

*The 2023 Show will feature an exhibit and seminar related to the decoys of Lake Koshkonong*



NORTH AMERICAN  
**Decoy Collectors**  
ASSOCIATION

**Fall 2022 Newsletter**

# Getting Back to (the new?) Normal

After more than two years of what seemed like an endless series of disruptions to everyday life, we are finally starting to feel like things are getting back to normal in 2022. For us as collectors, this has meant getting back together and enjoying the face-to-face interaction that is such an important part of our hobby. Auction houses have begun to open their doors to in-person bidding. Regional and local shows have come back in full force throughout the country. Our own show in Lombard featured a new venue with all of the elements that attendees have come to expect and enjoy.

Now we all know that COVID is not completely behind us. We certainly had our share of infections coming out of our gathering this spring in Lombard. Thankfully, no one was seriously ill. However, we have all come to accept the reality that is COVID and learned to get on with our lives. That's good news for all of us and bodes well for the future.

Planning for our 2023 show is in full swing. Our membership roles have recovered to pre-pandemic levels and we expect to be setting membership records by the time the show ends in April. The show dates are April 25-29, 2023 so start planning now for a great event.

*Discover • Preserve • Celebrate*

# NORTH AMERICAN DECOY COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

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## WHO WE ARE

The **North American Decoy Collectors Association** is a nonprofit, educational organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois. It invites membership to all persons. The purpose of North American Decoy Collectors is to foster the hobby of decoy collecting by attracting new collectors, seeking out and preserving old decoys, gathering data about carvers and their methods, and holding an annual show for decoy collectors and carvers.

## OUR HISTORY

The **North American Decoy Collectors Association** was started in 1966 by a small group of dedicated decoy collectors as a gathering in Ottawa, Illinois to reconnect, share stories and trade decoys. Since then, the Club has grown to nearly 800 enthusiasts from all over North America and from all walks of life. They write books on collecting, manage auction companies, publish collector magazines, carve world class decoys, calls and collectibles, provide appraisal services, and form a core network of knowledge on sporting collectibles and their history. That humble gathering of collectors in 1966 has grown to become the **North American Vintage Decoy and Sporting Collectibles Show** – the largest show of its kind. The annual show features room-to-room trading, a tabled show and a major decoy auction in addition to a variety of networking events and educational activities including seminars, displays and carving demonstrations.

**DISPLAY ADVERTISING** is now being accepted in select issues of the NADCA newsletter. Contact Jeff Seregny at [jseregny@gmail.com](mailto:jseregny@gmail.com) or 586-530-6586 for rates and availability.

[www.nadecoycollectors.org](http://www.nadecoycollectors.org)



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Fall is my favorite time. It lasts long in Iowa as it starts mid-September and extends into December with beautiful leaves and sunsets. For 62 years, I have enjoyed hunting over wooden decoys, and it's time to get the rigs ready, scout the various locations, and talk with our members across the country. I appreciate all of you!

Our organization is in great shape as we have adapted and improved in every area. We have completed our brand refresh, moved to an improved event location, updated all of our tools, added some talent to our leadership team, refreshed our website and the supporting tools, and grown our membership. Each of our communications has focused on creating better knowledge and awareness. You've seen that in our newsletters and member directory.

We are experiencing a unique time for sporting collectibles, which is exciting. We were pleased to welcome fifty-five new members during our show, bringing our active membership back to pre-COVID levels. New collectors are emerging with a strong appreciation for American sporting traditions and the collectibles this creates.

An important trend is that many long-time collections are becoming available and old favorites are coming to market. Several times per month, we hear from holders of old collections that they are getting ready to sell. New collectors and fresh items are trends to celebrate. Make sure that you are networking with the membership, as many are finding new things.

We are busy planning our 2023 activities. It began with our post-show follow-up and communication outreach. We apply all the lessons learned to improve, talking with dealers and auction outlets to understand trends and working to create more value for our membership. We are returning to the old format for our weekly event schedule. You can review the details on the club website.

Our initial survey indicates that tables will be very tight next year as we need to find space for new participants. Please renew your memberships for both the North American Decoy Collectors and the Call Maker and Collector organizations. Your support is critical to maintaining positive momentum.

Our show is a terrific opportunity to learn about all areas of sporting collectibles. The discussions and opportunities for learning are endless. Make your plans now and be sure to allocate the appropriate amount of time for this valuable event. Our new hotel location offers a great opportunity for networking and discussion.

We continue to grow our educational outreach and want to solicit ideas or content that will help our members gain more knowledge. We are pursuing some new ideas on how to build a better book of knowledge to capture the vast wisdom within our expert community. I appreciate the dialogue and assistance that Ted Harmon has been giving me so that we can discover better ways to share, educate and build more dialogue.

We recently lost Rose Claussen, a past board member and lifelong collector. Rose shared her wonderful wit and passion for collecting with great class. Our deepest condolences to Bill and his family.

I want to personally thank Jon Deeter for his thoughtful coaching and wonderful support in helping us land successfully at our new location. I called Jon with the request for help, and Jon was on the road that weekend to help and has been all in with his support. This change has been very challenging, and I appreciate his help.

Happy Hunting and Collecting! Stay strong and safe! Nothing is normal, but we can do more together, and our current status proves that fact.

*Rick*



# Member News

## Membership Remains Very Strong



NORTH AMERICAN  
**Decoy Collectors**  
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Membership in the NADCA is back at our high, pre-pandemic levels and, as is usually the case, we fully expect to see increases as we get closer to our show in April. Plus, we are encouraged to see so many younger collectors joining the fold. We believe that this overall growth is a sign of both a robust decoy and sporting collectibles market, and the value that membership in the NADCA delivers to collectors.

While the summer and fall are not typically active periods for member acquisition, we did have several new members join us since the summer newsletter was published. Please welcome them.

### **Wayne Barker**

Union City, Tennessee

*Decoys, duck calls, old duck hunting and fishing equipment*

### **Josh Brewer**

Little Deer Isle, Maine

### **Philip Mehrer**

South Jordan, Utah

*Duncan Ducharme, Mason decoys*

### **Noel Poux**

Kalispell, Montana

*Pre-1940 sporting "stuff", art*

## 2022-2023 Directory Mailed in September



All members with dues paid up through 2022 should have received their Member Directory in late September or early October. The Member Directory is a valuable resource that can significantly enhance your collecting experience. We encourage you to take advantage of its many benefits.

■ **Networking:** Members can search other member collecting interests and begin networking with like-minded collectors to share knowledge and buy/sell/trade.

■ **Visit Other Members:** The state/city listing allows members to quickly identify where collectors live. Use this to arrange visits to other members and see their collections when travelling.

■ **Help with ID:** We all come across items that are outside of our particular region or area of expertise. Consulting member collecting interests helps you connect with members who might be able to help. You can also submit requests for ID help through our Facebook page and club website at [nadecoycollectors.org](https://nadecoycollectors.org).

■ **Collecting Resources:** The Directory includes a comprehensive list of reference books, magazines, dealers, and auctioneers, which makes it easy to find any information members might need.

■ **Dealer/Member Advertising:** Advertising throughout the Directory helps members connect with trusted buyers and sellers across North America. Be sure to check out the ads for items of interest.

**IMPORTANT:** Please double check your listing and contact Jeff Seregny at [jseregny@gmail.com](mailto:jseregny@gmail.com) with any corrections or changes.

## Renew Your Club Membership by January 1, 2023

Members whose membership expires at the end of 2022 will receive a dues notification in the mail in the coming weeks. Dues are payable for 2023 by January 1, 2023. You can pay online using a credit card or PayPal through a new, very user-friendly payment portal on the club website at [nadecoycollectors.org](https://nadecoycollectors.org). Or, you can send a check for \$25 (\$70 for three years; \$500 for lifetime) made out to NADCA to Matt Bryant, 17114 Erskine St., Omaha, NE 68116.



# Member News

## Doug Lodermeier's Minnesota Calls on Exhibit



**Doug with Heritage Center Manager and NADCA member, Katie Burke**

NADCA member Doug Lodermeier has loaned his extensive Minnesota call collection for an exhibit at the Ducks Unlimited Waterfowling Heritage Center at Bass Pro Shops in Memphis. Doug is the author of "Minnesota Duck Calls: Yesterday's and Today's Folk Artists." The Waterfowling Heritage Center offers visitors an opportunity to learn about Ducks Unlimited, wetlands conservation, waterfowl, the history of waterfowl hunting in North America, and the important role sportsmen and women have played in conserving our continent's wildlife and habitat.

In regard to this exhibit, Doug said: *"I am truly honored, humbled and gratified to have my Minnesota Duck, goose and game calls on exhibit for the entire next year at the Ducks Unlimited Waterfowl Heritage Center in the Bass Pro Shops Pyramid in Memphis, Tennessee. It is honor to be associated with such a leader in conservation as DU and to have my collection in the same venue as past displays including Howard Harlan, Rick Milligan and Ryan Graves to name only a few."*

*Millions of people will have a chance to view the incredible works of Minnesota call making greats - past, factories and present. I hope this will further shine a spotlight on the great artisans of our state."*

If you are in the Memphis area, this is a must-see exhibit. Thanks to Doug for sharing both his expertise and collection.

## New Club Website Goes Live

In case you missed it, the club has launched a new, user-friendly website designed to enhance the collecting experience for both current members and prospective members alike. Along with its rich array of collecting resources, the site has current information about the 2023 show in Lombard including the show schedule and a downloadable table registration form. You can also pay your dues with a credit card through a new, easy-to-use portal. We'll be adding new features in the coming weeks. So, check in at [nadecoycollectors.org](http://nadecoycollectors.org) often to see what's new!





# A Case for the Future of Decoy Collecting

*Member Shane Newell recently published an article articulating his bullish belief in the future of decoy collecting. He was kind enough to let us share it here.*

I enjoy a good decalogue, so here's my 10-point case why decoys will soar above all Americana arts in the future.

**1** Most art historians consider waterfowl decoys as the only indigenous folk art in North America. All others migrated here. Decoys come with a 2,000-year old legacy that crept out of a cave in Nevada. Consequently, waterfowl decoys represent Native American culture and Americana better (more authentically) than any other art form.

**2** Decoys are void of institutional and affluent elitisms unlike fine art, rare books, and most cultural art forms. No establishment dictates what makes a great or valuable decoy. Auction houses and dealers enable the "invisible hand" of our free market. We, the Collectors, form the social union and create the supply and demand. It's all very forthright and simple.

**3** Decoys are tactile. In a world of velvet ropes, glass cases, and overall flat-screen modernization, human touch matters and there's something unique about holding a decoy in your hands and that it's common practice to do so. The topic of decoys is also very conversational.

**4** Decoy collectors are not snobby toward contemporary makers. Decoys are judged by construction method, form, carving detail, and paint. Gratitude (and demand) is rightfully



extended to contemporary decoy makers that carry on the great tradition. New inventory allows for industry growth without changing the game or rules. The hobby thrives without mass media or popular culture. This is unique in the art world.

**5** Unlike fine art, big names don't totally dominate the decoy market. A great decoy collection can be assembled without Crowell, Cobb, Lincoln, Mason, or Wards. No brand or region is essential. Personal preferences, in the eye of the beholder, are universally respected among decoy collectors.

**6** The great architect, Joel Barber, designed our matrix for growth. We've evolved from decoy hunters and gatherers to a cooperative society of decoy collectors and merchants. This is irreversible and very scalable.

**7** Decoys represent the art of forging materials, enduring outdoor elements, and our primal instincts of hunting and taking game. Regardless of the collector's gender or view on hunting - true grit mixed with fine art greatly appeals to human nature.

**8** Decoys are both plentiful enough to ignite the interest of beginners and rare enough to obsess the purists. Decoys are accessible to anyone, starting at any price point. Resources about collecting are more abundant than ever before.



**9** Mass produced collectibles (Star Wars, Baseball Cards, Coins, Video Games, etc.) will never garner more appeal than something unique, hand carved, and hand painted. Decoys represent craftsmanship and tradition. Pride and passions are exemplified in the finding, handling, acquiring, refining, and arranging a decoy collection. I've never seen a collection of anything displayed as well as a collection of decoys in terms of stunning variety, brilliant colors, unique forms, and in the artful manner by which they're exhibited. Building a private collection is an art form.

**10** There's a rising popularity in bird knowledge. Perhaps it's environmental awareness, or love for the feathered kingdom, or perhaps it's the popularity of Wingspan - whatever it is, I've noticed a growing interest in bird books, Audubon stuff, bird watching, bird calling, and bird knowledge. As these enthusiasts become inevitably intrigued by investment quality decoys, each aging generation will push decoy collecting to new heights in the 21st century.

— Shane Newell



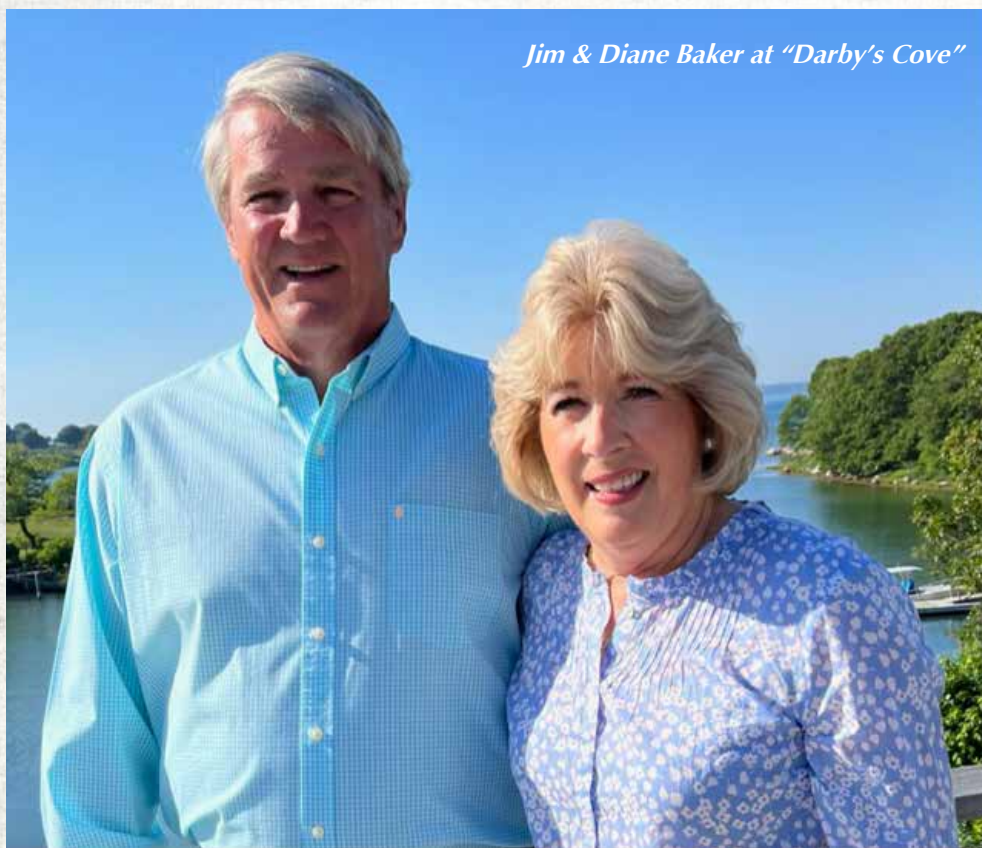
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## MEMBER PROFILE:

# Jim Baker: Like Father, Like Son

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*Jim & Diane Baker at "Darby's Cove"*

It's certainly no wonder that Jim Baker is a passionate decoy collector today. After all, his grandfather carved duck decoys in addition to songbirds, seagulls and other assorted fowl. His father carved decoys and also collected decoys, becoming an expert on birds made at the Old Saybrook, Connecticut factory. In fact, he was a major contributor to "Wild-fowler Decoys," the seminal book written by Dick Cowan and Dick LaFountain. Jim estimates that 40-50 Old Saybrook decoys pictured in the book came from his dad's collection.

### The Beginning

It all started on Fishers Island, New York, a 6 mile long spit of land accessible only by plane or regular ferry service just 7 miles from New London, Connecticut and 9 miles east of the tip of Long Island. Jim grew up there learning to hunt ducks and fish for striper with his dad. Following a long career as an executive with Unilever, he moved back to the island after retiring in 2013. He fondly recalls accompanying his dad to decoy shows, antiques shops, and flea markets up and down the east coast when he was only 10 years old, a practice that continued through high school and college into his early 20's. He and his dad even ventured west to what was then the Midwest Decoy



*Jim's Favorite Decoy, Made by his Dad*



Show in Chicago in the late 80's while Jim was living in St. Louis.

## Learning the Ropes

Jim considers his father as his most influential mentor and relishes the many years he was able to spend time with his dad learning and sharing their passion for collecting decoys. That said, there were many others who helped him along the way as well.

Chief among these was the well-known contemporary decoy maker Bob White of Tullytown, Pennsylvania. However, that didn't happen overnight. Jim recalls it being a real challenge to connect with White early on. As Jim tells it, while living in nearby Princeton, he made a number of unsuccessful attempts to contact White in the late '80s. He would call, leave a message and hear nothing back. After repeating this several times, one day he just went to Bob's shop unannounced and his persistence finally paid off. Initially, he managed to convince Bob to sell him a couple teal decoys which he was collecting at the time. Jim kept going over, each time adding a few more to his collection. Eventually, he learned Bob's process and how long it took him to make his decoys. He figured out that if he got there at the right time, he could have the opportunity to buy the

decoys that Bob had finished. This early relationship turned into a lifelong friendship, and Jim credits Bob with teaching him about Delaware River decoys which would become an important part of his collection.

Others who have helped Jim along the way include former NADCA Director Alan Haid and his wife, Elaine. Jim lived not too far from the Haid's and would visit them about once a month to talk about

collecting and to simply experience their wonderful collection. Jim used every opportunity to visit other highly regarded collections to continue to add to his knowledge. Jim Doherty and many others openly shared their knowledge and, through these visits, Jim learned to appreciate the philosophy of focusing on quality over quantity, something that many collectors don't appreciate until much later in their collecting journeys.



*Bob White Pintail*



*Bob White White-Cheeked Pintail (Argentina)*



*"Darby's Cove Rig" Branding*



*Bob White Mallards from "Darby's Cove Rig"*



*Jess Heisler Widgeon Pair, Burlington, NJ, ca. 1930s*



*English-Dawson Bluebill, Florence, NJ, ca. 1930s*



*Jess Heisler Mallard, Burlington, NJ, ca. 1930s*



*Joe King Black Duck, Parkertown, PA, ca. 1940s*



*Robert Freirich Pintail, Tullytown, PA, ca. 1930s*



*John McLaughlin Black Duck, Bordentown, NJ, ca. 1950s*

## The Collection

Today, Jim's collection is concentrated in several key areas.

First is a large group of Wildfowler decoys made at Old Saybrook, the result of an obvious connection to his father and the years they spent hunting, fishing and pursuing decoys together. The collection features some of the finest and rarest Old Saybrook decoys including Mergansers, Gadwall (the only known pair), eider ducks, and most other species, all in very good to mint condition. These decoys came from the collections of Somers Headley, Mort Hansen, Harold Morse and Alan Haid to name just a few.

As a result of his ongoing friendship with Bob White, his collection also features about 100 of White's carvings, including a number of unique, one-of-a-kind decoys that Bob made specifically for Jim. In the 90's, Jim was doing a lot of black duck, mallard and teal hunting on Fishers Island, and Bob made him around 50 decoys in these species, all branded "Darby's Cove Rig," for the beautiful inlet where Jim lives on the island.

During his working life, Jim became good friends with a business associate in Argentina who loved to hunt. This friendship led to frequent trips there to



hunt doves, partridge and 13 different species of ducks, most of which are unknown to wildfowlers in the U.S. These include such beauties as Silver Teal, Brown Pintail, Brown Spotted Teal and Chiloian Wigeon. After accompanying Jim on a couple of these trips, a grateful White made a group of unique decoys for him that represented many of these native Argentinian species.

The last major grouping is a broad cross-section of decoys from the Delaware River area. He credits his friend Bob White for his deep interest in birds from this area. White not only helped educate Jim but also was instrumental in helping him acquire many of the Delaware River pieces that reside in his collection. Makers represent a veritable who's who of Delaware River makers including Jess Heisler, Dan English, Tom Fitzpatrick, Bill Quinn, Tony Bianco, English/Dawson, Robert Freirich, Claude Trader and several others.

Like so many collectors, Jim's collection does include outstanding pieces from outside of his core collecting focus. These include well-known makers such as Roswell Bliss from Stratford, Connecticut, Obediah Verity from Long Island, and Elmer Crowell of East Harwich, Massachusetts.

As one scans Jim's decoy room, it becomes evident that he has a particular affection for American Black Ducks. It was this species that he

primarily hunted when he was growing up. He just loves hunting black ducks, regarding them as extremely smart and wary, and a great challenge to bag. He considers a black duck made by his dad, given to him on his 21st birthday, to be the favorite in his entire flock.

Jim also has a beautifully displayed, complete set (numbered 1-25) of Elmer Crowell miniature waterfowl that he found at an estate sale Connecticut in 2005. Each of these 100 year-old gems had been individually wrapped and stored in a large shoe box. As a result, they are in absolutely perfect condition, as though, as Jim puts it, "they had never seen the light of day!" What a find!

In addition to decoys, Jim also displays a fine grouping of saltwater striped bass lures made in the 40's and 50's by Stan Gibbs of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Jim loves to fish for stripers in the Fishers Island Sound near his home so these pieces are very special to him.

Lastly, his decoy room is also adorned with a half dozen or so Great Blue Heron carvings by various makers including a few by Russ Allen. These majestic marsh birds have long been among Jim's favorites.

In all, Jim estimates that he has nearly 400 pieces in his collection. While he continues to focus more on quality over quantity and uniqueness in his acquisitions, he's always looking to add special black ducks



*Wildfowler Preening Canvasback, Old Saybrook, CT, ca. 1940s*



*Wildfowler Green-Winged Teal Painted by Ted Mulliken, Old Saybrook, CT, ca. 1940s*



*Wildfowler Northern Shoveler, Old Saybrook, ca. 1940s*



*Wildfowler American Merganser, Old Saybrook, CT, ca. 1940s*



*Rare Wildfowler Gadwall Pair, Old Saybrook, CT, ca. 1940s*



*Elmer Crowell Miniature Waterfowl Set*



*Stan Gibbs Striped  
Bass Lures*

to the flock. As an example, if the opportunity to buy a good black duck by Jim Schmeidlin or Charles Perdue were to arise, he says he'd likely jump at the chance.

## The Collector

Today Jim continues to actively pursue his passions for hunting and

collecting. In addition to his excursions to Argentina, he has hunted ducks and doves in Mexico, quail in Georgia, woodcock and grouse in New England, geese near the Pennsylvania/New Jersey border, and, of course, he still shoots a lot of ducks in Fishers Island Sound. He regularly attends a number of

decoys shows including New Jersey, Long Island, Easton, and the NADCA show in Lombard.

Many thanks to Jim for sharing his collection with us. He can be reached at bakerj428@gmail.com.



# DECOY MAGAZINE

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# 2023 Show “Sneak Peek”



Your Board is busy preparing for the 2023 North American Vintage Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show which will take place April 25-29 at the Westin Lombard hotel, in Lombard, Illinois. With two separate events at this modern venue under our collective belts, next year's show is bound to be the best ever.

While there will likely be some tweaks to the schedule, members and attendees can once again count on robust room-to-room trading on Tuesday through Thursday, followed by Guyette & Deeter's premier auction, and our ballroom event which will feature a variety of sporting collectibles displays, silent auctions, carving demonstrations and more.

The show will offer a number of different educational opportunities including a seminar on the decoys of Wisconsin's famed Lake Koshkonong. The history surrounding these decoys is just fascinating and NADCA Board Member and Koshkonong collector Al Steffen will share the current thinking about these decoys and their likeness to the decoys of the Susquehanna Flats on the east coast.

As always, there will be countless opportunities to reconnect with old friends and to buy or sell a few items along the way. We look forward to a great show in April! You can check out the full show schedule on the club website at [nadecoycollectors.org](http://nadecoycollectors.org).



# ANNUAL NORTH AMERICAN Vintage Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show

## April 25-29, 2023

**Don't Miss  
the Collecting  
Experience  
of the Year!**

- Room-to-Room Trading
- Guyette & Deeter Auction
- Ballroom Dealer Show
- Koshkonong Decoy Seminar
- Koshkonong Decoy Exhibit
- Various Displays
- Carver Demonstrations
- Free Appraisals
- And More



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The Westin Lombard  
– LOMBARD, IL –

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