

## When Might Working with an Auction House Make Sense?

John Leonard, owner of Leonard Auction in Addison, helps de-mystify the world of auctions to help you determine when it might be the appropriate means for selling specific goods or collections.

### ■ How does your auction process work?

We do two auctions a month — coin and currency, and antique and estate.

The antique and estate one carries furniture, jewelry, silver, artwork, china and glass but not every day household items (though some auction houses do.) Our clients range from entire estates to someone with a single item to sell. Pieces range from \$50 to thousands of dollars.

### ■ What types of pieces do you generally see?

Popular categories include furniture, jewelry, sterling silver, original artwork and

collectibles — sports items, toys, trains, dolls.

### ■ Why would someone considering putting items in an auction?

We know and follow the market. We have experience finding the pieces and identifying them. We also have a built-in base of buyers looking for certain pieces.

### ■ What is the most challenging part of the process?

Many people have unrealistic expectations as far as what items sell for. Some items are

perceived to be valuable but don't have a strong resale market. On the flip side, sometimes people don't realize how much something is worth. A seller once had a rhinorsaurus horn from an uncle's estate. They thought it was worth about \$100, we estimated \$1000, but it sold after a bidding war for \$6500. So it works both ways.

### ■ How does someone get their stuff to you?

We provide complimentary appraisal with no obligation and no charge. We can make house calls for larger collections and estates. For

smaller pieces, folks can bring them to our location in Addison. And once a month we do an appraisal fair where people can bring in up to three items. It's a nice way to get your feet wet.

### ■ What else should people know?

Our regular monthly sales are open to the public and are a lot of fun. We post catalogs on our website ([www.leonardauction.com](http://www.leonardauction.com)) ahead of the sale, and the Sunday antique auction can get pretty lively. It's a good way to see the process in action.

the-bride ensembles, prom dresses, shoes, evening bags and jewelry.

**Nitty gritty:** Kelsey and Swap Shop will help pre-screened customers clean out a closet and will bring items right to the store. They don't carry vintage pieces except Chanel. "People are very surprised by what they can get," says owner Beverly Moran. "We're very picky, but we get a lot of stuff with tags still on." Resale pricing for clothes is about 70-80% off retail and consignors get 50% of the resale price.

*Swap Shop Resale Boutique, Glen Ellyn*  
(630) 858-2622, [www.swapshopresale.com](http://www.swapshopresale.com)  
*Kelsey Resale, Hinsdale*  
(630) 568-3281, [www.kelseyresale.com](http://www.kelseyresale.com)  
*Formally Hers, Hinsdale*  
630 455-0136, [www.formallyhers.com](http://www.formallyhers.com)

## FUR COATS & FUR ITEMS

**What to sell:** The good news with furs is that there is still a vibrant market for them, and styles aren't necessarily affected

by time, although some pieces hold their value more than others.

You're particularly in luck if you own anything made of sheared mink. "Those pieces sell almost right away," says Melissa Waters, manager of This Old Fur consignment boutique in Hinsdale. "That's on the top of most people's list."

**What to know:** People often think that because a piece is made of fur, it's automatically valuable. "We can still sell a vintage stole from grandma's closet," says Waters, "but it won't bring in hundreds of dollars." On the other hand, Waters had a customer bring in what she thought was a beaver coat and it turned out to be Russian sable worth thousands.

**What doesn't sell:** Anything that is on the endangered list can't be sold. Heavier, long haired pieces, such as beaver or raccoon, don't sell as well and are priced accordingly.

**Nitty gritty:** Customers are always welcome to bring in or ship items for a

free appraisal and evaluation. Furs are consigned from September through March, and weather can play a factor — furs don't sell as well in warmer winters.  
*This Old Fur, Hinsdale,*  
630 323-1840, [www.thisoldfur.com](http://www.thisoldfur.com)

## CHILDREN'S CLOTHES, TOYS & EQUIPMENT

**What to sell:** Options abound for unloading kids' stuff at great prices. Garage sales, church resales and storefront retailers such as Once Upon a Child are perfect for clothes, toys, equipment.

**Older kids' clothes:** For the discriminating tween and teen, Plato's Closet buys top-name brands, which are still in style (eg: something you might still find at the mall.) They buy clothing, shoes, accessories and outdoor. Simply bring the pieces in and they'll give you an estimate while you wait or shop.