

FOHBC 2007 Award Winners

Presented at the Awards Banquet in Collinsville, Illinois, Friday, August 17, 2007

Best True Story: "Diving for Bottles Brought Two Clubs Together," by Daniel Weeden (aka the Underwater Bottle Hound). Published in *Bottles Along the Mohawk*, newsletter of the Mohawk Valley Antique Bottle Collectors

I started diving in 1962, first for small items, such as fishing lures, and later for anchors and other larger goodies. We frequently found as many as 600 fishing lures and jigs on one bend of Fish Creek, at depths of five to twenty-five feet. Eventually, we graduated to the old rock pier on Oneida Lake where many boat anchors had been lost between the rocks. From one to twenty anchors would see the light of day during a typical dive.

By 1970 several of us, devoted divers all, decided to form a club, which we called the Central New York Scuba Club, and publish a newsletter, *The Dive Light*. The club sponsored monthly dives, although most of us dove far more often, with a partner, of course.

Although I had several diving partners over the year, Gary Washburn, at fifteen years, has the most seniority. During our

days as a team, we dove many lakes and rivers in the Adirondacks. We became interested in old bottles and since every lake had some kind of local bottle in it, we soon began researching the history of these lakes, including Blue Mountain, Raquette, Sagamore and Tupper, among others.

One of the deepest underwater dumps we discovered was in Blue Mountain Lake. Down at fifty feet, in cold, murky water, I would see a barrel stave rising out of the bottom. I would stick my arm in the mud, up to my shoulder, and feel many bottles just waiting to be recovered. Pulling my arm and a bottle or two out created a cloud of mud, and in a short time, I could see absolutely nothing. From then on, all searching was done by touch and grab. I'd fill up my "goody bag" with whatever came out of the bottom with no idea of whether these particular bottles were keepers or just junk. In fact, it was so cloudy that it was impossible to see a fellow diver just a few feet away.

Probably our most productive dive occurred at the rather small Horseshoe Lake. There we discovered round-bottomed bottles from Belfast, Ireland, stacked up like firewood in piles of 200 or more. Some were

still in the crates! We also brought up about nine different sized maple syrup bottles, again with hundreds in a pile, in fifteen to twenty feet of water. A first time diver would have had no difficulty finding bottles.

In about 1984, Gary and I heard that a bottle club, based in the Utica area, was being formed. That was the Mohawk Valley Antique Bottle Club. Our group soon joined and that was the beginning of a wonderful relationship because of our mutual interest in both bottles and stoneware.

I recently researched and dove Onondaga Lake because I knew there were stoneware bottles there just waiting for me. I first located the site of the old hotel and then of the pier. My first dive produced a two-tone stoneware bottle, proving that I was in the right place. I am still diving Onondaga and still finding literally hundreds of bottles to show at the club's meetings.

I guess that I am very lucky to have found such an exciting hobby and to have also found two groups of like-minded collectors. It is hard to explain the thrill of the hunt, but if you are interested in bottles and/or the history they represent, give diving, digging and bottle collecting a try.

Second Best True Story: "How I Got Started In Collecting" by Adam Koch. Published in the *Ohio Swirl*, newsletter of the Ohio Bottle Club

There are many ways to start and build a collection of bottles, stoneware or almost anything else. The easiest way, if you have unlimited funds, is to buy anything you want from individuals, at shows, auctions, sales, etc. By using this method you can build great collections in a very short time.

If you have limited funds, as is the case with most of us, you have to be more creative. A number of good collections have been built using various methods.

Several of our club members have good collections of bottles that were primarily assembled by digging, buying at garage and yard sales at low prices. This method will take many years, maybe a lifetime commitment.

The method I chose was a combination

of the above, with buying and selling at a profit to finance purchasing items for my own collection.

Thirty-five years ago, my ex-wife Linda and I happened to run into a situation with a distant relative of hers in southwestern Kentucky that opened our eyes to bottle collecting. Both of us have always had an interest in antiques, primarily early Americana.

Cousin John lived in a house that was built in the 1840s; the house at one time being a stagecoach stop. The sign from that period was still in the attic. Over the years, many of the family items seemed to gravitate to the house.

Cousin John was also quite a character. Once wrongly convicted of murder around 1900, he spent some time in Federal prison. The prominent family paid off the judge to find him innocent, but they convicted him anyway. Then they eventually paid off the prison guards to let him go and he left the

area on horseback going West across the Mississippi. During those years, Cousin John met many interesting people, such as the sheriff of Coffeyville, Kansas who arrested the Dalton Boys gang. The sheriff gave him three of the Dalton's guns which were stolen from him by an antique dealer. During the time he was running from the law he also befriended Pat Garrett and Calamity Jane.

Cousin John's home ended up with over 130 years of family antiques.

Linda and I knew nothing about bottles. One day we noticed a bottle sitting on the mantle that looked interesting. The bottle had a dried-up flower stuck in it and many years of dust on top of that. Cousin John was in his 90s, lived by himself, so house cleaning was out of the question. A very large house, four huge rooms, two upstairs and two downstairs, with four large open-hearth fireplaces, it also had first and second porches across the front of the house with

a tin roof. In the back, it had an attached large kitchen with the old slave quarters still standing out back.

Linda asked Cousin John if we could buy the bottle on the mantle and he answered, "That old thing? Just take it!" Well, that was the beginning of our bottle collecting. We were living in Amherst, N.Y., a suburb of Buffalo, at that time. During the next few months, we tried to find out something about the bottle with no success. Finally, we saw an ad in the paper for a bottle club meeting in Lockport, N.Y., so we went to the meeting with our one bottle. It was at this meeting we joined the Western New York Bottle Club. There we also met Crawford Wettlaufer, a big time early bottle collector, who invited us to his house to see his collection. That was a real eye opener! Historical flasks, neilsea flaasks, perfumes and scents, Americana paintings and general antiques, furniture, etc., were all housed in a great mansion, complete with butler and maids. Our bottle turned out to be an aqua, 1/2-pint Cornucopia Eagle open pontil and side headed flasks.

During those years, we met Louie Tardy from the Rochester area that was a great picker and all around scavenger at garage sales and flea markets in the area. Louis came up with a lot of stoneware pieces and was looking for someone to sell them to.

Meanwhile, we had moved back to Akron and joined the Ohio Bottle Club around 1970. Louie would call me every few weeks when he had accumulated 12-15 pieces of decorated jugs and crocks. We would meet halfway, around Ripley, N.Y., and I would buy them from him. During those days, I was buying nicely decorated pieces in the \$20-25 range, bring them back, pick out the nicest six or seven and sell the rest for more money to a local antique dealer. Everybody was happy because all of us made a little money. Plus, I added to my stoneware collection and had money to buy more stuff without having to dip into family finances.

During the last 17 years, since I met and married Phyllis, we have enhanced not only our stoneware collection, but also added some quality fruit jars, yellowware, mocha, blue and white stoneware and spongeware,

plus whatever else we like.

In the last few years, I have befriended several old time collectors that I have been able to buy some nice things from to add to our collection.

Over the years, I have sold some things that I wish I still had, especially a black 1858 Mason fruit jar and a yellow-amber Helms Railroad Mills quart jar. But I guess we can all say that.

At the end, we cannot forget to mention the great friendships we have developed over the years through our bottle collecting. Almost all of our best friends are bottle-related. We also miss the many friends that are no longer with us: Elma Watson, Marion McCandless, Frank Salzwimmer, Cliff Ford, Paul Ballentine, Mina and George Waidman, Paul Mendik and numerous others.

We are still looking forward to our monthly bottle club meetings.

Best Research Article: "Ulysses S. Grant and His Whiskeys," by Jack Sullivan. Published in the *Ohio Swirl*, newsletter of the Ohio Bottle Club.

A longer version of this article, with additional illustrations, has already appeared in the January-February 2007 issue of *Bottles and Extras*, pages 59-61.

1st Place 2007 Newsletter: *Bottle Talk*, Raleigh Bottle Club, Marshall Clements, Editor



THE RICHMOND AREA BOTTLE COLLECTORS ASSOC.'S
ANTIQUE BOTTLE AND COLLECTIBLES SHOW AND SALE
SATURDAY - OCTOBER 6, 2007 - 9 AM - 3 PM
The Showplace Annex
3002 Mechanicsville Tpk.
Richmond, VA 23223
General Admission is \$3.00
Early Entry is \$20 - 7:30 AM
Next Door to the Big Antique Extravaganza
Ample Free Parking and Food Nearby
THE 36th ANNUAL
Exhibit - Display Space Available
Show Contacts: Marvin Croker (804) 275-1101
Ed Faulkner (804) 739-2951 email: faulkner@antiquebottles.com
4718 Kyle Lane Moseley, Va. 23120
♦♦♦ Directions ♦♦♦
From North: I-95 to I-295 East to Exit 37B (Rt.360), 4 miles on right
From East/West: I-64 to Exit 192 (Mechanicsville), 6 blocks on left
From South: I-95 to I-64 East to Exit 192 (Mechanicsville), 6 blocks on left

1st Place 2007 Show Flyer: Richmond Area Bottle Collectors Assoc., 36th Annual Show, Marvin Croker Show Chairman.



SOUTHWESTERN BOTTLE COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION
ANTIQUE BOTTLE & COLLECTIBLE'S SHOW
Sonoma Co. Fairgrounds
Finley Hall Bldg.
Santa Rosa, Ca.
OCTOBER 12th & 13th
12:00 - 7:00 9:00 - 3:00
2007
Admission \$10 Fri. Free Sat.
For Dealer Info: Call Bev Siri 707-542-6438
Same weekend as Western Antique Show & Sale

2nd Place 2007 Show Flyer: North West Bottle Collectors Association, 41st Annual Show, Bev Siri Show Chairman



Bottle Talk
RALEIGH BOTTLE CLUB NEWS LETTER
Editor: Marshall Clements
2007 BOTTLE CLUB OFFICERS
President: [Name] Vice President: [Name] Secretary: [Name] Treasurer: [Name] Editor: [Name] Newsletter: [Name] Show and Tell: [Name] Glass Chatter: [Name]

2nd Place 2007 Newsletter: *Glass Chatter*, Mid West Antique Fruit Jar and Bottle Club, Joe Coulson, Editor