

Restoration



Useful Salvage Possibilities and Creative Ideas for Spare Parts

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By DiAnna E. Tindell

Disaster has just struck! A prized collectible has been damaged and you're not sure what to do about it. In an earlier article, we discussed the pros and cons of restoring the damaged item. Unfortunately, there will be times when the damage is too extensive or the cost of repair too high to make restoration a practical option.

When restoration is no longer a viable solution for the problem, we are left with little more than either keeping the collectible in its damaged state or throwing it away. If you're inclined to simply throw the damaged item away, you may first want to consider alternative uses for some of its pieces.

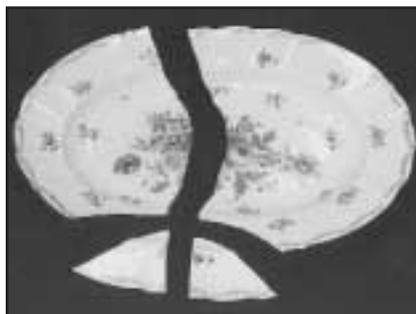
The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) recently announced that it would be cannibalizing decommissioned space vehicles for spare parts. The agency is taking this step in an effort to economize the time and cost of future projects. Just as with these decommissioned space vehicles, damaged collectibles often have a number of perfectly good "spare parts" that can be salvaged for use on future projects.

There is little more frustrating to a collector than to have one piece from a pair or set become damaged. If the damaged item cannot be restored, it may still be of value to you. For example, when one figurine of a pair becomes damaged, the damaged collectible may be used to pro-

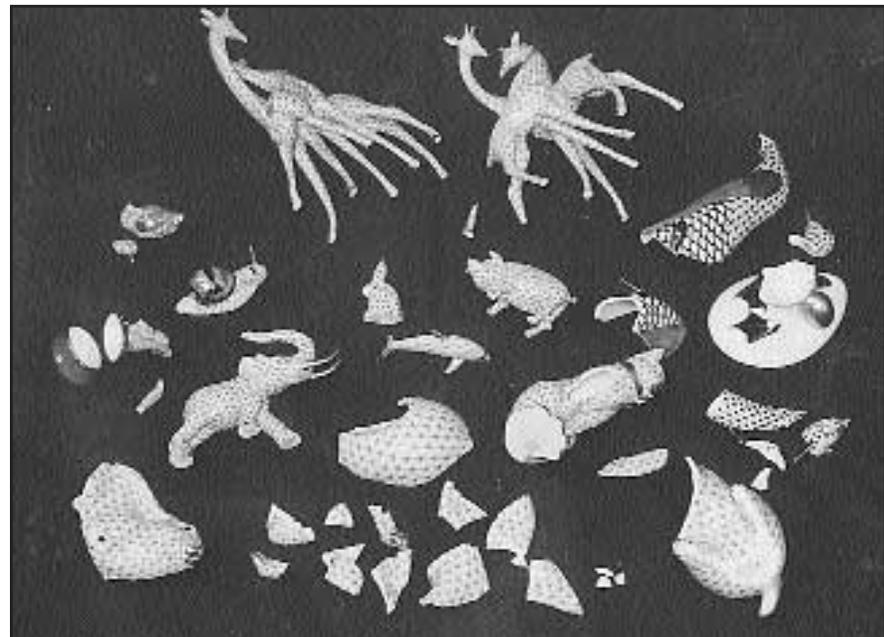
vide replacement parts for the remaining figurine in the event that it also becomes damaged. Suppose you have a set of 12 fine china plates. Should three of the plates be damaged, it might be possible to use the parts from two of the plates to repair the third and make a set of 10 rather than 12. The other parts from the two plates can be cut into customized name place settings that match your china.

Therefore, it might be prudent for you to hang onto any broken pieces such as china sections, figural heads, body parts, flowers, leaves, umbrellas, animals, instruments, etc. The most valued replacement parts, however, are tops or bottoms, handles, finials and stoppers. Such parts are needed to perhaps complete the top to a chocolate pot, the bottom to a sugar bowl, etc. and they can also be used to form molds for the casting of new parts needed in a restoration.

Of course, an item may be so damaged that it has no parts that could be used as replacements for another object being repaired. In that case, the damaged item may still retain some value. Fragmented pieces, especially those with some decora-



Pieces of a large Dresden platter like this could be cut into name place settings if the platter is damaged irreparably.



These broken Herend/Hungary figurals can be used as spare parts.

tive value, can be cut and polished, built up and/or sculpted into wholly original objects. For example, broken pieces of porcelain or pottery might be used to create matching name place settings, a napkin holder and rings, a trivet, a business card holder, a refrigerator magnet, ornaments, thimbles, buttons, decorative tiles, belt buckles, hair pieces, earrings, pendants, tie tacks, inlays for counter tops, wall hangings, hat pins, bracelets and key chains. The list of possibilities is endless.

Glass with minor chips can be polished out. Some glass that has suffered a clean break can be successfully bonded together. However, it is generally felt that glass items that have been severely damaged are no longer of any use. This is not necessarily true. Take, for instance, a crystal goblet whose stem has been shattered. While it may not be possible to restore the goblet to its original condition, it might be possible to level off the cup area of the goblet to form a finger bowl, candle holder or some other type of container. If some of the stem remains, the dam-



The damaged cut crystal compote above could become a bowl and the glass stem rose could be placed on another item.

aged goblet may even be converted into a bell. Likewise, if the cup portion of the goblet cannot be salvaged, the stem and base could be made into a ring holder or paperweight. An item such as a damaged crystal decanter might be cut down and sculpted into a bud vase while other pieces of glass can be converted into earrings, pendants, perfume bottle stoppers, prisms and paperweights. In short, a damaged collectible that cannot be restored may still have value as a source for replacement parts or as an item that can be converted into a wholly original object.

When a collectible has been damaged, it is always wise to consult with a restoration specialist to ascertain the best way to proceed. While the restoration specialist may be unable to restore the item, he/she may be willing to either purchase the item or take it in trade for its parts. A restoration service can be a good source for a replacement part. ❁



The handle and top of this severely damaged Nippon chocolate pot can make useful salvage material.