

# NOT YOUR ROADSHOW APPRAISAL....

by Francine Proulx

The PBS' *Antiques Roadshow* is great fun! We see pieces similar to our own and it's exciting when the expert gives it a high dollar value. But is our piece worth as much? It may or may not be depending on a variety of factors. If it is, you may want to schedule it separately on your homeowners insurance. The best way to find out is having it appraised.

**How do you know an appraiser is qualified?** Personal property appraisers are not government regulated. This means they are not state licensed as appraisers, only to do business. Historically, appraisals have been and continue to be done by those with long experience handling antiques such as auctioneers and dealers.

In 1987 The Appraisal Foundation, funded by the U.S. Congress, adopted the *Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP)*. An appraiser who follows these standards must pass a national exam every five years.

Another important credential is membership in one of the three major appraisal associations. Here are the membership requirements for one:

The *American Society of Appraisers (ASA)*([www.appraisers.org](http://www.appraisers.org)), headquartered in Herndon, starts with Candidate Membership. Candidates must pass the ASA ethics and the USPAP exams as well as an eight-hour accreditation exam based on 120 hours of coursework. Accredited Members have at least two years full-time experience (4,000 hours) and have passed a test in their specialty. Members with five years experience are Accredited Senior Appraisers. Members must be reaccredited every five years.

The other two organizations are the *International Society of Appraisers (ISA)*, ([www.isa-appraisers.org](http://www.isa-appraisers.org)) and the *Appraisers Association of America (AAA)*, ([www.appraisersassoc.org](http://www.appraisersassoc.org)). Each has similar, though slightly different, education and experience membership requirements.

What is most important is that all three have a Code of Ethics which members must observe.

All three support USPAP. All three evaluate the knowledge and skills of their members assuring you, the consumer, that members have met at least the minimum requirements of the profession.

**How much do appraisals cost?** Appraisers charge by the hour, the piece or total project, *never* a percentage of the appraised value. Hourly rates run from \$75-\$200. There may be travel charges and out of pocket expenses. Expect to pay a deposit when signing the contract. Ask for a fee schedule so there are no unexpected surprises.

An *average* appraisal of furniture, fine or decorative arts takes 4 to 6 hours per item. This includes the on-site inspection, research, market analysis, determining a value and writing the report.

**How do you find qualified appraisers?** Check the websites of the appraisal associations, shown on p. 7, that offer a database of appraisers.

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