

# Auctioneer

NOVEMBER 2011

The official publication of the National Auctioneers Association

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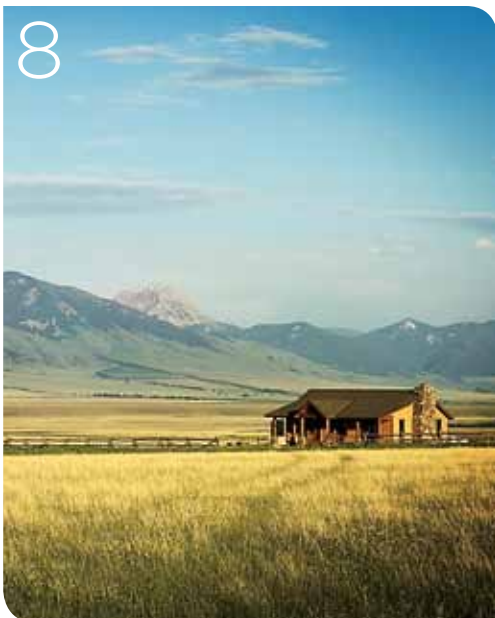
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# Auctioneer

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The official publication of the National Auctioneers Association

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**Christie King**  
CAI, AARE, BAS, NAA President

National Auctioneers Association President Christie King, CAI, AARE, BAS, became a member of the association's Board of Directors in 2006. She has served as an Education Institute Trustee, as a member of several committees and as NAA Vice President for two terms. King and two brothers represent the fourth generation of leaders for J.P. King Auction Co., Gadsden, Ala. King started C. King Benefit Auctions LLC, Gadsden, in 2007.

# Keep practicing good public relations

It's an interesting phenomenon for Auctioneers. You put a microphone in our hands and give us an item to sell and we own the stage. But, put a microphone in our face, one that we don't control, and ask us to answer questions about our business and many of us freeze!

One of the scariest things I have had to do as a member of the National Auctioneers Association Board of Directors, and particularly as President, is field questions — from the press, from members, from a lot of different people — about the auction industry or just stand up and talk, not sell, but talk. But I've learned or, at least, I'm learning.

Too often, we want to place the responsibility of educating people about the auction industry at the door of the NAA headquarters. Certainly, staff and leadership care about this as a specific issue. We have identified resources to help the public understand who we are and what we do.

Each Tuesday and Friday, *USA TODAY* showcases the NAA through the Auction Showcase. The amount of publicity we get through this relationship is fantastic. And this relationship will expand. The NAA now provides editorial content near the Showcase. This will result in an increased focus on auctions as the most efficient way to dispose of assets.

As I write this, I am leaving the Benefit Auction Summit in mid-September. At this event, Bill Menish, CAI, AARE, BAS, presented "Managing the Media: In Front of the Camera or Behind the Microphone." While the focus of his presentation was for benefit Auctioneers, some of the tips he provided are applicable to all of us, regardless of what we sell. Each year at Conference and Show, the NAA offers educational sessions similar to "Managing the Media."

This issue of *Auctioneer* features stories and columns that offer tips for good public relations. Check out Pages 25, 30 and 31.

## Meetings

The NAA has had its fall Board of Directors

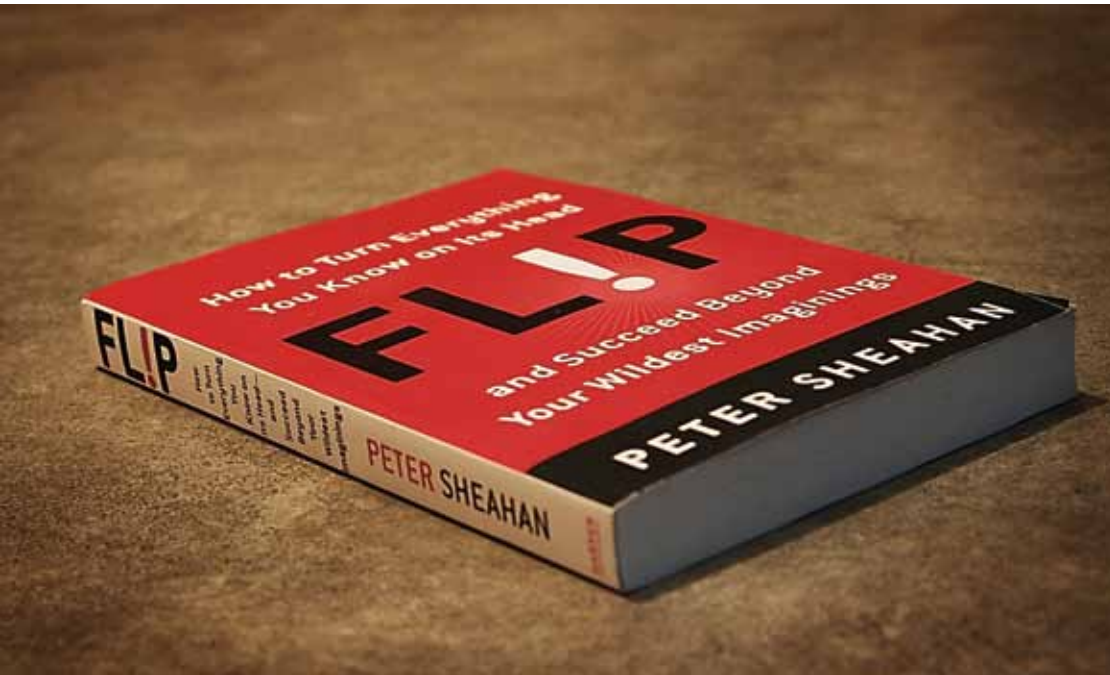
meeting, which took place in mid-October. During the two days in Overland Park, Kan., we met with the National Auctioneers Foundation Board of Trustees and then with the Education Institute Trustees. Each of these groups is responsible for important parts of our business — funding and education.

The Trustees will be discussing a plan to provide us all with world class education. Funding will be critical to support these efforts. These groups are working closer than ever before. We know what our responsibilities are. We exist to support the successful auction professional.

In addition to the Summit and Board meeting, my plans include the NAA Auxiliary Long-Range Planning meeting, scheduled for late October in Dallas. In November, I plan to head to Memphis, Tenn., to tour St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. So, my life as President is clearly underway.

This is also true for the reinvention of the NAA. We've been talking about making sure that the NAA is relevant in the future, beginning with the release of the paper written by the Council on Future Practices. Please read this paper if you haven't so you can prepare yourself and your business for the future, just as the Board is preparing the NAA for the future. Check out the story on page 16 for a report from the fall Board meeting.

At the end of this month, my husband, Mike, and I will enjoy Thanksgiving. I know this year in particular I'll be giving thanks for the relationships I've developed at the NAA. Enjoy your holiday as well!



# Book questions business relevance



By Stephen Karbelk, CAI, AARE

ing business book, “Fl!p.”

When coupled with “Give Me Five, Now Ten ... Years Into the Future,” a white paper produced by the National Auctioneers Association’s Council on Future Practices, “Fl!p” helps you dig deeper into assumptions behind the Opportunity Agility concept.

Sheahan challenges you to ask yourself tough questions about your business and what you are doing or not doing that’s keeping you from growing your business to the next level. For instance, he cites example after example of how products are constantly improving and being re-invented so they

What will make your auction business irrelevant? Ouch. That’s a brutal question. But it is just one of the many questions and compelling thoughts gleaned from Peter Sheahan’s provoking

can remain market leaders. Just imagine what would have happened to Apple if it had stopped improving upon its first iPod. Clearly, the competition would quickly have surpassed Apple as it rested on its laurels.

As I reflected on Sheahan’s words, thoughts and challenges, I asked myself, “If my auction service was a product, what model am I on?” Also, I asked myself, “Are we innovating enough?” We have successful auctions, but are they good enough?

Sheahan forces you to look into the proverbial mirror and reassess everything you do. He questions whether being fast and cheap is good enough, if our service innovations are just for our convenience or truly for the benefit of our clients and customers. His book makes you think if your business is losing relevance in the marketplace because it is not innovating fast enough.

When you read “Fl!p,” have a pen and paper nearby. Be prepared to spend time reflecting on Sheahan’s concepts. You never know, you may come up with the next big thing that will turn our industry upside down. ❖



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# Land sells strong as alternative to traditional investments

## “Old-school” marketing still brings buyers

By Tom Burfield  
*contributing writer*

As interest rates hover near zero on bank savings plans and demand for productive land swells from producers and investors, business is booming in some areas for Auctioneers who sell ranch and farmland.

Larry Brenner of Farmland Auction & Realty, Hays, Kan., now conducts about one such auction each week and reports that the number of auctions he’s presiding over, as well as the dollar amount he’s bringing in, have increased considerably over the past two years.

“Appraisals keep getting higher,” he says, and that’s good for sellers and buyers. “It makes their equity position look better.”

The market is so hot around Charlotte, Iowa, though, that William Hamilton, CAI, of Hamilton Auctions and Farm Management, says properties that once may have gone to auction now are being snapped up by neighbors for expansion. His business remains steady at three to five such auctions a year.

In Yukon, Okla., Eddie Haynes, CAI, AARE, of Eddie Haynes Inc., says he conducts about a dozen land auctions a year.

Agricultural land has been holding its value, he says, but with a worsening drought in Oklahoma, many owners want to sell. The more property that becomes available, the less money it brings in and the harder it is to sell.

### Seller’s market

The capital gains situation has created a seller’s market, says Brenner, who also is a broker associate.

“If (buyers) get a 2-3% return on their land investment, they’re doing better than they can at a bank,” he says.

Brenner tries to reach investors and producers by advertising in newspapers in Kansas and in five surrounding states. He also uses the Internet, radio and TV.

On auction day, he conducts a live Internet auction.

With a little help from Geographic Information Services Inc., he puts together a brochure that lists exact land locations and includes aerial photos and soil surveys that indicate the soil type and productivity.

“We try to put a format together that is good enough so that (potential buyers) can guide themselves around the property,” he says.

continued on Page 10 »



## GET THE BUSINESS

*For ranch and farmland auctions, here are some tips from seasoned experts:*

- Don't overlook the **basics of marketing**, like signs on the property and handbills
- Prepare a brochure that lists exact property locations and includes **aerial photos and soil surveys**
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In Illinois, the closer land is to a grain terminal, the more it's worth, Hamilton says.

He uses local newspapers, journals, direct mail and occasionally sale bills and telephone calls.

Another way to find potential clients is to network by doing volunteer work, for the local cancer society, for example.

"That's how you build a clientele," he says.

There is pent-up demand for good farmland around Oklahoma, Haynes says.

He advertises his auctions online, in newspapers and in a variety of publications, including farm and ranch magazines and even in horse magazines. But he gets good results from decidedly old-school methods, too.

"We're still getting most of our buyers off the signs on the property," he says.

He also spreads the word about his business by conducting benefit auctions for peace officer associations.

### Hard work

Auctioneers have an advantage over real estate brokers when interest rates are low, Brenner says.

"The auction method is quick, certain and effective," he says.

Haynes says he enjoys conducting farm and ranch auctions more than any other kind, but he agrees that it takes a lot of effort to stay abreast of real estate laws.

At one time, Haynes had real estate and/or auction licenses in 32 states, but now he only keeps up licenses in Oklahoma and adjoining states because of the time investment needed to stay up on continuing education requirements.

In some states, you may need both an Auctioneer's license and a real estate license, he says.

He spends some of his time putting up signs and scattering brochures in stores for miles around.

When dealing with farmland, it's important to familiarize yourself with the property so you can portray an attractive investment opportunity for potential buyers, Hamilton says.

"I do a lot of walking and looking things over," he says.

Occasionally, a seller will have an unrealistic expectation for his property.

When that happens, Hamilton will pass on auctioning the property to avoid disappointing the seller and upsetting bidders if the property is withdrawn. ❖

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At St. Jude, Brayden received 11 rounds of chemotherapy to eradicate the tumors, but doctors are unsure how much vision he has lost. Brayden's tumor growth has been persistent, and his parents face the very real possibility that their little boy might still lose his eyes one day. Brayden's St. Jude treatment team continues to monitor the situation very closely.

"The patients here are blessed," said Misty. "They receive treatment they might not have at other places. St. Jude is the best place." Brayden visits St. Jude for regular checkups. He is a happy, active child who loves music, dancing and playing with his older brother.

For more information, visit [www.stjude.org](http://www.stjude.org).



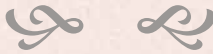
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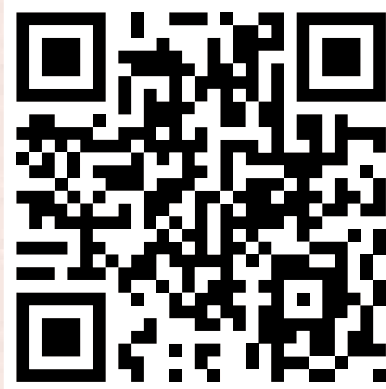
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Steve Proffitt

Steve Proffitt is general counsel of J. P. King Auction Company, Inc. (www.jpking.com). He is also an Auctioneer and instructor at Mendenhall School of Auctioneering in High Point, N.C., and Reppert School of Auctioneering in Indiana. He welcomes questions from readers about auctions and auctioneering. Readers' communications may be edited and revised.

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# Change is constant

## Proper disclosure reserves right to modify terms

An Auctioneer wrote me: "Steve, I see a lot of Auctioneers putting out ads that say announcements at the auction will control no matter what their previous advertising said. I've never used this notice. Do you think I should and, if so, do you have any advice that would help me?"

How many times have you seen that notice printed in an auction advertisement? You probably include it regularly in your own marketing materials, just like many Auctioneers. The Auctioneer who contacted me wants to know if this disclosure is a good idea. Let us consider the issue to answer the question.

If there is one constant in life, it is the opposite of constant — it is change. Things are always changing and almost everything eventually changes — and then changes some more.

Sometimes change comes when we least expect or want it. Like the old saying goes, "The best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry."

When things go "awry" leading up to an auction, Auctioneers need the ability to alter their plans so they can handle issues that arise. That is what this disclosure does. It gives Auctioneers the flexibility to shift gears and adapt to an alteration that has occurred between the time when the initial ads and flyers were published for an auction and the bell time for the event.

### Shifting gears

Suppose a seller removes a featured item from the inventory the night before an auction? Suppose a threat of bad weather requires the event to be shortened and the advertised order of sale to be amended? Suppose the seller decides to offer an item without a reserve, when it was advertised as having a reserve, or

*Announcements the day of auction take precedence over all printed material.*

vice versa? Suppose another seller has recently consigned goods to the auction under different terms than those advertised?

These things happen and Auctioneers do not want to be boxed in by bidders claiming that advertising done days, and maybe weeks, ahead must control. Auctioneers can avoid this by using this disclosure to tell the world that, no matter what has been advertised in advance, everything is subject to revision before the start of an auction.

The Auctioneer who wrote me about this issue asked if I have any advice that might assist him in using this disclosure. I do, and here it is:

### Get approval

First, an Auctioneer should never make any important change in an auction's terms without having the expressed consent of the seller to do so. If the modification is a significant one, the seller's approval should be obtained in writing.

### Be consistent

Second, before reworking the terms of auction, the Auctioneer must ensure that any change made will be consistent with all of the other terms. If the Auctioneer implements a revision that causes a contradiction or other conflict with an existing term, the potential for trouble has been hatched.

### Put it in writing

Third, if the Auctioneer is using written terms

for an auction, any revision should be distributed to the audience in written form, too, whenever practical to do so. As noted, the Auctioneer does not want to do anything to create an ambiguity, contradiction or conflict in an auction's terms, so it is crucial that the change be tightly defined. Additionally, it is always best to modify a written term with a writing to avoid the potential for someone to later claim that the revised term was not received or understood.

### Give the terms

Fourth, the Auctioneer should make all announcements with the "three Cs" in mind — that is to announce any modification in terms clearly, correctly and completely. Giving the terms before the start of an auction is not only an extremely important component of an upcoming sale, it is the most important component. Unless there is a separate contract for sale form that will be used, the terms of auction will become the terms for the contracts for sale that will be formed in the auction between the seller and the buyers. If there has been any change from what was already advertised, the Auctioneer needs to carefully detail and emphasize it.

### Answer questions

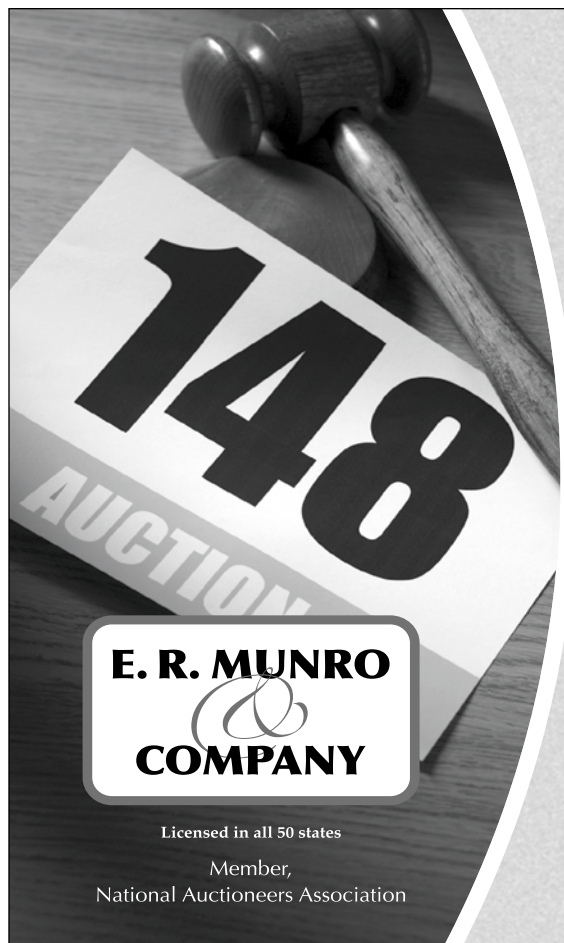
Fifth, once the Auctioneer has announced a modification in the

terms, a smart technique is to ask the audience if anyone has a question about it. If there is a question by someone who does not understand what is being done, the Auctioneer should try to answer it. The Auctioneer does not want confusion, questions or conflict during the auction. If a questioner is merely looking to debate a decision the seller or Auctioneer has made, though, the Auctioneer should maintain control of the situation and politely, but firmly, move forward.

### Consider what's at stake

Sixth, Auctioneers should never forget this important rule: the greater the amount of money potentially involved, the more careful they must be in everything they do, including making any change in an auction's terms. If there is a lot at stake, this is another instance where an Auctioneer is well advised to have the revision printed and distributed to bidders at the time when they register to bid in the auction.

There is nothing like having the right tool to do a job. When an Auctioneer needs to make an amendment to an auction's terms, this disclosure reserving the right to do so is the tool that is needed. Auctioneers should know it and use it. ❖



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# Consider your compensation

## A sheriff sale is a good source of business, but all parties must agree on the fee

### *What must I know to conduct a sheriff sale?*

**Q:** What is a sheriff sale, and can an Auctioneer conduct it in foreclosure actions? If yes, how should the Auctioneer proceed with this auction?

**A:** A sheriff or other court officer conducts a sheriff sale, usually at auction, to carry out a decree of execution or foreclosure issued by a court. In other words, it is a sale by which the sheriff disposes of property in accordance with a court order. Generally, sheriff sales involve real property, but in some instances such sales may include personal property, as well. The typical sheriff sale is the result of a foreclosure action initiated by the holder of the promissory note, usually a financial institution, and the court's judgment and decree of foreclosure at the conclusion of the litigation.

Sh  
heriff sales are creatures of state law. Consequently, the laws governing sheriff sales vary from state to state. In addition, some of the procedures for the sheriff's sale may vary between municipalities. The sheriff sale usually concludes a foreclosure action because the property is sold. Whether Auctioneers are allowed to conduct sheriff sales will depend on the applicable state's law. In Indiana, for example, the statute specifically permits debtors or a creditor involved in the foreclosure proceedings to request that an Auctioneer conduct the sheriff's sale.

Under Indiana law, if the debtor or a creditor involved in the foreclosure proceedings requests that the sale be conducted by an Auctioneer prior to the court entering an order of foreclosure, then the court in its "order of foreclosure shall order the property sold by the sheriff through the services of the Auctioneer requested by the petitioner and approved by the court[.]" Ind. Code § 32-30-10-9(b). Indiana Courts may exercise their discretion in deciding whether to permit an Auctioneer to conduct the sheriff's sale. The

statute requires courts to evaluate the petition based on the following factors: 1. whether the sale is economically feasible; 2. all the creditors in the proceedings agree to both the auction method of sale and the Auctioneer's compensation; and, 3. the Auctioneer's compensation is reasonable. I.C. § 32-30-10-9.

### Getting paid

With respect to compensation, in Indiana, Auctioneers compensation must be agreed to by all of the creditors involved in the foreclosure action. Although sheriff sales may be a good source of business, Auctioneers should be aware of the risks associated with these types of sales. The Auctioneer's fee must be a reasonable amount stated in the court's order. If the sale by an Auctioneer has not been agreed to by the creditors in the proceedings and the sale price is less than the amount of the judgment and the costs and expenses necessary to satisfy the judgment, then the Auctioneer's compensation may be significantly reduced. In this situation, the Auctioneer is entitled only his or her advertising expenses

plus \$100. Ind. Code § 32-30-10-9(d).

It may be appropriate for a party to request the services of an Auctioneer for valuable properties that are likely to sell for more than the amount owed in the judgment. An Auctioneer will advertise and market the property more than a sheriff normally would and generate more interest in the property. Before agreeing to conduct the sheriff's sale, Auctioneers should consider whether the property is likely to sell for more than the amount specified in the judgment and try to persuade creditors who have an interest in the property to sell the property by auction. The Auctioneer should also try to obtain the agreement of each creditor to his or her compensation. Failure to ensure that these measures have been taken may result in the court reducing an Auctioneer's compensation.

Auctioneers who are interested in conducting sheriff's sales should proceed with caution. Each state may have different requirements or procedures for Auctioneers to follow. For these reasons, Auctioneers should learn about the sheriff's sale process and the local procedures. If necessary, Auctioneers can meet with

an attorney licensed in their respective state to advise them about the specific requirements and any risks associated with conducting sheriff's sales. Sheriff's sales can be a good source of business, but Auctioneers need to be aware of the potential pitfalls that exist under their state's laws. ❖



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# Leaders discuss Task Force recommendations for association's future

By NAA staff

**N**ational Auctioneers Association leaders are preparing the organization to meet future challenges.

In mid-October meetings at NAA headquarters in Overland Park, Kan., the NAA Board of Directors, the National Auctioneers Foundation Board of Trustees and the Education Institute Trustees discussed recommendations from the NAA Vision 2015 Task Force.



King

NAA President Christie King, CAI, AARE, BAS, says the recommendations were presented to the three groups for discussion, and the results of those deliberations will be sent back to the Task Force for further review. The groups will see final recommendations before they are presented

to all NAA members, she says.

King says it was important for the Task Force to engage in discussions with NAA and NAF leaders.

“We learned a lot from this exercise,” King says. “The leadership was able to help us understand what made sense and what didn’t and how to fill in gaps that existed. We want to make sure that when our recommendations are taken to the membership they are complete.”

Kings says NAA members will be given an opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations before the Board of Directors again reviews them during its April meeting. She says she hopes documents will be ready for distribution by the beginning of 2012.

“It is important that the membership look at these recommendations as it will affect all of us within the auction industry,” King says. “The best thing about this is that all of the recommendations from the membership will be sent back to the Task Force so that membership input will help shape the final recommendations.”

## Other business

The NAF Board of Trustees met separately and jointly with the NAA Board of Directors. Other topics of discussion for the NAF included the development of an online fund-raising auction. The auction’s Chairman is NAF Trustee Mike Jones, CAI, BAS, GPPA.

The auction will become one of the primary fund-raising opportunities for the Foundation. Donations will be requested from members through Jan. 5, and the auction will open on Jan. 19. The NAF plans to run it through Feb. 6. More details will appear in *Auctioneer*.

The NAA Board of Directors also discussed the association’s 2012 budget and financial policies. It adopted a Standard Operating Procedure for elections. A summary of the meeting can be found under the Member Resources tab at [www.auctioneers.org](http://www.auctioneers.org).

During its meeting, the Education Institute Trustees began work to identify skill sets it believes NAA members need in order to be successful. This work will form a foundation for NAA educational curriculum.

The group also began reviewing the process of recruiting new Trustees. This process will be outlined in a future issue of *Auctioneer*. ❖



## Make your recommendations

The NAA is accepting recommendations from members on a charitable partner for the association to support and promote for the next five years. St. Jude Children's Research Hospital will be among the organizations the NAA will consider during the review process.

Members interested in submitting a charity for consideration should contact Brandi McGrath via e-mail, [bmcgrath@auctioneers.org](mailto:bmcgrath@auctioneers.org), by Dec. 30.

When proposing a charity, please provide answers to these questions:

- 1. Is the organization a nationally recognized nonprofit charity?**
- 2. Do the organization's costs exceed \$0.20 for every dollar raised?** (Please use [charitynavigator.org](http://charitynavigator.org) to evaluate)
- 3. Does the organization use auctions and Auctioneers in its fund-raising efforts?**
- 4. Does the organization incorporate publicity and promote itself on a national scale?**

The Charitable Partners Task Group will evaluate charities submitted for consideration after **Dec. 30**. This group will review the charities and select the top three organizations for recommendation to the NAA Board of Directors.

The top charities will be invited to present their organizations to the Board during its April meeting, in which the Board will select the NAA's charitable partner. In the future, the NAA will review its charitable partner relationship every five years with the same review process outlined above.

# Association seeks member recommendations for charitable partner

*Support, promotion would last for five years*

By NAA staff

In April 2011, the National Auctioneers Association Board of Directors voted in support of a proposal to review the association's charitable partner program.

As with the association's other programs and services, the Board decided it was important to review commitments and partnerships periodically. As part of the new charitable partner review process, the NAA is accepting recommendations from members.

For more than 15 years, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital has been the charitable partner of the NAA. NAA members have raised more than \$4 million for the hospital.

As the NAA's preferred charitable partner, the NAA promotes St. Jude's philanthropic work, as well as its research. The NAA encourages members to raise money in support of the hospital.

St. Jude and the NAA created the Auction for Hope program in 2009 to help provide NAA members with tools, resources and information needed to conduct benefit auctions for the hospital. Each year, the NAA plays host to and conducts a Toy Auction for the patients of St. Jude with the support of that year's International Auctioneer Championship winners. ❖



NAA members have helped raise more than \$4 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in the past 15 years.

# 21 22 23 24 25 Questions

## WITH TOM SATURLEY



Presidential Appointee Tom Saturley, CAI, is a past CAI instructor and former Assistant Attorney General. Photo by Bryan Scribner

The 2011-2012 Presidential Appointee to the National Auctioneers Association's Board of Directors, Tom Saturley, CAI, of Tranzon Auction Properties, Portland, Maine, is a former member of the NAA's Board and past CAI instructor. Saturley also brings to the NAA his previous experience as an attorney and as Assistant Attorney General for the State of Maine.

NAA President Christie King, CAI, AARE, BAS, describes Saturley as a visionary who embraces the future. He understands the history of the association and auction industry.

"Tom is well respected in the auction industry," she says. "He brings wisdom and a balance to discussions. He has experience from both a small company and a large national company perspective."

### 1 *What is your background as an Auctioneer, your experience as a leader?*

"I'm a second-generation Auctioneer. All of the members of my family would be part of the family auction business. I went on to do a variety of different things, which we can do in this great country of ours, including the practice of law, but became frustrated with that practice so I refer to myself as a recovering attorney. I went back to what I had learned as a young man in the auction business and started in the early '90s in Maine in the real estate auction part of our profession. It's been very good to me since."

### 2 *What will help you be an effective leader for the association? Do you have any specific goals in mind?*

"I had the fortunate experience to have served on the Board of what used to be known as the Auction Marketing Institute. From that experience I went on to serve a term as a member of the Board of Directors of the NAA. I'm hoping that I can accomplish two things: One, I hope to be a resource with regard to the Board from the background that I had — whether that be law or being an Auctioneer or having served on a variety of different Boards. Secondly, what I hope to be able to do is to be able to bring some sense of efficiencies by serving on the (NAA Vision 2015 Task Force) with regard to bringing relevance to our profession and our association."

“The future of the NAA is founded in providing a world-class education to the current members and to the next generation of professionals.”



Watch an excerpt from the interview on the NAA's YouTube channel at <http://youtu.be/x64nqdbnwYA>



### 3 *What is going well in the auction industry and what things do you believe need to change?*

“We are being perceived as being a solution with regard to the phenomenal glut that we have within the real estate industry across the country. Clearly the inventories that financial institutions have and the need of everyday Americans with regard to changing their portfolios of real estate holdings are fundamental to being able to move ourselves from what has been an extremely long recession.”

### 4 *What will help make the association successful years into the future?*

“The future of the NAA is founded in providing a world-class education to the current members and to the next generation of professionals. If we can continue to respond to the professional needs, from an educational standpoint ... not only the Auctioneers, the bid callers, but also the support team ... then we are looking forward to a long-term success.”



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### 5 *Why did you decide to take on the role as Presidential Appointee?*

“I have been very fortunate to have been a friend, colleague of our President, Christie King, CAI, AARE, BAS. My generation, which I refer to as the ‘60s generation ... I’ve always felt that it was our responsibility to make this world a little bit better. I’m hopeful that by giving this service, and participating with the Board as Presidential Appointee, that I have in some way fulfilled my responsibilities as a member of that generation.” ❖

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# oldest active Auctioneer

*NAA member going strong at 94*



Mario Piatelli of The Piatelli Co., Los Angeles. Submitted photo

**By Sarah Bahari**  
*contributing writer*

New York in the 1930s was not a place for dreaming big.

It was a place for scraping by, for finding ingenious ways to feed a family, for feeling lucky to find a job, any job.

So when a young Mario Piatelli landed a job driving a truck on the docks, he felt fine and settled.

The young man certainly never expected that decades later he would be one of the most respected and well-known real estate Auctioneers and brokers in California and nationwide.

“I never gave auctioneering any thought,” Piatelli says. “Times were very different then. Everybody was struggling. There were not many opportunities, at least not for me.”

Now 94, Piatelli is likely among the oldest active Auctioneers in the country.

Piatelli still runs the company he started shortly after World War II, now specializing in selling high-end homes in southern California and multi-million dollar commercial properties all over the Western U.S.

Colleagues and friends say he is one of the most knowledgeable and resourceful people in the industry.

“Mario knows the business. He knows how to read people and read the market,” says Jeb Howell, CAI, AARE, of Auction Management Corp., Atlanta. He considers

Piatelli a mentor.

“He knows what he’s got to do to get the job done.”

## Pearl Harbor

By age 22, Piatelli had grown tired of working on the docks, so when he learned about a local course for machinists, he signed up. Machinists were in high demand after the attack on Pearl Harbor, when the country suddenly needed naval ships and other equipment.

“I worked very hard and became quite good at what I was doing,” Piatelli says.

The Navy hired Piatelli as a machinist and relocated him to Pearl Harbor, where he would spend years building parts for ships.

When the war ended, the country needed to unload millions of tons of surplus Army, Navy and Marine equipment, including the same ships Piatelli had helped build. Piatelli and a handful of others were appointed war assets administration sales officers and given the task of liquidating the equipment.

In 1948, Piatelli formed his own company in Honolulu, buying and selling heavy construction equipment, ships and marine salvage.

One year later, he opened a large salvage operation on Adak Island in the Aleutians, salvaging and shipping thousands of tons of heavy equipment and scrap steel to buyers around the world.

Piatelli was successful, but the mainland beckoned.

## On-the-job training

In 1955, he moved to southern California and began selling heavy equipment to industrial auctions in Los Angeles, working with firms such as Milton Wershow Co. and Max Rouse & Sons.

“I never went to auction school, but I learned from the best,” he says. “We trained ourselves then. We just learned from doing.”

Almost immediately, Piatelli decided to give up equipment sales and focus solely on real estate, including farms, residential, commercial and industrial properties.

“Real estate was more interesting to me. You’re dealing with big money, big assets, big clients,” he says. “I didn’t want to be handling a multimillion-dollar property one day and selling machinery the next. In my mind, I couldn’t mix the two.”

The decision paid off. At its peak, the company boasted a Beverly Hills office and employed 25 full-time salespeople. Piatelli has sold multimillion dollar homes, high rises, vineyards, industrial parks and an old Indian motorcycle plant in northern California.

Known for a razor-sharp business sense, Piatelli was recognized for his contributions to the industry in 1971 when elected President of the Southern California Auctioneers Association.

“Mario is brilliant on real estate trends,” says Pamela Rose, CAI, AARE, of Pamela Rose Auction Co. LLC, Maumee, Ohio, who often seeks Piatelli’s advice. “He has all this knowledge and insight into the industry and people. He’s inspiring.”

## Then and now

Over the years, Piatelli has seen the market rise and fall. Today’s economy has proven especially tough, he says.

On most properties, he says, the owner owes more than the asset is worth, making selling for a profit nearly impossible. The Piatelli Co., Los Angeles, turns down 80 percent of the properties it is asked to sell.

Not long ago, the company spent two months on a property auction. The high bid was \$1.2 million, short of the \$2 million required by the bank.

“We look at each property with a thick magnifying glass. If we know it will be a waste of time, we have to pass,” he says. “The real estate auction business is in limbo.”

That does not mean Piatelli has slowed down. He has embraced technology and social media, such as Facebook, while continuing to advertise in prominent publications, such as the *Los Angeles Times* and *Los Angeles Business Journal*. He estimates the company has spent about \$10 million on advertising over the years to build name recognition.

Tough circumstances do not stop Piatelli, says Howell, who recalled an auction a few years ago in which the two competitors became partners the night before the event. With hardly a bidder in sight, Piatelli started the auction at \$4 million and asked for \$4.1 million.

“And sure enough, the property went for \$4.1 million,” Howell says.

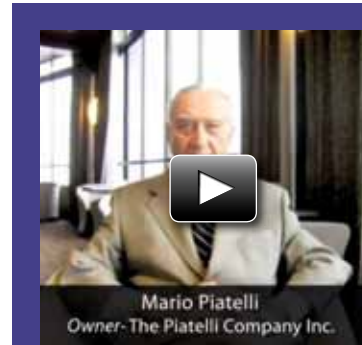
In recent years, Piatelli has scaled back his company to a smaller office near his home in Brentwood, Calif., but retirement is not on the horizon.

“Why would I do that? You retire and what do you do all day?” Piatelli says. “You sit at home and stare at the wall. That’s not me.” ❖

“You retire and what do you do all day? You sit at home and stare at the wall. That’s not me.”

**Mario Piatelli**

*The Piatelli Co.  
Los Angeles*



Watch an exclusive video featuring Piatelli on the NAA’s YouTube channel at <http://youtu.be/D2Vb-Kq8kijw>

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# Benefit Auctioneers learn how to boost their bottom lines

By Bryan Scribner  
editor

**B**enefit Auctioneers in Florida, Arkansas, Arizona and other states are doing something you're not doing ... and they're making more money because of it.

If you were in Baltimore on Sept. 12-13 for the Benefit Auction Summit, you likely learned about it, and now you can put it to work in your business.

Mark Schroeder, BAS, CES, of Auction brio LLC, Cleveland, says this year's event, in particular the "Great Ideas Session" on Sept. 13, was even better than last year's summit.

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"Last year, it made me instant money in two auctions — the ideas," he says. "This year, the exact same thing happened. I inserted two opportunities — three different auctions — and it made money for my clients. It was fantastic.

"We pay for that summit ... that summit paid me back."

Schroeder, who was in television for 23 years before becoming an Auctioneer eight years ago, says the Benefit Auction Summit offers a platform to freely share best practices for success. It's not about one Auctioneer competing with another.

"If you want to be on top of your game, you have to be there," Schroeder says. "You have to block out those three days."

## Making connections

Dean Crownover, BAS, of Crownover Enterprises, Avondale Estates, Ga., took the time to make connections and learn how other benefit Auctioneers run their businesses. He says he made connections during breaks, dinners and other social opportunities, including the "Speed Meet & Greet" that kicked off the program Sept. 12.

Crownover says the summit provided him motiva-

tion and an opportunity to redefine his goals. Like Schroeder, Crownover brought home a few good ideas.

For example, he says he didn't previously wear a nametag while working auctions. As soon as he returned from the summit, he ordered a \$20 nametag that he says has already made a significant difference for his business.

A session that stood out for Crownover was "Understanding Generational Differences in Order to Facilitate Change for Your Clients." Darron Meares, CAI, BAS, MPPA, was the presenter.

Crownover says he walked away with a better understanding of how to communicate with myriad generations of clients.

## Better communications

Another attendee, Peggy Moran of Apache, Okla., also got a lot out of Meares' talk.

She says she learned how different generations, including baby boomers, Generation X and Generation Y, interact with one another.

Some of the people she works with are 20 years younger than she is, and therefore, she says it was enlightening to learn about the best ways to communicate, including text messaging.

"It was very good for me to learn how they respond and what's the best way to respond back to them," she says. "Is e-mail the best or is texting the best? Being in the baby boomer age, I'm used to hand writing notes."

She says younger attendees offered confirmation for Meares' analysis. The program was full of fresh knowledge, camaraderie and support for beginners and veterans alike, she says.

After three years as an Auctioneer, Moran says her business is gaining traction. About three weeks following the summit, she conducted her most successful benefit auction. In an event with 450 people, Moran helped raise more than \$100,000. ❖





## watch it online

Check out the WebPage on **page 46** for video clips from the Benefit Auction Summit

Keith McLane, BAS, of KLM Auctions, Carmichael, Calif., presents "Sell This, Not That!" for the "Benefit Auctions IGNITE" presentation during the Benefit Auction Summit on Sept. 12-13. Video of McLane's presentation is available at [www.youtube.com/NAAAuctioneers](http://www.youtube.com/NAAAuctioneers).

## media relations



Menish

During the Benefit Auction Summit on Sept. 13, Bill Menish, CAI, AARE, BAS, of Menish Auctions, Louisville, Ky., presented "Managing the Media: In Front of the Camera or Behind the Microphone."

An Auctioneer and 20-year veteran in broadcast journalism, Menish shared with attendees how to get media attention before, during and

after their auctions.

Menish provided tips on how benefit Auctioneers could reach traditional media outlets, but he also encouraged attendees to look beyond newspapers, radio and TV. Newsletters from neighborhood associations, churches, schools and clubs are all part of a good media mix.

**To best reach people in their communities, Menish offered these ideas:**

- Offer radio stations a **live stream of the audio** from on-site auctions
  - Broadcast auctions and their **results through social media**, including YouTube, Facebook and LinkedIn
  - Establish **relationships with assignment managers** and reporters
  - Pitch content and offer to **be an expert source** for interviews
  - Call radio stations and **do phone interviews** from anywhere in the country
  - Be a part of the community through **event sponsorships**
- In order to put their best foot forward, Menish gave this advice:**
- Rehearse, in front of a mirror, **responses to potential questions**
  - Learn to speak in **15-second sound bites** and try to sound natural
  - Stay on message and **avoid going off on tangents**
  - Speak **clearly and slowly**, and make key points early and often
  - Speak **with emotion**, for example, explaining why proceeds are going to a certain cause
  - Dress conservatively and **in solid colors**

# THE SHOW GOES ON

## Auctioneers persevere in face of natural, man-made disasters

By Tom Burfield  
contributing writer

**A**n Auctioneer's job can be challenging, but three National Auctioneers Association members got a lot more than they bargained for this year when their auctions were interrupted by a major power failure, a heavy-duty tornado and a case of arson.

### THE LIGHTS GO OUT IN WEST VIRGINIA

Anita Eades, partner with her husband, Mike, in Four Seasons Antiques and Auctions, Princeton, W. Va., was all set for an estate auction with 146 registered bidders at her antique mall/auction house in April when a storm knocked out the power.

Not only were there no lights or sound system, but the restroom facilities that were operated by an electric pump were out of commission, as well.

Mike, an apprentice Auctioneer, suggested they cancel, but Anita wouldn't hear of it.

People, including family members, had come from several states to place their bids, and she wasn't about to disappoint them.

A quick trip to the local

Wal-Mart and Radio Shack turned up some battery-operated fluorescent lights and a karaoke machine that substituted for a sound system.

Someone brought in water from a nearby creek to keep the bathroom facilities functioning.

The auction set for 10 a.m. kicked off nearly on schedule.

The lights came on 2½ hours later, Eades says, "and the whole crowd was still there."

Bidding continued for the rest of the day.

"It was the biggest auction we ever had," she says.

The next time there's a power failure, the Eades will be prepared — the lights and karaoke machine are standing by in a back room.



Four Seasons Antiques and Auctions, Princeton, W. Va., used battery-operated lights, a karaoke machine and creek water when the power went out during an estate auction.

# TORNADO FLIPS PLANES IN FLORIDA



**M**arty Higgenbotham, CAI, CES, owner of Higgenbotham Auctioneers International Ltd. Inc., Lakeland, Fla., came face to face with Mother Nature mid-auction in March.

He was in the process of selling about three-dozen airplanes at a local airport when the facility manager announced that a tornado was imminent.

Higgenbotham told the crowd to take cover as the twister descended on the field, flipping over about 40 planes.

No one was hurt, but Higgenbotham lost some equipment he had set up in the hangar where the auction took place.

“It blew our (public address) system and computers right out the door,” he says.

Fortunately, the tornado bypassed the auction trailer, even though it flipped a plane just 50 feet way.

“It rocked the trailer, but it never flipped it,” he says.

Some of the owners exchanged their damaged planes for the insurance money, while others had them repaired.

Higgenbotham sold the rest of the planes the next day and managed to have a successful auction, despite losing about \$3,000 worth of his equipment.

“Based on what could have happened, that was dirt cheap,” he says.

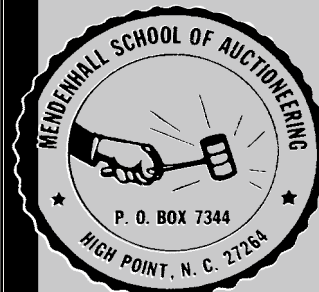
Nearly three-dozen airplanes flipped over when a tornado hit one of Higgenbotham Auctioneers International's sales in March. Submitted photo

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*continued »*



## ARSON EXTINGUISHES REAL ESTATE AUCTION



A suspected arsonist eliminated an auction this summer for J.R. Dixon Auctions. Submitted photo

**R**aife Dixon, CAI, AARE, CES, owner of J.R. Dixon Auctions, Sumter, S.C., hoped to stimulate heated bidding for a house he was set to auction, but things got a little too hot when a suspected arsonist burned it down late this summer.

“It pretty well canceled the auction,” he says.

His clients had expressed concern that someone they knew might try to interfere with the auction, and Dixon urged them not to go through with it because he believed that person could be “very mouthy and very discouraging to any bidder.”

That could result in poor auction results.

But no one thought the person actually would burn down the house.

Dixon was able to cancel some advertising because the blaze occurred about three weeks before the scheduled auction, and his clients willingly reimbursed him for other expenses.

Dixon says he still may auction the four acres on which the house was built.



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# Public relations: It's all about mutually beneficial relationships



By Carl Carter, APR

Let's get right to the point: There are people who can make you rich or put you out of business. Public relations is about figuring out who those people are and working to develop relationships with them. Often, your efforts can keep them off your back — and maybe put them in your corner.

What? You thought PR was just about putting out press releases? You're in good company. That's what most Auctioneers think, and that's part of the picture. But by broadening your view of the process, you open the door to new possibilities. So let's talk about these groups that have so much power over your business and your sales.

Old line PR practitioners called them "publics," but nowadays, most of us call them stakeholders. The label doesn't matter much. The important thing is to know how to manage your relationships with them.

Failure to identify and address a key stakeholder group can ruin your whole day, or your auction. We saw this dramatically earlier this year with the planned auction of Rosa Parks' papers.

When she died, it sparked a dispute over who owned her private papers. The parties couldn't agree, so the court turned the papers over to an auction company, which declared its intentions to sell them for \$8 million to \$10 million.

But everybody overlooked a huge group of stakeholders: People who thought history scholars should have access to the papers without paying the \$10 million the Auctioneer was seeking. *The Washington Post* even ran a major op-ed piece by two prominent civil rights leaders decrying the very idea of auctioning the papers without having allowed scholars to see them.

How's that for a PR mess? Your challenges will hopefully be lower key. Stakeholders lurk in all kinds of places, often out of your sight. You'll find them in zoning boards, city councils, neighborhood associations and garden clubs.

Your seller may be able to help you identify them, but sellers sometimes keep such information to themselves in hopes that any problems will go away. Sometimes you can locate them by searching for news stories about the property or the neighborhood. Often, it helps to spend some time in the community. If you don't identify and deal with these stakeholders, they might remain in the background, quietly saying and doing things that can hurt you on auction day.

Some of the most common causes of stakeholder activity are the following:

- Concerns over land use (e.g. opposition to development)
- Desire to sabotage the auction in hopes of getting a lower price when it fails
- Skepticism resulting from beliefs that past Auctioneers used deceptive tactics

Those are things that you can't usually address with a press release. It's here where you discover the reality that public relations is really about relationships. ❖

## PR STAKEHOLDERS — SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK

### **Who stands to gain (or lose) by our sale?**

Common candidates are environmentalists or entities that want to own the land for their own purpose but can't bid.

### **What are they doing now?**

Usually, a local seller will be able to provide insights into possible reactions.

### **Who influences them?**

What do they read? To whom do they listen?

### **What would they do if they wanted to kill our sale? How would their behavior differ if they wanted to help us?**

Probably the most important question because it provides the best insight into the extent of the threat and the cooperative potential (see below).

### **What is their cooperative potential?**

The natural assumption is that this is zero, but that assumption is often wrong.

### **How may their interests be addressed?**

Often, their actual behavior reveals that their concerns may be addressed in ways that do not hurt the auction.

*Stakeholders lurk in all kinds of places, often out of your sight. You'll find them in zoning boards, city councils, neighborhood associations and garden clubs.*

# Get the word out

## Press releases preserve precious marketing dollars



By Rachel Gingell

I'm always on the lookout for a good deal, and I've found one in the world of advertising. Using some simple techniques, it's possible to get entirely free coverage of your auctions in local newspapers, expanding the reach of even the slimmest advertising budgets. Let me tell you how you can put some public relations skills to work for your auctions.

Newspapers are constantly looking for stories to fill their pages, and press releases play a big part in helping them find news. A press release is a brief article provided to the newspaper by an organization or individual who has news to share. If you've got the right kind of auction, then your event might be a perfect candidate for some free publicity.

As a benefit Auctioneer, most of my auctions are good fits for this kind of promotion. Editors are most likely to pick up on stories they perceive as of general interest. While benefit auctions most commonly meet this standard, if your auction includes rare collectibles or items of local interest, you can make a case for it, as well. Try submitting a press release and see what happens! Press releases aren't only for auctions, either. If a member of your team has a significant accomplishment, such as graduating from auction school, placing in an auction competition, or being elected to a leadership position in an Auctioneer's association, pass the word along to local newspapers. If your news is included, it can help increase your name recognition and boost your credibility as an Auctioneer.

The advantages of writing and submitting your own press release are huge. If you write well enough, entire sentences or paragraphs from your release may be used in the article, giving you control over how the event — and your auction company — is portrayed. While your article will ideally be in the newspaper before the event, giving an opportunity for readers to attend, even an article written afterwards can be effective in promoting your auction services.

If you aren't much of a writer, try calling your local newspaper.

Many publications have a tip line, where you can leave a message about your event. Better yet, contact the person who normally handles your advertising. If you've established a good relationship with him, he may be willing to direct your story to the appropriate person. I've found success using this informal method, and you may as well.

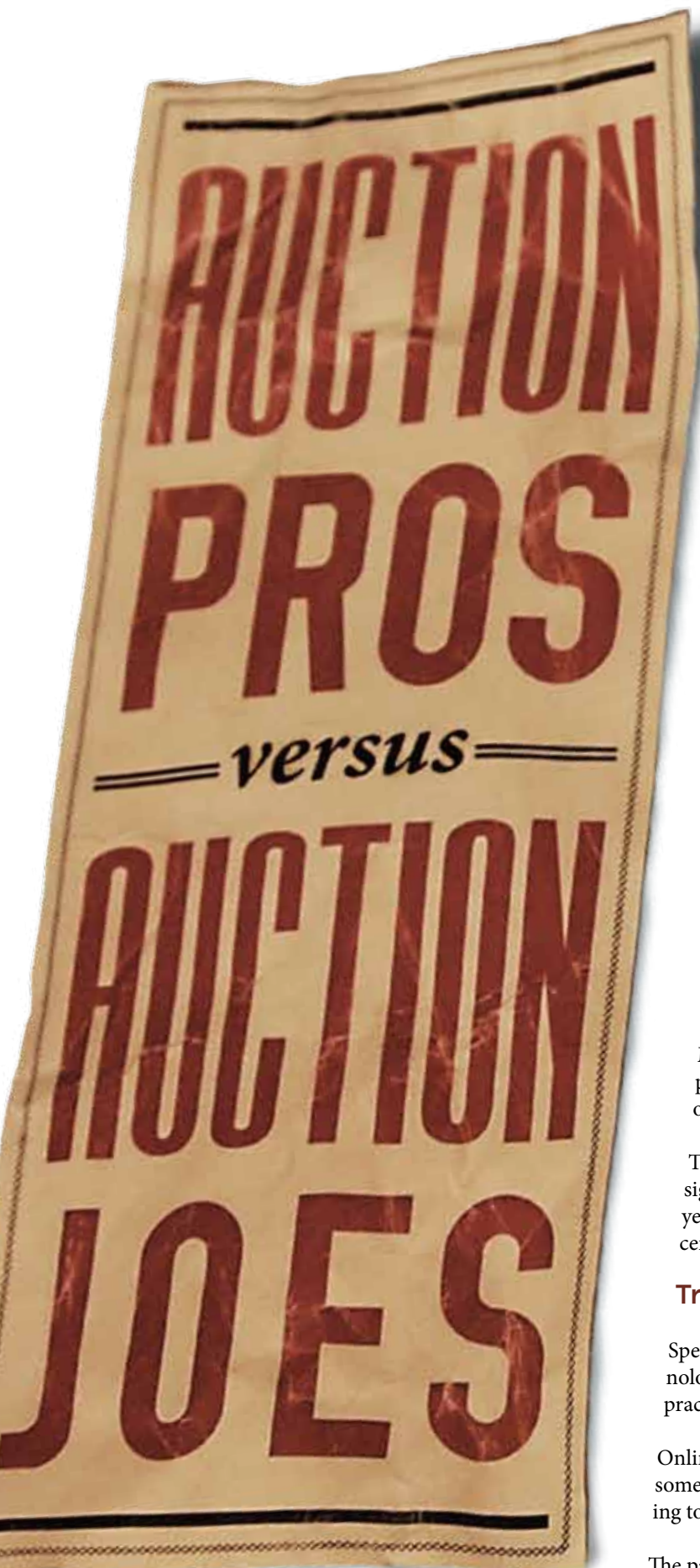
### How to write it

A good press release is three-quarters to a page long. Worried about how you might fill all that space? Don't be. There's plenty to include! You'll want to be sure to insert all the pertinent information about the sale, like the date and time, location and any interesting items. If you are writing about a benefit auction, include a paragraph about the work the organization does and how the auction contributes to its operations. Whenever you can, get direct quotations from sellers, sponsors and other relevant individuals to include in the article.

Now comes my favorite part of a press release: the boilerplate. A boilerplate is a short paragraph at the end of the article you submit. It's your chance to put in a plug for your auction company, the newspaper version of an elevator pitch. If the boilerplate is published — and it's not uncommon for reporters to include the whole thing word-for-word in order to lengthen the article — you've hit the jackpot.

While press releases are traditionally submitted by mail, the editor of your publication may accept submissions by e-mail or fax, as well. Call ahead and find out what they prefer, and be sure to include your contact information. If the press release is picked up for publication, you will likely be contacted by the reporter who is working on the story. Don't hesitate to send the same press release to multiple publications. A good reporter will use your release as a basis for their own unique article, so you don't need to be afraid that the exact same article will appear in different newspapers.

If you've never submitted a press release before, why don't you give it a try? In a profession where trust and word-of-mouth advertising are so important, having a solid public relations strategy is essential. Press releases have the potential to stretch your advertising budget and bring you future business. ❖



# Professionals have chance to shine in easy-to-enter marketplace

By Bryan Scribner  
*editor*

**A** web-savvy teenager, a 30-something entrepreneur and a retired couple have something in common: A computer and easy-to-use online auction software.

In a month, a week or maybe even tomorrow they can get their new businesses — Internet-only auction companies — up and running. They might ultimately leave buyers and sellers with an impression of the auction industry, good or bad.

How can auction professionals compete with other proprietors who might have less training, less experience and possibly lower ethical standards? How can she differentiate herself from would-be competitors, establish trust and convince sellers they will make more money in highly successful sales?

Enter Macro-Level Trend No. 2 — technology — from “Give Me Five, Now Ten ... Years Into the Future,” a white paper produced by the National Auctioneers Association’s Council on Future Practices.

The paper focuses on trends its authors believe will have a significant effect on the auction business in the next five to 10 years. In addition to technology, these trends are economic uncertainty, the “freemium” concept and government regulations.

## Transparency tells the story

Specifically, the paper looks at the idea that “developing technology increases visibility into auction results, auction business practices and entry into the auction business.”

Online auctions, it seems, represent the biggest opportunity, and in some cases the greatest challenge, for auction professionals, according to the paper.

The paper emphasizes that auction professionals should cherish the tradition of the live auction, but it says Auctioneers must embrace



online auctions. Many auction professionals, after all, are already using the Internet to promote and market their events.

NAA members, it asserts, now and into the future have to deal with the fact that auction results are more transparent — people all over the world, even competitors, can make judgments about auction businesses based solely on prices achieved.

Technology opens auction companies up to instant scrutiny; however, as the paper points out, this can improve the quality of auctions and ultimately weed out the poor performers.



Miceli

Carl Miceli, CAI, seems to have no problem with the openness of online auctions. More than half of his company's auctions are online only, he says.

"Some of the best auctions are run when you provide the most information to your potential bidders about what-

ever you're selling," says Miceli of Miceli, Appraisers & Liquidators Inc., Baltimore. "Problems occur when

you don't divulge all of the information that's necessary."

Transparency is good for business, says Chris Davis of Columbus, Ohio-based Auction Ohio, which now conducts most of its auctions, about 90 percent, online.

Davis says the Internet tells potential clients a story. Auction Ohio can prove itself simply by freely sharing the results of its sales.

The paper also makes this argument: In the long term, the highly trained auction professionals that follow a strict code of ethics and conduct will outperform all others. In the short term, though, less professional entities could damage the industry's reputation.

**Leave it to the pros**

Davis echoes this assessment, saying that professional Auctioneers should do a better job than anyone else in the business because they bring to the table experience with the auction method of marketing. He says an Auctioneer is in the business of bringing a buyer and a seller together, successfully, and



The NAA printed "Give Me Five, Now Ten ... Years Into the Future" in the June/July issue of *Auctioneer*, and it is available in the Member Resources section of [www.auctioneers.org](http://www.auctioneers.org). Click on the Downloads link to find it.

**continued »**



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Davis

**“We should be the industry that does this job better than somebody else on the outside that wants to get into our business.”**

**Chris Davis**  
Auction Ohio  
Columbus, Ohio

that’s what sets the auction professional apart.

“We should be the industry that does this job better than somebody else on the outside that wants to get into our business,” Davis says. “We should be progressive thinking enough to say, “You know what, there’s a better way to do what we’ve done.”

The public must realize that online auctions are best managed by experienced professionals, the paper says. Regardless of the venue, a trained auction professional should be the seller of choice for these reasons:

- They are marketing experts who follow proven sets of best practices for the disposition of assets
- They provide excellent customer service and make bidding easy and accessible
- They deliver consistent price results
- They properly manage sellers’ expectations while at the same time attract buyers who place trust in their companies

Miceli and Davis agree.

Miceli says clients trust him because of his background and experience. He’s been in the auction and appraisal businesses for about 25 years, has a good book of business and a proven track record.

He says his sellers know he will work to get the greatest returns possible in online auctions, which he says sometimes get more money than live events simply because the venues reach a larger pool of bidders. In turn, positive results produce good word-of-mouth advertising, an important way to pick up more business.

In the auction industry, Davis says reputation means everything.

“When buyers buy from us, they know that they can trust us,” he says. “They’re able to buy online from all of those different sellers but not have to deal with all of those different sellers. And the sellers, on the other side, have the ability to take their product to the marketplace and be able to have the ability of selling all of their assets in an online environment — the world being the marketplace — without them having to deal with a different relationship for every item that we sell.

“The commission that we earn really is based

on bringing that marketplace to the table and being able to be the go between. That’s where our need is today.”

## Online challenges

Davis and Miceli say online auctions are not always the best platform. There are challenges, and for them, sometimes a live auction or a live auction with simulcast bidding is the better option.

“It’s not easier to do than an on-site auction,” Miceli says. “It takes a lot of work.”

To conduct an online auction, auction professionals must take extra steps to ensure buyers fully understand what they’re bidding on, Miceli says. More detail and time must go into explaining terms and conditions, buyer’s premiums, payments, collections and other procedures.

Miceli says that although online-only auctions can help save money in some areas, additional costs become a factor in the time it takes to post items to a website, collect money and get purchases to buyers.

There will always be a need for the bid call, he says. Many people still want to attend live auctions, they want to see items in person and they want to get a feel for the room and competition.

“A lot of people do online auctions only,” Miceli says. “I’m not sure they’re for everybody. I don’t think they’ll ever replace on-site auctions.”

Consumers in Columbus, Ohio, might be more inclined to buy online; however, Davis says if he goes about an hour north of the city, a live auction crowd might actually spend more money than Internet buyers.

Davis has been in the auction business since 1984, and his career is rooted in live auctions. Still, he says online auctions are here to stay.

“That’s the way the marketplace wants to buy,” he says. “That’s the direction it’s headed. You don’t have to get on board, but that’s where it’s going to be in the future.

“We’ve shot holes in it ... we can’t find any reason not to do it. It works so much better.” ❖

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## Casket leads way in second million-dollar sale

Leland Little Auction & Estate Sales, Hillsborough, N.C., conducted its second consecutive million-dollar auction Sept. 16-17, according to a news release.

The 700-lot event attracted more than 200 in-house bidders, and 800 bidders were registered online.

The auction was led by the catalogue cover lot, a 19th-century French parcel gilt and gem-set jewel casket, which brought top honors at \$69,000, including a 15 percent buyer's premium. Another top lot was a bronze by Janet Scudder (1869-1940) that breezed past its estimate to achieve \$52,900.

Also, a Confederate North Carolina contract forage cap more than doubled its estimate, hammering for \$14,375. A rare Mendenhall, Jones and Gardner Confederate rifle rose to \$17,250, and a McElroy Confederate foot officer's sword sold for \$10,350.

American Furniture brought solid bidding throughout the sale. Top lots included a Southern Federal inlaid serpentine sideboard that achieved \$21,850 and an American classical secretary bookcase, which rose to \$7,475.

Estate jewelry was led by an Edwardian platinum and aquamarine pendant, which soared past its estimate to bring \$13,800. Another item of note was a 44-carat amethyst, turquoise, diamond and pearl choker that sold for \$6,900.

Finally, a carved soapstone Buddha achieved \$17,825, and a large Chinese porcelain Jardiniere rallied to \$17,250.

Construction is underway on a 5,500-square-foot expansion to Leland Little Auction & Estate Sales' auction gallery, which would bring its space up to 15,500 square feet. The expansion will offer 2,000 square feet of additional gallery space, a state-of-the-art walk-in wine cooler and more storage space for consignors.

The company expects the expansion to be complete in December. ❖



\$14,375



\$69,000



\$17,825



\$69,000



\$21,850



\$52,900

## Benefit auction brings more than \$100,000 for Jane Fonda's Campaign

Uladia Taylor of Peggy Slappey Properties Inc., Decatur, Ga., helped raise \$108,500 for the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention at a benefit auction Oct. 4 in Atlanta, according to a news release.

Actress Jane Fonda is Founder and Chairperson for the Campaign. The event included the live auction as well as the East Coast premiere of "Peace, Love, & Misunderstanding," a film in which Fonda stars.

In 20 minutes, Taylor sold eight items donated by Fonda, Ted Turner and other supporters of the organization. Items included a trip to Costa Rica, walk-on roles in Fonda's next production and tickets for the 54th Annual Grammy Awards. ❖

## Rusted or restored, air meters bring thousands

Air meters were popular sellers at an on-site estate sale from Matthews Auctions LLC, Nokomis, Ill., on Sept. 24, according to a news release.

One meter that was not cataloged — it was found in the attic of the estate before auction day — brought \$1,000, and four Eco air meters did well.

An unknown Eco model got \$1,650, a model No. 93 fetched \$1,430, a model No. 37, head only, sold for \$1,221 and a restored Tireflator brought \$2,200. Also, a restored Erie air meter with wall-mount bracket went for \$1,760.

In addition, an AC Spark Plugs tin die-cut flange sign, dated 1936 and featuring the "Sparky" logo, sold for \$2,310. Nearly 600 lots crossed the block in the sale, which attracted about 350 people. ❖



\$1,221



# Condoleezza Rice gives keynote, auction doubles expectation

Mike Grigg, AARE, of Elite Auctions & Mike Grigg Auctions, Bakersfield, Calif., helped raise \$1.3 million in a benefit auction aimed at reducing homelessness, according to a news release.



Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice talks with TaylorMade-adidas Golf Co. President and CEO Mark King. Submitted photo

Vista, Calif.-based North County Solutions for Change played host to the Oct. 8 event, "An Evening to Remember ... with Condoleezza Rice," at the Rancho Bernardo Inn in San Diego.

TaylorMade-adidas Golf Co. President and CEO Mark King was master of ceremonies for the charity event, and former Secretary of State Rice gave a keynote speech. The group raised money through a silent auction, live auction and fund-a-need, according to the release.



<http://youtu.be/cmUQdgm0zCQ>

The \$1.3 million more than doubled the organization's goal of half a million dollars. The benefit auction marked the first time Grigg had helped secure more than \$1 million in an evening. ❖

# Member helps raise money for LIVESTRONG

Wendy Lambert of Lambert Auction Co. Inc., Coppell, Texas, took part in the Swing FORE! Yellow charity golf tournament in late September, according to a news release.

During a dinner and auction before the tournament, Lambert sold an evening cooking class donated by Royal Chef Darren McGrady, former chef to Queen Elizabeth II, for \$13,500. Winning bidders also received a copy of his book, "Eating Royally; recipes and remembrances from a palace kitchen."

The Swing FORE! Yellow event benefits the 4 Yellow Foundation, which raises money for cancer research, services and awareness. Half of the fund-raising dollars support the LIVESTRONG Foundation, and the other half goes back into the communities in which 4 Yellow conducts its events.

Two of its annual events are in Steamboat Springs, Colo., and two, including Swing FORE! Yellow, are in Dallas. Lambert plans to serve as the benefit Auctioneer for the group's other Dallas-based fund-raising effort, Dress 4 Yellow, on April 5, according to the release. ❖



It's true that the Long Ranger 4 will be discontinued in the not too distant future due to the obsolescence of a critical circuit board part. Right now, however, there are still quite a few new systems available.

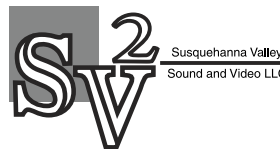
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**13-15»** Virginia Auctioneers Association convention, Charlottesville

**14-16»** Ohio Auctioneers Association convention, Dublin

**15-16»** New York State Auctioneers Association convention, Utica

**20-21»** Auctioneers Association of North Carolina convention, Greensboro

**22-24»** Wisconsin Auctioneers Association conference, Wisconsin Dells

**24-27»** Michigan State Auctioneers Association conference, Lansing

**26-28»** Minnesota State Auctioneers Association conference, Minnetonka

**26-29»** Kansas Auctioneers Association conference, Wichita

**27-29»** Auctioneers Association of Maryland conference, Ocean City

**27-29»** South Carolina Auctioneers Association convention, Greenville

## FEBRUARY

**3-5»** Oklahoma State Auctioneers Association convention, Oklahoma City

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"Waiting For the Hammer to Fall - A Guide for Auctioneers" and "Auction Law" by Kurt R. Bachman and Joshua A. Burkhardt provide legal guidance and up-to-date information on issues Auctioneers encounter in their course of business.

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## **Mission**

*To promote the professionalism of auctioneers and auctions through education and technology.*

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These are just a few of the outstanding benefits of NAA membership. For a complete list of member benefits, visit our website.

[www.auctioneers.org](http://www.auctioneers.org)



# Advancements in audio equipment add life to auctions

By Sarah Bahari  
contributing writer

**W**ireless microphones, built-in music players and top-of-the-line speakers are among the new must-have features in audio equipment for Auctioneers.

Recent advances in the field have helped Auctioneers achieve mobility, along with a crisp, clear voice reproduction that makes it easier for bidders to understand and follow them.

“Today’s equipment is portable, easy to use and captures the full voice range,” says Rich Basinger, who owns Basinger Audio Systems, Canfield, Ohio. “It’s about making the Auctioneer comfortable and the auction more enjoyable for those attending.”

Audio systems include microphones and speakers and can range from a few hundred dollars for a basic model to several thousand for a versatile, high-end package.

## Microphones

Dual, wireless microphones for the bid spotter and Auctioneer are becoming increasingly popular, says Bruce Jones, vice president of marketing for Lectrosonics Inc., Rio Rancho, N.M.

“The ability to move around at an auction is important,” Jones says. “This eliminates the cord, so you don’t have to worry about getting tangled up.”

Dual technology also allows auctions to run smoothly with few interruptions, Basinger says, as the bid spotter and Auctioneer do not have to hand off microphones before speaking. Hands-free options, such as a headset, also are available.

Auctioneers must decide between microphones that operate in the newer UHF television band or older VHF electromagnetic spectrum. UHF bands operate on multiple frequencies, while VHF bands use a single frequency.

With proper use, Jones says, both types should work well.

## Speakers

Improvements in speakers have provided Auctioneers with a much more natural voice reproduction than equipment a decade ago, Basinger says.

With older, horn-style speakers, voices often came across with a high, tin-like pitch when used indoors, Basinger says. Newer, cone-style speakers are better

able to capture different voice tones, resulting in a natural, easy-to-understand sound.

In recent years, Basinger says, manufacturers have designed portable, cone-style speakers, a benefit to Auctioneers on the go.

“More and more Auctioneers are seeing the benefits to natural sound reproduction,” Basinger says. “Horn speakers are no longer adequate in most cases.”

Many also have found benefits in pre-auction music, as more systems have built-in MP3 players with talk-over features, which allow music to fade automatically when the Auctioneer makes an announcement.

“Without pre-auction music, people were coming into a dead environment,” Basinger says. “Music livens things up quite a bit and makes the buyer’s experience more enjoyable.”

## Recorders

Recording auctions is an important step for many Auctioneers who need to review who purchased items and for how much.

In the past, auctions relied on audio cassettes placed near the Auctioneer and flipped every hour or two.

Now, most Auctioneers are opting for digital recorders, much like digital cameras, that can provide up to 30 hours of coverage, Basinger says.

“Wireless and digital technologies have had big benefits for Auctioneers,” he says. “There have been a lot of improvements in sound quality over the years.” ❖





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# WHAT YOU'LL FIND ON THE WEB



## Decision making

In a motivational IGNITE presentation from the NAA's Benefit Auction Summit in mid-September, Sherry Truhlar, CAI, BAS, talks about her decision to become an entrepreneur. Learn about her story in this video:

<http://youtu.be/Sp6zueiu81g>



## Successful benefits

Keith McLane, BAS, presented "Sell This, Not That!" in an IGNITE presentation during the NAA's Benefit Auction Summit in mid-September. Learn the seven ingredients for a successful benefit auction in this video:

<http://youtu.be/nWZanNnoWxA>



## Client relationships

Jama Smith, BAS, presented "First Call Paradigm" in an IGNITE presentation during the NAA's Benefit Auction Summit in mid-September. Watch Smith explain how she cultivates client relationships in this video:

[http://youtu.be/IS\\_QKbcJLrk](http://youtu.be/IS_QKbcJLrk)

## ONLINE MARKETING

### Ugly codes serve important function

QR codes are ugly and Auctioneers often use them improperly on flyers and business cards. Use the space they consume instead to better promote your website. QR codes do, though, serve an important function for Auctioneers. Use them to deep link directly to an item's listing from an asset tag or sticker. Never use a QR code that doesn't also explain with text what it will do. For an item tag, list "View and bid on this item at [abcauction.com](http://abcauction.com)" so the user never has to guess what will happen. **View Traffas' full article at [traff.as/qr](http://traff.as/qr).**



By Aaron Traffas  
CAI, ATS, CES

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Compiled by Brandi McGrath

**AROUND THE BLOCK**



■ **The National Auto Auction Association** recently presented its Bernie Hart Memorial Auctioneer Award to longtime National Auctioneers Association member Paul C.

Behr, CAI, BAS.

■ **In recognition of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month** in October, Cliff Shuler Auctioneers, Titusville, Fla., sold a decorated bra before an auction Sept. 18. Cliff Shuler's granddaughter decorated the bra, which sold for \$400. The company collected an additional \$87 in donations, according to a news release.

■ **The deadline to apply for a CAI I scholarship** that recognizes class adviser Traci Ayers-Dower, CAI, AARE, is Nov. 30. The scholarship covers CAI II tuition and lodging for the winner's 2013 education. Auction professionals who



are interested in the scholarship must submit a 500-word essay and letter of recommendation to Si Harbottle, CAI, 845 N. Rosemary Dr., Bryan, Texas, 77802.

**MEMBER'S CORNER**



NAA members Doug Denison and Tommy Rowell (right), CAI, AARE, meet with Congressman Billy Long in Washington, D.C., in early October. Submitted photo

The 2011-2012 National Auctioneers Foundation Board of Trustees: (Back row) NAA Treasurer Kurt Kiefer; David Helmer, CAI, CES, GPPA; Homer Nicholson, AARE, CES; Vice President Randy Ruhter; (Middle row) Sanford Alderfer, CAI, MPPA; Finance Chairman Tommy Rowell, CAI, AARE; Mike Jones, CAI, BAS, GPPA; Sherman Hostetter Jr., CAI, AARE, CES, GPPA; (Bottom row) Marvin Henderson; President Benny Fisher, CAI; Jack Hines, CAI, AARE, GPPA; (Not pictured) Chairman of the Board Chuck Bohn, CAI, GPPA; and Barbara Bonnette, CAI, AARE, GPPA.

Photo by Nathan Brunzie



September 2011 Texas Auction Academy graduates: (Bottom row) Paul Anderson, Parkville, Mo; Skipper Wright, Longview, Texas; Gary Holub, New Braunfels, Texas; Amanda Leverett, Hahira, Ga.; Carissa Cruz, Pflugerville, Texas; Michael Miller, Irving, Texas; Kelly McDaniel, Houston; Mike McKee, Lawton, Okla.; (Row two) Instructor Troy Lippard, CAI, Enid, Okla.; Steve Caraway, Whitewright, Texas; Matt McDaniel, Gastonia, N.C.; Cecil McCoy, Fruitvale, Texas; John Williams, Palmer, Texas; David Ashcraft, West Monroe, La.; Raymond Garcia, Mission, Texas; Jim Smith, West Monroe, La.; Brandon Hooper, Amarillo, Texas; Instructor Montie Davis, Keller, Texas; School Administrator Lori Jones; School Director Mike Jones, CAI, BAS, GPPA; (Row three) Mike Fazzino, Bryan, Texas; Kipp Kelton, Flower Mound, Texas; Alvin Livingston, Show Low, Ariz.; Whitley May, Sweetwater, Texas; Rick Hefty, Ivanhoe, Texas; David Culver, Mason, Texas; Bill Winter, Flower Mound, Texas; Rodney Dennis, Gainesville, Texas; Jonathan Warriach, Dallas; David Daniel Sr., Roanoke, Texas; Steve Neely, Quitman, Miss.; (Top row) Bill Eagle, Whitesboro, Texas; Jake St. Amant, Wesson, Miss.; Allan Jackson, Shreveport, La.; Curtis Watson, Haslet, Texas; Richard Kaniho, Kamuela, Hawaii; Bill Laughlin, Crocker, Mo.; Erol Murat, Houston; Kyle Clarke, Plano, Texas; Brody Blevins, Watauga, Texas; Bob Price, Big Spring, Texas. Submitted photo

Richard Kaniho, of 5 K Auction Services, Kamuela, Hawaii, calls for bids during the September 2011 Texas Auction Academy benefit auction. Kaniho is the first native Hawaiian to graduate from the school. Photo courtesy Texas Auction Academy



### Academy's benefit auction sets record

Class helps victims of wildfire

The September 2011 graduating class of the Texas Auction Academy raised \$28,421 during its class benefit auction Sept. 17, according to a news release.

Proceeds from the auction went to four groups and one family. The total amount raised was a record for the academy, which had 37 students from nine states, including Hawaii, in the September term.

The school gave \$12,056 to the Texas Scottish Rite Children's Hospital in Dallas; \$8,881 to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn.; \$3,425 to the National Auctioneers Association Auxiliary; and \$1,475 to the International Fellowship of Christian Auctioneers.

For the first time, the auction included a buyer's premium, which raised \$2,584 for Trent Sample and his family, which lost its home to a Texas wildfire. Sample is the son of one of the school's instructors, Jim Sample, of Sample & Son Auction Service, San Marcos, Texas.

The student auction is the highlight of each session. Students, school owners, instructors and other organizations donate all of the items for the auction.



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