

Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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” Antiques Library Show”

Ever wonder how much that Superman comic book you bought as a kid is worth? There may not be an Antiques Road show crew in Norfolk but there is an extensive antiques reference database at the Norfolk Public Library.



There are over 140 major U.S. auction houses that provide approximate values for items on the p4A Antiques Reference site. A library patron can search for an item and pull up a full colored picture of almost any antique, its description and the latest sale price, date of sale and contact information. Additional historical references are also added to many of the records.

“A person can search for an item that they might not even be sure what its original use was. Enter a keyword like “small leather farm tool” and you will pull up items that might match your unidentified item,” said Judy Hilkemann, reference supervisor at the library.

It’s an oak carved kitchen clock. It could be worth \$200 or \$20, who knows? Lyle Baker of Norfolk bought the clock at an auction at what he hoped was a reasonable price. To find out its true value he talked to his daughter, Amy Fuxa, who works at the Norfolk City Library. With the help of reference librarian Judy Hilkemann and an antiques database the library subscribes to, Baker found out the clock was worth between \$140-\$200.

“That’s more than I paid for it. I’ll probably put it on the auction block,” Baker said.

The antiques database, called p4A (prices for antiques), is available through the library’s website link to all card owners. By entering in a description of an antique, owners can find its value and what a similar item recently bought at an auction. A 27 inch Ansonia New York made clock nearly identical to Baker’s brought \$144 at an auction in August 2009.

“You get an idea of what an item’s worth. I’ve have stacks of books that will tell me but this is much faster,” Baker said. He has been buying and selling antiques and collectibles for 15 years.

Hilkemann encourages library patrons to use all the databases available at the library. The p4A antiques database is one that can be accessed without first acquiring a user name and password.

“The more you know about the item, the easier it is to find information about it. The name, date, any marking, where it was made, the material it’s made of all helps,” Hilkemann said.

For more information about using the database, go to <http://ci.norfolk.ne.us/library> and click on the antiques database or call 402-844-2100.

There are 1,280 different classifications of antiques in the database including furniture, lamps, firearms, books, dolls, toys, clocks, glass, pottery and porcelain, and advertising collectibles. The value of the items range from ten dollars to millions of dollars.

Artwork is also included in the database and includes value of art currently recorded at many reputable New York art markets.

It is not necessary to obtain a user name and password to use the service. The Norfolk Public Library has a subscription to the database so searching for items is free for library card holders.

To access the database, library patrons first access the p4A Antiques Reference website at <http://www.p4aantiquesreference.com/library/norfolk.asp> or go to http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/library/online_databases.htm and click on Antiques Appraisal. On that page, the patron enters his or her library card number found on the back on the card underneath the bar code. Once submitted the user is directed to the p4A Antiques Reference search page where keywords, category, place of origin and dates can be entered in.

For example, when “Red Wing Crock” is entered in the keyword section, a page comes up showing pictures of various types of crocks. If the picture of the 25 gallon crock is clicked on, more information comes up on that item including its picture, the previous owner and the condition of the crock (chipped on the bottom). The price given for the crock when sold at a Minnesota auction on July 10, 2007 was \$225.

Users cannot buy antiques on the site. Top appraisers around the country use p4A, which is a private company based in Ohio, to see the current value of hundreds of thousands of items.

“This is the most extensive database of antiques available to the public. It is updated each day of the year as items are sold and recorded from across the country. We are happy to provide this as another valuable online resource for Norfolk Public Library cardholders,” Hilkemann said.

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For a short video of this story, go to the City of Norfolk YouTube site at www.youtube.com/norfolkne1.