

The Little show with a lot of GO!

Washington County, Pa., Antique Bottle and Glass Club Show and Sale

by Jeff Mihalik



Best of Show, Bennett and Carrol Bitters, Chestnut and Barrel forms.. Jeff Mihalik holding the bottles, Bob Decroo- bottle owner



Dave Douglas (left) talking with another bottle collector and I'm sure its got to be about some rare Wheeling VA (pre-statehood) bottle!

The Washington County Antique Bottle & Glass Club show is just one of many small club shows that over the years have continued to do well. Being a smaller show (compared to the Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Mansfield size shows) with 50 tables sold to 25 dealers setting up this year, the show still manages to provide a lot of excitement, opportunity for connecting with friends in the hobby, and of course a good bottle purchase or two. The Kuskiens (Ed and Diane) do a great job of overseeing the show and making sure all goes well along with many other club members who pitch in to help set up, advertise, and do all the other things that need done. I did hear one dealer say they didn't have any sales (but at least a couple touches) but that seemed to be isolated as most dealers did sell well, and when dealers sell well, the result is buyers had the opportunity to purchase well.

My stock of bottles was at a several year low, with only a few better West Virginia pieces, a Kentucky flask, and many local Washington Pa. bottles. That said, I sold ALL my better bottles (giving my digger discount, of course) but didn't sell any local bottles. With an in the door attendance of 89, I guess it wasn't surprising that local bottles were not selling (please note, due to an oversight is getting our yearly reservation for the show, we had to change the show date to the following week and into the Memorial holiday weekend, which may have hurt our attendance somewhat). Bringing in more local residents is an area I think we should focus on and make a concerted club effort to really up our local marketing efforts.



Russ Crupe presenting Forest Baer with his first bitters bottle



Lots of bottles to look at from the Kuskie's table



Wide open isles but serious buyers

However, our area is lucky to have such a strong bottle collector population with many of the Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia Bottle Club folks living in close proximity to the Washington area. I'm actively digging (as well as several other club members) in all 3 of these states right now and many of our club members specialize in bottles from these areas, so we do draw a lot of interest from the Tri-State area. This translates into a close knit group of dealers and collectors who look forward to attending this show every year.

If you're looking for a world class bitters or flask, you may not find it at this show.. but if you're interested in a local Pittsburgh, Wheeling, or eastern Ohio bottle, then you have a good chance of finding it here. We did an ad hoc look for best of show (bottle) and came up with 2 bottles on the Decroos (Bob and Edna) table. Shown are 2 Bennett and Carrol bitters, the chestnut and barrel forms. Very nice items, reasonably priced, and I think the Decroos were there to sell, so they would work with you on a final sell price so everyone is happy.

One of our young club members (Zack Baer) is currently working on an article about Linsey's Blood Searchers, and Bob Decroo was cordial and traded with Zack a nice ice blue Linseys Blood Searcher/ Pittsburgh Pa (a bottle Zack has always admired). That's Zack with his top hat on (sorry but we didn't get a picture

with Zack and his wife Kate, who both had their top hats on-nice!). but we did capture a special moment as long-time bottle enthusiast and club president Russ Crupe presents a gift to Forest Baer (our youngest bottle club member) of a nice bitters bottle. Forest is really a great guy at age 1 1/2. His first word was "botel" and he is calm enough so that his parents allow him to pick up several bottles and take it around during the show (yeah, not their top shelf stuff, but Forest is a cool dude!).

Looking around the small venue, you notice that the aisles are wide, not jammed with people, but the people you do see are serious bottle people and buyers with cash in their pockets. Hey, there is Dave Douglas Sr. talking with Charlie Argentine - bet they are talking about some rare Wheeling Va bottle (there is a wealth of knowledge about West Virginia bottles between these two local icons).

So long story short, although the Washington Pa show is comparatively small, it's a show with a lot of Go! Maybe you should come to the show next year, we would love to see you there!!

