

## Radio Premiums Gone Wild

By Doug Hopkinson



This week I was browsing ebay listings for radio premiums. Wow, are there a lot of pretty neat items you can buy. Some are inexpensive and some are pricey. I came upon one listing that really caught my eye. It was for a radio premium put out by Quaker, the last sponsor of the Little Orphan Annie radio show in its final year. It was described as being the rarest of all radio premium rings. The 1942 Little Orphan Annie Altascope Ring. The listing stated that only 10 of these rings are known to exist, I figured this would be an interesting auction to follow.

So what does an Altascope Ring do you ask?

An Altascope ring enables a person on the ground to determine the altitude of an airplane flying above.

How does it work?

Let me begin by describing it. It is all shiny brass having a wrap-around type adjustable band. It's definitely child-sized. The front of the ring has three individual metal plates held together with a rivet at the bottom. This enables the plates to be pivoted out. Each plate has a hole in the center with a number stamped at the top. Each hole is a different size. The idea is to view an airplane through one of the holes by holding the ring up to the sky. The altitude of the airplane is determined by the number on the plate of whichever hole the entire image of the airplane fits into. Ingenious! We all need at least one of these.



**Orphan Annie Altascope Ring Cereal Radio Premium RARE!!**

Item condition: --

Time left: 11h 44m 2s (Jan 11, 2010 19:00:13 PST)

Bid history: 11 bids

Current bid: **US \$2,600.00**  
Reserve not met

Your max bid:

US \$

**Place bid**

(Enter US \$2,650.00 or more)

The auction was a 7 day affair that began at \$9.99. Anyone that is an ebayer knows there are two philosophies to bidding on an item. Bid early and bid often or wait until the last minute and bid your limit. On day seven with 11 hours remaining this Orphan Annie bauble sat at \$2600.00 but the reserve set by the seller had still not been met!

The fact that 11 bids had pushed the price up this high, coupled with the seller's reserve not being met, caused me to do a bit of internet surfing. What I found was that if there are only 10 known to exist, they keep getting sold over and over again seemingly for less and less money. In 1995 one of these rings fetched \$12,350.00. In 2005, one sold for \$10,000.00. In a September 2008 auction, one sold for \$9,487.50. Interestingly, the auction house felt that it was going to sell for at least \$20,000.00. Yikes! Or should I say Leapin' Lizards!! I found two auctions in December 2009. One sold at \$3,616.00 and the other reportedly sold for \$3,200.00.

Having looked up this information I was quite keen on watching the end of our auction at hand. I can't really keep anyone in suspense as scrolling down is so easy to do.

So the end result was that the Altascope Ring sold for \$4,000.00!



**Orphan Annie Altascope Ring Cereal Radio Premium RARE!!**

Item condition: --

Ended: Jan 11, 2010 19:00:13 PST

Bid history: 12 bids

Winning bid: **US \$4,000.00**

Shipping: **FREE shipping** US Postal Service Priority Mail [See more services](#) | [See all details](#)  
Estimated delivery within 5-6 business days

Returns: 7 day money back, buyer pays return shipping | [Read details](#)

Coverage: Pay with **PayPal** and your full purchase price is covered | [See terms](#)

The really nice thing about this auction was the free shipping offered by the seller.

The interesting thing about this auction was how the bidding played out.

Bidders: 6 Bids: 12 Time Ended: Jan-11-10 19:00:13 PST Duration: 7 days

**i** This item has ended.

Only actual bids (not automatic bids generated up to a bidder's maximum) are shown. Automatic bids may be placed days or hours before a listing ends. [Learn more about bidding.](#)

Bidder ?	Bid Amount	Bid Time
o***8 ( 1024 ★ )	US \$4,000.00	Jan-11-10 19:00:05 PST
c***i ( 540 ☆ )	US \$2,600.00	Jan-05-10 07:18:54 PST
i***v ( 418 ☆ )	US \$2,600.00	Jan-09-10 08:54:20 PST
n***n ( 4897 ★ )	US \$2,500.00	Jan-06-10 15:43:41 PST
c***i ( 540 ☆ )	US \$2,000.00	Jan-05-10 06:55:33 PST
n***n ( 4897 ★ )	US \$2,000.00	Jan-06-10 15:43:12 PST
c***i ( 540 ☆ )	US \$1,500.00	Jan-05-10 06:53:15 PST
n***a ( 1162 ★ )	US \$1,100.00	Jan-05-10 08:16:52 PST
c***i ( 540 ☆ )	US \$1,000.00	Jan-05-10 06:09:11 PST
c***i ( 540 ☆ )	US \$500.00	Jan-05-10 06:08:35 PST
n***a ( 1162 ★ )	US \$500.00	Jan-05-10 08:15:57 PST
c***a ( 128 ☆ )	US \$10.00	Jan-04-10 19:13:58 PST
Starting Price	US \$9.99	Jan-04-10 19:00:13 PST

Six bidders in total, twelve bids overall. Poor old c\*\*\*a 128 jumped in for 10 bucks within 15 minutes of the auction starting and was in for almost \$500 until c\*\*\*i 540 came along. n\*\*\*a 1162 tried a couple times to best him but failed. On day two n\*\*\*n 4897 showed up to play. He enjoyed being the leader for almost three days and then i\*\*\*v 418 and our old pal c\*\*\*i 540 double-teamed him with the same number. c\*\*\*i 540 was lulled into a false sense of security in an assured victory for over six days as he sat atop the heap of fellow bidders he had defeated. With eight seconds remaining, a heretofore unnoticed bidder swoops in and snatches the victory. o\*\*\*8 1024 is the final and ultimate winner with a heavy, even and cool \$4,000.00 bid. That's just how life is in the cold-blooded yet exciting world of buying on ebay.

I guess the bottom line is that some collecting is fun and some is serious. A trinket that cost a boxtop and a dime in 1942 can cost more than your car is worth today. Nostalgia seems to be where the money is right now but an item is only worth what someone will pay for it. I look at it this way, I like the Little Orphan Annie radio premiums but I'll wait until they're only worth a boxtop and a dime again.