

Huge throng witnesses historic MacArthur auction

By Marg Millett - The Glengarry News

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It was the social event of the season for the village of Lancaster. On Saturday some 800 to 1,000 people gathered at the home of the late Duncan MacArthur, just outside the village near old Highway 2.

Theresa Taylor & Associates Auctioneering, of South Lancaster, were on hand to hold one of the most interesting country estate auctions seen in this area, with two rings to handle the farm equipment, milk bottle collection, maple syrup collection and a myriad of wonderful antiques and collectibles.

It was also a truly modern event. Treasures of the MacArthur homestead, reflecting life in the past five generations of Duncan's family, were being auctioned in a most cutting edge way, taking advantage of modern technology to do a great job. Probably the most modern things in Duncan's house were the fridge, stove, microwave oven and the television.

The milk bottle collection alone drew great attention. Before the sale the National Director of the Milk Bottle Collection Association came down from Pakenham, and, with Theresa Taylor, made a database and then produced 100 catalogues of these bottles. What is surprising to me is that the bottles sold individually!

As well the maple syrup articles, the farm implements and all of the antiques and items that people love to collect were catalogued. Theresa tells me that the maple syrup people would like to install Duncan into their Hall of Fame.

Long before the auction one could read an e-mail message from Theresa that gave a continuous update of all that would be for sale on Saturday. If an interested buyer on-line wanted more information Theresa just scanned in a picture to her trusty old (?) computer and sent off a photo.

Although Duncan's brother from Swift Current, Sask was able to come to his old home for Duncan's funeral and returned for the auction, his sister Helen, of Edmonton, Alta was not.

However, thanks to Theresa, Helen was able to go down to her local library, went on-line and sat there looking at old family photos. She saw pictures of herself as a child in Lancaster as well as the many articles that would be auctioned on Saturday.

During the day bids were continually made on-line from interested parties who received information in many convoluted ways over the internet. There were bids from out west, many parts of Ontario and from the United States. It puts a whole new meaning to networking.

There are many stories to be told, such as opening the trap door in the basement to discover some beautiful porcelain that was hand painted in 1907. At the end of the day the barn and silo were sold, the wonderful cutter with the tag still intact. Theresa tells me that it made her happy to see the many young people related to the MacArthurs who went home with family treasures.

Now what did Theresa buy for herself? Well, as many of your know, Duncan was an auctioneer himself and went to the same college as Theresa. She has his auctioneer's hat, records of sale and speeches made while at this school.

Theresa, this very busy, vivacious women, is off to Calgary on Tuesday. She's headed for an auctioneer's convention. Always looking to better her skills and provide great service in a business that she passionately loves, Theresa tells me that her next goal is to have a live Internet sale go on simultaneously with her auctions. Now that is the cutting edge, and if I know Theresa, you'll see that soon in your neighbourhood.