

## NORMAN BARNETT TRIBUTE

The death of Norman Barnett, a Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors Hall of Famer from Flat Rock, Indiana, has left a void in the world of fruit jar collectors, a segment of the antique bottle collecting hobby in which he excelled.

Norm, as he was known, and his wife, Junne, were early Federation members. In 1972, he helped found the Midwest Antique Fruit Jar and Bottle Club, serving as president for all but 10 years of its existence, and was show chairman at the same time.

Norm was probably best known in the hobby for his collection of rare early fruit jars, particularly those with unique closures.

Here are a few words from some of his many friends:

**GARY BEATTY:** I first met Norm when the Ohio Bottle Club held its September show at the Brown Derby. That was several years before the show was held at Mansfield. In those days, we'd check into the Brown Derby and everyone would open the doors to their rooms. I remember sitting on the bed as Norm showed me a Buckeye No. 1 fruit jar, I never knew they existed. From that first meeting, Norm and Junne were my friends. Over the years that I served as Ohio club president, they supported our every endeavor. I also served the Federation with Norm and I always looked for them at the Mansfield show just inside the door. He will be greatly missed. Junne, I love you!

**BARRY & SALLY BERNAS:** A smiling face, joke and a different story always met us whenever we first encountered Norm at a show. We learned so much about the history of the Federation and his passion for collecting odd closure fruit jars. We also met the personalities that composed and continue to populate our hobby by just sitting with him and passing time behind his table. We will miss him at coming events, but he will always be with us in spirit.

**JON VANDER SCHOUW:** Norm will always be remembered for his enduring love of the jar hobby and his never tiring labors toward the Midwest club and the famous "Indy" show. All jar collectors are forever in his debt.

**WAYNE AND JUNE LOWRY:** Wayne and I first met Norm in July 1984 at the Midwest Antique Fruit Jar and Bottle Club show at the Holiday Inn in Indianapolis. We had driven all night with Gerry Phifer to get there from Topeka,

Kansas, not realizing everything that goes on before the actual show. Norm took the time to let us know about all the activities in which we participated from that time on. After moving to Lebanon, Indiana in 1986, we volunteered to assist Norm and Junne with the Indianapolis shows and took over the contract piece and hotel reservations. He much appreciated that.

We became very good friends. Norm kept us informed about FOHBC goings on (the National Bottle Museum at the Verbeck house in Ballston Spa, N.Y., the magazine, etc.) since he was on the board. Norm and Junne, who also is a Hall of Fame member, were constantly traveling to Ballston Spa to assist with the museum operations. He was always talking up the FOHBC, encouraging people to join.

One year, I believe it was 1988, we had a cake baked for Norm's birthday. It was called a "boob cake" because it featured a

woman's torso and very large boobs and he really enjoyed that. He was also good about telling jokes, but could be blunt about his political views. You knew where you stood with Norm.

Without Norm, there would be no Midwest club, no Indy shows (now held in Muncie). Without him, some of the FOHBC shows would not have happened, and without Norm, the fruit jar hobby will just not be the same. He had certainly risen to the level of super fruit jar collectors Alex Kerr and George McConnell.

He was forever pulling our daughter Stephanie's ponytail just to aggravate her and he always remembered her sleeping beneath our table at shows when she was small. He also never forgot that she roller skated down the hall at the Holiday Inn.

The last FOHBC show he and Junne attended was the York (Pa.) Expo in 2008.

**JOE COULSON:** I met Norman Barnett a little over seven years ago. This was when I first developed an interest in collecting fruit jars. I learned about the Midwest Antique Fruit Jar and Bottle Club while searching for information about fruit jars on the Internet. I discovered the club's meeting place was within an hour's driving distance from where I lived. The warm reception I got from Norm (club president at that time), his wife, Junne, and all the other club members is the reason I am so involved with the hobby today. (Joe is secretary and newsletter editor of the Midwest club and



Norman And Junne Barnett York, PA show in 2008

FOHBC Midwest Region editor). They are my extended family.

I can tell you from personal experience that Norm was very dedicated to the hobby and enjoyed every aspect of it. To my generation of collectors, he was like a grandfather. I learned many things about early fruit jars, rare original closures and hobby history from him. It seemed like at very club meeting he had another story to tell and I was eager to listen and soak it all in. I re-lived some of the early days of the hobby through his stories.

If you met Norm, you would probably not forget him. He would strike up a conversation with just about anyone. Maybe that is why he was such a good ambassador for the hobby. He liked to tell jokes (sometimes he was like Archie Bunker from "All in the Family;" other times, he was like Henny Youngman with one-liners).

I don't know if it would have been possible for Norm to accomplish all of his hobby achievements without his most important "Go-With," his wife, Junne. I can't think of a time when I ever saw the two of them apart. I am sure it is tough on Junne now that Norm has passed on. I hope I can give back to the hobby in a way that accomplishes at least a fraction of what Norm did in his lifetime. Those are some big shoes to fill. We will all miss him.

**ALICE MOULTON:** Norm was always willing to share his knowledge of jars with me. I enjoyed our times at various bottle shows for many years. The hobby has lost a wonderful friend.

**BRUCE W. SCHANK:** Norm started collecting fruit jars in 1967 and before he knew it, his jars had grown by leaps and bounds. He was hooked and there was no stopping him. I remember meeting Norm at the 1988 Indianapolis show and seeing his display of unusual closures and I was simply amazed. His enthusiasm and determination helped shape and influence many collectors in the hobby.

For those in the hobby who knew Norm, they know his name was always synonymous with nothing but the finest and rarest fruit jars available. He literally had the Best of the Best. He also was considered by many a true pioneer of fruit jar collecting. He led an incredibly industrious and productive life dedicated to the creation, continued expansion and perpetual existence of the fruit jar hobby in general so that second-, third- and fourth-generation collectors and beyond could enjoy the fruits of his labors.

Norm will be sorely missed by many people inside and outside of the hobby. Who can forget his dry wit and humor? With the dispersion of his wonderful collection, many collectors

now have pieces of history sitting on their shelves and a reminder of Norm for many years to come.

**JERRY IKEDA:** I met Norm for the first time at the Santa Rosa show in the '80s. I was a new collector and was excited to meet someone from the Midwest. I will always remember Norm's great smile and great sense of humor. The hobby has lost one of its great ambassadors.

**STEVE KETCHAM:** "I'm glad you were able to enjoy the pleasure of my company." It was jests like this which,

when he spoke them, that endeared Norm Barnett to so many of us. Norm and I first met in the early 1970s when we both became active in the FOHBC, Norm was elected Midwest Regional chairman and I was his assistant chair. We attended many of the same shows then, particularly the Federation shows and Expos. When Norm was elected Federation president, I approached him with the idea of a writers' award contest and he agreed to give it a try. Norm was always in favor of ideas which he felt might improve the hobby.

We were never able to get together without Norm asking to hear a few Ole and Lena jokes. He laughed at them all, but his favorite involved a goose, two chickens, a rock and a bucket (see below). I can never tell that one without thinking of Norm. I cherish the memories of the Midwest Fruit Jar Club shows I've attended and I know the club will miss



Caricature of Norman was drawn by Bob Villamagua in 1981.

Norm's enthusiasm, leadership and friendship.

Norm, we are all glad we were able to enjoy the pleasure of your company.

Here is Norm's favorite Ole and Lena joke:

*Ole vas valking home from town. He vas very tired. He vas carryin' a load. He had wit him a bucket, a rock (for da rock garden, donch ya know), a goose and two chickens.*

*Ven he got to da gate of his neighbor, Lar Larson, Ole taut he vould take da short-cut tru Lars's land to his.*

*Der at da gate stood Lena, Lars's beootiful dotter.*

*Ole says, "Lena, vould ya open da gate and let me tru?"*

*Lena says, "No, Ole. I vouldn't do dat."*

*"Vhy not?" asks Ole.*

*"Becuss, Ole, you vould try to make luff to me," Lena tells him.*

*Ole vas vexed. "Yust how vould I do that, Lena? Can't you see I got dis bucket, dis rock, dis goose and two schickens! My arms isn't even free."*

*Lena replied, "I vill tell you, Ole. You vould put da goose on da ground. Den you vould put the bucket on the goose. Den you vould put the rock on da bucket. . .and I'll hold da two schickens!"*