

Auctioneering

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Business shared by father and son

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Staff Reporter

"Seven...seven.... I see eight....eight...Do I hear nine? ... nine...nine...bottom final...sold to the fellow waving number 54." The words spill rapidly and easily from the mouth of auctioneer Harold Bunnett.

A 23-year veteran of the auction business, Harold helps his father Cameron Bunnett in the older Bunnett's auction sales barn. A truck driver during the day, Harold oversees the two weekly auctions held in his father's barn. People from all walks of life cram the building to place their bids on items that range from faded grass skirts to large freezers. Dealers collectors and people just interested in a good buy flock to the auction in search of that plant to fill the empty corner in the living room or to buy several articles that will grace their sales tables at local flea markets.

Cameron Bunnett has been in the business for 35 years, and taught his son the ways of an auctioneer. The elder Bunnett conducts the outside auctions in various places he holds Saturdays. Between them, he and his wife split the

load of the paper work. Bunnett has been in the same location for over 30 years. His house and sales barn on Highway 2 just west of Belleville can be easily identified Monday and Wednesday evenings by the large number of automobiles parked outside.

One of the most popular

auctioneers in the Quinte area, Bunnett conducts sales throughout southern Ontario and even as far away as North Bay. Although he is presently trying to sell the sales barn part of his business, Bunnett says he likes the business too much to give it up completely. If he does manage to sell the barn,

he said he plans to go on conducting the outside sales.

Although they have no formal auctioneering education, both Bunnett and son have mastered that mystifying art of speaking so quickly. Harold said he had no trouble learning it, in fact it was like typing, once you learned you never forgot.

These days a person can go to school to learn the business, but Harold Bunnett explained it was a hard business to break into.

"For years people have been coming to auctions around here, they have their favorites," he said. "It's hard for a young person to take the clientele away from the older, more experienced auctioneers."

"What was the oddest item I ever sold?" Harold pauses. "I think it would have to be a load of grenades and bombs we got from an old house in Belleville. The police took away the live ones and we sold the rest."

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