

Area antique stores make it easy to find ...

Remnants of the past

BY GINA GOODMAN
Record-Eagle staff writer

Chicago resident Katie Usedom inherited a 1950s mannequin that she dresses in a large wardrobe of '50s clothes, ranging from bathing suits to a mink fur shawl, depending on the season.

"She gets used every day," Usedom said. "She's in the window, she's got her wigs, she's got her hat, and people bring me things for her, which is really funny."

While browsing in Bay West Antiques in Traverse City, Usedom said the mannequin is not the only old and unusual thing she owns.

"I like Art Deco mirrors, so I'm always looking for unusual shapes of mirrors," she said. "It's just fun to look 'cause everything has a history attached to it."

Whether it be a summer pastime or a year-round hobby, shopping for antiques is a passion for many people.

During the summer in northern Michigan, visitors and locals alike enjoy the weather and scenery by browsing the various antique shops around the area.

"We would just like to keep the summer

months all year long," said Marilyn Flaherty, part-owner of Antiques at Railroad Place in Traverse City. "We have a steady repeat Traverse City trade in the winter time. It would be nicer to have those people here all year long. But usually people who visit in the winter time are more interested in skiing than in antiques."

People from all over come into the store, Flaherty said.

"We've had people from Australia, any state from the United States," she said. "(A while) ago I had a couple in here from Alaska."

Margaret and Joe O'Daniel from Ohio stopped at Bay West Antiques, while visiting a friend in Elk Rapids, to see what items they could find.

"This is just part of the week-long experience," Joe O'Daniel said. "We do a little bit of this, a little bit of that."

The couple has been interested in antiques for 20 or 30 years, they said.

This year, antique hunters are interested in more expensive items, Flaherty said.

"What we're finding is that there has

been a switch from less expensive things to more expensive things," she said. "It may be an investment thing, it may be a nostalgia thing. Older clocks have sold. That's a trend. I think they're appreciating the workmanship in old things. They were made to last."

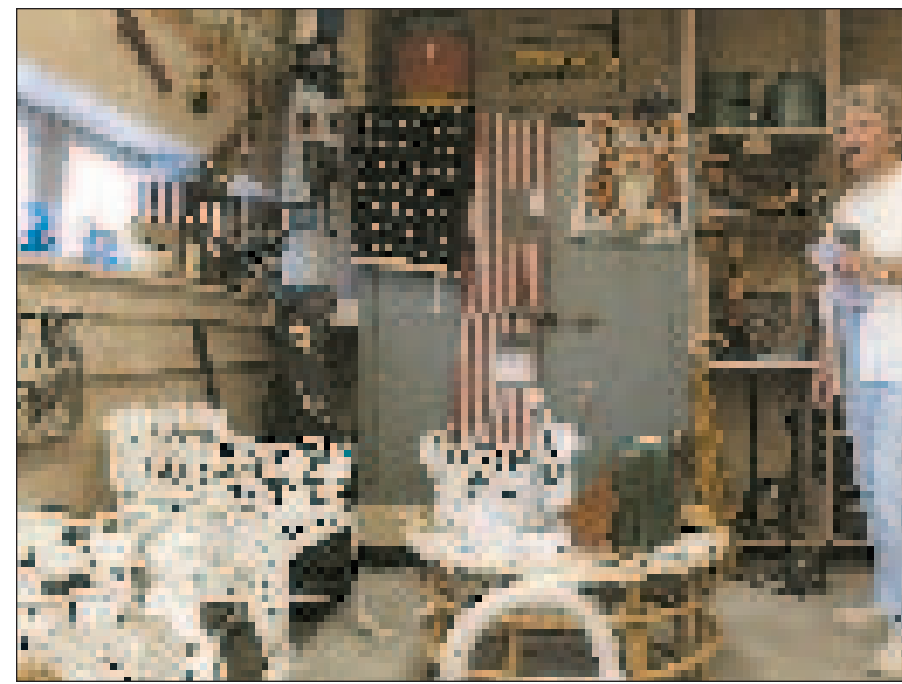
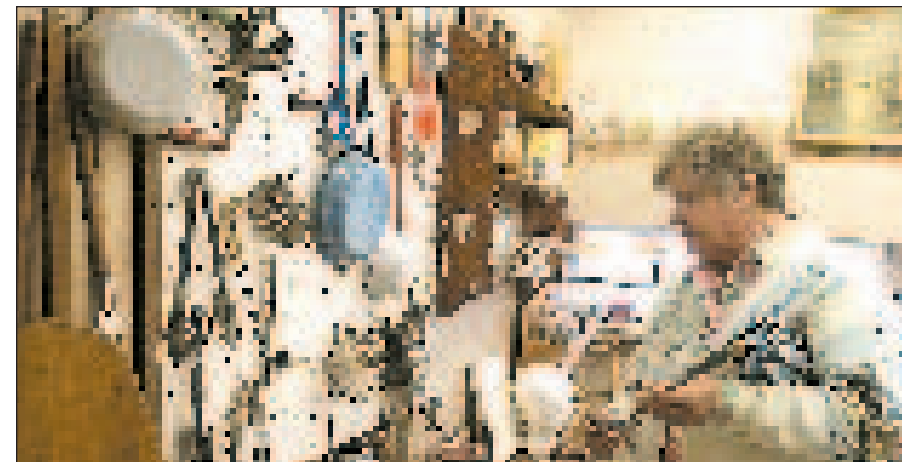
Antiquing for many people is just the interest in things that are no longer made. Whether just browsing or searching for something specific, most appreciate the stories behind the old items.

Usedom's mom, Nancy Balash, said that was the reason she became curious about antiques in the 1960's.

"I first got interested in antiques when I was going through the Chicago Art Institute, and I saw the furniture and the dishware, and I thought to myself, how many generations of people have used these things?" she said. "They're meaningful. They have stories."

Usedom agreed.

"I think every time you walk into an antique store it's like a history lesson," she said. "I think that that's one of the things that's really exciting."



Record-Eagle/Lara Neel

Clockwise from far left: Salt and pepper shakers are some of the most affordable items at Antiques at Railroad Place in Traverse City; Joy Klarich inspects some antique bowls; Betty Stansbury looks at old kitchenware; Nancy Olivier admires vintage lawn furniture. Purchasing large, expensive items is a recent trend in antiquing.

New book offers tips to bargain antique hunters

BY GINA GOODMAN
Record-Eagle staff writer

A new book called "How To Buy Antiques At Bargain Prices!" offers tips for anyone interested in antiquing, from dealers to collectors to those who just browse for fun.

The author, John Gollehon, said he wrote the book so people would have better experiences while antiquing.

"What I'm doing is promoting the industry of antiques," Gollehon said. "It's to help dealers enjoy what they're doing, and also so collectors can learn more about what they're interested in."

Gollehon became curious about antiques because his parents were dealers.

"I have been to shows since I was 12," he said. "It's been in the family, in the blood."

In the book, Gollehon talks about trends in antiques and how to recognize them.

"The really shrewd collector or dealer will recognize trends early," he said.

Gollehon conducted many surveys on the categories of collectibles and their upward and

downward cycles.

"There are seven pages of categories," he said. "And that's only some. There are probably thousands out there."

Some other tips included in the book are:

Always negotiate. Ask if the seller can "take less." Don't be afraid to throw out a really low-ball offer.

Avoid auctions with listings that are too specific. Look for general terms such as "dishes" and "pottery." Specific terms such as "Fiesta" and "Roseville" will attract all the collectors.

Avoid fancy antique malls. The more grungy-looking the better. If there's a basement, always check it out, especially if the stairs look dangerous to go down.

Never sell anything if you are not sure of its worth. Check price guides at bookstores, do research on the Internet, or ask a trusted dealer before you sell.

"How To Buy Antiques At Bargain Prices!" is published by Gollehon Press, Inc. in Grand Rapids, Mich. For more information, call 616-949-8674.