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TURLEY PUBLICATIONS COURTESY PHOTO BY LAURETTA R. ST. GEORGE-SOREL
Doug Lappin, a Ware resident, stands in front of his intricate room screen at last Sunday's Antiques and Collectibles Show in New Braintree. The screen, which he uses in his home, was a gift from a friend in Iran. It was appraised at \$500 to \$700.

Trinkets and treasures appraised by expert

By Lauretta R. St. George-Sorel
Correspondent

NEW BRAintree - The New Braintree Town Hall was the site last Sunday afternoon of an expert's appraisal of a wide range of antiques and collectibles, the majority of which were owned by local residents

and members of the surrounding towns of Warren, Spencer, Ware, the Brookfields, and Hardwick, among others.

Sponsored by the Quaboag Historical Society, the three-hour event featured auctioneer/appraiser Wayne A. Tuiskula, of Central Mass Auctions Inc.,

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Blue Star finds new home at last

Horse sanctuary to move to West Brookfield

By Douglas Farmer
Staff writer

WEST BROOKFIELD - After months of surveying the landscape for a place where the retired workhorses at Blue Star Equiculture could roam freely, it seems their new home was only a few minutes away. For if everything goes according to plan, the horse sanctuary - which has been located on leased property off Route 181 in Palmer for nearly nine years - will move to the 235-acre Clover Springs Farm, on Ragged Hill Road in West Brookfield.

Natalie Johnson, 33, who owns the farm and worked it for many years with her late father, said she had always wanted to house horses on the property. Presently, she lives on Lake Wickaboag.

"I am hoping the attorneys have the agreement worked out within the next couple of

weeks, but it will be a long-term lease arrangement," Johnson said. "I was looking for a tenant that had a strong following and could work and use a piece of property this large, and Blue Star has a good number of volunteers."

Prior to her recent conversations with Blue Star founder and Executive Director Pamela Rickenbach, Johnson said she only knew of the organization

that houses retired and recuperating workhorses through social media.

But as it turns out, a good friend of Johnson's is Darcie Confar, a "herd member" and longtime supporter of Blue Star.

"I knew Natalie was interested in having someone take over the farm, but I didn't

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TURLEY PUBLICATIONS STAFF PHOTO BY DOUGLAS FARMER
Jesse Taylor, 10, is all smiles around the horses at Blue Star in Palmer. The horse sanctuary has plans to move to Clover Hill Farm in West Brookfield.

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PORTRAITS 1
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they sit at in the art room. "I taught them how to draw self-portraits, with different parts of the face and what they look like," said Mundell. "It took them two art classes to complete."

WBES Principal Colleen Mucha even did a self-portrait to be hung in the gallery, which students could search for among the portraits.

"It was a way that we could incorporate a lot of them; they are really excited," Mundell said. "We didn't use mirrors, it was more about what they thought of themselves, not what they look like in a mirror."

Students also included an interest hobby or sport in the background of

their self-portraits. Fifth-grader Olivia Gravel said she included acting, dancing and singing into the background of her portrait.

"I don't think it was hard to draw myself," Gravel said. "I like art and like seeing it hanging up on the gallery wall." Isaac Gravel, also in the fifth grade, drew his self-portrait winking at the viewer.

"I was thinking of old shows that show every character in the beginning credit and there's always one that does a funny face. So, I winked," Gravel said. "It's cool to be in an art gallery because I love art and I've been drawing for a while. I am good at drawing people because that's what I usually draw."

Their mother, Mel-

Jean Gravel, said she was happy to see her children's work hung up in the gallery and encourages them to continue to draw at home.

"It was great, they love to see their own work," Gravel said. "It's also nice to see how they see themselves and think of themselves. Both of them are very good artists, they both draw. Isaac has a sketchbook that he draws in and Olivia enjoys drawing clothes in particular."

Holly Garceau, a West Brookfield resident, said that she attended with her family and granddaughter because she wanted support the school.

"I wanted to support the school and the arts because I love them," Garceau said. "I think they're great self-portraits. They all have expressions and personality to each of them."

She it was a good experience for her because she used to teach art at the elementary school and now one of her pupils is a teacher there and teachers her granddaughter.

Artist Geigh Cloward said he included several interests in the background of his drawing. "I picked baseball because I play baseball and cooking utensils because I like to cook," Cloward said. "It's nice to have art hung up and sometimes I like to make different art than cooking."

His older sister, Isabella Cloward, said it was nice to see her brother's work because when she was younger she also had art hung up in a gallery.

"It's nice to see how he draws too and what he included as interests," Cloward said.



TURLEY PUBLICATIONS COURTESY PHOTOS BY LAURETTA R. ST. GEORGE-SOREL
Patricia Tuttle, of Warren, holds her antique Tiffany pillbox, appraised at \$150 last Sunday at the New Braintree Antiques and Collectibles Show, sponsored by the Quaboag Historical Society. Tuttle was pleasantly surprised to learn its value.

APPRAISALS 1
FROM PAGE 1

whose expertise was appreciated by the large crowd that attended the show. Tuiskula was known to many at the event, some of whom regularly read his weekly column, Antiques, Collectibles, and Estates, in area weekly newspapers. Others had attended an event offered last year by the QHS, where he appraised similar items.

His professional, yet easy-going style of relating to people was apparent as he handled each item respectfully in determining its hidden history. Some people had an awareness of their items' background and shared that information with the audience, while others had no details to offer. In all cases, Tuiskula stressed the importance and significance of markings, such as manufacturers' names or initials on the items. Where there were none, however, he had to use his powerful magnifying glass to reveal a date or detail that provided some clue as to its background and value. In a few cases, when

he was not familiar with a particular item, he took down the person's contact information, offering to research the item and get back to the owner with pertinent information.

Tuiskula, who has been an antiques dealer and has conducted estate sales for more than 20 years, has also been an appraiser at events at the Worcester Historical Museum and the Worcester Senior Center. He has also appeared as an appraiser on the popular PBS program "Antiques Roadshow." In his comments at the conclusion of Sunday's program, he said interest in antiques and collectibles is very high at this time. Other "hot" collectibles include baseball cards, estate jewelry and old coins, he said. "Memorabilia from World War I and World War II are always popular, too," he said.

Members of the QHS, including co-presidents Ed Londergan and Amy Dugas, greeted the attendees as they entered the Town Hall with their prized possessions at noon on Sunday. Each person signed in and took a number, assuring that the event would run smoothly. About 40 people had brought their items to be appraised, many of which had been in their families for generations. In general, they were



TURLEY PUBLICATIONS COURTESY PHOTOS BY LAURETTA R. ST. GEORGE-SOREL
An American helmet, left, and a German one, are held by Dawson Durgin, of Spencer. The German helmet, with SS insignia, could bring approximately \$500, according to Tuiskula.

accompanied by friends and family members, eager to learn the monetary value of their treasures. Although they weren't necessarily interested in selling their items for a profit, several were excited to learn that the value of their items was much higher than they had anticipated. One man from North Brookfield, who didn't want to identify himself, was surprised to learn that a gun that his father had paid \$50 for was now valued at \$1,500.00. The shotgun, manufactured in 1800, had been passed down to him. He worried, he said, that he might be the target of a robbery if his identity was made public. "There's been some break-ins around the area lately," he said.

Among the articles brought for appraisal were several pieces of Depression glass, Confederate money, World War I posters, a very large weathervane, a framed assortment of arrowheads, a Tiffany pillbox, numerous art pieces, pieces of estate jewelry, helmets worn in World War II, one American and one German with the SS insignia, cobalt glass, an antique mousetrap from 1877, a room-size folding screen originating in Iran, assorted books, a set of beautiful dolls that would thrill any little girl and many other treasures.



INSET: WBES Principal Colleen Mucha also participated in drawing a self-portrait, which was hidden amongst the students' work.



Wyatt Fay points to his self-portrait in purple at the top of the display exhibited by the Worcester Art and Frame Gallery.

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