



[Photo C]



[Photo D]



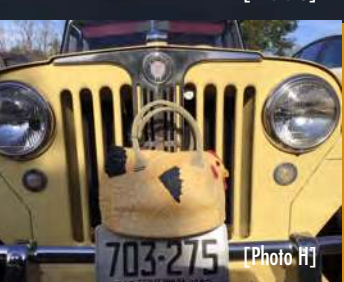
[Photo E]



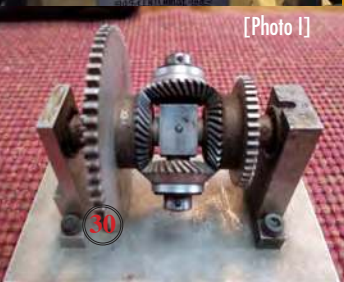
[Photo F]



[Photo G]



[Photo H]



[Photo I]



[Photo A]



[Photo B]

Nosy writer Ralph Finch wants

Ralph poses this observation: If I were to visit the homes of a thousand FOHBC collectors, we would likely find... a ton of old bottles, old pottery, etc. But will there be one thing that would cause a sharp-eyed observer to pause and say... "what the heck is that? That doesn't belong!"

So, let's break into a few collectors' homes and try to find what's questionable.

John Pastor's bucket list: If you visit John's lovely Michigan home, you would be surrounded by really great and beautiful early-American glass.

In the corner, there is a plain-looking 50-year-old lunch bucket: "In it, I can still smell banana," admits John. It was John's late father's lunchbox reminiscent of his dad's favorite fruit. [Photos A & B]



[Photo J]

[Photos A & B] A lunch box filled with memories of John Pastor's father. Photos: Liz Maxbauer

[Photo C] Jim Peake selected a pair of salt and pepper shakers in the form of flirtatious snails.

[Photo D] Terry Kovel holds her "priceless" cup, which cost 25 cents.

[Photo E] Bill Baab's The hound-handled pitcher is attributed to the Baynham pottery in Aiken County, S.C., and dates to the early 20th century.

[Photo F] Poison queen Joan Cabaniss can tie one on with one of her string holders (taken from the deck of her Virginia home).

[Photo G] An item that brings back childhood memories for Steve Ketcham of Minnesota.

[Photo H] The Kokles' rubber chicken purse named Henny which Mary has carted around the country while Kim photographs at historic sites.

[Photo I] Bob Strickhart's father made this hand-made device that was given to Bob when he was seven. Its purpose? To show how gears work.

[Photo J] Ralph shows his 61-year-old

Purse your lips and If you visit **Kim and Mary Kokles** in Texas, major collectors/dealers, you will be surrounded with a variety of top-notch Americana antiques, including museum-quality wooden Indians; maybe even a wooden nickel. And one rubber chicken purse named Clucky which Mary has carted around the country while Kim photographs it at historic sites. [Photo H]

Some other contenders included the only wooden nickel I have, and Lord knows where it is, which is one that someone hands you when you say, "I will do it when I get around to it." Hence, the wooden nickel is printed on one side "Round TUIT," so now you have to do your procrastinated chore because you have a round TUIT in your hand. Ingenious but stupid.

We also have a very eclectic mix of objects which have strong visual interest. Not as varied as the Finches' world of Toilet Paper to Toasters, but introduce us to something visual, and we can get addicted pretty easily. Many have said, "I would buy that if I had a place to put it." That is on the lowest priority of our totem pole of necessity of ownership.

I started collecting when someone took me bottle digging at age 15, and I dug one embossed "Snake Oil." Having grown up in the world of TV westerns and traveling snake oil salesmen, I was immediately addicted.



to poke around your... privates.

sumo umpire's "fan." He now doesn't remember if it started or stopped a match, but when he sees it he can clearly remember the event; even the sound of it! (Recently, a young Japanese friend commented, "I tried to find the meaning of the moon and the sun but I could not find the good explanation, but ... the sumo umpire uses this fan when wrestlers start the sumo match and raises the fan in the direction of the winning sumo wrestler."

Photo: Janet Finch

[Photo K] Kim Kokles' Comments: "During World War I, the U.S. needed to raise money to pay for the soldiers, tanks, airplanes and other equipment it needed to fight the war, and to be repaid after the war." It sounds like a poster most collectors should have.

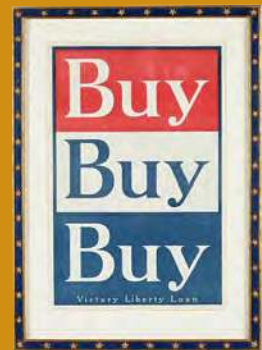
[Photo L] Joe Gourd is happy to give us the bird (just to release some steam).

As a side note, the only thing on my bucket list is to dig a pontiled pontil. And Kim corrects me: "It's NOT Clucky; it's Henny!" Kim then adds this about the Kokles Collection (sic):

When my grandfather immigrated to this country, another gentleman came along but decided to try his luck in the Yukon gold rush. He returned to live with my grandfather here in Texas, sick and broke, and he paid his room and board with these walrus ivory carvings and baleen baskets, scrimshawed and woven by the native Eskimo. These objects adorned my grandparents' mantle and, as a kid I stared at them with wonderment, and they have been passed down in my family. Perhaps it was this fascination which started me on my collecting."

I asked Kim again for a photo, but he replied: "Henny has been in hiding in fear of all the 'Eat more chicken!' commercials, but I will see what I can do." And, before I could finish this article, Kim changed his selection, thinking it should be the theme for most collectors.

We have a WWI poster [Photo K] encouraging you to buy war bonds. But this sign talks to us the most of everything we have, and it helps us stay on course if we lose our way. I think I choose this for your article.



[Photo K]

Easily sidetracked, New Jersey's **Robert Strickhart**, a major flask and bitters collector, replies:

"When you are the son of the man who hand-built parts for missile guidance systems, the guidance mechanisms for Redstone rockets, gyroscopes for Mercury and Gemini space missions, as well as fire-control systems for Iowa class battleships, you had interesting toys. [Photo I]

So, I have a hand-built O Gauge Camelback locomotive in live steam. I have a stationary live-steam locomotive. And, there's a stand with hand-made naval specification gears that don't do anything really, except demonstrate how all types of gears operate. Life with my mom and dad was never boring. I was lucky."

Perhaps England's No. 1 collector/researcher, **John Ault**, admits that the only odd thing in his home is him.



[Photo L]



[Photo M]

Jim Peake is the glass and British ceramics specialist at Bonham's Montpelier Street branch in London and says:

"I collect some 18th century English wine glasses, but my main personal interest is impressionist bronze sculpture (particularly portrait busts). I don't have many, but those have kept me happy enough. When I was a child, I used to collect Victorian glass bottles—I still have the collection, quite a number, but always prefer the ones with a hint of colour or attractive iridescence from excavation. My background is in archaeology, so, unlike many collectors, I tend to prefer things which look like they've been dug up rather than perfect!" So, the oddest thing in his home? "It's hard to pick just one thing out of the masses of sentimental rubbish I've hoarded over the years! I think the one that sticks out like a sore thumb is a pair of salt and pepper shakers in the form of flirtatious snails." [Photo C]

"I have a cabinet filled with various curiosities and these now sit on a shelf in there. They belonged to my mother. I have no idea where she got them, but she gave them to me as a child and I used to play with them. Essentially, they were my first ceramic! They used to have painted eyes and red lips, but most of the paint has chipped away. They are truly horrible, very kitsch, made in Japan sometime in the '70s I'd guess. But they're fun, and remind me of home."

Name your poison? This Huddleston, Va., collector lives for poison. Surrounded by 600 American poisons amassed over 42 years, **Joan Cabaniss**, who turned 82 last October, explains her antidote to her poison addiction: "I collect antique string holders, which visitors are always asking: 'What are they?' They also are green, clear, and pink and come in different molds." [Photo F]

And I ask Joan if she knew Jerry and Lori Jaffe, the "king, and queen of poisons," in Connecticut, whose car license plate said POISON. Joan replies, "I knew the Jaffes and bought poisons from them... My Virginia license plate is POISON, and I had lots of fun with it, including when the Virginia State Police wanted to know why."

My reply to Joan, "What a coincidence; we must be related. Although I sold my tiny poison collection some time ago, I still have my glass string holder—clear, with a thumb-print design and a blue rim. Wow. Great minds, etc."

Cups fit this kid to the tea: The popular **Steve Ketcham** of Edina, Minn., is known for bottles, advertising, and stoneware, but beyond that, "a collection of several dozen Victorian children's china cups has become my cup of tea. Most were made in Germany. All bear colorful, wonderful, whimsical scenes of youngsters playing at being youngsters. Shown here are four favorites, three of which include a bottle as part of the scene." [Photo G] (And we have shown our favorite.)

Joe Gourd gives us the bird: In his Winfield, Ill., residence, Joe Gourd is famous for his thousands of trade cards—especially bitters bottle trade cards and adds: "If you were to visit our home, you can and would expect to find posters and other colorful bitters ephemera displayed everywhere. What you would not expect to see would be a vintage dark blue, Spongeware, pie bird." Pie birds or pie whistles, pie vents, pie funnels, or even pie chimneys are hollow ceramic statuettes that bakers can use to vent steam from their pies. [Photo L] "As anyone knows, my limited kitchen skills consist of feeble attempts to toast bread. On the other hand, my lovely and talented wife, Edie, can perfectly bake anything from Apple pie to Zucchini Bread. Yum, Yum!"

Terry has a mustache: Visit the Cleveland home of **Terry Kovel**, queen of the Kovel antiques publishing world, and you will literally see thousands of valuable collectibles. At age 92 (along with her late husband, Ralph), she has helped write 100 books on antiques and collectibles. And, amid rooms of tons of serious material, there is a mustache cup Terry purchased when she was a child. [Photo D] The original cost? Twenty-five cents. Its current value? Priceless!

Terry explains: "I bought it for me; it was the beginning of a collection. My mother and brother both had collections, and I had empty shelves in my room. I liked the gold flower decoration. We were at Niagara Falls, and I had been given a dollar to spend," she recalls. "So, I looked around and decided to buy this cup for a quarter. I didn't know it was a mustache cup, and neither did my family for a few years. A family friend with a mustache admired it and used the name. I was delighted because I had something old and rare to look for when we all went antiquing." Plus, Terry admits, "I had to buy something, or my mother said I had to return the dollar."

(And Terry kindly adds: "I like your article; it isn't often antiques writers get a new idea.")

Weaving a story for a buck: Georgia's noted fishing expert and Augusta bottle collector, **Bill Baab**, tells us about... "This basket is attributed to the Cherokee tribe and was made in the late 19th or early 20th century. The hound-handled pitcher is attributed to the Baynham pottery in Aiken County, S.C., and dates to the early 20th century. You can just make out the trophy buck with antlers which is being pursued by a hound on the left." [Photo E]

Ralph shovels the dirt: At the Finch home (**Ralph & Janet Finch**) in Michigan, a visitor will see a truckload (a dump-truck load?) of old (and odd) this-and-that, although mostly glass: snuff jars, demijohns, glass canes, glass (or wood) flytraps, and some non-glass: a large, 1899 tricycle (on it sits an old teddy bear wearing a Phantom of The Opera mask), and, above his computer, a very large (and appropriate) sign that proclaims "Fertilizers of all Kinds,... etc."

You'll also see a 61-year-old souvenir of a sumo-match umpire's fan (to start and halt bouts), "which reminds me of my adventures of three years in Japan when I was 20. Whenever I see that 'fan,' I can hear the sound of those humongous bodies slam together and echo about the arena." [Photo J]

"And on our bedroom wall is a ratty, 78-year-old, one-eyed teddy bear. I don't know what happened to the one eye, but I can still remember cuddling it at night, pulling off its fur (and possibly its eye). And then there's my 74-year-old reverse-on-glass painted zebra. It's not very good, but I was only 11." (Yet with the artistic skills of a six-year-old.)

And I ask you: Don't all collectors, regardless of having amassed thousand-dollar flasks, have that one particular object important only to them—their personal Rosebud, (the closing line to Citizen Kane, where director Orson Welles used it as an illusory flashback effect of memory that may affect everyone: We have amassed all of this, but... what really is important?)

OK, what item in your home, no matter how small or even seemingly silly, appears to be out of place? Fess up, photo it if possible, and e-mail rfinch@twmi.rr.com.

