



EVEL KNEIVEL — TIMES & TOYS SEE PAGE 10

# the mountain states collector

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54th ANNIVERSARY — ESTABLISHED IN 1972

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# Independence Day

By Rachel Hoffman

Independence Day, or the Fourth of July, is the day we Americans celebrate our nation's existence. It was 250 years ago, on July 4, 1776, that the Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Second Continental Congress declared that the thirteen American colonies regarded themselves as a new nation, and no longer a part of the British Empire. The American Revolution was fought to gain our independence.



There will be fireworks, parades, barbecues, carnivals, fairs, picnics, concerts, baseball games, family reunions, patriotic speeches, and other events and ceremonies around the country. The opening paragraph of the Declaration is well known but worthy of repeating:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.



The second sentence of the Declaration is equally well known and one of the most cherished statements on human rights:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

The best known version of the Declaration, a signed copy regarded as the official document, is displayed at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

I invite you to shop for antique and vintage Americana and patriotic objects along Denver's Antique Row. You will find unique items related to the history of our country, famous Americans, the flag, fine art, frames and photographs, furniture, clocks, jewelry, clothing, ceramics, military and sports paraphernalia, toys, collectibles, and more.

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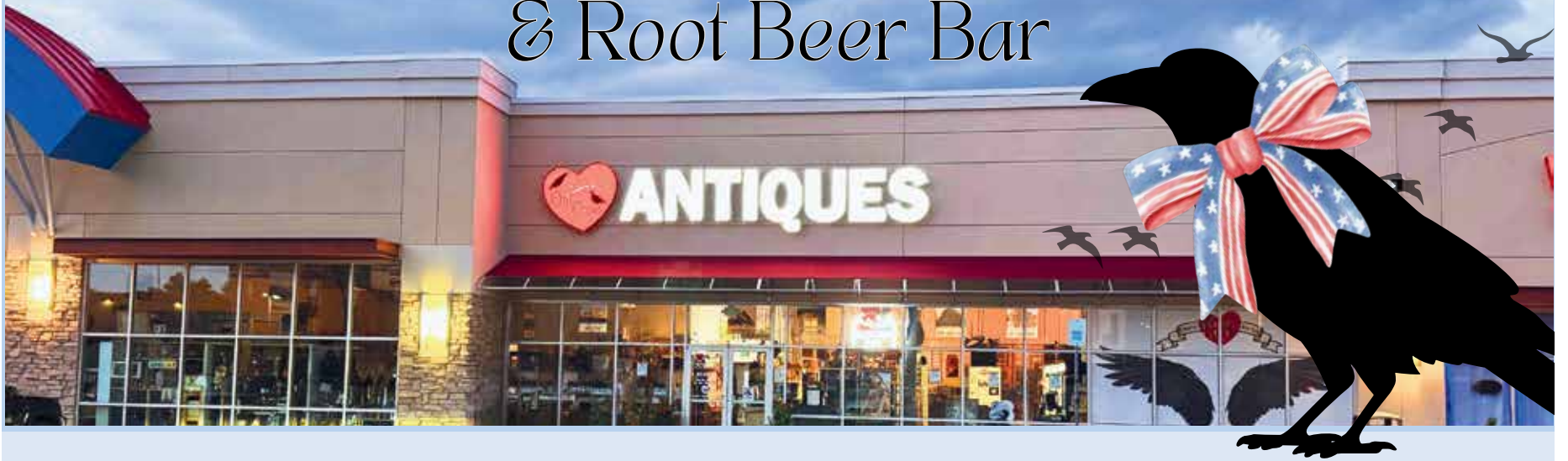
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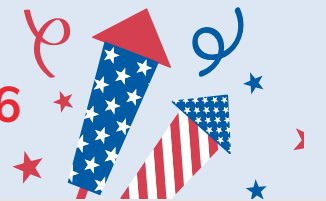
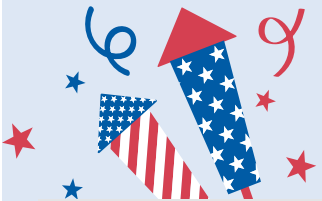


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**JULY 25: OLD CROWS SUPPORTS THE ARTS**, all day long Saturday. Call 303-973-8648 for more information.

**JULY 16 & 17: DENVER POSTCARD & PAPER SHOW**, Jefferson County Fairgrounds, Golden, Colorado, Friday 11 a.m. -6 p.m., Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. More information, go to [denverpostcardshow.com](http://denverpostcardshow.com).

**JULY 18: Happy 62nd Birthday Florence Pioneer Museum!** Join the museum Saturday, July 18th for beverages and birthday cake. Admission is by donation that day. Join us for a grand celebration! [www.florencepioneer-museum.org](http://www.florencepioneer-museum.org).

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# American Eagle: Emblem of Our Republic

By Rachel Hoffman

The American eagle is the emblem of our republic and one of the most beloved collectibles to be found in every state. The collecting of America eagles promotes an interest in the history of the United States and unites us as a people.

In 1782 the United States Congress chose the bald eagle as the national emblem. It is on many of the nation's coins, seals, and medals. The American people adopted this emblem because the bald eagle is strong and proud and free. It represents power, courage, and dignity. The talons of the eagle have enabled it to defeat mountain lions in battle.

The bald eagle is a majestic bird. Its wingspan may measure more than six feet from tip to tip. It is best known for its keen sight and strong beak and claws. Bald eagles eat mostly fish, which they catch by diving into the water from great heights. They usually place their nests in the top of tall trees.

The bald eagle is represented in

many wonderful artifacts. It has been carved in many types of wood from our native trees. The emblem has also been fashioned in metals. It is featured in jewelry, and it is printed or sewn on fabric. It appears in scenes on ceramics, porcelain, china, and glass, especially hand-painted dinnerware.

Folk artists have created many remarkable items inspired by the eagle. Fine artists have taken the bald eagle up as a theme in beautiful paintings. (John J. Audubon spent years painting the eagle in its natural habitat.) Commercial artists have often used it in advertising. Children are fond of the exquisite image of the eagle so it has been a decorative

device in children's rooms and used on toys and on instruments.

The bald eagle is also well represented in American heraldry. It has been dramatically painted in the colors of red, white, and blue, so dear to the hearts of our people. Antiques depicting the bald eagle are plentiful and great to collect.

One popular depiction of the American eagle has it bearing a ribbon in its beak that reads E Pluribus Unum. Another popular depiction has the eagle carrying a laurel wreath and a palm branch. Variations and details of each depicted eagle make it special.

When we visit various museums across the country, we see how often and how cherished the emblem of the eagle has been throughout our history.

To learn more about Rachel Hoffman's Appraisal Practice, visit [www.rachelhoffmanappraisal.com](http://www.rachelhoffmanappraisal.com)



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# Pre-Revolutionary News

By Carol Cox

Once in a while, something turns up in Denver that really surprises me. Just recently it happened again. I shouldn't be surprised. People move across the United States and bring family treasures with them. I suppose what surprises me is these items make it into the open market. You may wonder what turned up – pre-revolutionary war newspapers from Philadelphia and Boston, The Pennsylvania Gazette Numb. 2078 and 2079 dated October 20, 1768 and October 27, 1768 and the Boston and Country Gazette Journal dated October 9, 1769.

So, it made me start thinking about printing in the early days of our Union. A quick google search told me that by 1775 there were 37 independent newspapers and primary media for shaping public opinion, intelligence and the fostering the desire for independence. Most newspapers were only print as illustrations were expensive and hard to come by. Most were printed on a single sheet and folded 4 times to make a complete newspaper. They were expensive to publish and for that reason most were read in coffee houses or other public meeting places.

Most of these publications had the usual items, reprinted articles from England, legal notices, rewards for run away slaves and even lists of merchants that imported goods from



England. For history's sake, it is extremely important when significant events are mentioned like the Boston Tea Party, the French Indian War, or articles by prominent Americans like Benjamin Franklin.

And that is one thing so exciting about these papers. The Pennsylvania Gazette is the oldest newspaper in the United States. It was started in 1728 by Samuel Keimer and purchased by Benjamin Franklin in 1729 and became the most successful paper in America. It was the first newspaper to print the entire contents of the Declaration of Independence on July 10, 1776.

How can a newspaper survive 200 plus years? Newspapers were made of rag paper

prior to 1870. Unlike modern pulp paper, rag paper was more durable. Made from cotton or linen fibers instead of wood pulp, it resists yellowing and remains flexible. It was the cost of hand made rag paper that made newspapers such a valuable commodity. The average citizen could not afford a subscription which made coffee houses and meeting halls more important for sharing information.

Today we have electronic media to disperse information, real or fake, good or bad. Most will never be printed and preserved for history. If you are interested in a piece of American history, come out to the Denver Postcard and Paper Show on Friday-Saturday July 17-18, 2026 at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds in Golden, Colorado. There will be postcards, photographs, general ephemera, postal history, Colorado history, railroadiana, travel, and so much more. For more information, see the advertisement in this issue of Mountain States Collector or go to [www.denverpostcardshow.com](http://www.denverpostcardshow.com). You can also email Carol Cox at [camoble55@gmail.com](mailto:camoble55@gmail.com) or call 720-308-1516.



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# Cats Curosities Captivates Customers Opens in Fanta Fe Arts District



By Jon DeStefano

The first time you enter Cat's Curiosities you will be fascinated by their distinctive vintage finds, antiques and curios that spark conversation and captivate their customers. Candie and Terry Burnham, the owners, pride themselves on sourcing uncommon pieces

that transcend ordinary - each item is carefully selected to be a showstopper in your home or collection.

Their curated inventory spans statement making antique furniture, stunning period lamps, exquisite vintage jewelry and captivating art. They seek out the extraordinary and have a shop full of unique. The Jacobean breakfast hutch with rich carved details, their broad collection of early 20th century slag glass lamps casting their distinctive glow, their mid-century paintings with bold color and vision and their meticulously engraved 19th century maps chronicling worlds past are just a few examples of just some of the many wonders you will find at Cat's Curiosities.

The name of the store came from Candie's nickname "Cat" but everything Candie and Terry have done with their shop they come by honestly. Candie started in antiques as a child with her grandmother at Conestoga in Old Town Arvada and later joining her mom, Susie, selling vintage jewelry while in high school in Lakewood. She has fond memories of going with Susie to Homestead Antique Mall on Wadsworth.

Terry honed his British sense of humor and love of history and antiques in England with his "mum" doing jumbo sales where people brought their "stuff" to church and school

sales. He developed a love of Shelley china when he was about 10 years old. You can find

*Continued on page 15*



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# Evel Knievel –

By Robert Reed

If Evel Knievel could be considered a legend of the 1970s, then the toys created in his name clearly were legendary.

Knievel became America's number one daredevil during that decade and at the same time evoked more than \$300 million worth of toys and related merchandise. Some experts go as far as to say that the motorcycle maniac almost single-handedly managed to jump-start the stalled toy industry of that time.

The Ideal Toy Corporation certainly sold tens of thousands of action figures, stunt cycles and similar Evel Knievel items.

But that's not counting all the rest from alarm clocks and belt buckles to walkie talkies and waste paper baskets.

Before the "era of Evel" had ended there would also be bicycles, radios, watches and even pinball machines bearing his colorful and controversial likeness.

"I came along at the right time in the right place," Knievel told an interviewer many years afterwards. "America was down when I came along and needed somebody who was truthful and honest, someone who would spill blood and break bones, somebody who wasn't a pho-



ny."

Robert Craig Knievel was born in Butte, Mont., with a talent for promoting himself and a likewise knack for putting himself at risk. Over the years the daredevil broke bones and also broke laws. Reportedly he assumed his professional name based on modification of the earlier jailhouse tag of Evil Knievel.

The pioneer motorcycle jumper first soared to fame in 1969 as he attempted to clear the fountains at Caesar's Place in Las Vegas. Evel cleared the fountains, but crash landed. By the early 1970s he had managed successful motor-

cycle jumps in a number of cities including Seattle and Houston.

In 1972 Hollywood released a film about the daring performer. "Evel Knievel the movie," about "the last of the daredevils," starred George Hamilton and Sue Lyon. That same year Ideal launched their first Evel figure. The seven-inch plastic doll and accompanying Stunt Cycle were a major seller.

The first heavy-plastic Stunt Cycles bore the familiar Ideal logo and the copyright date of 1972.

By 1973 the real Knievel was making several widely acclaimed motorcycle jumps with varied success. There were crashes along with some achievements. At the

Los Angeles Coliseum that year, he amazingly cleared a stack of 50 old cars in the center of the site.

Meanwhile the Ideal Corporation was now manufacturing a much broader array of Knievel toys. Evel action figures (basically bendies) came in assorted costumes and with a removable helmet. The boxed figure was sold individually in red, blue or white cloth outfits. Eventually a fourth choice, Teenage Stuntman Robbie Knievel in dark blue outfit, was added by Ideal.

Evel Knievel was arguably one of the most

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# The Times and the Toys

famous characters in the entertainment and sports world in 1974. Plastic model kits issued by Addar that year included Evel Knievel's Ramp Jump, Evel Knievel's Wheelie, and best of all Evel Knievel's Sky Cycle X2. Proclaimed the Ramp Jump box, "there can only be one Number One and Evel's it." Most of their boxes of snap-together parts came with folded 8x10 photographs of Evel himself.

The sky was the limit at Ideal Toy Corporation, too.

Evel's red, white and blue Scramble Van came with a cycle ramp and stunt bike. The Evel Knievel Road and Trail Adventure set was even bigger and included the Evel figure, trail bike, pick-up truck and cycle trailer. Many of the sets also included a giveaway comic book produced by Marvel Group Comics.

Other EK packages from Ideal eventually included the Arctic Explorer set, the Racing Set, the Rescue Set and the Stunt Stadium, which included a full-color vinyl carrying case and numerous Evel accessories. Ideal's Evel Knievel Stunt Game was another remarkable item which provided a board game and stunt cycle set which allowed players to race a toy motorcycle around a track and perform stunts. Ultimately the Ideal Toy company would also produce an appealing series of Precision Min-

iatures also saluting Knievel. Basically, four-inch die-cast vehicles came packaged with a plastic figure of the daredevil rider. Among the boxed choices were the Jet Cycle, the Racing Cycle, the Sky Cycle and the Stunt Cycle. For a time the Stunt Cycle was offered as a mail-order premium with proofs of purchase of other Ideal/Knievel toys.

Of course there was other Evel merchandise as well. Aladdin Industries marketed a very graphic lunch box depicting Knievel on the front and the Snake River jump on the reverse. Ben Cooper had a Knievel jumpsuit Halloween costume, and Topps (the gum card people) released a set of 60 trading cards featuring the exploits of the popular motorcycle rider.

Evel even made the cover of Sports Illustrated magazine early in September of 1974.

But for all of the promotional toys and for all of the public attention, Knievel's most famous jump of the 1970s was pretty much a failure. Evel used a specially constructed Skycycle in an effort to clear the Snake River Canyon in Idaho. The rocket-powered vehicle at first soared into the air, and was then pulled back by a malfunctioning parachute. The event was a major disappointment for the daredevil and his fans.

Still the remarkable performer was not finished. In May of 1975 he drew a record crowd of 90,000 at Wembley Stadium in London, England. His attempt to jump 13 double-tiered buses ended in a crash, but by the following October Evel again won acclaim by leaping his motorcycle over 14 Greyhound buses at King's Island in Ohio.

Evel was seriously injured in a crashed attempt to jump over a tank of live sharks at the Chicago Amphitheater in 1976. Knievel had broken more than 30 bones over the course of his career, but after the '76 incident he never fully recovered physically or professionally.

In many ways Evel's fortunes were much like the dolls made in his image.

"The Evel Knievel stunt doll on his stunt cycle could be categorized as both a success and a failure," observed Judith Izen in the highly comprehensive book, "Collector's Guide to Ideal Dolls."

"The doll was a big seller in the late 1970s, and each year there was a slightly different



gimmick such as his Stratocycle, Chopper or Supercycle," said Izen. "However, in 1978 Evel Knievel, the stuntman, was convicted of a crime which brought a marked drop-off in sales. Ideal was left with many dolls in the warehouse."

The crime, assault on his former manager, briefly put the American hero back in the jailhouse.

Today author Mark Rich ("100 Greatest Baby Boomer Toys") and many others rank the Evel Knievel toys among the best of the 1970s. Collectors still seek them out, especially the more elusive items including the tire-shaped radio, Ideal's life-sized Evel stand-up and Knievel-related clothing for children.

### Captions

1. Evel Knievel's Wheelie, boxed model kit by Addar, 1974.
2. Evel Knievel stunt cycle issued by Ideal Toy Co., all plastic.
3. Evel Knievel colorful Scramble Van by Ideal Toy Co. Vinyl sides.
4. Topps trading card featuring Evel Knievel. Set of 60 cards, 1974.



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# July's Quote of Month

I drifted into a summer-nap under the hot shade of July, serenaded by a cicada lullaby, to drowsy-warm dreams of distant thunder.

– Terri Guillemets



## AMERICAN HISTORY July Anniversaries

**July 1**  
151st Anniversary of the opening of the Philadelphia Zoo, the first public zoo in the U.S. (1874)

**July 3**  
251st Anniversary – George Washington assumed command of the 17,000-man Continental Army in Cambridge, MA (1775)

**July 4**  
Independence Day

**July 8**  
Liberty Bell tolls to announce Declaration of Independence (1776)

**July 20**  
Apollo 11 astronaut Neil Armstrong takes historic first steps on the moon (1969)

**July 26**  
Congress establishes U.S. Post Office and appointed Benjamin Franklin as its first postmaster general (1775)

**July 26**  
76th Anniversary of U.S. President Truman signing an Executive Order ending racial segregation in the U.S. Armed Forces (1948)

**July 27**  
National Korean War Armistice Day



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### GEORGETOWN

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# Some Collectibles Can Be Magic



By Anne Gilbert

Who isn't fascinated by magic tricks and the magicians who perform them? When the subject comes up the most familiar name is "Houdini." For collectors "Houdiana" covers a variety of items related to magician Harry Houdini (1874-1926), born Erik Weiz, the famous magician of the early 20th century. Posters, event tickets and objects used in his shows find eager buyers willing to pay, sometimes, over a thousand dollars. Such was the case when Potter and Potter, a Chicago auction house featured two private collections of not only Houdini collectibles but

other items relating to magic.

Among the items that found buyers at the Potter auctions were posters advertising his show, objects used in his performances. One rare item, a large wood crate used in his "death defying water escape" sold for over \$3,000.

A pair of handcuffs that he "miraculously unlocked" fetched over \$3,000. Scrapbooks, advertising posters and photos of Houdini and even more recent magicians and illusionists found buyers. Even Houdini commemorative stamps were issued. They are a cross-over collectible for stamp collectors as well as magic memorabilia collectors.

The art of magic or illusion dates back to ancient Egypt. In different forms it has come and gone in popularity. Currently different forms are making a comeback. Among them Houdini-style escape tricks rather than the rabbit in a hat illusions.



From the 19th century on there have been many famous "illusionists" whose related items are now pricey collectibles. Among them was Englishman William Robinson, who took the

name Chung Ling Soo and became known as "the marvelous Chinese Conjurer." He performed silently, saying he didn't want to speak English.

Most familiar to late 20th century fans and collectors is David Copperfield, an illusionist who seemingly made the Statue of Liberty disappear.

**CLUES:** Early books for would-be magicians are popular collectibles. One of the first known, printed in 1584, "Discoveries of Witchcraft" by Reginald Scot is the earliest known. Houdini's books, describing some of his tricks is one of many written by 20th century magicians. These days there are magic clubs, workshops, the International Brotherhood of Magicians, which publishes a monthly journal.

**PHOTO CAPTIONS:** (1) Houdini catalog (2) Houdini magic water crate (3) Houdini magic lock.



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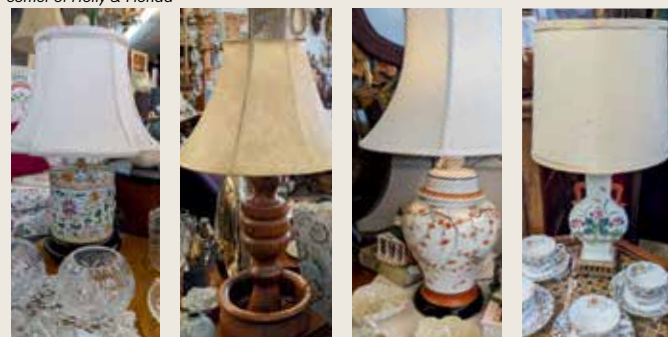
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## June's What Is It?

This beautiful 2-piece, hand wrought aluminum object is a "crumb catcher." It is marked "Continental" Chrysanthemum pattern. Aluminum items of every sort from tableware to jewelry were made by dozens of companies from the early 20th century into the 1940s. A decade ago aluminum became a popular collectible and prices were high for quality pieces.



They were used in refined homes or hotels both in Europe (and England) early then later in America. When tablecloths had crumbs spilled on them but were not too soiled as to warrant complete changeover or laundering, servants (or later housewives themselves) would sweep the crumbs off the tablecloth, leaving it

tidy for the next meal.

We had many readers who correctly identified our June What Is It. Congratulations, everyone, you have won a year's subscription to the Mountain States Collector. We sure enjoyed hearing from you!

## July's What Is It?



Send your answers to the What Is It contest, postmarked by July 20, to the Mountain States Collector, P.O. Box 1003, Bailey, CO 80421. At least three winners will be drawn. Winners will receive a one year electronic subscription to the Mountain States Collector. Be sure to include your email address to your guess.

## Cats Curiosities Captivates Customers Continued . . .



Continued from page 9

numerous book collectibles from antique historical books, military and medical, as well as just good literature.

Candie and Terry attribute most of what they learned to experience at popup markets and to people they worked with in Denver's quality antique malls including Old Crows, Heirlooms, and the Antique Exchange on South Broadway. They credit the owners of the Exchange, Dan and Bob and also Roger

for the incredible knowledge and support they gave them for much of their success.

They were ready when they retired from their health care jobs in policy with the state of Colorado to begin their own shop. Mostly because the values they operate their business on are so clear. They are very intentional about every piece they select for their store.

Each purchase supports sustainability by giving new life to existing treasures. They specialize in caring for family treasures and finding them new homes. They choose timeless treasures over throwaway trends and break free from the fast fashion cycle.

Each item carries stories and craftsmanship from bygone eras keeping our heritage alive.

At Cat's Curiosities you will find furniture crafted with techniques and materials meant to endure for generations. And you will find one of a kind treasures that no one else will have - each piece tells its own story because Candie and Terry go to the trouble to find out their story.

Candie and Terry know the best antiques tell stories and inspire wonder. Terry sums it up best, "Whether you are a seasoned collector or discovering the magic of vintage for the first time we're dedicated to helping you find those special pieces that make your space uniquely yours."

What I like best about Cat's Curiosities are Candie and Terry. They are people who certainly care about the treasures in their store but who treasure their customers even more. Visit Cat's Curiosities in the Santa Fe Arts District at 808 Fanta Fe Drive in Denver. You'll be glad you did.

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*Krysti Jomei of Birdy magazine couldn't resist visiting the dinosaurs at the Brass Armadillo. Photo by Sean Forrester.*

