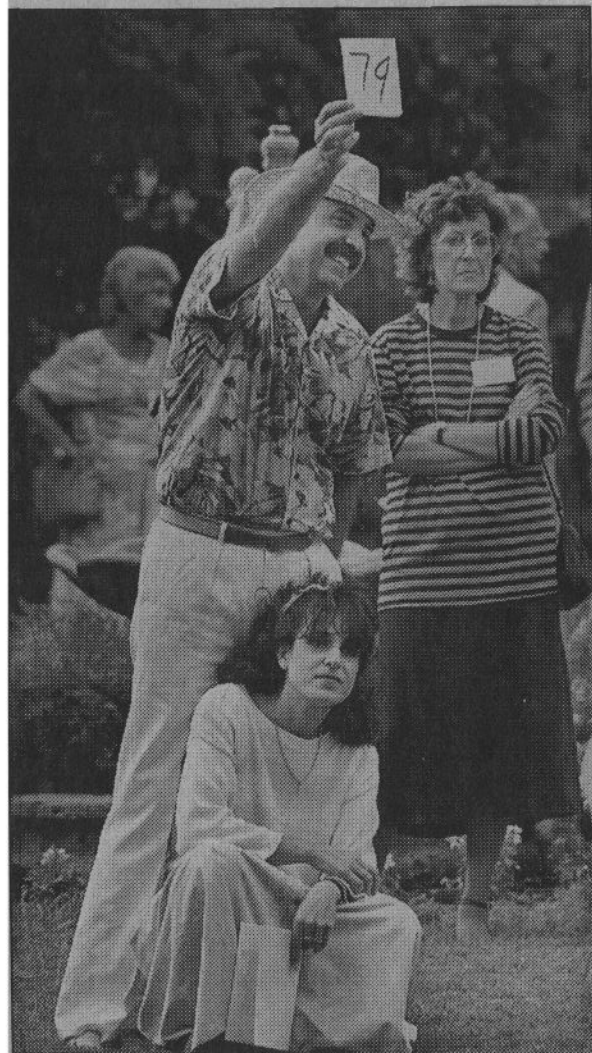


# VALLEY

San Fernando, Conejo, Santa Clarita & Simi Valleys

1987/F



JOE VITTI / Los Angeles Times

Steven West becomes successful bidder on a doodle by actress Maureen Stapleton at benefit auction. Allan Miller auctions off play by Laker coach Pat Riley, right.



# Back Alley Auction Turns Doodles to Dollars

By CLAUDIA PUIG,  
Times Staff Writer

It was a garden party with a twist, and Ruth Campbell, who turned 29 Sunday, decided that it would be a novel way to spend her birthday.

"I wanted to do something different," she said. "This was a chance to get dressed up and spend some money."

About 250 people joined Campbell in dressing up and spending money Sunday at the third annual auction of famous doodles, which raised more than \$25,000 for the Back Alley Theatre in Van Nuys. The auction, held at a Sherman Oaks mansion, was replete with show-business talk, the melodic strains of a chamber ensemble, nouvelle cuisine hors d'oeuvres and the good-natured spending of large sums of cash.

"They're here to schmooze and enjoy the setting, but primarily they're here to help the theater," said auction organizer Laura Zucker, who with her husband, Allan Miller, is the theater's producing director.

## Highest Bidder

The auction's highest bidder was Don Plehn, a land developer from Northridge, who spent well over \$4,000 for doodles by Vice President George Bush, by actor John Huston and by Jay Gould, the Disney artist who drew Mickey Mouse.

John Huston's Dali-like pen sketch of a man with a skull in his lap and a cross in the background was drawn just a month before his death and drew the afternoon's highest price—\$2,000; while a signed photograph of a young Liberace garnered the lowest bid, \$50.

A few at the auction had their hearts set on specific pieces of doodle art by notables



Prospective bidders look over celebrity doodles prior to the auction.

such as actor Jimmy Stewart, Golda Meir, Lakers coach Pat Riley and playwright Arthur Miller. "He's not the kind of person who doodles," Zucker said of Miller.

"See that diagram by Pat Riley?" asked Michael Norris before the bidding began. "You're looking at the people who are going to buy it." Norris had come from Manhattan Beach with his wife, Kathy, to collect sports memorabilia, but were outbid by California Institute of the Arts professor Jules Engle, who bought the doodle—a diagram of the winning play in the 1985

NBA championship—for \$1,000. He plans to make a lithograph of the winning play and send a copy to the Norrises.

"I'm getting the Arthur Miller and the George Bush," announced actor Alex Stalter of Beverly Hills, who last year spent \$1,900 on works by Kurt Vonnegut, Paul Newman, Lucille Ball and Peter Max. Later, he bought the Arthur Miller doodle and a framed painting by Golda Meir. He said his girlfriend, a Democrat, talked him out of bidding for the Bush, which sold for \$300.

The event was held at the home of real estate agency owner Jerry Burns, and the 110 doodles were commissioned from a wide variety of rich and famous folks, including Sammy Davis Jr., Candice Bergen, Dudley Moore, Joan Baez, Kirk Douglas and Gerald Ford.

"All the doodles, almost without exception, are done specifically for this event," Zucker said.

## Operating Costs

The money raised by the auction, which is the theater's biggest fund-raiser, will go toward the operating costs of the theater, which run about \$250,000 yearly, Zucker said. Last year's auction netted \$16,000, and this year's figures are clearly the best yet, Zucker said.

Co-organizer Miller served as auctioneer for the afternoon. A smooth-talking emcee, he was not above some gentle nagging of the buyers.

"C'mon, Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson are a husband-and-wife team," he cajoled. "If you've got one, you have to have the other." It worked.

Woodland Hills attorney Steven West spent a few thousand dollars on a dozen doodles, calling his purchase "the best way to get an autograph," and adding, "it's a little more personal."

"Part of the attraction of this is you kind of see into people's psyches," Zucker said.

Lily Tomlin's crayon doodle was drawn with the psyche of Edith Ann, her preschool alter ego, in mind. Actor Rene Auberjonois delved into a struggling actor's psyche to create his cartoon of an odd-looking fellow reading *Variety*, with the caption, "Show Biz is my life."

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## Trail of 'Pack Rat' Is Strewn With Debris and Clouded With Mystery

By JANE HULSE, Times Staff Writer



## Contamination Threat Forces Evacuation of Burbank Homes

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# DOODLE

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Two of the most satisfied customers were Julie and Richard Ruvelson of West Los Angeles, who paid \$250 for a single sheet of paper with two doodles on it, drawn by actors Danny DeVito and Rhea Pearlman, who are husband and wife.

"It was a bargain; we got two for the price of one," Julie Ruvelson said.

Added her husband: "It's for a good cause, and it's much better than attending a dinner and getting bored."