

## Smitty Axtell's Americana Collection Brings \$280,000 At Skinner

MARLBOROUGH, MASS. — Billed as "Smitty's Eye," the Axtell collection sold by Skinner on March 3 included numerous one-of-a-kind objects. Bringing the highest price of



the sale at \$10,000 was an unsigned American school oil on board winter landscape with a horse-drawn sleigh, several houses, snow covered roads and trees, wooden fences and more. Several painted cupboards, sets of shelves, other furniture and a variety of painted boxes found willing buyers as did unusual objects, including a slate sundial dated 1793, and a make-do toy pistol utilizing a discarded wrought iron door latch and padlock. Many items, such as early lighting devices, hearth equipment, small paper covered boxes, small watercolor drawings, and woodenware were sold in large lots. Few lots were passed in the timed, online-only sale, and the collection grossed \$280,000. A full report will follow.

## At Weschler's Auction, Alma Thomas Painting Triples Expectations

ROCKVILLE, MD. — At Weschler's Capitol Collections sale on March 4, an Alma Woodsey Thomas (American, 1891-1978) acrylic on canvas, "Pale Yellow Autumn Leaves," 12¼ by 16¼ inches, tripled expectations and then some, finishing at \$183,500, inclusive of premium, against a \$30/50,000 estimate. Signed "A.W. Thomas," the painting



was dated '77 and titled "Pale Yellow Autumn/Leaves" on verso. Thomas was an African American painter and art educator, born in Columbus, Ga. In 1907 she moved with her family to Washington, where she would later become the first graduate of Howard University's art department in 1924. She received a master of fine arts degree from Columbia University in 1934 — the first African American woman to do so. Her early paintings were realistic but became geometrically abstract and abstract expressionistic as she matured. Lois Mailou Jones and James V. Herring (both were her professors) influenced her career in art. She was the first female African American to have a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

The 186-lot sale was heavy in diamonds and fine art. A more extensive review to come.

## Tsugushige Portrait Attracts Global Attention, Leads At Nye



BLOOMFIELD, N.J. — One of two portraits of Kondo Tsugushige by Ryusei Kishida, and the only one to survive an earthquake and fire in 1923, that had descended in Tsugushige family, attracted global attention when it was offered at Nye & Company's March 203 Estate Treasures Auction.

The 1921 oil on canvas was accompanied by a late watercolor copy of the portrait and a biographic book on the sitter, who was a medical scientist and the co-founder of the Japan Surgical Society.

According to Nye & Company's director of business development, Andrew Holter, Kishida is a well-respected and sought-after artist in Japan, who in 2000 had the distinction of having his work set a record for the highest price paid for a Japanese artist at auction.

A diligent marketing campaign spread the word and the painting attracted interest from the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Japan. Ultimately, it realized \$294,000 from an online bidder who outlasted internet and phone competitors.

Prices quoted include the buyer's premium; a more extensive recap will follow in a future issue.

## Pokémon First Edition Charizard Leads At Heritage

DALLAS — A Pokémon Charizard No. 4 first edition base set trading card (Wizards of the Coast, 1999) in PSA GEM MT 10 grade sold for \$336,000 to lead Heritage Auctions' Trading Card Games



Signature® Auction on March 5. The magnificent example drew 69 bids before reaching its final price, far surpassing its estimate of \$200,000. Much of the demand for the card was due in part to the fact that it is from the game's first English print run and it carries the highest possible grade — one of just 121 to carry the lofty GEM MT 10 grade. Cards from the first English print run are coveted by serious collectors and finding one in this grade is exceptionally rare. It was followed on the leaderboard by a Pokémon first edition base set with sealed booster box (Wizards of the Coast, 1999) at \$288,000. The entire sale grossed \$3,789,153. For information, [www.ha.com](http://www.ha.com) or 214-528-3500.

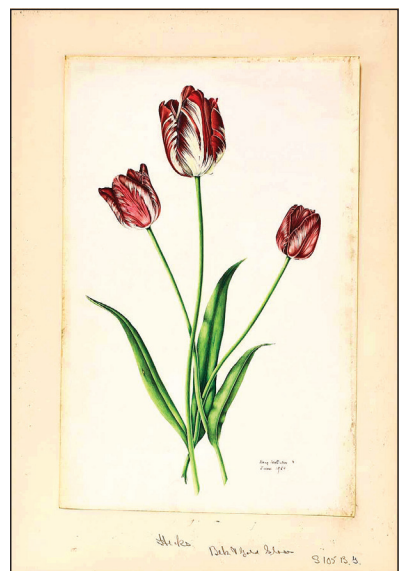
## Rare Newport Desk Attributed To Job Townsend Sr Is Tops At D.L. Straight

STURBRIDGE, MASS. — Think spring, said David Straight, as his firm conducted its Americana and folk art auction on March 5 offering nearly 500 lots of estate antiques and Americana. Leading the sale was a rare Newport, R.I., desk attributed to Job Townsend Sr (1699-1765) or his school, which ended up at \$4,000, including buyer's premium. The slant lid desk in old surface featured a shell-carved interior and a bold original bracket base. The selling price was a marker of how the market values such material these days, as this desk was purchased in 2006 from Woodbury, Conn., dealer Wayne Pratt for \$27,000. It was accompanied by a full condition report and documentation and measured 36 by 19 by 44 inches. According to Chipstone, the Townsends and Goddards were best known for their blockfront, shell-carved case pieces and dominated the furniture industry in colonial Newport. Watch for further highlights from this sale in a future issue.



## Douglas Fairbanks Jr Sale Gets Tulips For Sworders

STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET, ESSEX COUNTY, U.K. — Spring was on the minds of bidders at Sworders on March 2, when the firm offered 126 lots of furniture, artwork, jewelry,



clothing and entertainment memorabilia from the collection of actor and Anglo-ophile, Douglas Fairbanks Jr (1909-2000). Leading the sale, and bringing \$32,646 against an estimate of \$2,5/4,000, was a watercolor painting of tulips by Rory McEwen (1932-1982) that had been painted in 1954 and measured 17 by 11 inches. It sold to a UK trade buyer, bidding on Sworders' proprietary online platform, against an underbidder on the phone.

Prices quoted include the buyer's premium and have been converted into US Dollars. Watch for a longer sale review in a future issue.