

Business Quarterly

Kretchkos 'honest, reliable' when it comes to antiques

By Sarah Wheeler
Spectrum contributing writer

When it comes to the world of antiques, Bob and Loretta Kretchko are seasoned professionals.

Full of knowledge and passion regarding everything historical, the Kretchkos have turned what was once merely a hobby into a full-time business.

It has been 25 years since the two met at an auction and "decided to join forces," leading to the creation of Bob Kretchko Antiques.

After the birth of their business, the couple said they "decided to do antique shows and travel all across the country seeking out their pieces."

As times changed and the Internet became prevalent, the Kretchkos developed an Internet presence and began selling most of their antiques online at their www.rubylane.com store.

"There are over 160 items listed presently, and the prices are right there for potential buyers to see," Loretta Kretchko said. "They can buy directly, pick up their item, or we can ship their purchase to them."

Prior to founding Bob Kretchko Antiques, Loretta Kretchko, a New Milford native, worked with the William Raveis Antique Homes Division selling real estate up until "times got really bad."

"My work with William Raveis emphasized my interest in antiques," she said. "Then, when real estate got slow, a friend asked if I'd assist him at his antique shop. Eventu-

ally, I went on my own."

Bob Kretchko's past is similar to that of his wife, working previously as a buyer for a supermarket chain, "a suit and tie type of job." Antiquing was always just a hobby until he decided to open his own shop in Pleasantville, N.Y.

The couple spent approximately 15 years traveling the country running their business and eventually slowed down 10 years ago when they purchased their New Milford home.

Located just north of the north end of the New Milford Village Green, the Kretchkos restored their 1880 house and barn, winning a plaque for the preservation of both buildings. The house holds special meaning for the couple.

"For years, I'd been a collector of New Milford Wanoppee pottery, and coincidence had it that our house was built by the founders of the Wanoppee pottery, William Diamon Black and Sarah Sanford Black," Loretta Kretchko said.

Friend and client Carol Carroll, who has known the couple since they teamed up, emphasizes "the antiques business to the Kretchkos is not just a business; it is their passion and their life, along with their dogs."

"I can't think of two other people I would recommend any higher" than the Kretchkos, Carroll said.

Although most of their selling business is conducted online, they still do antique shows here and there, mostly on the East Coast.



DEBORAH ROSE/SPECTRUM

Bob Kretchko Antiques in New Milford is a "passion" for owners Bob and Loretta Kretchko, according to a family friend. Above, the Kretchkos are shown with their dog, Tallulah.

"We show at Brimfield, Mass., three times a year; Madison, N.Y., Atlantic City, N.J., and Bethlehem, Pa. Really here and there," they said.

Although they do not have a shop open to the public, they offer antique

consulting for anyone trying to sell a piece.

They are always looking to buy.

"Call us up. We'll go to your home or wherever the antique is located, and we'll look over what you have," Loretta said.

"If we're interested, we'll make an offer."

"If it is something we are not interested in buying, we will guide you to where it is best to sell your piece," she said.

Longtime friend and client Iris Arenson-Fuller

credits the Kretchkos for the wonderful business they have built.

"They are honest, reliable and value their integrity in business. ... I have often recommended them to others and have not hesitated in doing so," Arenson-Fuller said.

When discussing their favorite part of antiquing, there was no hesitation for either partner. They both agree buying is where they find the most joy.

"Buying antiques is like a treasure hunt," they said. "We go all over the place in search of the treasures."

The Kretchkos buy and sell a wide range of periods, from pre-Victorian up to the 1960s.

A great deal of their antiques are fine American, European and Asian, including silver, clocks, paintings, porcelains, glass, country store, penny arcade, Americana and other better collectables.

Aside from antiquing, the Kretchkos are extremely active in the town of New Milford and its preservation, sitting as board members for the New Milford Trust for Historic Preservation, as well as the state and national trusts.

They are also members of the New Milford Historical Society, TheatreWorks and the Greater New Milford Chamber of Commerce.

For information, call Bob Kretchko Antiques at 860-354-4759, or visit www.bobkretchkoantiques.com or www.rubylane.com/shop/bobkretchkoantiques.

Community Culinary School at a glance

The Community Culinary School of Northwestern Connecticut provides training and job placement to unemployed and underemployed adults 18 and older who are interested in starting a new career in the food service industry.

Chef-instructor Blythe Roberts,

a graduate of the French Culinary Institute in New York City, heads up the 12-week sessions that feature culinary and life skills training and take place at St. John's Episcopal Church on Whittlesey Avenue.

Food produced in the classes is distributed to the hungry in

the community via the New Milford Food Bank, serving up to 150 households weekly.

To date, 100 percent of students successfully passed the ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification test and the school has an 88 percent employment rate at three months post-graduation.

Downtown businesses plan Taste offerings

At press time, the following special events are planned at downtown businesses the evening of A Taste of New Milford:

SPECIAL EVENTS

Wine tasting with White Silo Farm & Winery: Spruce Home & Garden, Bank Street.

Wine tasting with New Milford Spirit Shoppe: Swank on Bank, Bank Street.

\$100 gift certificate drawing: Krypto Comic, Bank Street.

Ten percent discounts and open late: Play and Daffodil, Bank Street.

Tours, 20 percent discount on hair accessories and \$10 off service

card for appointments booked: Joe's Salon & Spa, Bank Street. Tours offered until 6 p.m. Salon open until 9 p.m.

Twenty percent off men's haircuts: Len's Barber Shop, Railroad Street. Open until 8 p.m.

Music, chance to win free electricity for a year and open late: PPG, Bank Street.

Fifteen percent discount and open late: Down On Main Street, Bank Street.

STORES OPEN LATE
Golden Needle, Archway and William Raveis on Bank Street, and Nordica and Robertson Jewelry on Main Street.

Save dates for Chamber events

Sept. 11: A Taste of New Milford, 5-7:30 p.m. Sponsored by Nicholas-Tobin & Associates on the Village Green, New Milford. \$10, \$5 children under 10. Free for first responders with proper identification.

Sept. 19: "Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Recovery" Lunch & Learn seminar, noon-1:30 p.m. at the railroad station, Railroad Street, New Milford. For more information and to RSVP, call 860-354-6080 by Sept. 16.

Sept. 19: Business Scene, informal networking opportunity for business people, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Sponsored by Nicholas-Tobin & Associates, Classica Liquors, Bonni Manning Catering and Candlelight Farms at Candlelight Farms, 214 Candlewood Mountain Road, New Milford.

Sept. 24: Breakfast Networking Scene for members only, 8-9 a.m. Sponsored by the New Milford Historical Society

& Museum at the museum, 6 Aspetuck Ave., New Milford. Limited to 30. One representative per chamber membership. Reservations required. For more information, call 860-354-6080 or email nmcc@newmilford-chamber.com.

Oct. 1: Board of directors meeting, 8 a.m. Railroad station, Railroad Street, New Milford.

Oct. 2: Multichamber breakfast event, 7:30-9 a.m. Sponsored by Unlimited Signs at Unlimited Signs, 72F Gray's Bridge Road, Brookfield.

Oct. 24: Business Scene, informal networking opportunity for business people,

5:30-7:30 p.m. Sponsored by GeronNursing & Respite Care and Union Savings Bank at 31 Danbury Road, New Milford.

Oct. 30: Annual chamber breakfast. Details to come.

Nov. 5: Board of directors meeting, 8 a.m. Railroad station, Railroad Street, New Milford.

Nov. 30: Festival of Lights, tree-lighting ceremony, 5:30 p.m. Village Green, New Milford. Includes lighting of Christmas trees on Green, a parade of lights with volunteer fire departments, visits with Santa Claus and a Christmas karaoke sing-along.

Dec. 3: Board of directors meeting, 8 a.m. Railroad station, Railroad Street, New Milford.

Dec. 21-29: 26th annual hands-on train display, noon-4 p.m. daily except Christmas Day. Railroad station, Railroad Street, New Milford.

The railroad station is at 11 Railroad St. in New Milford. For more information, call 860-354-6080, email nmcc@newmilford-chamber.com or visit www.newmilford-chamber.com.

Concert by Cast of Beatlemania

A concert with the Cast of Beatlemania will be performed Nov. 2 at New Milford High School on Route 7 South. The concert is a benefit for the New Milford Bulls.

Doors will open at 7 p.m., followed by the show at 8. Tickets are \$35 and may be purchased by calling Debbie at 860-355-9768 or 203-948-1059, or from any Bulls member.

For more information, email nmbullsbeatlemania@gmail.com.

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