

# HAVING CONTROL OVER THE DISPOSITION OF OUR COLLECTIONS OR SAFEGUARDING AND PRESERVING OUR COLLECTIONS

**By Bette L. Bemis (CBCS #001)**

Most of us have been collecting cribbage boards for a few years now, a few folks for longer than they can remember. When we began collecting, the prices of boards were reasonable, many about ready to be thrown in the dumpster by their owners! Recently, I purchased a cigar advertising cribbage board box that was actually found by the seller on a pile of rubble that was destined for the dump. The E. C. Hazard cigar box cribbage board, in pristine condition and over 100 years old, is worth about \$300. The owner, who was cleaning out her home in preparation for selling it, had no idea what she had. Neither did the man who picked it out of the trash, but he knew that it needed to be saved. All of us have stories like this, not only with our cribbage board collections, but with other collections as well. We have become a throwaway society, and the dumps are growing needlessly huge because of it.

Well, we've kept our heads buried in sand long enough. The collections are becoming more valuable all the time, and we need to secure their future. Many collectors naively assume that someone will want to inherit their cribbage boards, but is that a fact, or is it just an assumption? Has the collection been catalogued, or is it on display just for its aesthetic appearance? Is the true value of the collection known? It is time to collect hard facts, before it is too late. Although we think that we are immortal, we aren't! The outline below is directed at helping us to make decisions about the concerns that need to be addressed before it is too late.

## CONCERNS FOR YOU TO PONDER:

What happens to our collection when we are no longer able to maintain it?

How do we safely reduce our collection when we are downsizing our other holdings?

Paul (#124) has provided us with a written commentary on his eBay success story. You will find it at the end of this worksheet. Paul, who has an extensive collection, decided that it was time to downsize. He chose to do so by selling some of his collection on eBay.

How do we safely dispose of our collection when we are no longer interested in it!

(Heaven Forbid!)

How do we protect our investment?

## CONSERVING AND PRESERVING A COLLECTION:

Is restoration really necessary on a cribbage board that is in poor condition?

Damage to a very old board may be part of its rich history.

Is extreme cleaning necessary?

Or will a moderate cleaning bring out the character of the board.

How should boards be cleaned?

This topic will be addressed at another time.

How should boards be stored?

Always store in an area where there is moderate humidity and temperature.

Do not store in basements that aren't protected, in attics, or near heat sources.

If possible, 'fragile' boards should be stored in an enclosed case.

**INVENTORY - METHODS OF FORMALIZING THE LISTINGS:**

At the very minimum, you should have a dated written inventory of all boards in your collection, which includes the approximate current value of each board.

- Value can be based on information found in books or other writings, as well as the price that was paid for the board, if it is higher.

- Written receipts for purchased boards should be retained with inventory.

Examples of Methods for formalizing a collection's inventory:

The McLaughlin System (#131)

ACCESS computer worksheet (Bette Bemis (#001))

Handwritten cards (Bemis #001)

Computer Programs

**COLLECTOR'S SHOWCASE (Dale #141)**

A video of the collection could prove helpful, but isn't essential, as long as written documentation and photos are available.

**FUTURE OWNERSHIP:**

Establish whether or not a family member is interested in inheriting the collection.

Is there a museum, library or historical site that would like to house the collection?

If no family member is interested, is there a friend or relative who is interested?

If so, do you want the collection to be a gift?

If not a gift, is the relative/friend willing to purchase the collection?

If so, a written agreement should be signed **WHILE** you are able to do so, agreeing to a purchase price which is a certain percentage of value at time of purchase.

For Example: The Seller may want the Buyer to purchase at a certain percentage of true value (for instance 25% of current value). Without a written document or contract to confirm the agreement, the person settling the Estate might not honor the agreement.

**ASSIGNMENT:**

Have a family member or trusted friend agree to manage the disposal of the collection.

This person should know where all documentation on the collection is located.

This person should be willing to do a final inventory, check for any boards missing or located elsewhere (such as in a storage vault or museum), and do a final count.

If a Broker has been contacted who is going to dispose of the collection, the manager of the collection should have that information and will review inventory with the Broker.