

OPEN SALT COLLECTORS



Issue # 45 – Spring 2020

New OSC Web Site

Rod Elser

I'm pleased to report that on April 27th the newly designed web site for Open Salt Collectors was made

"live" and is now available, worldwide, for all individuals interested in our shared hobby. While the address of the new web site remains the same as it has always been (www.opensalts.info), the site itself is completely new and chockfull of interesting and useful facts and photos. In addition to basic information about open salts, open salt collecting and the multiple clubs across the U.S. that bring us together, the site also provides a wealth of

research and archival resources—for example, all of the many articles authored by such prolific writers and collectors as Ed and Kay Berg and Ed Bowman are available, as well as many back issues of the National Newsletter. Links are also provided to web sites for dozens of museums, listed by state, where open salts can be viewed and, in some cases, researched as well. There is even an area

where our individual clubs will be posting their latest updates about meetings and other activities!

It has been nearly a year-long process to go from concept to completion on this new web site and now that



we've reached this milestone, I'd like to recognize and again thank all those who have contributed their time and talents:

- Judith Rosenbaum and Mike Zagwoski for their work with me on the initial, exploratory committee.
- Jeff Kornbau for both single-handedly maintaining our old web site and for providing valuable guidance and direction as we developed the new one.

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President's Message

What a difference a few weeks makes! No going out to dinner, no getting together with friends, no trips to the mall or flea markets. And no salt meetings! We were lucky to get the Snowbird meeting in the week before everything closed down. But the spring NESOSC and OSCAR meetings have been canceled and even the fall joint meeting is being rescheduled for a few months later than planned. However, CASC is being very innovative and has scheduled a zoom meeting this week. I hope many of you who live at a distance can join the meeting. I'm anxious to see how it goes.

Our new website is almost ready to be launched. Kudos to Rod E. for pulling us through the process! Representatives from all the clubs have participated in the process. Thanks to Carolyn B., Kent H., Judith R., Amanda K., Linda W., Judy J., Robin and Gerry G., and Nina R. for all your input.

I see on Facebook that many of you are making the most of your stay-at-home time to clean and rearrange your salts. I'd rather read than clean so I've started rereading all my national newsletters. They have SO much information. Thank you to the editors and all the contributors who have made it such a wonderful newsletter from the beginning.

The other salt-related activity that I've done is to clean out and organize a file cabinet drawer stuffed to the brim with information about my collection and club activities. It was a trip down memory lane. A ton of old pictures (e.g. Norm K and Marie C. leading us in a salt song at the 2nd convention), correspondence, old receipts for salts purchased (including the one for the first salt I bought from the Salt Lady), all the convention packets, etc. The best thing I found, though, is a DVD of Ed Berg giving his lecture on "See The Difference". Ed had given the talk in the early days of NESOSC. In 2008 I asked if he would repeat it as we had so many new members. At the time the National Board was thinking of video taping programs to be shared with the other clubs. So this was our first attempt at that. At the time I was also thinking it would be wonderful to have just for the sake of posterity for future members who did not know the Bergs. The husband of one of our members took a crash course in videotaping from the local PBS station, which also loaned us their equipment. The result is the DVD which I watched again the other day. If any of the clubs would like to use it for a program sometime, contact me and I will send a copy.

Until we can meet again, stay safe and be well.

Lesley Solkoske

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While we encourage the dissemination of information about open salt collecting, we do like to know in advance when and where material originally appearing in the National Newsletter will be used. Please contact the Editor (khudson639@verizon.net) if you would like to use anything from this newsletter. When publication occurs, we also ask that a copy be sent for our archives.

The National Newsletter is the official publication of the Open Salt Collectors, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and encouraging the study, collecting and preservation of open salts. This is done through the publication of a national newsletter, maintaining an informational website, promoting membership in open salt collecting clubs, publishing informational and educational articles in collector publications and through other means as may be appropriate from time to time.

The National Newsletter of Open Salt Collectors is published three times per year—in April, August and December—in both electronic and hardcopy versions. Subscriptions are available through the organization's website (www.opensalts.info).

17th National Open Salt Convention is postponed

Out of concern for the health of convention attendees, the board of the New England Society of Open Salt Collectors announces, with regret, the postponement of the 17th National Open Salt Convention, originally scheduled to take place in September of 2021.

The timeframe for the development of a reliable COVID-19 vaccine and its eventual deployment would

not have allowed for the vaccine to become fully effective in time for the original convention date.

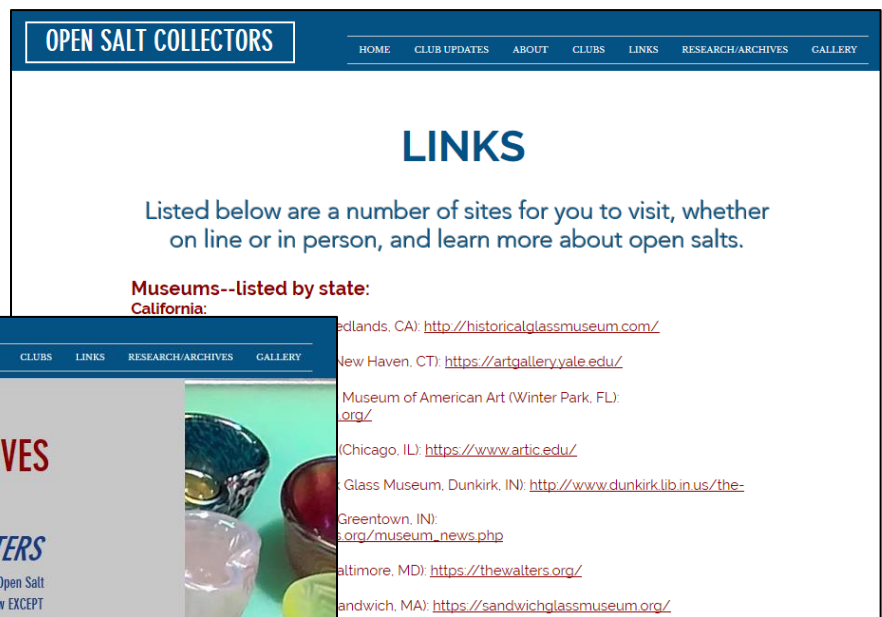
Depending upon future events, it is expected that the next convention will be held in Providence, Rhode Island the weekend of May 19 - 22, 2022. Details will be shared as soon as they become available.

Continued from page 1 New OSC Web Site

- Carolyn Bugel, Gerry Grube, Kent Hudson, Amanda Kirchner, George Kullgren, Judith Rosenbaum and Linda Witt, as representatives of all the individual clubs, for their work in developing the new site.
- **Judy Johnson, Nina Robertson, Linda Witt, Amanda Kirchner, Judith Rosenbaum, and Carolyn Bugel** for volunteering to be **Web Editors** for the new site, ensuring the site will be maintained with current, relevant information about our clubs and activities.

by OSC past President George Kullgren and current President Lesley Solkoske.

The final thing I would like to note is that a web site such as this will never be “perfect;” it will always be a “work-in-progress.” Although the period of functional relevance of open salts may be far in the



- Rachel Douglas of RADD designs for her technical skills in building the framework of the web site and in training us on how to keep the information updated.
- And lastly, perhaps most importantly, the on-going leadership, support and continuity provided

past, collecting them—and learning more about them, their makers, their history, etc.—is still active and engaging, and we want the web site to reflect this. So if you notice something hasn’t been updated or a link isn’t working properly or any other detail that isn’t right, please pass this information along to one of the Web Editors so a correction can be made. Remember that this is “our” site so we all have a shared responsibility to ensure it is the best it can be.

Salts She Wrote

Mary Kern

Double your pleasure...

Double your fun

With double good

Double salts,

Doubles are fun...

Looks like I am going to have to double up and double down for this column. Hope I don't double bore you, sort of like sleeping single in a double bed with no cats or dogs to double cuddle. Are you catching on? Double or nothing, you gonna be so tired of the word double, but I am double Dutch hoping not double salts, especially the silver ones.

"Things change" said Don Ameche 2,371 times in the movie "Things Change". That really should have been the title of my column as I have said it so many times. Perhaps a change is due. But I shall have to double dribble on this one and see what bounces up.

My love for double salts has long been with me, but doubles of glass and doubles with age. No prissy ones lined with gold or enhanced with bowls of clear or cobalt. But now they sit like

Royalty in my collection, ergo, once again, "Things Change" and double quick for the double better.

To me silver double salts are the most magnificent, even standing alone all by themselves, or they gift you with double beauty of silver and glass. A double of silver inside and out, or a double with gold wash to the bowls, stand out to perfection and match beauty and grace to the ones with double removable bowls.

When I got my first silver double, it did not take me long to be in double trouble and I mean double fast. A shelf of doubles turned into two and then three. I went into double time on double purchases, their double decker side by side sent my eyes to double vision and my salt account into a bit of double debt trouble.

There are many with double salt bowls that seem to copy our old masters, and being a lover of the old, a new double salt love was eminent, it just came double too fast. No matter their stance, no matter their height, no matter their age, all of my babies are ready to be placed on the table for some double duty from soup to desert. (yep, sea salt on my double fudge brownies, double please.)



French Silver



Hazorfim



German



So here's the question I close with. Do they have a secret well hidden, a double standard, if any? Did they hold only salt, or do double duty with pepper and salt, salt and paprika, mustard??? I think I will walk away from

this double-edged sword and stick with my own personal love of Double salt, Double salt, Double salt

My writers block was in double jeopardy when I was saved by my salty face book friends who created and enjoyed some double good fun and in double quick time to help me get rid of my



double dose of Double Dumb Dumb ..



CASC Zoom Meeting April 25, 2020 Nina Robertson



A little social distancing can't stop open salt collectors from getting together! Last month, faced with the choice between cancelling upcoming meetings or transforming them into a "new normal" kind of gathering, members of CASC opted for the latter.

On Saturday, April 25, approximately 24 CASC members from the East Coast, West Coast, and points between came together for the first online club meeting using Zoom. We didn't sacrifice Meet and Greet, Show and Tell, or a Program, but several lamented the absence of FOOD!

With the meeting scheduled for 1 p.m., host Kent Hudson opened the virtual meeting room at noon so that everyone could sign in, catch up, and catch on if the Zoom platform was new to them.

The business meeting proceeded pretty much like the business portions of live, in-person salt club meetings. Show and Tell had a slightly different flavor. Most participants emailed photos of their Show and Tell salts to Kent in advance. Kent grouped the photos into a Power Point presentation, and members were given the floor to talk about their salts one at a time.

The program also centered around a Power Point presentation created by Kent. The meeting topic, "The Island of Misfit Salts," included misidentified or misunderstood items in our collections, with photographs submitted by many of the meeting participants.

While it was not a "perfect" meeting, everyone agreed that it was far more perfect than no meeting at all! And we hope more club members will join in next time... and until we can meet and greet in person (with snacks!) once more.

This Little Piggy...

Denise Lonergan

I had been eyeing a Dresden pig salt on display in a local antique shop for a few weeks.

Since I had only recently begun collecting, the \$40 price tag gave me pause. Two events would conspire to change that.

One of the most frequently asked questions of parents to school-age children other than, "Have you finished your homework is, Have you finished cleaning your room?" I asked this of one of my children and received assurance that the room was in perfect condition. A cursory inspection revealed that much more needed to be done.

"Your room is still a pigsty," was my comment.

My offspring, eager to go off with friends, suggested that a fairer question for me to have asked would have been: Have you cleaned your room to satisfy MY standards? After joining forces and working together for another four hours, I was satisfied. The floor was once again visible, the drawers and closet organized, the bed linen changed, and the dirty-sock odor gone.

I rewarded myself with a much-needed break, a sit-down with a cup of tea and my newly acquired salt collector's guide, *The Open Salt Compendium*. There, on

Page 234, was a Dresden pig salt, identical to the one that I

had been admiring, except for a different hand-painted floral design. The price guide of \$125 convinced me that the one in the local shop was a bargain, and didn't I deserve a reward for my hard work? Fortunately, the salt was still available and became Piggy #1. Yes, I decided to raise pigs. It had to be easier than raising children!

For those of you who take issue with me grammatically against the use of "raising" children, I refer you to the late Theodore M. Bernstein's "The Careful Writer" in which he states,

RAISE, REAR: At one time, a war raged (and some skirmishes still go on) against the use of 'raise' to describe what parents do to children. The battle cry was, 'You raise pigs, but you rear children.' However, in this country at least, the war is over; we 'raise' both pigs and children, and some parents will testify that you can't always tell the difference.

I can attest to that. Put me on the stand!

Over the years, I've been fortunate to acquire several more pig salts that are pictured in this article, some of which most likely did not begin their lives as



1. Dresden Pig



2. Unmarked

salts but rather as egg cups or whimsies. Things change! I am pleased to report that my children, now grown, and my pigs all keep clean sties.

Thanks to Sandy J, Mary K and Kent H for contributions to this article.



3. Unmarked
Condiment



6. Made in France



4. Unmarked



5. Unmarked



7. Handled Double
Made in France
Similar to 6.



8. Unmarked
9. Unmarked
Condiment Pair



11. Unmarked



12. Royal Doulton
Flambe' from the estate
of Elaine Cooper



10. Unmarked



13. Unmarked



14. Cradle marked 5641



17. Unmarked



15. Unmarked



18. Diminutive Unmarked



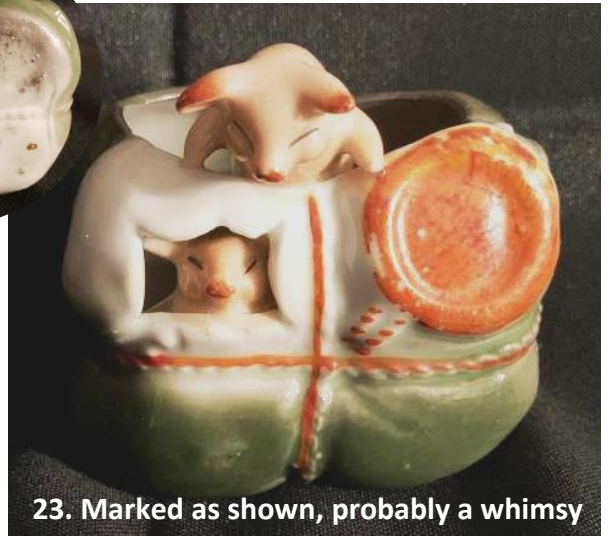
16. Marked 5055



19. marked 2384



20. Unmarked



23. Marked as shown, probably a whimsy



21. Unmarked



Probably an Egg Cup



Marked Germany



24. Diminutive



22. Unmarked



25. Unmarked



26. Unmarked



29. Faience, Made in France for Tiffany



27. Unmarked



30. Faience



28. 925 Silver



31. Faience



32. Faience



33. Unmarked



34. Copper



35. Unmarked



36. Unmarked



The Psychology of Collecting

Shirley M. Mueller, MD

Convention Banquet Speaker

Editor's note. I was unable to understand the recording that I made of the Saturday Night Banquet talk by Shirley Mueller at the National Convention in September. Since the talk centered around her book "Inside the Head of a Collector" I decided to buy the book and use it as my source for this article. It is truly a beautiful book with many personal stories about her collecting experiences as well as beautiful illustrations of Chinese Porcelain. Just as important is her use of scientific data to support her observations. Although Salts are not mentioned, I am happy to add it to my library.

Dr. Mueller has had two careers, her first as a practicing neurologist, and later as a financial advisor. She wrote a weekly column for Physician's Money Digest. She has collected Chinese Porcelain for many years and was a guest curator at the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, May 26-Oct 22, 2017.

Pleasure

The Thrill of the Chase

Dr. Mueller immediately got our attention with the story of a special purchase that she made in 1996. She was at the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem, the Netherlands touring with a group. On this



Shirley M. Mueller, MD

occasion she left the group and set out on her own to shop at some of the local antique stores in search of Chinese Export porcelain. No luck at the first two stores and she was running out of time. The third store did not offer anything either but after a conversation with the dealer, "he turned so that he was directly facing me. Then with his eyes locked in mine, he said, 'would you like to see my private collection?'"

This caught her off guard and she had many mixed thoughts. Of course, she wanted to see his collection, there might be something she might like at a good price. But on the other hand, she did not know this man, he

**He turned so that he was directly facing me.
Then with his eyes locked in mine, he said,
"Would you like to see my private collection?"**

could harm her. Cell phones were not common and no one in her group knew where she was. But she asked, "Where is it?" and he replied "Upstairs."

"So, with less hesitancy than might have been prudent, I ascended the circular metal stairway." It was a 17th century house, the steps were steep and narrow, but when she arrived it was like a haven with rooms reminiscent of a Vermeer painting. In one of the cabinets she found a pair of tall underglaze blue-and-white containers, each with a lid. (Figure 1)

They looked like they were made in China about 1640 and in good condition. The dealer explained that he would rather sell to a collector than to another dealer. The price was reasonable, and she believes that they were both happy with the transaction.

She used this example to discuss risk taking as it applies to a collector. "If I had been sufficiently cautious, I would not have climbed the stairs that day. On



Figure 1 - Pair of Chinese export porcelain underglaze blue tea caddies, c. 1640

the other hand, if I had an appetite for danger, I would not have given it a second thought.”

When the porcelain containers arrived, she placed them on a high shelf in the living room. They became a fixture and little noticed. That is until the following year when she read an article in the January 1997, newsletter of the Oriental Ceramic Society (OSCS) of London entitled “Porcelain in the Clouds, Oriental Ceramics depicted on the ceilings at Charlottenburg” by Phillip Allen. There was a picture of the ceiling of the seventeenth century Oranienburg Palace fifty miles north of Berlin that included one of the containers she had purchased in Haarlem the previous year. Suddenly the pair of containers became much more valuable to her, she moved them from the top shelf to a safer location where they could not be accidentally knocked over by her cat. They became the subject of further research. They are apparently a pair of tea caddies; the decoration includes tea leaves. The tops are colored differently, one blue on white and the other white on blue, the assumption being that one is for black tea and the other green tea. There is an example like hers found in the Hatcher Wreck, a ship what went down off the coast of Jarkata in 1643. She has identified only three other examples which are in museums in England and Germany. These two jars have become one of the major joys of collecting for her.

Novelty and Discovery

In the chapter entitled “Novelty and Discovery” she discusses her pleasure in discovering examples of Chinese porcelain that contain errors. This is especially true of the special orders that Europeans send to China that were often misinterpreted. Of special interest is the description of the process for handling the orders and the number of people involved with the orders between leaving Europe and arriving at the factory in the interior of China. Names were misspelled and the wrong colors

used on the coat of arms painted on the dinner services. Christian iconography, especially in the depiction of the Crucifixion was not understood by the Chinese. The Chinese did not understand the concept of the puzzle jugs they were asked to duplicate with the result that they did not work.

Social Benefits

The third topic under the Pleasure section is entitled Social Benefits. Here the author described meeting and developing a friendship with Mildred Mottahedeh, founder of the porcelain supplier Mottahedeh and Company (figure 2). Mildred tapped into the expertise at Vista Alegre, a Portuguese porcelain manufacturer, founded in 1824, to create porcelain reproductions. One of Mildred’s stories was how she could made reproductions and not have them copied. She would contract with a museum to reproduce an original porcelain in their collection. Later, if the piece were manufactured by a factory other than her own at Vista Alegre, it would be the museum that would have to battle the copyright challenge, not Mildred’s company.

Studies demonstrate the positive effects of Social Connection. For example, it leads to less depression plus an overall feeling of well-being in addition to fewer complaints of medical illnesses and visits to doctors. Even the immune system is reported to be strengthened due to communal bonds. What is even more fascinating is that activity in an area of the brain known to be important in responding to rewards (such as foods and sex) increases when faces of loved ones are presented to lonely individuals. This does not happen when images of strangers are offered, confirming that indeed, intimate social interactions do influence our brain processes.

Pain - Fakes

She tells another story from her personal experience of buying a plate that she was initially suspicious of



Figure 2 - Mildred Mottahedeh and Shirley M. Mueller, 1990's



Left: Figure 3 - Chinese export porcelain famille rose Foo Dog Teapot, one of a pair, c. 1730
 Right: Figure 4 - the mate to the Foo Dog Teapot broken into many pieces due to earthquake

but listened to the dealer claims. When it arrived, she realized her mistake and returned it after getting expert advice, but not without a lot of hassle. There are many fakes being produced, especially of the early Chinese porcelain that brings high prices. Buying a fake can happen to anyone. To quote Michael Cohen, London dealer: "Anyone who says they haven't been caught out has been caught out but doesn't know it."

In collecting, essentialism means we respond to beliefs about objects as well as the object itself. It is often the stories behind an object that makes it important to us. People feel wronged when they buy art or antiques, they think are authentic, but later find out they are not.

Science has proven that the mental distress of disappointment can be identified using fMRI. It registers in a specific location of the brain (the anterior insula and anterior cingulate gyrus) using this

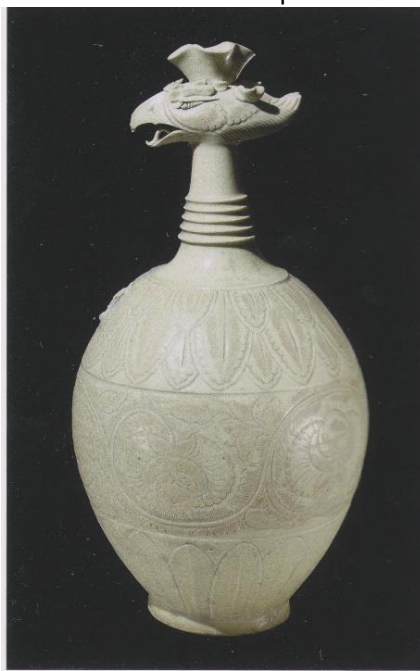


Figure 5 - Liao ewer (907-1125). The British Museum curator's statement "This ewer is widely regarded as the finest known example of the phoenix-headed vessel type. There are no others surviving."

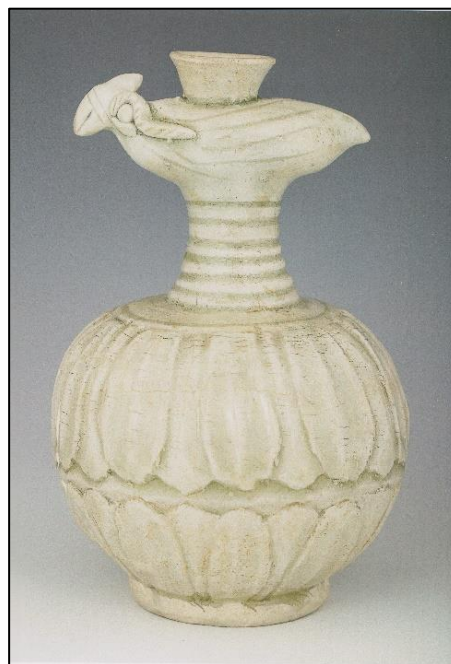


Figure 6 - Ewer for sale on Hollywood Road, Hong Kong, in 1995, described by the dealer as a Caledon bird from xi Cun Kiln, 10th -14th century.

technique. What is remarkable is that they are the same areas where physical pain is perceived. Tylenol, normally used for bodily pain, can dampen the emotional pain.

Damage and Loss

Again, the author tells several personal stories of damage to her collection including an unusual earthquake at her home in Indianapolis, IN, a collapsed glass shelf, items damaged in her hand luggage while traveling, and items lost or damaged in shipment. (Figures 3 and 4) "Studies from psychology and behavioral economics tell us we value something we own more than something we don't. This inherent human tendency is called the **endowment effect**. Therefore, when we collectors break or damage one of our objects, it is not only a profoundly negative emotion, but it

has a greater impact on our psyche than the reverse – similar gain. This tendency is embedded in our nature and called **loss aversion**.”

Collecting gone awry, Hoarding

About one third of the American population, roughly 107 million, are collectors of one thing or another. There are many fewer hoarders, about six to fifteen million. Hoarders can be miserable and make those around them miserable too. In a large US study of hoarders, major depressive disorder was found in over 50%, while generalized anxiety disorder and social phobia was found in roughly 25%. Fewer than 20% had obsessive-compulsive disorder. Hoarding has been reclassified as an independent entity, hoarding disorder, and is now a subdivision of Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders.

Enhancing Pleasure Through Understanding Ourselves

Set Collecting

Collectors initially gather objects that have value to them as individual units. Later, as more parts are added, and a group begins to take shape, single pieces are of less interest, but valued rather for the good they offer to make the set whole.

The Collectors Decision

Anchoring is a cognitive process in which humans fixate on a target that may or may not be accurate. The most common anchor is price. It is a practice used by many dealers, by indicating one price and then if the ultimate is less, the client feels she is getting a bargain.

Memory anchoring is another type of anchor. When you see an object that resembles one that you have admired before. The example she gave was for a phoenix head ewer that she had seen in the British Museum that was labeled “There are no others surviving.” (Figure 5) When she found a similar piece

(Figure 6) while traveling in China, she was sure she had found another one, and had to have it at any price even though it was damaged. It turned out to be not the same, her memory had betrayed her.

Auction overbidding

It was rewarding for her to get pieces that she both wanted and would add impact to her collection, but it was less pleasant to pay what she considered high prices. However, to purchase the same items from a dealer would be anywhere from two to five times. Was pleasure the overwhelming feeling the moment she purchased the items? Elizabeth A. Phelps from New York University and her colleagues would argue the it was not. Their research suggests the she bid not to win, but because she was afraid of losing.

The Halo Effect

Another cognitive bias that collectors may suffer is the halo effect, which is essentially, “Judging a book by its cover,” or initial impression. A dealer that appears to be straight forward or presents in an eye-catching manner or that you have dealt with before has better objects than one who doesn’t is the halo effect. But if the dealer deviates from what the user expects, the halo is tarnished.

One example she cites is her experience with a merchant who was very frank with her about a flaw in an item she was selling. The merchant developed a halo in Dr. Mueller’s mind, who assumed she would be just a honest in the future. So, when the merchant advertised a cup and saucer with an error in the text written on it,

she purchased it to add to her collection of “mistakes.” The merchant lost her halo when the text was not an error and the dealer said she was quoting another customer.

Too Much Choice

Buyers can be overwhelmed by too much choice. Collectors looking for rare antiques become very suspicious when

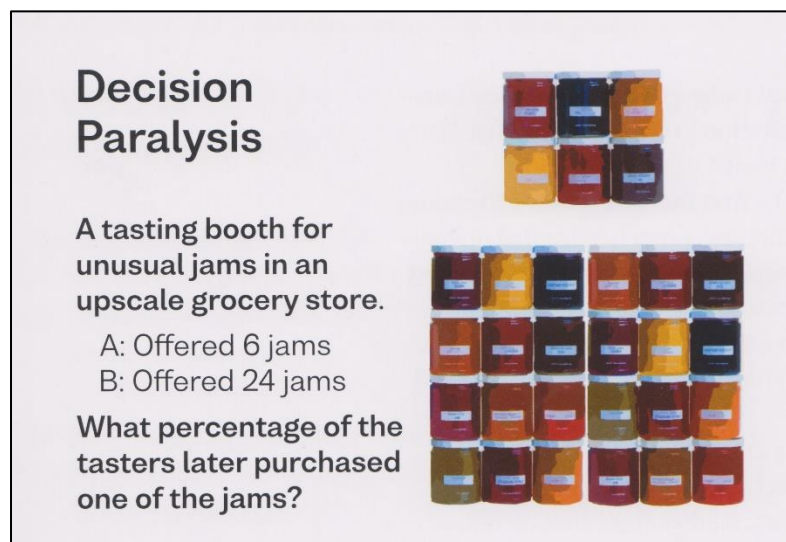


Figure 7 - Test to determine which sold the most, smaller or larger display

confronted by a large selection and end up walking away. They question whether it is less rare than was thought, or if it is overpriced. Researchers set up a jam tasting station at a stylish grocery store. (Figure 7) During one part of the day they placed six types out to taste; at another time there were twenty-four varieties to sample. The larger display attracted more attention. But the smaller display drew more sales. Thirty percent bought from the six-jam display while only three percent bought from the twenty-four-variety display.

Sunk Costs

When buying, another bias that comes into play is sunk cost. This is the tendency of people to irrationally follow through on an activity that is not meeting their expectation. They do this because of the time and or money they already spent.

The Effect of Delay on a Buying Decision

Dr. Mueller relates how she became excited about some items that she saw in an add on the internet, even imagining how they would look in her home. But since she couldn't examine the items in person, she asked the seller a few questions via email. The seller was slow to respond. By the time she received a response from the seller, she had lost interest. In the end she was happy not purchasing the items.

She attributes this turnaround in her thinking to a cognitive bias known as temporal discounting, which relates to decisions made under uncertainty. When we desire something, and it is available immediately it is especially attractive. But if we must wait, it is less so.

Loss Aversion

Loss aversion is the tendency to favor avoiding losses over acquiring equivalent gains. An example is investors who tend not to sell losing stock, they will disengage with winners too soon in an up market but hang on to losers as their price drips. The pain of selling the poor performers hurts too much and it means the buyer made a mistake that he doesn't want to acknowledge.

The Herding Effect



One of two Chinese export porcelain underglaze blue jars sold as a pair in the January 23, 2015 Christie's Winter Sale, "Important American Furniture, Outsiders, and Folk Art"

People imitate other's behaviors and favor what is in style. She quotes Warren Buffet, "You're neither right nor wrong because other people agree with you. You're right because your facts are right, and your reasoning is right"

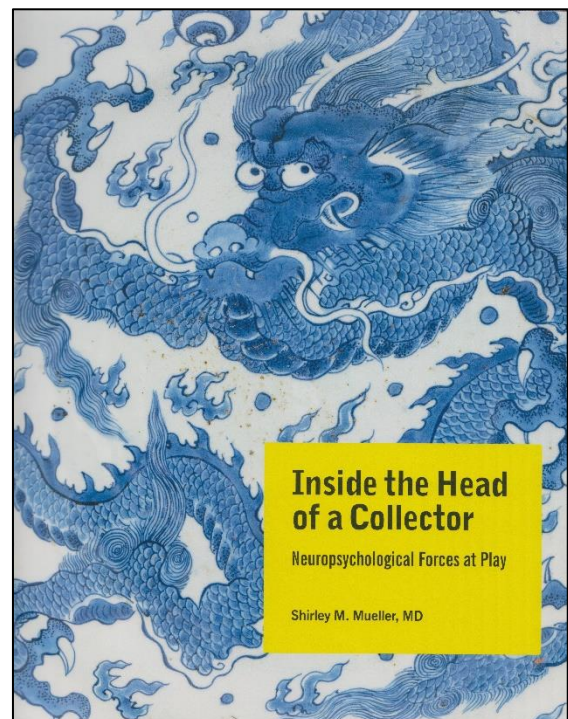
Bargains

Bargains can be found when items are misplaced in an auction or store. She relates a case where she was the only bidder and purchased a Chinese porcelain at a low price that was in with an auction of mostly furniture. (Figure 8) Christie's told her the seller did not want the item separated from the rest of the sale, probably because the more a seller includes in a single auction, the lower the commission.

In one study, investigators demonstrated that their subjects did not respond as much to absolute price as to the price relative to what they thought was suitable.

References

- Inside the Head of a Collector by Shirley M. Mueller, MD. Published Fall 2019, Lucia | Marquand, Seattle.



General Samuel Blackburn's Salt

*General Samuel Blackburn's
Chinese Export Armorial Porcelain Service,
made for General Samuel Blackburn (1759 – 1835) of
Virginia, by family tradition, as a wedding gift from
the Marquis de Lafayette (1757 – 1835).
General Samuel Blackburn was a distinguished
officer of the Revolution, one of the most beloved
friends of General Washington and
one of the pallbearers at Washington's funeral.
Provenance: The Collection of Dr. M. Donald Hayes
and Jane Telfair of Wilmington, Ohio*

The above are excerpts from the document that Dora-Weston Wilkins, a member of CASC, received when she purchased this Chinese Export salt. Also included are three different accounts of Samuel Blackburn's life. Claims like this beg to be validated. Fortunately, there is lots of information on the internet. Here are some highlights of General Blackburn's life:

He was born May 1761 in Frederick County, VA. His family moved to Augusta County, VA, He served briefly in the Revolutionary War. He was awarded an AB degree by Liberty Hall Academy, which later became Washington and Lee University. In 1785 he married Anne Mathews daughter of George Mathews, later governor of Georgia. He moved to Georgia and became a general in the militia and was elected to Georgia legislature. He was wrongly accused of wrongdoing in the Yazoo Land Scandal and in 1796 moved back to Virginia. He was a successful lawyer in Bath and Augusta Counties. He owned a 2000-acre farm in Bath County called The Wilderness. He served in the Virginia legislature where he was a famous orator and responsible for the anti-dueling act, reportedly the first such in America. There were no children, an adopted son died young. When he died in 1835, he owned 46 slaves, which he freed on the

condition they immigrate to Liberia at his expense. All but two accepted.

Researching the provenance or previous owners of the salt was just as interesting. Dr. M. Donald Hayes is an Orthodontist in Wilmington Ohio. He was known in the antiques industry as being a true connoisseur. Many people knew the quality of his collection. But he had to sell his collection as restitution to the Internal Revenue Service as well as serve 15 months in jail for making a false statement. His collection, including General Blackburn's porcelain service was sold at auction by Cowan's Auctions, Cincinnati, OH, October 21, 2017. Also, sold at this auction was a pair of silhouettes purported to be of General Samuel Blackburn and his wife.

The second name on the provenance list was Jane Telfair of Wilmington, Ohio. She was the great grandniece of Ann Mathews, General Blackburn's wife. She was born November 21, 1870 and died in California Jun 13, 1940, and is buried in Sugar Grove Cemetery, Wilmington, Ohio where many of

her family are buried. She did not marry. Her great-grandfather Isaac Telfair married Jane Ann Mathews Dec 27, 1794 in Augusta County Virginia. Jane

Ann Mathews was the daughter of George Mathews and sister of Anne Mathews, the wife of General Samuel Blackburn.

The decoration on the salt is typical of the period. The center design of blue and gold drapery surrounding a shield with a gold monogram is pictured in the Open



Silhouettes purported to be Samuel Blackburn and his wife



The Wilderness, build by General Samuel Blackburn ca 1815, Bath County, Virginia (photo Nyttend)

Salt Compendium, page 288, plate 897. That salt is described as the same pattern of china as that purchased for Mt. Vernon by George Washington in 1790. The center design is also pictured in "A Winterthur Guide to Chinese Export Porcelain" where it is described as a pseudo-armorial and an example of the standardization and simplicity that marked the turn of the 18th century. The border of cobalt blue and gold bands studded with gold stars is simple and elegant.

References

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- Dictionary of Virginia Biography, Virginia State Library
- Ancestry.com
- Cowan's Auctions www.cowanuctions.com
- A Winterthur Guide to Chinese Export Porcelain by Arlene M. Palmer, Crown Publishers, Inc.
- The Open Salt Compendium by Sandra Jzyk and Nina Robertson, Schiffer Publishing Ltd.

Do you have a salt with provenance? Let us know so that we may feature it in the newsletter
