

ANTIQUE TOY WORLD



The Holiday Sale
January 30, 2026
CHRISTMAS & HALLOWEEN





Five VIP collections unite to create an unforgettable Holiday Antiques Auction, Jan. 30-31 at Bertoia's

Featured: Christmas, Halloween, candy containers, automata, dioramas, mechanical pictures, American litho'd-paper-on-wood and other early toys; teddies, European dolls, much more



VINELAND, N.J. – On January 30-31, the Bertoia family will open their auction gallery doors to reveal a breathtaking winter wonderland of Christmas antiques, including exquisite European Santas and belsnickels; tree ornaments, candy containers, Steiff teddy bears, dolls and other coveted toys that once awaited good boys and girls on Christmas morning. Additionally, the sale's selection includes other types of early holiday collectibles, from whimsical Halloween characters to Easter and patriotic pieces.

The spotlight will shine on five top-tier collections with instantly-recognizable name value, especially to those who are members of the Golden Glow of Christmas Past or the Antique Toy Collectors of America (ATCA).



- First, there's the acclaimed Ed & Brenda DeGarbolewski collection. Longtime holiday aficionados, Brenda and her late husband both had a well-practiced eye for quality and reveled in attending auctions, shows and club conventions hosted by both the Golden Glow and ATCA. The DeGarbolewski name speaks for itself within the hobby.

- Married for 58 years, Jerry and Darla Arnold can trace their interest in Christmas antiques back to Darla's college days and a visit to a museum where she fell under the spell of antique ornaments on a tree. Jerry joined Darla in her newfound pursuit and, over time, also became known for expert restoration work and his own original holiday designs.

- Bob & Maurine Young, members of both Golden Glow and Keystone Kringles, avidly collected Christmas antiques for 20 years. Maurine got her start at the Eastern National Doll Show (Gaithersburg), where she acquired a stunning Christmas diorama. She would go on to collect many dioramas of Christmas and winter scenes. Several of her most highly-prized examples are musical and even illuminate. The Youngs' collection also features an oversize nativity set, feather trees and ornaments, including a large grouping of cotton-batting types.



- A retired nurse practitioner in California, Linda Morrow has been collecting Christmas and Halloween for 40+ years. It started with the purchase of a Santa at the Rose Bowl swap meet in Pasadena. She then moved on to pipe cleaner Santas and, eventually, antique German pieces, including candy containers, Dresdens and feather trees. Linda scoured West Coast antique shows and flea markets, later expanding her search to the East Coast and Germany. Along the way, she also discovered contemporary artists like Jack Rhoads, Kathy Patterson, Roberta Taylor and Debbie Thibault, all of whose work can be found in the Jan. 30-31 sale.



- ATCA member the late Richard Mueller accumulated one of the world's largest collections of vintage pull toys. He was also a highly successful self-made businessman who operated the largest number of Domino's locations of any single franchisee in the United States. Part of Richard's extremely fine toy collection was offered in Bertoia's November 21-22, 2025 auction. For the end-of-January specialty sale, collectors can look forward to viewing and bidding on some of his premier paper-litho-on-wood boats, Noah's Arks, Schoenhut wagons and more.



So now that you know whose collections will be headlining the sale, let's take a virtual walk through the gallery to explore the many subcategories and top-10 candidates. We'll start with the Christmas gift-giver himself, Santa.

There are a dozen or so nodding Santas, mostly tall clockwork examples – some possibly having served as store displays – and a Santa riding a nodding donkey. An absolutely pristine rattan Santa sleigh is pulled by two “snow”-flocked reindeer with glass eyes and metal antlers in perfect condition. But Santa will also take to the road, as the driver of two rattan automobiles. The smaller of the two vehicles has a top that opens so goodies can be stowed inside.

Next up there are German papier-mache belsnickels, some designed as candy containers. The leader of this category is a large Santa in a brown mica-speckled coat, with arms crossed in front and holding a feather tree. Bertoia Auctions' president, Michael Bertoia, noted that the detail work on this piece is “exceptional, especially on the face and beard.”



And speaking of visual appeal, collectors are going to be charmed by the elegant herd of reindeer candy containers, each displaying majestic antlers and all the trimmings, such as leather harnesses, bells, etc. Additionally, there's a pair of mint-condition reindeer candy containers that stand perhaps a foot tall and whose heads lift off to access treats. The fur-covered pair, a matching brother and sister, have impressive antlers and glass eyes.

A very special highlight from the DeGarbolewski collection is a near-mint terra cotta Santa seated on a sleigh. This spectacular artwork from the revered German firm Villeroy & Boch boasts impeccable hand-detailing to the character's beard and facial features. Ed and Brenda's collection was also the source for a couple of early skittles sets, including a near-mint frog with little frogs (bowling pins) dressed in cloth outfits.

An oversize nativity set and approximately a dozen Neapolitan creche figures reflect the inspired beauty of Italian artistry. Each figure stands approximately 14 inches tall with the exception of the Baby Jesus, who is proportionately sized to suit the dimensions of the rest of the Holy Family.



Maurine Young's array of gorgeous Christmas and winter dioramas will stop collectors in their tracks, especially a village scene with a wooden back, painted background, and original old parts and pieces. It's a wonder to behold with its brushed Christmas trees, flocked sheep, Christmas trees, people figures and other accessories. Michael Bertoia observed that some of Maurine's dioramas incorporate early Erzgebirge pieces, which were crafted in a mountainous region of Germany known for its tradition of unique handmade wooden toys, figures, nutcrackers and Christmas pyramids. There are other Erzgebirge productions in the sale (from various consignors), including a fort; plus European platform toys with different animals, and large castles. From the U.S. side of the Atlantic, there are small litho'd-paper-on-wood houses, perhaps by Bliss or Reed; stables, Schoenhut wagons, and boats with interior storage for masts, flags and sails. Most of the American-made toys mentioned here are from the Richard Mueller collection.

A unique example of European folk art was designed to replicate the exhilarating activities on a ski slope. When a crank is turned, skiers appear to schuss down the mountain. It stands perhaps 3ft tall to its highest point, where it's topped by a rifugio (refuge or inn), an obligatory resting place for skiers in the Italian Alps. Its condition is simply spectacular.



A collage of seven vintage Christmas toys. In the top left is a large, light brown teddy bear with a purple bow. In the top right is a reindeer with a red harness carrying a Santa Claus figure in a red suit. In the center is a realistic-looking owl with large eyes. In the bottom left is a small orange clown on a tricycle. In the bottom center is a reindeer with a red harness and a yellow and green saddle. In the bottom right is a clown with a large red nose and a green outfit. In the bottom left corner is a Santa Claus figure in a red suit holding a white stick.



Several rare automata will be auctioned. One includes a clock and birds, while a second example is housed under glass dome with a peaceful landscape that includes a painted river, paper buildings, a possible castle, and a little paper boat with a Dresden-like quality that “sails” toward the background when the automaton is activated.

And speaking of Dresdens, there will be many from which to choose in the Christmas ornaments section, which also offers creations of glass, paper, cotton-batting and more. In addition, there are feather trees and a variety of delightful Heubach figures sitting on snowballs.

The Halloween section will be replete with treats, but not a single trick. The items are primarily from Linda Morrow’s collection, which produced a bumper crop of exciting early pieces for bidders. There are candy containers, pumpkin heads, a fantastic vegetable man, and amusing original designs by contemporary artists. Endearing Easter bunnies and Uncle Sam also add color and fun to the holiday harvest.



Sports-themed candy containers are sure to attract crossover interest, starting with a football player with a removable head, holding a football and dressed in an old-fashioned uniform with pants like knickers. There are also smaller versions of an early football player and baseball player, respectively, as well as a candy container that depicts a football player seated atop a football twice his size.

Finally, there are around 45 French, German and Italian dolls; teddy bears (including Steiff bears, at least one of them a rod bear), and several Noah's arks, each with its own menagerie of animals and people figures.



If you already collect high-end Christmas antiques, Bertoia's January 30-31 Holiday sale is the place to be. If you don't but would like to start a collection, this event offers the opportunity to acquire some of the very best of all known examples from master collectors of the Christmas genre.

Bertoia's January 30-31, 2026 Holiday Auction will be held live at the company's gallery located at 2141 DeMarco Drive, Vineland, NJ 08360, starting at 10AM ET. Auction goods may be previewed the week before the sale by appointment only. In addition to live gallery bidding, remote bidding options include absentee, by phone, or live online through Bertoia Live or LiveAuctioneers.

For additional information on any item, to leave an absentee bid, schedule a private-preview appointment, reserve a telephone line for bidding, or confidentially discuss consigning to a future auction at Bertoia's, call 856-692-1881, or email toys@bertoiiauctions.com.





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