



# HAVING A BALL IN BALTIMORE\*

Photos by Janet Finch

Pronounced: *Bawl-mer/Bal-da-more/B-more.*

\*Where **Ralph Finch** admits that spellin isn't one of his strong skills.

**A**h, the March 10 to 11 \*Baltimore bottle bash was all the Finches could hope for. See, we go to a bottle show to: A: Talk to old glass collectors\*\* B: Buy more stuff. (If we had personalized license plates on our car, it would say STUFF.) and C: Sell some of our duplicate stuff.\*\*\*

\*\*And, boy, are some of you getting old. I looked at one, his hair graying, looking overweight, and using a cane. (Then, shockingly. I realized that I was looking in a mirror!)

But friends remain the key to the hobby. We enjoyed chatting with Dann and Sue Louis of Michigan and learning about their progress as they continue translating the hundreds of notes written by the late John Wolf. Dann and Sue plan to produce the end-all book on John's great collection of cure bottles! "*So far,*" Dann says, and they are only a third of the way done, "*we have 800 pages of listings, descriptions, and line drawings.*" Again, so far, only two photos have been taken. "*We expect many, many more,*" they commented. (OMG!) The lovely Sue says the duo works on the project six hours a day using three different computers and that it should be done in a mere year and a half!!! It's a good thing that Dann's locks have been prematurely gray for years—as putting a bottle book together is guaranteed to turn hair gray. (I have said for years that people who compile a book on old glass or print club newsletters earn automatic sainthood.)

Back to the show: The weather was great, with a large crowd setting up and another large crowd coming through the door. Everyone seemed happy, and Janet (who is in charge of counting money, while I am in charge of spending it), said it may have been the most succe\$\$ful show ever.

\*\*\*We actually sold some STUFF, duplicate stuff, like a vintage roll of toilet paper and a circa 1909 wooden box that traveling salesmen would carry around proudly (?) showing off their wares. (I can't believe this was the salesman's No. 1 product—or No. 2—but those must have been tough days, flush with many challenges. (I once asked my rectum doctor how he got into that line of work and—well, it was an interesting story.)

And we actually bought some STUFF, like three elaborately designed stippled bottles, thanks to Jim Hagenbuch. The interesting (some say "odd") bottles are from the Scottish glass firm Alloa. In brief, these well-designed items, usually etched with animals, ships, etc., included these dates and names: 1853, "Margret Robertson, 1875, "Hellen Carmichael" and 1876, "Mr and Mrs. King."

Actually, we added another bottle that weekend, but not at the Baltimore show. The fourth one was sitting on our porch when we returned home. Well-packed by the Jeffery S. Evans Auction firm was a (edited) late 1700s "Dutch black-glass horse hoof onion utility bottle." It was decorated with a portrait of a



A long line of shoppers was attracted to the tables of Jeff and Holly Noordsy; they were waiting for them to put out part of the rare goodies of the late Barry Hogan.

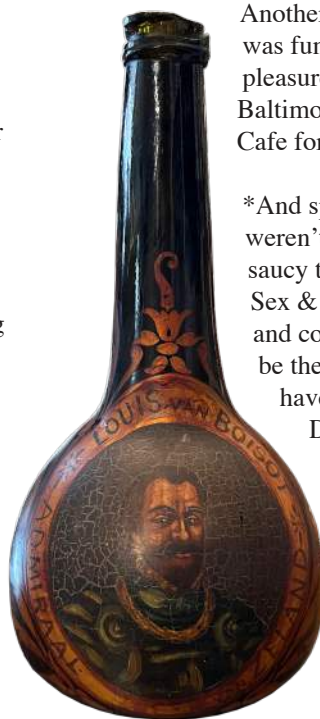
bearded man in metal armor, with "Louis van Boisot Admiral Van Zeland." Willy Van den Bossche's book says Boisot was an important Dutch naval/military figure in the Eighty Years War and died in 1576!

We took advantage of visiting a historic city by arriving a day early and visiting—well, not the great Peabody library, which was closed!!! What kind of library is closed on Friday and Saturday? A trip to Baltimore is not complete without a trip to the George Peabody Library (aka the "Cathedral of Books.") The library, part of the Johns Hopkins University, opened in 1878 and features a stunning architectural interior with five tiers of cast-iron balconies open to the skylight.

We visited the Walters Museum, and that was a treat—it was also free. It had a special exhibit on ancient Chinese pottery (along with its usual 36,000 items from around the world. (With 39,000 items, you'd think there could have been even one roll of antique toilet paper or ketchup bottle!\*)

Another treat was...eating. The EC Dinner was fun, Shannon's Pub & Grill (trice) was a pleasure, and my No. 1 fave (discovered at a Baltimore show years ago) was the Blue Moon Cafe for breakfast: unusual decor, unusual food.

\*And speaking about ketchup—we were, weren't we? I just discovered something... saucy to add to my collection: A book titled *Sex & Ketchup* about "life in all its absurdity and complexity." (Sadly, that was going to be the title of my autobiography, so now I'll have to go to my backup: *The Man Who Didn't Shoot Liberty Valance*. Catchy?)



The newest addition to the Finch collection of 1700s-1800s painted bottles. This black-glass bottle, 10.5 inches tall and in the "horse hoof form," shows the image of "Louis van Boisot, Admiral Van Zeland." (Not as famous as "John L. Mason," but who is?)

