

Getting Around

By ETHEL SIMMONS



Under TV lights: Auction on the air

The 10th Annual Channel 56 Auction continues its frenetic pace through Saturday, raising money for the public television station.

I was an auctioneer, for the first time, this year and was amazed at the speed and coordination displayed by all the participants, on camera and behind the scenes.

While you're plucking for bids on camera, the phones are ringing all around, with a busy bank of volunteers. The stage crew is wheeling setups of merchandise on and off the set. The director is calling out red-dot warnings, of one minute to air time, for the next board coming up (A, B, C or Quicke boards).

RUNNERS TAKE bid slips from the telephone crew and bring them to volunteers seated behind each board. There, the bids are sorted, and the current bid called to another volunteer who works with chalk and sponge, putting up the newest high bid for each item.

Each board has its own behind-the-scenes team. Once the board is declared closed, a stage crew member

pulls down the bid board and puts up a closed sign.

Still behind the scenes, a volunteer telephones the winning top bidder to confirm the call. Volunteers attach winning bids to the original information sheets, and the "auctioneer" and a helper go on camera again to announce the winners.

Everything you should read is underlined in red pen by the volunteers, so being an auctioneer isn't difficult. The only thing is to remember to talk as fast as you can without muffling lines and to say, "Thank you," after reading the name of each top bidder.

THE HOST for each time period (in this case, Tom Shannon) introduces the auctioneer and makes it easy for you to get started when your board is on. A volunteer is at your side behind and on camera, helping you with the bidding slips.

Everybody works in shifts, and points is nowhere in sight. All items auctioned must be worth at least \$50 and brand new. Articles I auctioned ranged from a blood test kit to the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy.

There was also wallpaper, a child's "fat" vest, and a fun kit including a hockey game and an instant camera.

I almost lost my voice because I tried to hear myself talk above the sounds of the telephones and other noise. Actually, you don't need to project, the microphones picks up your normal tone. Once I stopped straining, things went okay.

For a moment, I thought I was going to have to gasp my way off camera and let another auctioneer take over.

DO YOU AGREE with food writer and critic James Beard on the top five restaurants in metropolitan Detroit?

Beard, who is one of the leading authorities on what to eat where, thinks Detroit is among the most outstanding restaurant cities.

For Benson & Hedges 100's cigarettes, he selected "100 Recipes from 100 of the Greatest Restaurants." The restaurants and recipes he picked include:

Chuck Muer's Charley's Crab in Troy (baked stuffed lobster Larry); Joe Muer's Sea Food in Detroit (flounder stuffed with deviled crab); Koji Watanabe's Kyoto Japanese Steak House in Dearborn (dipping sauces); Les Gruber's London Chop House (watercress soup); and Joe Beyer's Pontchartrain Wine Cellars (white rump of veal).

I've dined at four out of the five and think most of us would agree Beard has chosen well. I haven't tried the Kyoto yet, but I certainly will.

The five Detroit-area restaurants were honored one recent afternoon at a wine and cheese reception in the Detroit Press Club, where they

received plaques from Benson & Hedges.

In February, books with the recipes and tempting color photos were distributed free with cartons of the cigarettes. Copies are no longer available from the company, but the selected restaurateurs may have the book for sale. Ask at your favorite restaurant, if you are interested.

Talking with Joe Beyer, owner of the Pontchartrain Wine Cellar, I asked him to state in one sentence what it was that made his restaurant great.

"It's a gentle restaurant," he replied succinctly. Then, I questioned him for a bit more detail. "It has a gentle atmosphere, except on Saturday nights when it's a madhouse," Beyer said.

WELL, IT SOUNDED like a Cole Porter song to me, but film buff George Sill of Southfield called to say that "Cocktails for Two," which I mentioned in a recent column on Kitty Carlisle, was written by Arthur Johnston and Sam Caslow.

Sill said he knows because he plays piano and has the sheet music for "Cocktails for Two."

He also said the song is from the film "Murder at the Vanities" (1934), in which Ms. Carlisle starred with Jack Oakie and Carl Brisson. Miss Carlisle sings the song in the Paramount film.

INCIDENTALLY, for Cole Porter fans, and those who want to know more about this famous songwriter, a new show "Cole" will have its Midwest premiere April 20 at Meadow Brook Theatre.

"Cole" is a musical entertainment being staged by Broadway, TV and movie choreographer John Sharpe.

Channel 56 needs more merchandise

The 10th Annual Channel 56 Great TV Auction is going like gangbusters. However, so is the merchandise. The response to the auction has been so great that Channel 56 faces a shortage of items.

Auction Central said the warehouse reached a critical low point Wednesday, day six of the nine-day sellathon. Last year, the Channel 56 auction sold more than 7,000 items. They need 2,000 more just to reach that figure this year. Merchants in the area are being asked to help.

The station asks that merchants bring their brand-new, saleable items worth \$50 or more directly to the Channel 56 studio, at the corner of Sec-

ond and Bethune, one block north of the Fisher Building.

Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. The auction runs through Saturday.

One of the new features of the Channel 56 Auction this year is the introduction of "theme days." Certain related items, such as school tuitions, are being concentrated on special days so interested viewers can be sure to watch.

Of course, hundreds of other general items of merchandise also will be auctioned on the "theme days."

School tuitions will go up for bids on Thursday and there will be a "Travel Day" on Friday.

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2. WED. MAT. 2:05
M-FRI. EVE. 7:15 9:15
Sat. & Sun. 1:30 3:30
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JOHN TRAVOLTA

THE BIG SLEEP
PG

Goodbye Girl
PG

COMA
PG

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Call theatre for scheduled times

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JULIA (PG)
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Norehu

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