

# Well-made products and funny frogs brighten collectorâ??s home â?? and the weekly lunch crowd

## Description

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Larry Boysenâ??s 1919 yellow Inner Sunset bungalow holds collections of radios, phonographs, records, kitchen appliances, furniture, light fixtures and telephones from the early 1900s. â??I love the craftmanship, history and engineering of items from the 20th century â?? the everyday stuff that made peopleâ??s lives easier.â?•

He also has hundreds of new and old glass, ceramic and metal frogs, an interest kicked off by childhood gifts from his mother. â??I always loved frogs as a child even though I didnâ??t want any live ones to take care of. They are friendly creatures and I like the variety.â?•




Larry Boysen shares his humorous frog collectibles with fellow lunchers at Calvary Presbyterian Church. (Photos by Jan Robbins)

Boysen gets a kick out of the creativity and humor that goes into many of them. And he likes to share that. When he volunteers to collect the $2 for Tuesday lunches at the community center at Calvary Presbyterian Church, he puts one of his frogs on the sign-in table. On holidays, he makes sure they match the occasion.

â??I get a kick out of bringing the frogs to the Calvary programs,â• he said. â??It if makes a person smile, it makes my day.â• And he can usually count on Sheila Conn, with whom he shares his frog-of-the-week in a special way â?? â??he brings it over to my table and we discuss it. He tries to match the

frog with the program.â?•




â??I always loved frogs as a child â?¦ They are friendly creatures and I like the variety.â?•

Boysenâ??s frogs have come from garage sales and estate sales and as gifts from people who know he collects them. â??A friend gave me a frog with a whisk broom coming out of his mouth,â?• he said. â??Another friend asked to borrow it so he could photograph it because he collects brooms.â?• Of the pair sitting on a bench on his kitchen table, he says. â??I imagine heâ??s whispering in her ear, â??Letâ??s get it on!â??.â?•

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Sometimes his frogs need repairs. The perhaps-courting duo was â??painted gold with speckles, and the gent had a broken head,â?• he said. â??I sanded them down, repainted them green and re-made the bench.â?•

Boysen, 76, grew up in a time defined by The Depression. He learned an appreciation for things well-made, carefully repaired and seldom discarded. â??My parents worked hard to make ends meet. My Dad fixed anything, and my Mom stretched a dollar for a mile.â?•

A single child, he inherited his parentsâ?? house and everything in it. His collection began after they died, starting with their furniture â?? in mint condition. â??The maroon mohair sofa from the 1930s in

the living room is just as comfortable as ever,â?• he said.



A 1950s era Oâ??Keefe and Merritt gas stove.

Walking into his kitchen, which had been completely remodeled by his father â?? at his motherâ??s request for more light, another big window was added, and the dining nook opened up â?? Boysen pointed out his pristine Oâ??Keefe and Merritt gas stove, â??one of the two top brands from the 1950s.â?• On the kitchen table was a 1919 coffee urn. On display on a counter was a 1930 Glorette tabletop stove and an ice crusher.


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A 1919 coffee urn

In the dining room, a built-in hutch and wainscoting provide an example of the gum wood typically used in San Francisco homes built in the early 20th century. A 1929 telephone on an end table serves as Boysenâ??s landline. â??I donâ??t use it much because voices sound really nasal.â?•

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Still working: A telephone from 1919.

The far side of the room is dominated by a 1928 Electrola by the Victor Talking Machine Company. It plays 78 rpm shellac records specially designed for this machine. â??I have a huge collection of 78s,â?? he said. â??I always loved old music and records.â?•




A 1928 Electrola by the Victor Talking Machine Company.



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Boysen has a collection of 78 rpm shellac records specially designed for the Electrola.

A modern upright piano might seem an anomaly in Boysenâ??s dining room. But he gets paid for playing at two Masonic lodges in San Francisco. â??I play rhythmic music which accompanies the Masons as they march.â?• He has been a member of the fraternal organization for 32 years.

If his home seems a step into the past, his basement is as curated as a museum. Itâ??s filled to the rafters with objects Americana. Boysen poses for a photo between a 1948 Magnavox â??Regency Symphonyâ?• radio/phonograph on his right and a 1933 RCA-Victor model 331 radio/phonograph on his left. On shelves near the Whirlpool washer and dryer â?? the 1970 dryer still in working order â?? are six small radios from the 1940s. Boysen pointed out the signature wood and lattice work detail on

one. â??They are all definitely works of art.â?•




Boysen plans to leave his radio and phonograph collection to the Museum of American Heritage in Palo Alto.

As a youth, Boysen liked to draw and had an interest in mechanical things. His father had a fix-it business. He took advertising, art and design in City College San Francisco, and from there went into mechanical engineering drawing. He was also drawn to radio broadcasting and was a fan of old radio dramas like â??The Shadow,â?• â??Whistlerâ?• and â??Sargent Preston of the Yukon.â?•

During college, 1964-1970, he volunteered as a writer/producer for San Francisco KNBRâ??s â??Bradyâ??s Bandstand,â?• featuring music of the 1920s to 1940s, and was a paid disc jockey on KUSFâ??s â??Reminisces.â?• â??I had a fantasy to be a DJ but life steered me to engineering drawing.â?•

After college, Boysen served in the Army Reserve, stationed at the U.S. Army Hospital 53rd in the Presidio. â??In todayâ??s world, I would have seen a lot of action.â?•

**Full up**

He put his drawing skills to work first at Kry Press, designing wine labels. When Kry Press closed, he landed at Standard Oil, but after four years, his department was eliminated and he was laid off. â??I was out of work for a year, but then one of my engineering buddies told me about Bechtel, which at that time, was a huge engineering company.â?• He worked at Bechtel for 14 years, during which he created the industrial drawings needed to build the companyâ??s nuclear reactor. He left to help his father care for his mother, who had Alzheimerâ??s. He also helped with his Dadâ??s fix-it business.

He plans to leave his radio and phonograph collection to the Museum of American Heritage in Palo Alto. â??I am happy they will be lovingly taken care of and shared with others.â?•

As to further collecting, Boysen said: â??Iâ??m full up.â?•

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