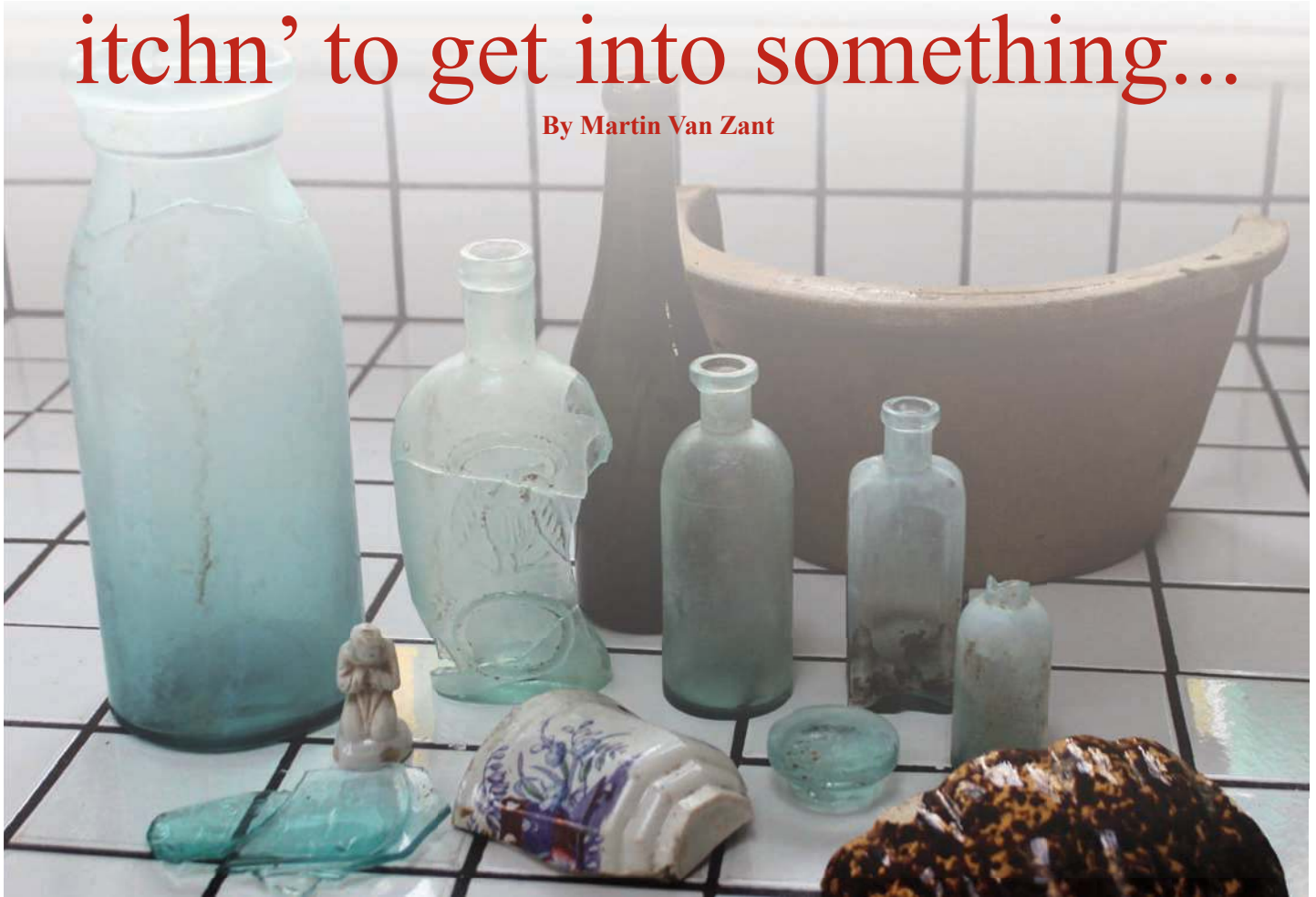


# itchn' to get into something...

By Martin Van Zant



## The Goods

**W**ow, what a weird winter this year. I bet you all feel the same. Here's a little digging story for you. It was Saturday, March 18, and my friend and I were looking for something to do. It was already late in the day, but we were still itchn' to get into something.

Richard called me about 11 and said. "I'm coming over -- have something for us." I couldn't think of anything, then I remembered there was a lot in town. The house had burned last year and they just tore the place down. The lot was a wreck, and we had a floating permission from the backhoe driver. :)

I met Richard up the street, only to remember I didn't have any tools. The digging machine was in the shop and all my tools were in it. I said the heck with it, so off to the shop we went. I work at a school with a automotive repair shop. I found a janitor and he let us in. We swooped up two shovels and two probes and off we went.

The lot was messy with an orange tarp around it. Perfect, I thought. I went to the middle of the lot and Richard went to the side or edge of the lot which was on the alley. I stuck the probe twice and said this is it. Wow! I never get that lucky. Richard probed a few more times. "Are you sure?" he asked. We opened it up and down we went. Within a few minutes, Richard found pieces of an Allen's Lung Balsam and it looked early. Now we were between two and three feet down. Then a brick wall appeared, weird because we thought it was a wood-walled privy.

Richard got a little quiet and when someone gets quiet there is something there. He said, "I think I have a flask." Then he handed me up the pieces. Ahhhh, man! It was a nice pint size aqua Pikes Peak with an eagle on the back. This came about the four-foot level and white wood ash started to appear, a nice thick white layer. Then it was my turn. I found a round tubular medicine with

Land W on the base and a broken piece of pottery. About the same time the brick ran out on one side. All of a sudden, the bottles go from dating to the 1860s to 1900s. I started pulling out slicks left and right. Then a Martin's Stove Polish and a clear hair tonic from Chicago and New York. YUCKKKKK! Where did this stuff come from and where did my wall go? It was really black dirt and a trashy layer just cock full of glass. Unembossed glass, of course.

All of a sudden we hear a "whatcha doin over there?" The neighbors found us and were getting curious. Next thing you know the neighbor come over to check us out. Then he goes and gets his wife, who's having a birthday party, to check us out. While the husband was watching me pull up unembossed medicines, the wife leaves and I spot a fruit jar above me. I stick my hand up to dig it out. I thought I would wiggle it a tad to see if it felt whole. I didn't notice the hole in the back of the jar. I stuck

my pinky right up in the jar and cut the living daylight out of it.

Then I hear the wife again and this time she comes back with a whole load of people. So hear I peel my glove off with blood just pouring out. I'm trying to be calm and kinda hold my hand so no one knows. I'm bleeding down the back of my pants, on my shoes and all over the place. I calmly looked at her and said, would you happen to have a Band-Aid. She laughed and said, "why?" Then I showed her and off she went.

Richard and I spent the next half hour explaining our hobby. Everyone wanted to know how we knew there were bottles in that spot. We had the whole yard to dig, and why did we pick that spot. We spent another few minutes explaining how we do things and off they went. We gave them a pile of slicks to take with them. We ended up getting three permissions by talking to them. My injury wasn't all that bad.

It was Richard's turn to get in. He went back to the good side and started digging out the rest of the brick liner. He found a rectangular medicine with a hinge mold base, aqua in color. Nice and early. He said, "I think I got one." Nope, it was a broken, and he handed up the iron pontiled base first. Next came a gnarly rolled lip to a 10-inch tall pickle jar. He finally handed up the rest of the jar. It was complete -- completely broken. Richard stood up and said, "I think it's the bottom. So I told him to go towards the back wall. After about three minutes, he said something's weird here, you need to check it out. Sure enough it started turning into a clay layer. Then I saw it, a clay sewer pipe. Damn, the side wall was gone.

How lucky did we get, we found a two-foot wide bricklined privy with both edge walls missing. We were able to dig just the middle of the oldest pit. However, we still have the newer pit and I think there should be one more other than that. We filled it in and told the neighbors we'd be back. We didn't get any photos of the pit but here are a few pics of the bottles. Enjoy.

