

WANTED

BOTTLE COLLECTING POSITIONS NOW OPEN AND YOUNG COLLECTORS NEEDED.....APPLY IMMEDIATELY!!

By Mike Polak

This blog will be longer than normal, there's a lot of great Bottle Collecting news to talk about. Based on the great digging articles I've read in the "Bottles and Extras" and "Antique Bottle & Glass Collector" magazines, and other publications like the "American Digger Magazine," including amazing "You Tube" digging adventures on land, in rivers, lakes, and oceans, it's great to see that bottle collectors from all over the world are still finding great bottles and treasures from the past, and having a ton of fun in the process. In my last blog titled "Bottles Are Hot!!!", I mentioned that Jeff Wichmann of American Bottle Auctions issued his Newsletter titled "Bottles Are Hot" regarding his Auction No. 65 and commented that "The initial participation to this auction is really overwhelming and we thank you from the bottom of our heart."

Well, bottle collecting is still hot, and I hope it becomes a lot more overwhelming. That's a good thing. I've said this before and I'll say it again, "Bottle collecting continues to experience increased popularity in both the domestic and international markets." Bottle collecting is still a relevant and popular hobby as demonstrated by the great digging adventures, increases in bottle clubs, club memberships, and bottle shows. And the bottle auction action continues to keep steam rolling. From January 2018 through September 2018, bottle auctions resulted in total sales of approximately \$2,750,000. That's one heck of a lot of bottles. Now, all of this is exciting and great news for the Hobby of Bottle Collecting, but in order to keep all of this happening into the future, we need to attract a major transfusion of young blood and recruitment of "YOUNG NEW COLLECTORS."

In the Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors (FOHBC) May-June 2018 issue of its magazine "Bottle & Extras," Ferdinand Meyer (Recently retired FOHBC President), wrote an excellent 'President's Message' about the need for attracting the "next generation" by stating "Sometimes I wonder where and what younger people are doing these days as far as interest?....." We hear stories that collecting and passion for doing extracurricular things is a dying tradition." Ferdinand went on to give an example of an event he and his wife checked out before attending a Houston Rockets basketball game, the 2018 Anime (A style of hand-drawn and computer animation originating and associated with Japan) Matsuri Convention, with attendees from 22 countries and over 36,000 attendees. Ferdinand also quoted Matt Lacy, the FOHBC's newest President (congratulations Matt), "We took Owen (his young bottle-collecting son) to the Comic-Con in downtown Cleveland last month..... Comics and Anime are definitely the trendy thing right now for the younger generation!" Ferdinand went on to say that "Another similar convention for the younger generation each year is the San-Diego Comic-Con.... they average around 175,000 guests."

"In closing," Ferdinand stated, "I suppose my point is, our next generation is out there alive and kicking in so many ways,"... Sure, our work is cut out for us, but we must try. If we don't, there will be no next generation, and our collections and knowledge will be meaningless. Let's stay positive here and proactive." This was a great message from Ferdinand stressing the point that we need to attract that next generation, and we need to do it now! Proactive is right. I'm happy to report that there have been, and are, a number of bottle related events where proactive actions are being taken to attract new young collectors.

In the "Antique Bottle & Glass Collecting" magazine's July 2018 issue, publisher John Pastor introduced Kamil Salame, who started collecting bottles at 16, as the "Newest Young Collector and Columnist" of the magazine. In the announcement Kamil said, "I hope to inspire younger collectors, as my mentor did for me, and show the great fun in collecting and digging for old bottles." Wow. That says it all. But there's more.

In the August 2018 issue, there's a great article titled, "New Young Leader for the Hudson Valley Bottle Club," introducing Alex Prizgintas, 18, who will be attending Marist College in fall with a double major in both history and music, and is now the youngest member of the club to hold the position of President. What a great accomplishment and a big responsibility. There's still more. In the same issue, there's an article by Sherry Kughn titled, "Passionate Collector in Third Year of Hosting Show," stating the following; "Bottle collector Jake Smith of Renfroe, Alabama, planned the upcoming Lincoln Bottle Show set for Saturday August 11 with not only traders and displayers in mind, but also youngsters. He is asking each of the fifty or so vendors to donate a bottle to a display table so that children who attend the event may pick out one item in hopes they will begin collecting. "We want to grow the hobby, Smith said."

These types of proactive actions are exactly what the bottle collecting world needs to grow the hobby for that next generation, and keep it strong and relevant going forward. Saying all of that, it's time for a huge challenge to the FOHBC and all of the Bottle Clubs across the United States, to keep the new young collector in focus when a show is being set-up. The FOHBC has two huge upcoming EXPOs, 2019 in Augusta, Georgia, and 2020 in Reno, Nevada. My suggestion is that for these two EXPOs, and for the remainder of all bottle club shows in 2018, and those in 2019 and 2020, the FOHBC and all bottle clubs have a young collector focus better; on their show, and include an action similar to the Renfroe, Alabama show of having each dealer donate a bottle to the show organizers, to have available for new young collectors. Let's keep this ball rolling in the right direction.

Remember, "Have Fun With The Hobby of Bottle Collecting"

