '53 we returned to England & repeated the tour with a different sketch. Came back to the U.S. in '54. Due to illness we both were forced to retire.

This is about all the information I can give you Gary.Hope it will cover your purpose.

All the best.

Sincerely:-

Stan Laurel.

Stan Laurel

In this 1958 note, Laurel provided a quick-hit eight-year "biography" for a young fan named Gary, with whom he had an ongoing correspondence.

SWEET-SOUNDING ADVICE

Most homes have a stringed instrument stashed somewhere. How old is it? How valuable? We bring you a crash course.

By Jane Viator

We had the opportunity recently to spend the day with appraiser Jill Arbetter of Skinner Inc. This Massachusetts-based auction house regularly holds sales of fine instruments. We talked to Arbetter about stringed instruments: violins, guitars, banjos, mandolins, ukuleles, cellos, bass viols, harps. Evaluating these instruments requires close-up examination, so Arbetter travels regularly to hold consignment clinics in major cities.

On this day in San Francisco, all instruments brought in were violins—not surprising, because they typically comprise 90–95 percent of what Arbetter sees in her travels.

We quickly learned some basics:

• **Labels often lie.** No matter if the yellowing label inside says "Stradivarius" in curly antique letters. Almost certainly, it's not a multi-million-dollar 17th- or 18th-century Italian masterpiece from the most famous violin-maker of all time. It's most likely a 19th- or 20th-century copy.

• **Condition is paramount.** Violins are sensitive and complex. Cracks, missing parts, and clumsy repairs are difficult or impossible to correct. Expert restoration is hard to come by and expensive, worthwhile only for a high-quality instrument.

• **Age doesn't equal value.** An authentic very old violin can be worth very little. A newly made violin can be worth tens of thousands. It's the quality of the instrument and the beauty of its sound that matter, not its age or place of origin.

Photos by Jane Viator

At the owner's request, Jill gives one of his flea-market violins an audition. Most violins she sees are c. 1890s to mid-1900s, German-made, and worth $1,000–$3,000.

Karen's heirloom violin is missing its bridge, so Jill improvised a pad to protect the wood beneath the strings.

FAMILY HEIRLOOM

Arbetter sees many violins that have been kept within a family because a relative played it years ago. That was the

Jane Viator, a decorative arts consultant based in Walnut Creek, Calif., wrote about pure gold in decorative arts in our February 2014 issue and undervalued Mid-Century Modern designers last month.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Fiddle and **violin** are often used interchangeably to describe the familiar four-stringed bowed musical instrument (although a concert violinist would be unlikely to call a Stradivarius or Guarnerius a fiddle). "Fiddle" is an informal word frequently applied to the instrument used in folk music. It may be smaller and more crudely constructed. "Luthier" is the technical name for someone who makes and/or repairs violins and other stringed instruments. The specialist who makes bows for these instruments is an "archetier."

WHAT'S NEXT?

Auction houses won't accept badly damaged or low-value instruments; the combined cost of insurance, photography, cataloging, and other services can amount to more than such items are worth. If the violin is playable or can be made so with minor repairs, keep it for the grandchildren. Or consider donating it to a school or community program. These organizations are often glad to accept instruments they can give or loan to students who otherwise could not afford them.

WHERE'S THAT?

The most famous place name in the history of violin making is **Cremona**, a small northern Italy town. There, starting in the 16th century with the Amati family, the violin, viola, and cello achieved the shapes and construction that continue today. But fine stringed instruments have been made in many other nations, including Germany, France, Austria, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, and the U.S.

WHAT NOW?

A fine stringed instrument can last for hundreds of years and even improve in tone if it's properly cared for. Store it in its case, in fairly even temperature and humidity (comfortable for the average person). If pieces have become detached or damaged, keep them in the case, along with any paperwork, photos, and other documents pertaining to the item. Arrange for the instrument to be played from time to time; it's good for it. *—J.V.*

A fine violin in the right hands sounds sweet, as Jassen showed with this 1803 Italian instrument (see "In Expert Hands" section).

The violins Jassen brought to Skinner Inc.'s appraisal event are a small part of his collection. The auction value of the pair pictured at right is at least $150,000.

case with Karen and Kirk's violin; it had belonged to her great-grandfather. He was a Norwegian immigrant, a railroad worker and an amateur musician. His violin has the label of Sanctus Seraphin, a well-known Venetian violin maker, with a date of 1730. Arbetter quickly established that despite the label, the instrument is a German copy—and a good one—dating to the 1880s.

Labels don't always tell the truth. If this were a genuine Sanctus Seraphin, it could sell for as much as $850,000, Jill Arbetter says.

It was a fairly common practice in the 19th century to give a violin a label that claimed it was much older and was made by a well-known Italian maker. Violins made in and around Cremona are the best-known and most highly valued instruments.

Like today's made-in-China versions of luxury wristwatches and handbags, the copiers of fine instruments were trying to convey to buyers a sense of quality and exclusivity. Copyright law wasn't well established, and misappropriating famous names was common.

The violin is missing the bridge, a thin carved wooden piece that holds the strings away from the body, but is otherwise in nice condition with very few cracks or other defects. Arbetter considers it "a good working instrument" with an auction value of $1,200–$1,600. She recommended that it be sent to auction without repairs or restoration.

FLEA FINDS

Justin sells odds and ends at a north California flea market. Recently, he purchased three violins from dealers in a neighboring booth. The price was right and the pieces looked interesting.

One instrument, labeled "Stradivarius," was a 50-year-old student model worth less than $200. Another was an older violin from around 1900. Although a better-quality instrument, its cracked rib and missing pieces would keep its auction value to $500–$600.

The third instrument, though, was a Heberlein, a quality German violin made c. 1900. The markings on this instrument were not the frequently (and easily) faked paper labels, but branded marks on the end button and inside the violin. Jill valued it at $800–$1,200, possibly more.

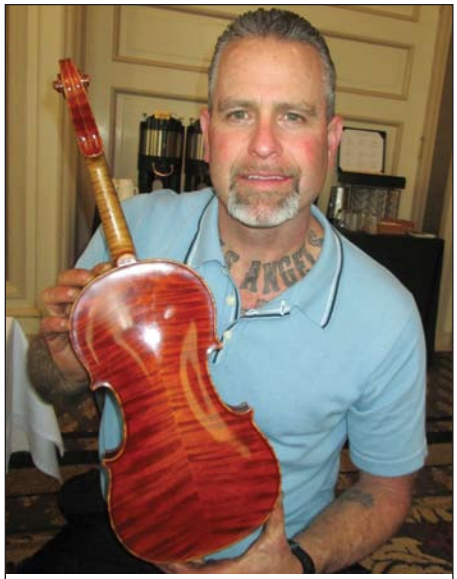
IN EXPERT HANDS

Not surprisingly, the best instruments we saw in San Francisco belonged to Jassen; he's a concert violinist and a college music professor. Like many practicing musicians, he has several instruments. The one he uses at any given time depends on the music being performed and his personal preferences.

One violin Jassen plans on sending to auction was made by a famous Italian violin-maker in 1914. Leandro Bisiach (1864–1945) was a trained violinist, a great researcher, and a notable craftsman who trained many other fine violin makers in his Milan workshop. An instrument of this quality has a pre-auction estimate of $26,000–$46,000, Arbetter said.

The other violin shown is slightly smaller and 100 years older: an Italian instrument dating to around 1803. It could sell for twice as much as the Bisiach.

Violins of this caliber are true collectors' items, and will increase in value if properly cared for. Indeed, many of the most expensive stringed instruments are unaffordable for all but a very few superstar performers. Fortunate owners who are not musicians themselves will frequently loan them to individual performers or orchestras. ❁



Justin's flea-market purchase shows the striped maple used in violins. It's so characteristic that it is often called "fiddleback maple." The tops are most often made of spruce.

ON THE LOOKOUT

SILENT PARTNER

The violin is the star performer, but it has no voice without its silent partner, the bow. Bow making is a completely separate craft from violin making, and bows, in the opinion of Skinner Inc.'s Jill Arbetter, can be much trickier to value.

Bows can actually be worth many thousands of dollars. Skinner Inc. auctions frequently offer examples in the $2,000-4,000 range. Some go up to $8,000 and more.

The modern bow was invented in the late 18th century by Francois Tourte (1747–1835), a French watchmaker turned bow maker. Exceptional examples of his bows have sold at auction in the $200,000 range. Just as Italian violins have dominated the high end of the violin market, French bows are considered the most desirable, although some English and modern American-made bows are also top-quality.

Professional-grade bows are made of pernambuco, a rare Brazilian wood, with sterling silver metal parts. Student-grade bows are generally made of rosewood with nickel or silver plate metal parts. Excellent condition and all-original parts are as important to the value of a bow as to a stringed instrument.

Twentieth-century bows from master makers can be as pricey as a fine violin. A bow made in the 1940s in the workshop of the master Eugene Sartory (French, 1871–1946), who was noted for his strong, relatively heavy bows, drew an estimate of $14,000–$15,000—far more than the violin it accompanied—at *Antiques Roadshow*'s Los Angeles even in 2004.

The moral here: Don't overlook the ratty-looking bow in the attic or the back of the closet. Sometimes that bow, perhaps missing its strings and looking like a stick for propping up the tomato plants, may be worth more than the shiny violin. —*Jane Viator*

ON THE ROAD

We're running out of time! The deadline to apply for tickets to a 2015 *Antiques Roadshow* event is 11:59 p.m. P.T. on **Monday, April 6**. Apply for (free) tickets and read all ticket rules at **www.pbs.org/antiques**. Recipients are selected in a random drawing.

DATE: CITY/STATE
May 30: Tucson, AZ
June 6: Spokane, WA
June 27: Omaha, NE
July 11: Cleveland, OH
July 25: Little Rock, AR
Aug. 8: Charleston, SC

Pictured in honor of the July 11 event: *Raspberries*, a collectible 1972 record (with scratch'n'sniff sticker) by Cleveland natives Raspberries, fronted by Eric Carmen.

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THE LAST WORD

Photos by Sarah K. Elliott

JUST FOR FUN

This month... a little horsing around.

Antiques Roadshow producer Sarah K. Elliott brings you a little closer to the show's host, Mark L. Walberg, on p. 6. Her story includes a photograph (also shown at right) of Walberg with a horse he met while taping a feature about parade saddles with appraiser Bruce Shackelford. At left is an alternate photo from the same day—one in which Elliott captured Walberg whispering something to his new friend. We had no choice but to share it with you—and ask for a creative caption.

What could Mark be saying to the horse in the photo at left? Send your best attempt(s) to our e-mail address, **ARI-Editor@comcast.net,** or to our postal address, ***AR Insider* Captions, P.O. Box 505, Bolton, MA 01740**. Just to make sure you hit our cutoff date, we'll give you a deadline: **April 6**. That's the same as *Antiques Roadshow*'s deadline for ticket applications (see box above), so it'll be easy to remember. As always, we greatly appreciate your participation!

JUST FOR FUN

"Wow, Kevin, they sure used some big shotgun shells back in the day." *–Mike Hill, Chadron, Neb.*

YOU HANDLE THIS: Appraisers Kevin Zavian (at left in photo) and Jason Preston look over an amber and gold Russian parasol handle. "Even though it was unsigned," Zavian said, "it could be worth hundreds or as much as a few thousand."

Zavian told us his company has converted a lot of them into magnifying glasses handles—resulting in "real *regal* magnifying glasses," as he put it. At least one reader, Anita Moquin of Alabama, plans to use the idea, as she wrote to tell us. How's that for inspiration?

Now, on to the best reader captions:

- "Jason, this is a classic case of corporate misdirection. The company actually perfected the parasol handle but couldn't devise the actual parasol! They went out of business in 1932." *—Dick Simon, Houston*
- "Hey Kevin! With a 14K gold screw top, this would make a snazzy Havana cigar case." *—M. Pamela Roy, Allentown, Pa.*
- "The owner said he bought it because his wife kept telling him to 'get a grip'!" *—Bob Gormley, Newtown, PA*

WAIT FOR IT...

AIR TIME

Antiques Roadshow's 2015 broadcast season carries on with these new episodes and—as marked by *asterisks—encore presentations.

- **April 6:** Birmingham Hour 2 Billings Hour 3*
- **April 13:** Birmingham Hour 3; Biloxi Hour 1*
- **April 20:** Santa Clara Hour 1; Biloxi Hour 2*
- **April 27:** Santa Clara Hour 2;
- **May 4:** Santa Clara Hour 3 Biloxi Hour 3*
- **May 11:** Charleston Hour 1 Washington, D.C. Hour 1*
- **May 18:** Charleston Hour 2 Washington, D.C. Hour 2*
- **May 25:** Charleston Hour 3

Coming in fall 2015: new episodes from Chicago and Albuquerque.