

"Newport Antiques Show Charms Crowds In Only Its Second Year"

by Frances McQueeney-Jones Mascolo, Photos by David S. Smith
Middletown, R.I.

For the second year running, fine paintings, exquisite furniture and marine antiques displaced the hockey goals and ice in the rink at St George's School, where 41 first-rate dealers set up for the Newport Antiques Show. Devoid of the standard aroma of a hockey rink, the space was handsomely transformed with lavish floral displays, and the fine antiques on view made for a fine experience. The show looked simply beautiful.



Presenting sponsor of the show, William Vareika Fine Arts of Newport, pulled out all the stops with a great selection of paintings having Newport connections. Pride of place went to John Twachtman's "Paradise Rocks, Newport," a landscape of a site practically around the corner from the show location. Another local spot was William Trost Richards' "Sachuest Beach, Newport, R.I., 1891," a view of the beach known as Second Beach. Another Richards painting was "Gray Cliff, Conanicut Island, R.I.," a view of the artist's home near Jamestown, and yet another was his "South Shore of Newport near Boat House Point." Vareika, who published John La Farge in *Paradise: The Painter and His Muse* in 1995, showed John LaFarge's 1867 watercolor "Tulips and Narcissus."

Vareika also showed spectacular marine paintings that included James Buttersworth yacht racing pictures. They were "Yacht Racing near a Clipper Ship," "The Schooner Triton and The Sloop Christine Racing in Newport Harbor" and "Yacht Race." William Bradford was represented by his portrait "The Mary Jane of Eastport, Maine." Hyannis Port, Mass., marine dealer Hyland Granby had a splendid display. A 10-foot pine door frame carved elegantly with hearts, shields and scrolls, stars and acorns commanded the attention of all. It came from the garden house near Boston of Harriet B. Pierce, sister of President Franklin B. Pierce, who so loved the design that she had it printed on her cards. One of those cards and the block used to print them was case framed and also for sale.



Speaking by telephone after the show, Alan Granby said, "The committee worked like no committee I've ever seen before to make it fabulous." Gorgeous was another word he used to describe the event. Sponsor Northeast Auctions had several staff members on hand, including chief Ron Bourgeault, taking a breather between his spectacular August sales and catching up with friends.

Not only did Bryn Mawr, Penn., dealer Diana Bittel put together a remarkably good-looking show, she also managed to fill her own booth with some choice objects.

Two zinc or iron curly coated retrievers, which she said were probably by Fiske, welcomed visitors to her booth, which was awash with shells — particularly apt for the location. She hung the walls with prime examples of the sailor's valentines for which she is so well known. The English sailor's woollies were crisp and nautical, arrayed in a neat pattern. Other delights included a pair of French Napoleonic shellwork figures of a man and a woman, circa 1830, in

domed cases with inlaid bases that drew every eye, and silk work pictures by Thomas Willis Orland, one of the steam yacht London and another of the Young America . There was also a pair of straw work pictures, also depicting sailing vessels. Bittel brought along a fine Napoleonic prisoner of war bone watch case and several pieces of furniture that included a five-tier étagère covered in shells, a New England maple chest and a New England tiger maple chest-on-chest.



Show beneficiaries were the Boys and Girls Clubs of Newport County and the Newport Historical Society, the latter of which mounted a loan exhibit that brought to light a locket with a three-carat diamond enclosing strands of hair of Martha and George Washington that was given to Oliver Wolcott by Martha Washington. A view of Easton's Beach, circa 1870, by F.A. Peckham was reproduced as the show catalog cover and was also on view. A Goddard Townsend easy chair that descended in the family of William Ellery, the Newport signer of the Declaration of Independence,

was also on view. The upholstery was embroidered by Ellery's wife and whenever reupholstering was required, her crewel work was cut from the old fabric and sewn on to the new one.