

Unique Zoitiques

By Cindy Michalak

Thank goodness the elections are finally over, as well as the holidays. Time for some back to basic living with your Borzoi! Children everywhere are probably still playing with their spiffy new toys. I'm sure you guessed that is my lead-in for this issue of the *Aristocrat's* Unique Zoitiques: Borzoi toys, or at least objects to be played with.



These little plastic Borzoi have small bases so they could easily stand up and a child could pretend to have them lined up for a dog show. They date back to around the 1960s, before warnings were given that a child may swallow it due to it being so small. My husband and I are bick-

ering about where they originated. I believe they were available from gumball machines where the "prize" was encompassed within the plastic domes where the bottom could be opened. Mike thinks they came as a prize within a box of Cracker Jack, also back when the prize was more than a crummy tattoo, etc. Measuring only 3/4" tall, I found these at an antique show many years ago and paid around \$1 each. Once I found one, my search was on to find all that I could and, as you can see, I found several in a plethora of colors. Today they're probably worth \$5/each, but very difficult to find.

Here is a Borzoi doll, all dressed in her pretty pinafore. While she is on the homely side, her body is made of stuffing with cloth clothing, and her head, arms and legs are made of clay then painted. This is the only doll I have come across since I purchased it about 8 years ago. She stands 12" tall and I actually use her as part of



a Christmas display where she sits under the tree. I believe I only paid about \$15, and it may not have been worth it for the maker to produce another one. However, I wouldn't part with it for even \$50!

If you're an old-timer in Borzoi, you may recall this next toy appearing in an old issue of *Borzoi International*. What better squeak toy than a Borzoi apparently doing the Kozachok, which is a dance usually performed by

Russian Cossacks. He measures 6" tall and I remember purchasing him in the early 1990s. At the time I had purchased several but over the years gave most of them away to other friends with Borzoi. When I bought them, they were around \$6.50 each. With them no longer in production, they are valued around \$15 each, if you can find any.

This next item can be considered a toy, although it is basically a large decal placed on the side of a semi-truck. I bought this from Germany a few years ago and thought it was a clever idea. So clever that I even thought about making some of my own. However, my ambitions always run rampant in my mind until it's time to actually do it. That being said, I never did pursue creating



my own. I believe I paid around \$25 with shipping. A great idea, especially since our neighbor is a truck driver.

Here is a darling wooden Borzoi that is jointed at the legs. You can place him in a running, standing, prancing or reclining position with great ease. I've had to put this high up on a curio cabinet because, as you all know, Borzoi love to chew wood! It has a wonderful black coat of paint, giving it the appearance of a silhouette. I've had this for several years as well and believe I purchased it on auction but cannot fully remember. Unlike a common breed where you can find all sorts of this type of toy, the Borzoi is difficult to find anything novel, so I value it at around \$50.



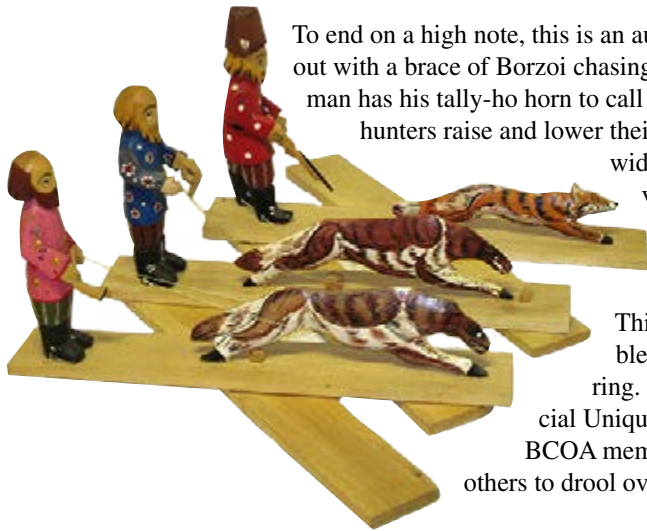
Borzoi on wheels! This is an adorable 12"x14" pull toy that I'm quite certain I bought at one of the Borzoi specialty auctions. It may have been in Houston in 1992 but I can't guarantee it. When you have as many Borzoi things as I do, you tend to forget where they all came from over the years and buying it at a Borzoi auction, I know I paid a lot for it. Sometimes it's best to forget how much you pay for something. This is a thick cut of wood in the shape of a Borzoi that was placed on a wooden



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base with wheels. It has a cute piece of twine that allows you to drag it around the yard or house. Since it's made of wood, this is also on top of a curio cabinet hidden away from my darling puppies.



To end on a high note, this is an authentic toy made in Russia, as marked on the underside. The Hunters are out with a brace of Borzoi chasing down the fox. One hunter has a rifle, another has a handgun and the last man has his tally-ho horn to call the hunt. When you move the accordion-type base opened and closed, the hunters raise and lower their guns and horn. It measures 5" tall x 5" wide closed position, or up to 12" wide when opened. I purchased this probably 15 years ago at an antique from a vendor selling Russian items. It is the only one I have ever seen. My original price tag is still attached showing \$58. I currently value this rare hand-made toy at \$200.

This past year has brought happiness and sorrow to many folks. I've been blessed being able to get two new puppies, enabling me to get back in the show ring. However, it doesn't put a hindrance on my thirst for finding that next special Unique Zoitique. How about you? Haven't you found something to share with the BCOA membership? If so, drop me a line and we can work on getting it out there for others to drool over. Until then, peace, love and prosperity to all.