

Space oddities go on auction in US

January 14 2011

A freeze-dried beef pot roast, the business card of the first man to walk on the moon, and a Playboy calendar that rode to space in 1969 are among a mishmash of old space items on US auction this week.

The collection is being offered for sale online by a Massachusetts-based company, RR Auctions. The [eBay](#) style auction continues through January 20.

While [space](#) enthusiasts will not find the highly coveted items that NASA keeps under lock and key, like spacesuits, many of the offers have a connection to the space program that shows an unusual side of the collectors' passion.

For instance, the muddy brown block of space roast, complete with plastic bag and nozzle for injecting hot water.

There is also a cube of strawberry cereal marked "Space Food" for the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo missions, the first three to bring humans into space orbit and eventually, with Apollo 11, to the moon.

Starting bids for the food specimens were 100 dollars.

Bidding was already up to over 600 dollars early Friday for moonwalker astronaut Neil Armstrong's business card.

And the Playboy calendar photo of a topless blonde holding a pool cue that was snuck aboard the Apollo 12 mission and bears the date of

November 1969 swiftly shot up to more than 3,100 dollars, triple its opening bid.

The piece has "normal wear as one would expect from an object that made the approximately 475,000 mile round-trip journey to the moon and back," the [auction](#) catalog said.

Lots of flags that flew on space missions were on offer, most of them American but at least one was an early version of the Spanish flag seen from 1945-1977 that flew aboard the Apollo 14.

Among the more morbid offers were a page of schoolwork done by a little seven-year-old girl who would later become the first teacher to ride on a space shuttle mission, Christa McAuliffe.

McAuliffe's death, along with six other astronauts on the Challenger, was witnessed by schoolchildren around the world who were watching from their classrooms in 1986 when the ill-fated shuttle exploded shortly after takeoff.

There is also a signed portrait of Roger Chafee, one of the three astronauts who perished in a 1967 fire aboard the Apollo 1.

And US bidders only could bid on an unflown heat shield tile, similar to the ones that caused the space shuttle Columbia's explosion on its attempt to return to Earth in 2003.

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