

FEBRUARY 2009 "COLLECTING WITH JEFF"
by **JEFF FIGLER**

Jeff will be hosting a new radio show, "Sports Collecting With Jeff Figler" on KSLG AM 1380 in St. Louis, MO.

He will be on the air every Sunday morning, starting February 15, 2009. If you would like to call in to the radio station, his show airs 9-10AM (Central Time). The Toll Free number is 800-491-1380.

Good News! "Sports Collecting with Jeff Figler" has been expanded to 8-10am Sunday mornings on AM 1380 KSLG in St. Louis. You can also streamline the show on your computer. The response has been great and we hope that other FOX affiliates will pick up the show.

Call in with your questions, or email him at collectingwithjeff@sbcglobal.net.

If you're ever in the St. Louis area, go to Protzel's Deli at 7608 Wydown in Clayton and ask for the "Jeff Figler Special" sandwich.

ACADEMY AWARDS AND MOVIE PROPS

The recent 81st Annual Academy Awards has come and gone, but the memories of the movies will linger on. For collectors, movie memorabilia is very popular.

The official name of the Oscar is the Academy Award of Merit. It is 13 1/2 inches tall and weighs 8 pounds. The statue depicts a knight holding a crusader sword standing on a reel of film with five spokes, signifying the original branches of the Academy: Actors, Directors, Producers, Technicians, and Writers. How the name "Oscar" came about is not certain, however two beliefs prevail. Actress Bette Davis claims that she named the statue after her late first husband bandleader, Harmon Oscar Nelson. A second belief is that the Academy's Executive Secretary, Margaret Herrick, made reference in 1931 that the statue reminded her of her Uncle Oscar. No matter the origin, both Academy Award and Oscar are registered trademarks of the Academy. As an interesting sidenote, since 1950 there has been a requirement that neither winners nor their heirs can sell the statues without first offering to sell them back to the Academy for \$1. Awards that are not protected by this requirement have been sold for well over \$100,000.

Memorabilia from movies are extremely popular among collectors. Collectibles include everything from scripts to posters, tickets, props, and especially costumes.

A sampling of some movie props and costumes that have sold at auction the past few years include:

- "Ben Hur" - Complete Roman officer costume - \$5,500
- "Casablanca" - Wool top with skirt worn by Ingrid Berman - \$7,500
- "Gone With the Wind" - Off-white petite hat with upturned brim and elastic straps, worn by Vivien Leigh - \$12,000

- "Mutiny on the Bounty" - Black felt period English mariner's uniform hat worn by Marlon Brando - \$4,000
- "The Ten Commandments" - One of the six set of tablets - \$10,000
- "Titanic" - First-class dining room chair - \$2,250.

Costumes and props first gained popularity when MGM studios sold thousands of items from their famous film memorabilia in May 1970. It was during the MGM studios sale that pairs of the ruby slippers worn by Judy Garland in the 1939 film "The Wizard of Oz" were found.

In the movie, the ruby slippers, the shoes worn by Dorothy, gave her the power of returning home anytime she wanted. She first got the shoes in the movie after her house fell on the Wicked Witch of the East, killing the witch and liberating the Munchkins. The slippers protected Dorothy from the evil magic of the Wicked Witch of the West. In the book, "The Wizard of Oz", by L. Frank Baum, the slippers were silver, but were changed to ruby in the film to take advantage of the new Technicolor process.

During the accumulation of items for the MGM auction and sale, four pair of slippers were found. It is believed that seven or eight pair of the size 5 slippers were originally made for Garland . One of these pair was auctioned for \$15,000 and was donated to the Smithsonian Institute in 1979, where it still is on display. A second pair was sold to actress Debbie Reynolds and is on display at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas . Yet another pair is in the possession of Philip Samuels of St. Louis , who bought them for \$165,000, and has used them to fundraise for children's charities. A fourth pair was owned by Michael Show, who originally had them exhibited in the Oz Museum in Wamego , Kansas . Eventually this pair was displayed in the Children's Discovery Museum in Grand Rapids , Minnesota , but unfortunately was stolen in August 2005 and has not been recovered.

A fifth pair of ruby slippers surfaced in 1988. It was this pair that caused the tremendous increase in value of the slippers that has continued to this day. As the story goes, in 1940 high school student Roberta Jeffries Bauman of Tennessee won the slippers as a second place award in a nationwide contest for submitting her choice of the ten best movies of 1939. This pair was made for Bobbie Koshay, Garland's stunt double, and used in scenes that required full body shots. Bauman kept this pair until 1988, when she consigned the pair to Christies for an auction. The winning bid for the slippers was \$150,000, and including the 10% buyers premium, went for \$165,000. This same pair of slippers was auctioned for \$666,000 in a May 2000 auction, and is currently owned by David Elkouby. Two or three other pairs used in the movie have yet to surface.

In addition to the ruby slippers, the Maltese Falcon statue from the 1941 movie of the same name starring Humphrey Bogart and Mary Astor, has drawn a great deal of attention from collectors. The current owner of one of the two statues created for the film is Gary Milan, a retired Los Angeles dentist. It is an 11 inch tall falcon made of lead, and weighs about fifty pounds. It has a bent tail feather, caused when actress Lee Patrick (who played Bogart's secretary Effie Perine in the movie) dropped the falcon on Bogart, who played detective Sam Spade. A few slash marks also are on the falcon, caused by actor Sydney Greenstreet in the movie. The falcon was supposedly a long-lost jewel-encrusted treasure dating back to 1539, when the Knights Templar of Malta paid tribute to Charles 5th of Spain . They sent him a golden falcon encrusted with rare jewels. The falcon is "the stuff that dreams are made of."

It is ironic that even though both "The Wizard of Oz" and "The Maltese Falcon" were both nominated for Best Picture, neither won, losing out to "Gone With the Wind" and "How Green Was My Valley", respectively.

For more about the Academy Awards, you might want to read the book "All About Oscar: The History and Politics of the Academy Awards" written by Emanuel Levy in 2003, or the 2002 book by Gail Ane Piazza called "The Academy Awards: The Complete History of Oscar."

By the way, if you do find a pair of size 5 ruby slippers with Judy Garland's name written in the lining it might be your lucky day. But do me a favor—tell me first.

EMAILS:

QUESTION #1: I have a ball signed by the St. Louis Cardinals from 1968. What is it worth? Some of the signatures are Roger Maris and Lou Brock.

ANSWER: Thank you very much for your response to the radio show. If the signatures are clear and if the ball is in good condition, it could be worth up to \$1,000-\$1,100.

QUESTION#2: I have a 1985 St. Louis Cardinals baseball cap that says "World Champions", only they did not win. These were printed up before the game by Paramount Cap Company in Sullivan, Mo.

ANSWER: The cap has minimal value because they did not win the World Series.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS:

Easy: Who was the L.A. Dodger pitcher who gave up two grand slam homeruns to Fernando Tatis of the St. Louis Cardinals in the third inning of their game on April 23, 1999?

Moderate: Which member of the Basketball Hall of Fame was the first member to be inducted as a player and then as a coach?

Difficult: Who was the first major league baseball player to hit a pinch hit homerun in a World Series game?

TRIVIA QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER:

Easy: Reggie Jackson (Mr. October) attended Arizona State University on what type of athletic scholarship?

Football scholarship

Moderate: The great Football player Jim Brown attended Syracuse University on what type of athletic scholarship?

Lacrosse

Difficult: Who held the all-time major league career home run record before Babe Ruth?

Roger Connor