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Maryland Community News

Published: Thursday, November 24, 2011

## Experts tell history of belongings in 'Antiques Roadshow'-like event by Abby Brownback Staff Writer

There were newspapers from 1932 and a German beer stein, baby dolls and a violin.

Each of them starts out as a mystery, said Sarah McCullom, an appraiser from Alexandria, Va., at a Saturday afternoon program called, "What's in Your Attic?" at Glenn Dale's Marietta House Museum.

About 30 residents wanted to know the history and value of the contents of their attics, bringing dishes, vases and even a drawer from a buffet for McCullom and Pat Fitzgibbons, who works at an antiques store in Alexandria, to evaluate.

"I just find them and think they're worth something," said Landover resident Sharon Taylor of the old newspapers, original advertisements and antique dishes she finds in the foreclosed houses she cleans in Prince George's and Montgomery counties.

The program, similar to the PBS television show "Antiques Roadshow," was the latest in a series designed to increase the number of visitors at the Marietta House, which reopened in October. The museum, the former home of Gabriel Duvall, an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, was closed for about a year while the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission debated whether to turn it into office space.

Television shows about the hidden treasures people find in their attics and storage units are quite popular, McCollum said. "People see things and think, 'I have something like that,'" said McCollum, adding that she has seen an increase in the number of people wanting to sell antique items since the economic recession began in 2008.

McCullom and Fitzgibbons told Taylor to frame the 1932 newspapers articles about New York gangster Dutch Schultz to preserve them and increase their value.

Stephanie Gillespie wanted to know the age of her dining room buffet, which was made in the 1920s, not at the turn of the century as she thought.

"Now that it's, in my opinion, worth less than I thought, all the more reason to let it go and get something sleek and modern," said Gillespie, who lives in Bowie.

Gillespie's mother, Bernice Gillespie, brought in a German beer stein that puzzled the experts, who examine the materials, the markings, the deterioration and comparable items to determine the origin and value of a piece, McCullom said. The stein was a lovely piece, she said, that was made in the 1800s.

The \$5-per-piece fee for the Marietta House program generated about \$300 for the museum, estimated Stacey Hawkins, the chairperson of Friends of Marietta, which advocates for the museum.

"When people see we're having events, they know it's open," Hawkins said. "We're hoping that through the fun stuff, [people] will come to appreciate the history of Marietta."

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Christopher Anderson/The Gazette (From left) Antiques retailer Pat Fitzgibbons and appraiser Sarah McCullom help Bowie resident Bernice Gillespie find out more about her 19th-century German beer stein at an event Saturday at the Marietta House Museum in Glenn Dale.