

America's oldest antiques shop closing its doors

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

PHILADELPHIA—William Eberhardt is in the process of closing the oldest continuously owned antiques shop in America specializing in porcelain, glass and orientalia. In addition, H.A. Eberhardt and Sons is America's oldest antiques repair shop.

Harry A. Eberhardt purchased the business in 1888 from a Mr. Brown, who purchased the shop from a Mr. Bartolet some time before 1869.

Harry Eberhardt won ribbons and medals at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 for porcelain repairs.

"My grandfather would hold

up a plate from a cheap set, smash it with a hammer, during the following hour, glue it together with what was our exclusive formula glue and sell enough of that at a dollar a bottle to pay for the booth, which was very sizable," William Eberhardt said.

He is the owner of H.A. Eberhardt and Sons and the grandson of Harry Eberhardt. At 79, William Eberhardt continues to be a master of porcelain repair.

For everyone there comes a time to retire, and he is selling all the contents of the business and the Walnut Street mansion in which it is housed.

His ties to Cape May go back to the 1960s, when he purchased the Kate McCreary

House at 1005 Beach Ave. at auction. William Eberhardt had arrived in Cape May to purchase the contents of the house, but found that the house was so cheap at \$24,000 that he bought it too. The home earned the name of the "Mae West House" due to its two protruding porches that bring to mind the busty singer and actress.

He purchased the contents of the chauffeur's apartment above the garage sight-unseen for \$50. The apartment included two Tiffany-signed leaded-glass lamps, something he said now would be worth more than what he paid for the house.

"My brother subsequently sold the house for \$1.9 million," Eberhardt said.

His Philadelphia business

has a great deal of Victoriana. He personally collects Japanese Meiji art, which he said he hopes eventually will reside in a museum.

Items for sale in the 9,000-square-foot mansion include Orientalia, specializing in Japanese Cloisonné and Satsuma, Chinese export, jade, glass, paintings, European porcelain figurines and vases, porcelain lamps, Lladro, Dorothy Doughty birds, Staffordshire, Wedgwood, bronzes, cut glass and crystal, cups and saucers, plates and miscellaneous antiques and objects of art.

The antiques business has changed, perhaps following the trend of society away from formal dinner parties, he said. Eberhardt said sets of china

are no longer easy to sell.

The building that houses Eberhardt and Sons was built in 1856 and is the last mansion on what was known as millionaire's row on Walnut Street.

"Wanamaker lived in this block. Rodman Wanamaker and his son lived across the street," he said. "The Clothier mansion was in this block, the Lee mansion was on the corner, Stotesbury was doors west of us ..."

"I comb Main Line estate sales, garage and yard sales and everything and pick up all kinds of things which we offer at what I'd like to think are reasonable prices," Eberhardt said.

Currently every item in the store is for sale at 25 percent

off. "A lot of people think because we are noted for repairs, a lot of the things we offer for sale are repaired, which is not the case," he said. "I would say 95 percent of what we offer is perfect."

Items that have been repaired are marked and priced accordingly, Eberhardt said. As an expert in porcelain repair, he has filled a closet with replacement parts: heads, hands, knobs and finials.

H.A. Eberhardt and Sons is located at 2010 Walnut St. in Center City and is open Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday. For more information, call (215) 568-4144.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Joseph Salvatore, chairman of the NASW Foundation, works on an exhibit in the gift shop, where work has begun on an expansion project that would increase the shop by one-third. Walls that separate the current shop from the museum's ready room are set to come down, which will make room for larger items and give the museum a much-needed area to sell books.

NASW

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creases in sales and we'd like to continue to invest in something that our visitors enjoy," Salvatore said. "We do lose a piece of the ready room, but sometimes compromises have to be made."

That project is also set to be completed by spring.

Both projects are fully funded by the NASW Aviation Museum, which highlights the importance of the support of its dedicated members and

donations to the annual giving campaign.

"Thanks to those donations, we are able to continue to grow and improve the experience at the aviation museum," Chief Operating Officer Bruce Fournier said.

A second flight simulator is also in the process of being modified and will be installed as a new exhibit in the spring. Currently the museum has one flight simulator that was donated by the Franklin Institute.

"The kids line up for the flight simulator," Fournier said of the exhibit that shows guests what it's like to pilot a Coast Guard helicopter.

"This will give them an opportunity to pretend to be a pilot or a co-pilot, the way professionals train, only more fun!"

The Naval Air Station Wildwood Aviation Museum is located in Historic Hangar #1 at the Cape May Airport. Cape May Airport was formerly Naval Air Station Wildwood, which served as a World War II dive-bomber training center. The museum is dedicated to the 42 airmen who perished while training at Naval Air Station Wildwood between 1943 and 1945.

For more information, contact Fournier at (609) 886-8787 or by email at bruce@nasw.comcast.net or visit www.usnasm.org.

Cold Spring man surrenders after standoff

COLD SPRING — Lower Township police, the county Regional SWAT Team, the county Crisis Negotiation Team and county Prosecutor's Office responded to a report of a subject barricaded in his home on Jonathan Hoffman Road at about 8 p.m. Dec. 16.

According to county Prosecutor Robert L. Taylor, the accused, Jeffery Hart, 47, fired a handgun behind his residence. Hart's wife and children then fled the residence and Hart barricaded himself inside

prior to the first police officers arriving at the scene, according to a news release.

Members of the Lower Township Police Department quickly responded and set up a perimeter around the residence and requested assistance from the three county agencies.

At about 1:15 a.m., crisis negotiators were successful in convincing Hart to exit the residence, at which time he was safely taken into custody without incident by members of the Lower Township police

and the county SWAT Team. Hart was transported to Cape Regional Medical Center to be evaluated.

Detectives from the Lower Township Police Department and county Prosecutor's Office conducted a search of Hart's residence and vehicle and seized a .22-caliber revolver along with an air-soft pellet gun.

Hart was charged with possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose with additional criminal charges pending at the time of the news release.

Cape May offering yearly on-street parking permits

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — In a city with parking meters in front of many homes and a limited number of parking spaces, a designated spot in front of your residence can make life easier. A number of historic homes do not have driveways since the horseless carriage was not in existence when they were built.

The city issued 33 on-street parking permits for 2015. Cape May recently initiated a change to their permits that allows some individuals to obtain a 12-month permit to park in front of their homes, according to City Manager Bruce MacLeod. Five of the 33 on-street parking permits are

for 12 months, he said.

The majority of parking permits issued cover the time period from May 1 to Oct. 31. Fees for a seasonal permit are \$350 or \$500 for the year.

MacLeod said the fees would remain the same for 2015.

According to the city's parking ordinance, street parking permits are issued only for residential properties and must be occupied by the owner or tenant.

Only one on-street parking permit is issued for any one building or tax lot regardless of the number of residential units contained in the building or on the lot.

If the property is a condominium, the application must include a resolution of the condominium association

authorizing the application, in which case the permit will be issued to the association.

On-street permits are issued to a property due to its size, zoning regulations, historic preservation standards or a location that cannot physically be used for any off-street parking space. There must be a distance of no more than 8 feet from the property line to the home on each side and no rear access to the property.

The city requires first-time applicants to submit a survey of the property. If no space is available in front of the residence, the city may assign another space nearby. The permit holder must hang a placard on their car's rear-view mirror. The city installs a sign to identify the parking space.

Wichterman

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not be serving on City Council next year.

Wichterman said a number of members of the public have told him council did a good job on the school-funding issue. He said it was time for new members to serve on council.

Wichterman wished the three new council members "good luck," and said he believed they would do a good job.

Mayor Edward Mahaney thanked Wichterman and outgoing Councilman Bill Murray for their work during the past four and a half years.

"With Jack, there was never

a dull moment. Bill's more the silent professional that makes comments to me when Jack's talking," Mahaney said.

He thanked Wichterman for taking leadership on the school-funding issue when the city had many other challenges facing it. The mayor said he and Wichterman as part of the finance committee were able to increase the city's bond rating to AA+.

He said the city has had major bonding and capital projects without increasing the debt of the city by retiring debt.

"One of the largest tasks we've faced in the last four years was actually having a stable financial basis for this city during a major recession at a time when people did not have the money to really come to the shore and spend as they normally did," he said.

Mahaney said under those economic challenges, the city was able to put together budgets that sustained the city's services and programs, initiated some new programs to

engage the public who did come to town and build the visitor base back up by giving low-cost and free programs.

"When people came, they felt they got value. So they were loyal to the city of Cape May," he said.

Merchants indicated the city was well on its way to experiencing higher levels of commerce that existed before the recession, the mayor said.

Mahaney said council worked together to build a new Convention Hall, which was finished on time and on budget. He said the facility has made a major impact on the economic vitality of Cape May and has "much promise that has yet to be explored."

Mahaney acknowledged working with Murray on Planning Board issues including getting Plan Endorsement from the state to receive priority status on receiving grants. In addition, Murray and the mayor served on a committee that examined the city's event house ordinance.

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