

Auction chairman takes survey comments to heart

By Rudy Roy

I want to thank all those members who participated in the 2001 Membership Survey. Since a number of members took the time to include comments and suggestions about the club auction, I thought it important to respond to some of them so you will know they are being taken seriously.

Let me preface my responses by stating that I am not a professional auctioneer. The format and procedures of the club auction was derived from the efforts of Joe Coulbourne when they were revived by him. What changes in format and operation have been incorporated come from either my own experiences with auctions and/or the result of recommendations and suggestions by member participants. I view the entire process as one of continuing evolution and will incorporate changes if they result in improving the auctions.

Now, to the comments and suggestions!

"More Bs in the auction!" As I am dependent on material being consigned by members for the auctions, and I try and include the oldest material I have on hand in the next sale, I can't always have items in the sale that are B rated or better. I try to include as much variety in each sale as the material I have to use offers. (Perhaps the lack of

B and better rates attracts to their true scarcity!)

"Since I am a col-

A number of you made suggestions or comments when you sent in your survey forms (*Bulletin*, January 2001). Last month we reported on the results of the survey. We also distributed a copy of all the comments to the Club officers and chairpersons. Auction chairman Rudy Roy thought it important to respond to those comments since the auctions are so important to the Club and a better understanding of how the auctions work will help you all to use them to your best advantage.

lector of postal history, in the club auctions I would like to see more foreign covers included and higher quality and more costly items. Too many German and British items in the auctions probably because they are the most common." See response above about being dependent on consigned material. I also attempt to balance each auction, if I can, so that there is material for every perfins collector. The writer of this comment answered the reason why there is more German and GB material—they appear more often, and I have more of them to sell.

"Would like to be more successful in bidding in Perfins Club auctions."

Thanks to Editor Floyd Walker, Prices Realized are published almost immediately after a sale closes, as well as appearing on the Perfins website. I strongly

encourage everyone to review these for an idea as to what various lots are selling for,

then, using this information, develop their own bidding strategy.

"The auction should close sooner. I need to know how much I spent to help me bid smartly in other auctions." The principal reason the auctions are open as long as they are is that our overseas members don't get delivery of the *Bulletin* with any great regularity, and the present time sequence allows them to participate. With about one third of the participants in each auction being overseas members, it would not be in everyone's interest to shorten the auction duration.

"At times I don't find all the abbreviations used listed in the key, i.e. in Auction 81, lots 123 & 133, the o/wf. It's probably obvious to others." A good point, and I apologize. There probably have been many occasions when I have used what I think

are fairly common abbreviations and shorthand without realizing that not everyone knows their meaning. I use the "o/w" as shorthand for "otherwise", and the "F" is an abbreviation for "Fine". I will evaluate the Auction Guide and see if additional shorthand symbols I use can be included.

"I like to get prices from the auction sales to establish my worldwide and US collection values, plus enabling me to bid on lots in the future.I would like all auction prices posted in the *Bulletin* as soon as they can be done without too much hardship to the auctioneer."

As soon as I wrap up an auction (usually a couple of days after the closing date), I compile the Prices Realized and email them to the editor, who usually publishes them in the next available issue of the *Bulletin*. I also email them to webmaster Joe Coulbourne who, as his work schedule permits, uploads them to Perfins.com.

"In auctions, the quality description is missing." The introduction section to each auction has descriptions of the general quality standards followed. Where necessary, additional comments on an individual item basis are made. The principal interest is the PERFINs PATTERN. Defects in the

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Auction chairman responds to comments

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stamp (thins, short perfs, tears, etc.) are noted as occurring, but no consideration is given to the centering of the stamp design. For covers, the obvious defects—tears, ink stains, wear, etc.—are noted, but not that the cover shows what one would term 'normal wear' from having gone through the mails. I would welcome suggestions as to what else I should include in a lot description.

"When foreign perfins are mentioned, especially in the club auctions, I would like reference made not only to Scott numbers but also to another catalog used abroad, for instance Stanley Gibbons." Unfortunately, while I have a decent personal library, including an old Gibbons red book, at present this is not a practical option. Besides lacking the many catalogs needed, space constraints in the *Bulletin* would prohibit more extensive listings. However, I have responded to overseas members' requests for scans of foreign lots where I have shown BOTH sides of the stamp(s). These were then sent via email.

Now I would like to address the three specific questions about the Auctions and the responses to them.

Question 1 inquired about participation in the auctions, and 48 of 71 respondents indi-

cated usually or sometimes. I don't think that this high percentage of respondents is indicative of auction participation, as each sale usually only has about 10 percent of the membership bidding. More participating members would be better!

Question 2 asked about the prices realized in the auctions, specifically were they "Realistic," "Inflated by the bids of a few buyers," or "Low." About 25 percent (15 of 59 respondents) indicated they were "inflated by a few buyers." While I often find myself wondering what makes a lot so valuable that 14 to 16 members will bid amounts that appear to me to be very high, I am a firm believer that an auction is where the true value of an item is really achieved. It is listed, described, (and perhaps even illustrated), and offered UNRESERVED (except those lots with owner prescribed minimum bids) to anyone who wants to make an offer on it. If you, as a knowledgeable buyer, value an item at X\$, and are willing to pay that amount for it, then it is at least worth that much to you. If another knowledgeable buyer also values the item, and is willing to pay \$Y for it, and Y is greater than X, then, following the established auction rules,

bidder of Y amount will win the lot over bidder of X amount at one bidding increment over the X amount. I am afraid, though, that the days when an A rated perfins was sold for \$5.00 and special comment about its "high" price was made in the *Bulletin* are long past.

Question 3 asked about descriptions of lots in the auctions, and 17 percent (10 of 57 respondents) indicated that they were "not very helpful or too limited." I always welcome suggestions for improving the auctions. Please send me any specific suggestions as to how I can make the descriptions more helpful. While I try to be clear but concise in auction descriptions, I may not achieve this, so suggestions here would also be welcome and helpful.

Auction 83 begins on page 87.

The prices realized in
Auction 81
are on page 93.

Auction 81 had just 65
bidders, only about 10%
of the members.

**Surely more than
10% of you need
something
in the latest
auction!**