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## Know Your Stuff: Shapely barometers bring best value for collectors

BY CONNIE SUE DAVENPORT • FOR WILLIAMSON A.M. • FEBRUARY 29, 2008

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Dear **Connie Sue**,

This barometer was given to me by friends in Belgium more than 30 years ago. I know nothing about it except that it was once in a shop in Leuven, Belgium, as indicated by the sticker on back. There are two directional arrows on the back with "TV" carved for the left and "Tempet" carved on the right. The words Barometre Aneroide are printed on the bottom of the face, with a maker's mark consisting of interlocking letters between the two words. The barometer measures 5½ inches across the face, and the metal parts are copper or brass except for one long arrow.

Can you advise me of its age, provenance and value? — **Thank you, Dale, Franklin**

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Dear **Dale**,

Aneroid barometers were introduced in 1840 by the Frenchman, Lucien Vidie. They replaced mercury barometers with a vacuum mechanism that measures atmospheric pressure by means of a thin metal disk that covers the partial vacuum. It uses a spring balance instead of a liquid. Knowing the fluctuations of pressure can help predict the weather. It's difficult to find anyone to repair barometers, so working condition is a big factor. Cosmetically, your barometer is fine, and if it measures air pressure properly, it might sell for around \$55. I would date it after 1920.

Buyers generally prefer more shapely models. The banjo shape is the most prevalent. I see lots of wheel- and lyre-shaped models that were purchased in the mid-20th century. I have dated yours a bit earlier because of the brass/copper works. Generally, the more wood and brass in the case, the higher the value, as most are used for decorative purposes, not weather watching. Upper value barometers can bring more than \$2,000. The high-end pieces might have a rosewood case, arches, pediments, a hand-painted dial, gesso and maybe some bone or satinwood inlay. Fancy is the best forecast for pricey barometers.

Dear **Ms. Davenport**,

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\* DETAILS

I have had this teapot since the 1970s, given to me by a friend. At the time, I was too young to appreciate it, but over the years, I began to collect teapots. I have looked through books trying to find pictures to know where it originated. It has no markings, which I thought strange. Perhaps you can offer a clue. Thank you for taking the time to look. — Yours, Kathy

Dear Kathy,

The lack of marks may mean this piece was made before 1891. Metals were usually marked even then, though. Look closely to be sure there aren't marks hidden under the metal's oxidation. It

appears to be porcelain and white metal with a porcelain body. I think it is European.

Since the handle covers part of the colorful vine and leaves, I think it was an early manufactured piece — maybe 1900. If a craftsman was making teapots one at a time, he wouldn't cover his lovely hand-painted design. I would value the piece at \$110. The metal may have been plated with silver that has since rubbed away. The interior is quite white — not much tea or coffee stain. It's a very nice piece, and I hope my clues have helped.

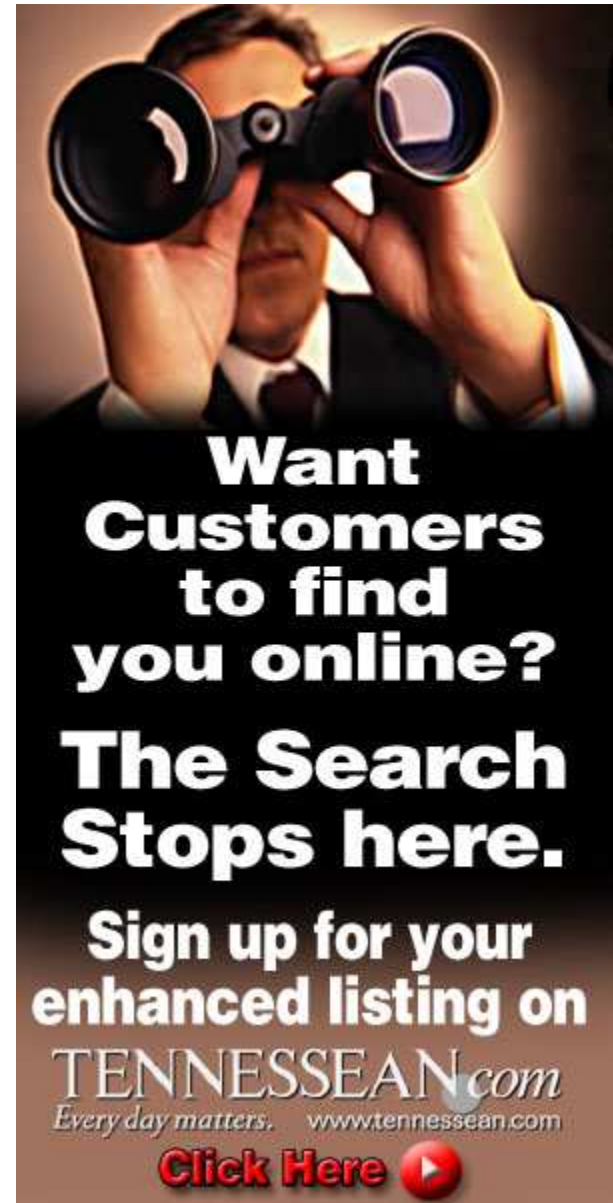
Contact **Connie Sue Davenport** with questions about your antiques and collectibles, as well as photos, and we'll discuss them here. Send to [curios@conniesueinc.com](mailto:curios@conniesueinc.com) or by mail in care of Williamson A.M.

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