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JUNE 2008 \$4.50US \$5.50CAN



worthy contenders

The advice here can help you get an idea of an object's value, but for a true appraisal, you'll need a written estimate by an accredited expert (see Appraisal ABCs, following page), along with a detailed description of the methods used to determine the value.



Victorian lamp with hand-painted glass globe

■ **BACKSTORY:** Diane Winslow, 62, of Chevy Chase, Maryland, says her oil lamp, wired for electricity, sat in her grandmother's house for as long as she can remember. The globe is not original.

■ **WHAT THE PROS SAY:** "Known as a banquet lamp, this gilt-metal and onyx fixture was made in the U.S. around 1880 and is worth \$900," says George Evans (see The Experts, right). Sheryl Muzzillo and Jim Antone both put its value lower, from \$100 to \$350. "Because it was converted to electric, and since the globe isn't original, it wouldn't appeal to a serious collector," says Muzzillo.

■ **THE VERDICT:** Sell it. It's unlikely to appreciate in value.



crystal and brass chandelier

■ **BACKSTORY:** Julie Sadowski, 46, of Suffern, New York, sent in a picture of this late-1960s light fixture.

■ **WHAT THE PROS SAY:** "This is a reproduction of a Louis XV chandelier," says Karen Keane. "With many decorative objects, the value reflects the taste of the times, and since this fussy style is out of fashion, it would get only about \$500 to \$600 at auction."

"Lamps like this offered style without a big price tag and are better in quality than similar ones being produced today," says Evans. "It's worth holding on to."

■ **THE VERDICT:** Keep it. It might be a valuable antique someday.



Empire-style desk

■ **BACKSTORY:** This desk, submitted by Diane Herbsman, 62, of Independence, Missouri, was handed down to her mother from her grandmother. It has a top drawer that drops down to reveal a work surface.

■ **WHAT THE PROS SAY:** With its gracious curves, this 1890s mahogany butler's desk is a classic example of the Empire style. Says Antone, "It's probably from Philadelphia," which was a center of American furniture making from before the Revolutionary War to the end of the 19th century. "It is worth about \$750 to \$850 and should rise in value over the next 10 years," says Antone.

■ **THE VERDICT:** Keep it. Empire pieces will continue to be desirable and will probably appreciate.

THE EXPERTS

Jim Antone is an appraiser and the owner of Pleasant Cove Antiques, in Jacksonville, Florida.

George Evans, an antiques expert, owns Bond & Bowery, an antiques Web marketplace.

Karen Keane is the CEO of Skinner, an auction house in Boston.

Terry Kovel is a coauthor of *Kovels' Antiques & Collectibles Price List 2008* (\$28, www.kovels.com).

Susan Bednar Long and **Christina Sullivan** are the principals of Tocar Interior Design, in New York City.

Peggy Maraschiello owns River Wind Antiques and Appraisals, in Deep River, Connecticut.

Sheryl Muzzillo is an antiques dealer in Prospect, Connecticut.



vintage book

■ **BACKSTORY:** Dorothy Wentz, 39, of Westfield, Indiana, sent in this snapshot of *Cinderella*, published in 1938.

■ **WHAT THE PROS SAY:** "The book was illustrated by famed children's-book illustrator Leonard Weisgard," says Christina Sullivan. Between 1937 and 1988, Weisgard worked on more than 150 books for various authors. "This is a first edition," adds Peggy Maraschiello. "Values can go as high as \$200 or more, but this copy has condition issues, with chips along the edges and the corner. It's probably worth about \$25."

■ **THE VERDICT:** Sell it. Or, better yet, donate it to a local charity's used-book shop.



oil painting

■ **BACKSTORY:** Margaret Booth, 65, of Monkton, Vermont, reports that her parents bought this painting by Charles Venneman, a 19th-century Belgian artist, for \$11 at an estate sale in the 1940s.

■ **WHAT THE PROS SAY:** Jackpot! "Venneman enjoyed considerable success in his time," says Evans. "Not many of his works have been on the market in the last 10 years, and at auction the canvas would probably fetch at least \$10,000 to \$15,000."

■ **THE VERDICT:** Sell it. It won't increase in price much. But before doing so, have it appraised by a fully accredited auction house, appraiser, or painting expert to get the best deal possible.



wool rug

■ **BACKSTORY:** Mariann Looney, 55, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, says that her grandmother purchased this four-by-six-foot wool rug around 1935. The piece features crewelwork, a style of loose embroidery.

■ **WHAT THE PROS SAY:** "It's difficult to find crewelwork designs in such good condition," says Muzzillo, "so this is exciting—especially since moths like to have their way with wool. Textiles like this one are sought after by both interior designers and collectors. The workmanship is lovely, and the fabric appears to be handwoven." Antone says the rug could fetch about \$350.

■ **THE VERDICT:** Sell it, since it could lose value over time. Cheaper copies are flooding the rug market.



Art Deco tea set

■ **BACKSTORY:** Kelly Foster, 36, of Averill Park, New York, was given this set by her mother-in-law. On the bottom, it has a flag containing the initials W & H, the letters G and H, some numbers, plus "Walker & Hall Sheffield" and "Warranted Hard & Silver Soldered."

■ **WHAT THE PROS SAY:** "The W & H flag is the manufacturer's hallmark, and the number is the pattern," says Sullivan. "A full set with a tray is rare and would fetch \$1,600 to \$2,000. Bring out the cucumber sandwiches!"

Keane says, "The silver finish and sleek design evoke the machine age of the 1920s and early 30s." She values it at \$1,200 to \$1,500.

■ **THE VERDICT:** Sell it—unless afternoon tea is the highlight of your day.