

THE TENNESSEAN

Art is in the bag at Nashville airport

By **ALAN BOSTICK**
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If you're traveling through Nashville International Airport this summer, you're also invited, free of charge, to travel back in time — if only for a few minutes.

Through Aug. 29, an exhibit titled Werthan Bag: A Nashville Legacy is on view on the Concourse Connector for ticketed passengers. It features some 20 highly stylized images of traditional American life in the middle decades of the last century.

The images on view — depicting everything from a woman holding a rose to a bucking mule — are in fact printer proofs once

used to decorate the burlap and cotton bags made by the old Werthan Bag and Burlap Company to hold flour, seed and other foodstuffs. The images chosen for the airport show were used mainly between 1940 and 1970.

"There's a lot of nostalgia and history here," said Caroline Carlisle of the Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority.

She coordinated the show for the Arts at the Airport program, a series of art exhibits and live music performances sponsored by the airport with help from the Metro and state arts commissions.

Getting there

Werthan Bag: A Nashville Legacy continues on view through Aug. 29 on the Concourse Connector of Nashville International Airport. Because the show is in a secured area, only ticketed passengers can view it. For more information on the Arts at the Airport program, call 275-1614 or go online at www.flynashville.com.

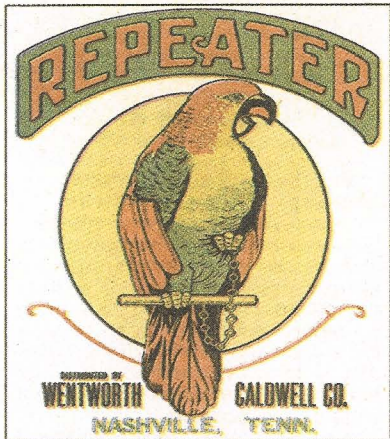
These prints were discovered, quite by chance, in late 1999 in the basement of the Werthan Building on Eighth Avenue

North. Entrepreneur William Kantz Jr. was there at the discovery, acquired the prints and provided them for the airport show.

The artwork has been described by Tony Werthan, chairman of Werthan Packaging Inc., which today makes paper bags for the pet products industry, as "classic Americana."

The work "depicts an era that we won't see again, of family businesses and hundreds and hundreds of small companies," Werthan said. ■

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Repeater is the title of this illustration, used in 1949 by the Wentworth Caldwell Co.



This image from 1958 once adorned a bag of flour produced by Nashville Roller Mills. It's part of a show now on view at Nashville International Airport.