

Only known promo-stamped Beatles "Butcher" album sells for \$5,000

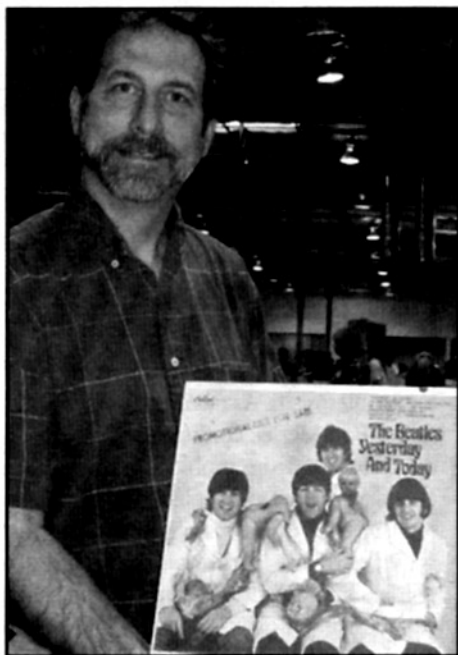
When David Eckstrom arrived at the Austin Record Convention the first week-end of April, his mission was to find additional stock for his Grand Prairie, Texas, store, Forever Young Records. "I was looking for out-of-print collectibles, but I also sell reissues and new releases too," he said. But nothing prepared him for when his eyes caught a glimpse of a first-state, mono copy of The Beatles' *Yesterday & Today* album (Capitol T-2553) with a \$5,000 price tag on it. "I knew Butcher Covers were rare, but this one had a promo stamp on the cover of it, and I had never seen one like that before."

The disc, which was being sold by Rockaway Records of Los Angeles, was acquired by owner Gary Johnson from a woman who received the item from the daughter of former Norfolk, Va., DJ, Bill "Sheriff Tex" Davis. It was Davis who discovered Gene Vincent and cowrote several of his hits, including "Be-Bop-A-Lula," a song covered by The Quarrymen and The Beatles. "I had originally put it up for sale on ItsOnlyRockNRoll.com, but it didn't have any takers," said Johnson.

As part of the purchase price, Johnson included a letter from Beatles historian Bruce Spizer, the author of *The Beatles' Story On Capitol Records*, who confirmed that the promotional stamp markings, on the front and back of the disc, were most likely applied by an ink stamp at one of Capitol Records' 25 distribution centers.

"Oh this is the real thing," said Wex Rex Collectibles appraiser Gary Sohmers, of Hudson, Mass. Sohmers is best known for his appearances on the PBS series, *The Antiques Roadshow*, and who also attended the Austin Record Convention this year. "Butcher Covers are out there, but to find one with a promo stamp on it like this is incredible," said Sohmers.

For Eckstrom, who admitted that he isn't a Beatles collector, it was a deal too good to pass up. "In my 20-plus years of collecting and dealing, I've only had two [Butcher



Courtesy of Lisa Wheeler

David Eckstrom with his promo-stamped Beatles *Yesterday And Today* LP.

Covers], and I sold them both," he said. "The first one was a stereo copy that I sold for \$1,000 in the 1980s. The second one was a mono [version] that I traded for \$3,500 in store credit." As with the first two, Eckstrom plans to re-sell what is currently believed to be the only known first-state mono, promo-stamped disc of this recording.

"This is an investment for me. I'm not keeping it," he said. The new owner admitted that he would use the LP as an advertising item for his store and then post it for sale, where it is sure to resurface in the hands of a collector who possibly is unaware that such an item exists.

"The right person hasn't seen this yet, but I know they are out there," he said. As for how much he will be asking for the newly discovered disc, "I'd rather not say right now. If you find the right person for this, price is not an issue."

— Lisa Wheeler