

FOHBC REGIONAL NEWS

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Western Region [Eric McGuire., Director]

It's a hot time in the Old West, but I especially want to report two interesting recent bottle-related events in this region. The first occurred on June 3, 2023. Fellow FOHBC members **John Burton** and **Jeff Rhoads** were on hand at the **Marin History Museum** (Marin County, California) to head up a bottle evaluation event hosted by the Museum. This collaboration was an amazing success, drawing a larger-than-expected crowd of people who happened to have a variety of bottles in their possession and wanted to learn something about them, along with their values. A steady crowd was present all day with all sorts of items. All types of bottles, jars, and containers were presented by local folks who wanted to learn something about them. It is interesting to note that a good number of individuals stayed longer than expected because they wanted to see what other people had brought as well. I would strongly recommend this type of event for any other location. It builds a liaison with local history groups, bottle collectors, and the general public.

The **49er Historical Bottle Association** held its annual "club picnic," hosted by **Rick** and his wife, **Tammy Correa**, at their home in Grass Valley, California, on June 10. It was well-attended with about 70 people. Besides the wonderful company and usual "bottle chatter," the highlight was three talks about bottles and bottle digging. **George McNeely** and **Herb Yue** both discussed recent digs they experienced and the wonderful items recovered. Past FOHBC president, John O'Neill, gave an interesting talk on Napa soda bottles, one of the most prolific producers of spring water bottles in the western U.S. John has spent years researching the company and acquiring many examples of the bottles, which will soon culminate in a book he is to publish. I strongly recommend keeping an eye out for that book.

Northeast Region [Charlie Martin, Jr., Director]

You may remember **The Little Rhody Bottle Club Swap Meet** write-up in the last issue. Club president **Bill Rose** wanted to take the opportunity to extend a special welcome to club member **Cameron Celrtuda**, who is currently attending Gettysburg College and is an avid bottle digger and collector. Glad to see that young collectors are coming into the hobby. We need all age groups participating to keep it vibrant, relevant and growing.

Roy Topka, co-chair of the **Saratoga Antique Bottle Show and Sale**, sent the following recap of their annual show and sale: "On June 4, the 43rd Annual Saratoga Antique Bottle Show and Sale was held at the Saratoga County Fairgrounds in Ballston Spa. As well as set up, the morning of the show, most dealers choose the night before to prepare for the show and enjoy the camaraderie of old friends. Forty-eight dealers occupied 80 tables in the two buildings, including a few additional dealers that chose an outdoor setup. The show was a good mix of high-end glass and several old collections brought in by individuals who had never done the show

and sold briskly. During the announcement of the 50/50 raffle, local dealer, collector, and long-time National Bottle Museum member **Art Dell** was honored for his unwavering support of the Museum with a plaque in his name which will be placed on the rotating exhibit case in the Museum, a fitting tribute to someone who has continually shared his collection with others through the Museum. Art had graciously donated this year's raffle bottle, a gorgeous *Tippicanoe*. The Bottle Museum was also open and greeted many first-time and return visitors. All in all, a fun weekend."

I've just been informed that the **National Association of Milk Bottle Collectors (NAMBC)** recently announced that their **2024 NAMBC Convention** will occur on May 17-18, 2024, at the Quality Inn and Suites in Bellville, Ohio. Registration opens in February 2024 and registration forms will be available at milkbottlecollectors.com.

As you read this article, approximately a dozen bottle shows have occurred (some were highlighted in my previous article) or will occur before the end of October 2023. Please check the FOHBC Show Listings at FOHBC.org (continuously updated) or in the back of our magazine to see if you can attend one or more of these shows in the Northeast Region. Fall is the busiest time of the year for bottle show activity—please try to take advantage of this opportunity to add that special bottle to your collection. Get out in support of your fellow collectors that host these great shows!

Ergo, I would like to mention a few shows that you might consider attending in the upcoming months. If the New England Fall foliage season is something you've wanted to experience, you may want to head out on a mini road trip in mid-September to the **Merri-mac Valley Antique Bottle Show and Sale** on September 17 in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. From there, head north to Topsham, Maine, for the **Mid-Maine Antique Bottle Show and Sale** on September 24. You can conclude your Fall foliage bottle trip with a "TWOFA." On Saturday, October 7, join Connecticut bottle dealers and collectors at the **Coventry Bottle Show**, sponsored by the **Museum of Connecticut Glass**. Then on Sunday, October 8, visit Keene, New Hampshire, for the **Yankee Antique Bottle Club Show and Sale** during the height of the "Leaf Peeper" season. All of the shows and the scenery are spectacular! I trust you will enjoy it all. Please remember that I am always ready to help any show chair or club officer promote their bottle show, including publishing photos from your show on the FOHBC website and Facebook page. Until next time, happy bottle hunting!

Midwest Region [Henry Hecker, Director]

I start my report by requesting all clubs send me their latest club information, officer roster, newsletter info, etc., to ensure our Federation website information is current. I have been somewhat limited in reaching out as I address several orthopedic issues that, thankfully, should be fading into the past. I will also send out a letter that informs everyone in the Midwest Region of the value

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proposition the Federation offers, most notably the magazine, the Auction Price Report and the Virtual Museum.

The Midwest Region lost another icon recently. **George Hansen** of Wautoma, Wisconsin, passed away in June at 92. While George was not very active in the hobby in the last few years, those who have enjoyed bottle and advertising collection since the 1970s will recall George as an avid collector-dealer who found “good stuff.” He was a fixture at flea markets and shows, selling a range of antiques. He was a longtime collector of beer-related items, art pottery, and die-cut Santa advertising. He was one of the original **Milwaukee Antique Bottle and Advertising Club** members when he lived in the Milwaukee area. Still, he and his family have lived in Wautoma for the last several decades.

If you are interested in 19th-century earthenware and stoneware, you should take a look at the website madefromclay.org. The product of **Peter Maas**, **Mark Knipping**, and yours truly, this site is devoted to the histories of early potters in Wisconsin. This well-researched, free resource tells the stories about these potters, many of them immigrants and trained in the “old country.” The authors augment the articles with many illustrations of Wisconsin pottery with attributions made from provenance and even a number of significant digs of potters’ waste dumps. Wisconsin had a wide variety of earthenware and stoneware wares with a rainbow of glazes and decorations made with local clay and clays from Ohio, Illinois, and Iowa. The large rural farm devoted to the dairy industry created the demand for these jugs, butter and cream pots, milk pans, and churns. However, with the advent of the railroad and the big stoneware manufacturers located in Red Wing, Minnesota and Macomb, Illinois, these small businesses disappeared by 1900. The website is getting attention from various historical societies that have requested links, and a state archaeologist recently consulted on pottery fragments found at the Villa Louis historical site in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.

Here are a few ideas to make bottle club meetings more fun and exciting that I see from those of you sending me your newsletters: “Show and Tell” thrives with interesting twists. **The Detroit Metropolitan Club** likes to have members bring items starting with a letter of the alphabet. This results in an eclectic set of items at every meeting that are described in the club newsletter. **The Ohio Bottle Club** employs both in-person and Zoom meetings to engage members. I continue to be blown away by the early glass that members can find in a state founded in 1803 (versus Wisconsin in 1848.) Their monthly publication, *The Ohio Swirl*, takes a ribbon as one of the top club newsletters in the country. The graphics are outstanding. As a follow-up on the importance of newsletters to maintain interest, the **Midwest Antique Fruit Jar & Bottle Club** also does a good job with their publication, *Glass Chatter*. The message

here is twofold. If your club is not doing a newsletter regularly, the club is missing out on membership and creating member enthusiasm. And for those that volunteer their time to put these great publications together, a hearty “Shout Out” to you!

Southern Region [Tom Lines, Director]

Having not heard from any southern clubs with activity updates, I contacted long-time friend and digger extraordinaire **Steve Hicks** in Knoxville, Tennessee. Steve and his long-time digging partners **Mike Barbera** and **Daniel Welch** have been tearing up Knoxville. By the way, Steve and Mike have been digging together for over 40 years! I spent an hour and a half on the phone with Steve getting an update on their digging activities...and this repressive summer heat hasn’t deterred them at all.

They have dug eight privies and three cisterns in the past two months! In addition, they have ten more pits and seven more cisterns lined up to dig! Wowzer! How do they do that? Well, Steve is blessed with great communication skills, aka “the gift of gab,” and he’s the chief permission seeker. They have formed a bond with a local real estate investor and have lots of late 19th-century and early 20th-century lots lined up. In addition, they actively reach out to all that are curious about what they are doing—neighbors, passers-by and friends. These guys are great emissaries for the hobby!

I asked about their success rate, and Steve said they had dug about 3,000 bottles so far this year! In thinking back over my own digging experiences, I don’t think I’ve even dug 3,000 bottles cumulatively! But he added that only about 20%-25% on average are productive digs. So how do they handle the heat? First off, they erect a canopy to cover the hole...nothing like digging in the shade! They also have portable fans to keep air circulating which is most helpful in a 16-foot-deep cistern. If the site offers access to electricity, they’ve been known to carry along a small refrigerator! All the comforts of home...well, except for a recliner! And, of course, they keep well hydrated. The 1966 tune by the Loving Spoonful “Summer in the City” comes to mind...”Hot town, summer in the city. Back of my neck getting dirty and gritty...”

These guys have an excellent reputation in Knoxville for being neat and meticulous with their digging practices. Upon digging out a hole, they frequently clean up the lot, tossing the trash into the pit before covering it up. If sod must be removed, it’s carefully replaced when done. Straw and grass seed is also carried to digs. These guys are thorough, for sure...which helps them keep that good reputation! At 70 years old, Steve thought he’d be slowing down a bit on the deep cisterns, but with his exuberant personality, I’m not sure about that at all! Thanks, Steve, for taking the time to share! And I wish y’all continued success!

Hey, please let me know what’s going on in your area too! Reach me by email at Bluecrab1949@hotmail.com or on my cell at 205.410.2191.

