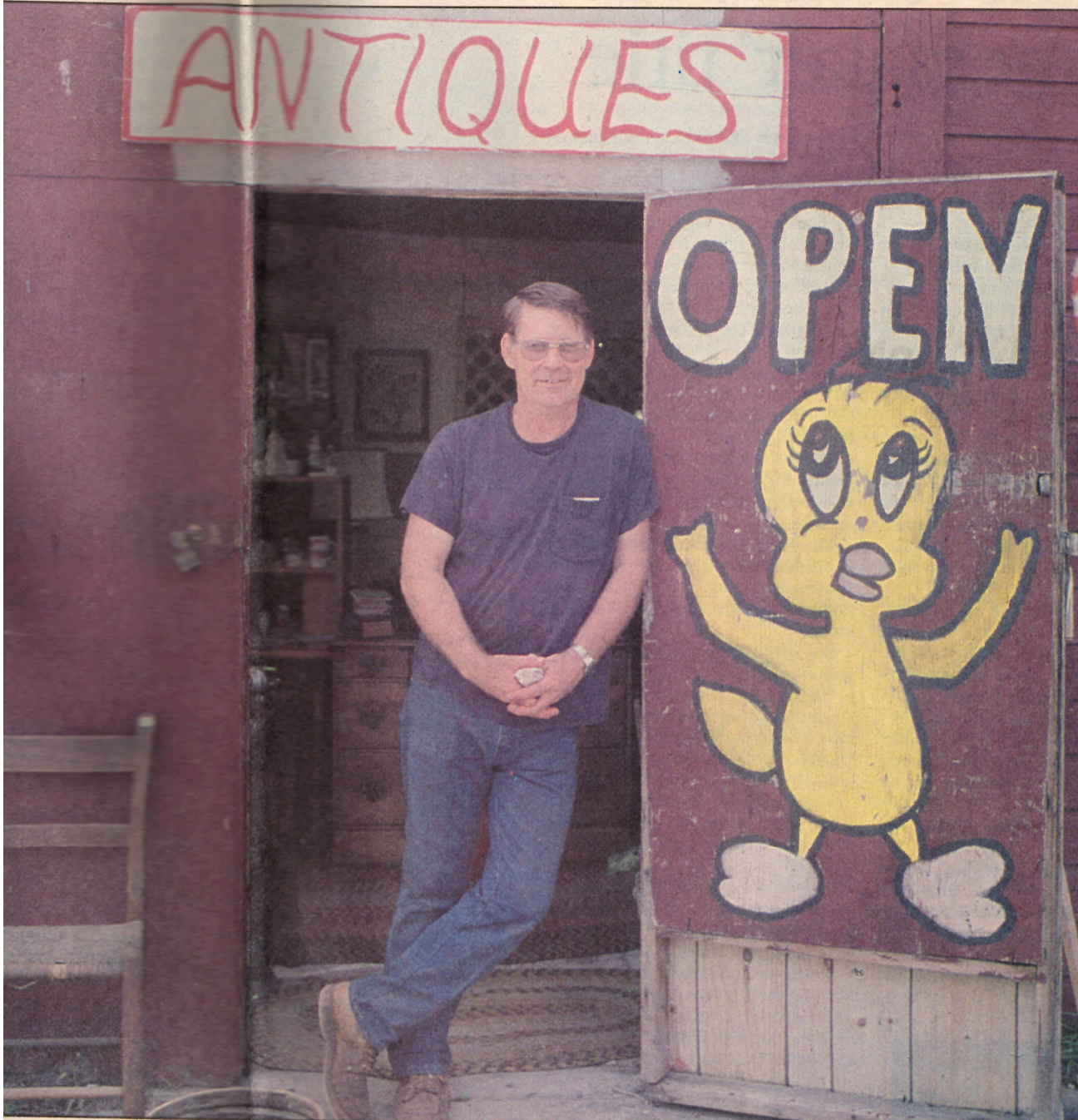


Faces

Entertainment

Tuesday in Nature:
How to live with
snakes without fear

Section D



STEPHEN MORTON/The Gainesville Sun

By LEIGH GLENN
Sun correspondent

Crown's section of The Red Barn. Cluttered with old and not-so-old pieces of furniture — projects in various stages of completion — it

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It's a hot Saturday in late evening. In his

When Bud Crown grabs a rag, dips it in "magic solution," and runs it across the wood, the dings and dents disappear in a stain of cranberry red and the patina begins to glow



STEPHEN MORTON/The Gainesville Sun

Crowning refinish

By LEIGH GLENN

Sun correspondent

It's a hot Saturday in late spring. In his store/workshop, The Red Barn in Waldo, Bud Crown is stripping a sideboard. But he stops and wipes his hands to talk to an old customer about an acorn four-poster rope bed.

The once-mahogany finish has evolved into an icky black the customer mistook for paint. But as Crown grabs a rag, dips it in "magic solution," and runs it across the wood, the dings and dents disappear in a stain of cranberry red and the patina begins to glow.

It's pine, Crown says. He tells the woman he would rather not strip it, but will clean it up for her and try to seal it in some way so she won't have to oil it — like people did in bygone times.

With his turpentine and linseed oil, Crown works wonders for old wood with a rag or a brush.

The workshop takes up about half of

Crown's section of The Red Barn. Cluttered with old and not-so-old pieces of furniture — projects in various stages of completion — it opens to the outside, providing fresh air for ventilation, which is always necessary, but especially when Crown is stripping varnish and paint from wood.

Crown's bent toward preservation shows up in the furniture he refinishes.

"What (people) see in antique stores becomes what is," he said. "All the oak seems to be stripped and all the patina pulled off. (The patina is) what makes the difference."

To preserve the patina — the look wood acquires as it ages — Crown said it's necessary to "get the old wood very clean. On the other hand, you've got to be careful with real good antiques."

Some of Crown's preservation inclinations come from his family, who moved from Baltimore to Gainesville around 1875. His great-grandfather ran a ferry boat across Paynes
See CROWN on page 3D

CROWN

continued from page 1D

Prairie when it was still a lake, Crown said.

"He had five sons, and they all lived in the area around the prairie," he said.

Even today, 50-year-old Crown owns property that his grandfather bought in 1895. Although his family was only five miles from town, they felt isolated.

"The typical Southern thing was a trip to town on Saturday afternoon," Crown said. In the late 1940s, "it cost 15 cents to go to the Florida Theatre and 9 cents to go to the State Theatre (an old movie house)."

Having grown up when \$1 went a long way and having lived around everyday objects that are today's antiques and collectibles, Crown is amazed at how much money such things bring in.

"To look at a bowl that's cut glass... it's \$300. I just don't see that," he said. "I do and I don't. But there's a segment of people out there that appreciates that."

"I've had a very simple life," Crown continued. "By God, you can go to K mart and buy a plate to eat off of just like a fine piece of china."

Although "\$15 goblets" don't turn him on, Crown said he can appreciate art and doesn't have a problem buying folk art or cut glass and selling it high.

"I don't mislead people. I bring stuff in and price it according to what I feel it will be worth."

BUD CROWN

It's just that he would rather stick with what he knows best: wood.

"I don't know (folk art and cut glass) well," he said. "My interest is finding the furniture and other small stuff and the wood work."

Last year, Crown made a small profit on a Star Wars clock he sold for \$45. The guy that bought it was happy because the book price for the clock was \$75, Crown said.

"I don't mislead people," he said. "I bring stuff in and price it according to

says he'd like to get out more to buy, the refinishing side of his business leaves him little time for that.

"I chose this business to get into because I like it," Crown said. "I'll always refinish. It's in my blood and I'll always do it — forever. But I have to be more selective."

But being selective about the types of furniture he refinishes is difficult for Crown. As word of his skill spreads and more people lay their battered chests of drawers and partially stripped chairs at his work bench, he finds it hard to turn the work down.

Mark Fink, proprietor of the Den of Antiquity, an antique store catty-cornered to The Red Barn, has known Crown for about eight years. The two often trade favors, but Fink said, "I think he helps me more than I help him."

Fink describes Crown as "the guru of wood" because of his ability to strip and refinish pieces — and to reconstruct them, too.

The most interesting thing Crown "reconstructed" for Fink was a display case in which Fink stores his own military collection.

He joined two open oak bookcases, added a crown molding to the top and a glass front.

"People can't believe it was put together," Fink said. "It's so big."

He also has had Crown strip pieces for him, too. Fink wouldn't trust his wood to anyone else.

"For what he charges, he's the best refinisher around," he said. "He gets real critical (of himself). He's probably too modest."

Kelly Kirk, a Gainesville resident, had been stopping by Crown's shop once or twice a year on trips to and from Jacksonville. She hadn't realized that he refinished furniture until someone recently told her about his quality of workmanship.

So, a soon-to-be mom, Kirk took her baby furniture to Crown to have him refinish.

"After looking in the store and hearing from word of mouth about him, I talked to him and he seemed very knowledgeable," she said.

"There's something about Bud that made me trust him almost from the start," Kirk added.

The proof of Crown's work may, in part, lie in his palms and fingers. Over the years, his hands have acquired a patina of their own — sort of like some of the older pieces he works wonders on.

"His hands seemed stained with the wood refinishing products," Kirk said. "His hands show that he's been doing this for a long time, and he obviously likes it."

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"I don't mislead people," he said. "I bring stuff in and price it according to what I feel it will be worth."

His lack of knowledge about how to price certain items led him to seek out Roselyn Tucker, an antique dealer he came to know on the garage sale/auction circuit.

In exchange for space to display her antiques and collectibles, Tucker researches items that Crown finds, prices them, dusts them and answers customers' questions. That allows Crown to work on refinishing projects.

"She takes care of my stuff sometimes better than I do," Crown said.

Crown's quick to point out his shop is not a museum. He said he could have called it "Oliver Clinton Crown Antiques," but that name didn't fit with his personality.

"(That's a) name built for an antique shop, (but) I'm Bud," he said.

Because his store offers more of a down-home atmosphere, Crown said a lot of times, people don't come there with buying in mind. During those times, Crown will leave the fumes of stripping solutions behind, come out of his work area and chat.

"One of my problems is I like people and I like to talk to people," he said. "It hinders me in getting work done in the back."

A lot of people who travel through Waldo say, "We came by to see what you've changed here. They're not going to buy anything. They just enjoy stopping by."

But that's OK with Crown, who adds, "I can't get back there and isolate myself."

It's been about six years since Crown left the faster-paced occupation of residential building superintendent and carpenter.

He tired, he said, of the shoddy workmanship he sometimes saw.

As anyone who has had him refinish a piece of furniture will say, Crown is not one to like jobs he can't take pride in.

He told himself, "If this is what this job has come to, I want to do something else."

The something else was refinishing furniture, which Crown has always done on the side. As much as Crown

The Climacteric Clinic

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