

# Rockin' the jukebox

## Sipper customizes pair of restored jukeboxes

By MICHAEL RODGERS  
The Luverne Journal

When it comes to making things, Kayo Sipper and his collection of jukeboxes make two things: music and memories.

Sipper has a Rockola and an AMI Rowe. One sits in his living room and the other is the centerpiece in his jukebox room.

"I didn't grow up with a jukebox, but I always wanted one," he said. "My youngest son said when he went to college that he was going to be making a lot of money when he got out, and he was going to buy me a jukebox."

Sipper said that his son got married while he was in college, and he knew money would be tight for his son, so he went ahead and bought himself a jukebox.

Sipper got his jukebox from a man in Andalusia who had done the majority of the work restoring it, but he worked to customize it.

"I don't tinker with them too much," he said. "I put a little wood around the bottom on each side, and I put some glass and decorations under here."

He sold the first jukebox he got and customized, but since then he's acquired the two in his house.

The Rockola doesn't stay put, though. Sipper has taken it to a number of events, including First Citizens Bank and a Class of 1962 reunion.

The AMI Rowe is a more robust jukebox that holds 100 records and sits in his jukebox

room.

The jukebox is surrounded by shelves holding nearly 2,000 records and a few other pieces of memorabilia.

Both jukeboxes play 45 rpm records, and Sipper said he has a number of different wants to buy them.

"I get them at yard sales, but you can also buy brand new ones from websites that sell reissue records," he said. "They're still pressing them, but you have to go through the orderhouse. I've gotten them from California, Pennsylvania, Atlanta and all over the country."

Sipper makes his own labels for the jukebox and switches them out as he changes the records inside.

"There are different colors and fonts and styles that I use to make them on the computer," Sipper said. "I make all the labels that go in there."

Most of the music in his jukeboxes is classic country, and Merle Haggard, Elvis and Johnny Horton are some of Sipper's favorite artists.

The rest he rotates in and out.

Some of them are country, but others have a specific memory tied to them, like the instrumental "Tuff" by Ace Cannon.

"I remember my brother playing that on the jukebox at the Dairy Dream in Luverne," he said.

Sipper has also collected the same songs by a number of different artists.

For example, "Earth Angel" was originally released by The



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Penguins, became a hit for The Crew-Cuts, and was covered by Gloria Mann, Barry Frank and the Four Bells, Johnny Tillotson, the Crests, Bobby Vinton and others.

Sipper said that jukeboxes are becoming fewer and farther between and that Waffle House restaurants are one of the places that still have them.

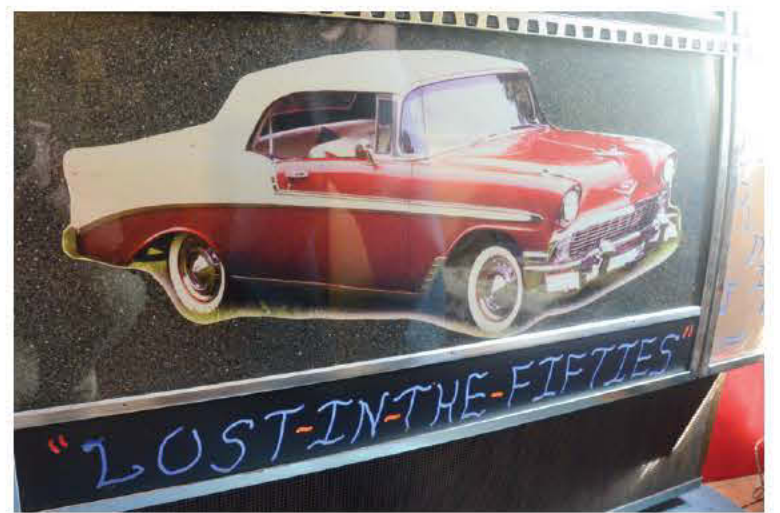
Even if they are slowly being phased out, one place jukeboxes will continue to be played is at Sipper's house.

The AMI jukebox had just over 300,000 plays when Sipper bought it several years ago.

Now it's sitting at more than 377,000 plays.

"After I got one, I guess the rest is history," he said.

Above: Kayo Sipper stands beside one of his restored jukeboxes. Below: A classic car is one of the personalized touches Sipper has added to his jukeboxes.



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