

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors Serving the National Capital



April 2000

Editor Retires

The old *Pontil* will be seeing a lot of changes over the next few months since editor Mike Jordan is retiring to Florida. While we all hope Mike and Betty enjoy their time in the sun, we will really miss everything they've done for the club. **Jim Sears** and **Andy Goldfrank** are taking over the newsletter, but we're hoping for lots of input from other club members. Andy is soliciting reports of unlisted local bottles for future newsletters (see story on page 3). Jim would like any other submissions including show reports, bottle digging stories, photos, announcements, and letters to the editor. Please send these materials to searsjim@usa.net. Those poor souls without email can send snail mail to 4211 N. 2nd Rd., Apt. 1, Arlington, VA 22203.



April 25th Program: **Richard Lilienthal** promises us a presentation on something other than milks. He will discuss local whiskeys and other D.C. area containers that never held cow juice. Club members are encouraged to bring their local non-milks and recent acquisitions for show and tell.

Refreshments: **Jim Sears** will bring refreshments other than milk.

March Meeting: Thank you to **Dr. Thomas King** for a thought-provoking talk on the interactions of archeologists and collectors. Dr. King let us know that some archeologist may be open to partnerships with responsible collectors but that others see all collectors as looters of the past.

Raffle Bottle: **Allan Einseln** organized the March raffle and won a half-pint Wakefield Dairy bottle picturing George Washington. Thank you **Lee** and **Karl Shipman** for donating this bottle.



Not Milk?

Upcoming Shows

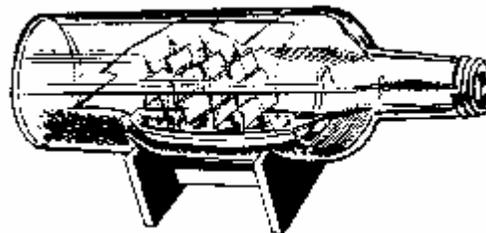
May 7 (9AM to 3PM) Keyser, West Virginia: Potomac Highlands Antique Bottle & Glass Collectors Club 2nd Annual Show & Sale at Keyser Fire Hall Station #2 off Route 220.

May 12-13 (Fri. 2PM to 6PM, Sat. 8AM to 2 PM) Mansfield, Ohio: The Ohio Bottle Club's 22nd Annual Show and Sale at the Richland County Fairgrounds, U.S. Route 30, Trimble Road Exit.

May 27 (9AM to 3PM) Kutztown, Pennsylvania: The Coal Cracker Bottle Club's 2nd Annual Sale at Renninger's Antique Market.



Show Reports



Baltimore: On March 5th our neighbors to the North put on an amazingly successful show with over 300 tables and more than 1300 paid admissions. This is the highest attendance the Baltimore show has had in its Essex Community College location. A large percentage of our club members were present to enjoy the show, so we should thank Show Chairman Bob Ford and the other Baltimore club members for their hard work as well as congratulating them.

South Jersey: Show chairman Bob Tompkins brought the South Jersey show back to the Williamstown Knights of Columbus Hall for an April 2nd show. Bob said that the hall had been renovated and the lighting much improved since his club had last held a show at this location. The dealers at this show offered a very good selection of bottles and jars, and several nice pieces of glass were also brought in by the public. Paid attendance was somewhat disappointing, which may be due to the number of moves this show has made in recent years.

Harrisonburg: The April 16 Harrisonburg show featured many Whitehouse Vinegar bottles and other moderately priced items of local interest. The show took place in a cavernous Rockingham County Fairground building that offers the show plenty of room to expand.

Odds & Ends



Possible Club Meeting: Coca Cola collector Bill Porter would be willing to host a club meeting in order to show us his extensive collection. This would probably mean going to Rockville rather than Fairfax at a regular meeting time. If club members are enthusiastic about making such a trip, we should try to schedule it at our April meeting.

FOHBC Dues: Our club board voted to pay our FOHBC dues a while back. Does anyone know whether this was actually done, and, if so, where the *Bottles & Extras* is going? (Please let Jim

Sears know.)

Archives: Despite the boxes of materials provided by **Mike Jordan**, **Allan Einseln** is seeking more donations to the club archives. He would particularly like pictures, articles, and other items that could fit in a club scrapbook.

Membership Person: We need a volunteer to take over Membership duties from **Betty Jordan**. Fortunately, we do have a Membership/Public Relations committee (**Allan Einseln**, **Pete Ryndquist**, and **Ed Reisman**), but we still need one person to take responsibility for maintaining the list of paid members.

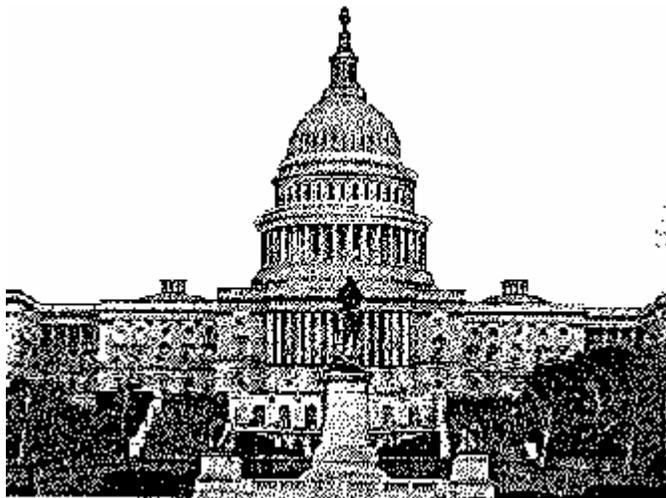
Membership Application: The membership application on page four of this newsletter was created by **Phil Godwin** and **Jim Sears** before the Baltimore show.



Above: Andy Goldfrank lets us know that privy digging is hard work at the January Meeting. Thanks to Matt Knapp for providing this picture.

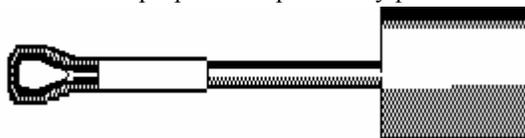
Around the Swamp . . . Bottles from our Nation's Capital by Andy Goldfrank

Three years ago I started digging in the Washington, D.C., area and found my first local bottle: an amber strap-sided flask embossed in a round slug plate "Jas. Tharp/Wines & Liquors/Washington, D.C." As it turned out, this flask was a relatively common bottle; however, it inspired me to explore more sites and buildings in the hopes of uncovering more local treasures. Since then, my finds have continued to mount. Many of my discoveries, both broken and whole, were readily identified in a book entitled *Antique Bottles from the Washington, D.C. Area* published by the Potomac Bottle Collectors in 1995 (3rd ed.). This soft-bound book lists thousands of area beers, sodas, medicines, stoneware, whiskeys, flasks, milks, pharmaceuticals and other glass products, and fast became my bible for information on local bottles and related artifacts. To my surprise unlisted bottles (broken or whole) continued to appear in my tailings. In an effort to keep track of these unique finds, I decided to take a rubbing of each bottle, write down all the information associated with it such as size, shape, color, and the date and location of discovery, before passing the item along to other collectors. The purpose of this column, which is intended to be a monthly feature in *The Potomac Pontil*, is to share with other collectors, archaeologists, and historians, these potential additions to the D.C. bottle book. If any of you have bottles or other items that you would like to see included in this column, please let me know, either by calling me at 202/588-0543 or by emailing me at amg_sticky@yahoo.com.



Early last year, a number of interesting bottles were uncovered at a construction site in Georgetown, D.C. The construction site was located on an old landfill for Georgetown. Alternating bands of clay, sidewalk paving bricks, ash and garbage to depths of 25 feet were uncovered. It appears the landfill was completed by the mid-1890's, as upscale, middle-class homes were constructed on lots neighboring the site between 1893 and 1898, according to map research and discussions with owners of those houses. The layers went back progressively to at least the 1870s, as some pontiled bottles and early colored smooth-based sodas were discovered. The newest dated artifact below the top cap layer was an amber barrel-shaped flask from the 1893 inauguration of President Grover Cleveland. In addition, this uppermost trash layer (up to 3 feet deep) yielded a number of soda and beer bottles with transitional tops: blob, baltimore loop and blown crown tops. There were almost no hutchinson stoppered bottles other than dozens of broken amber S.C. Palmer sodas. In one deeper area of the landfill there was a thick layer (2 to 4 feet) of sodas and beers dating from the 1860s-1880s in a variety of colors, shapes and sizes -- all intentionally broken with the bottoms and tops in separate piles. Ultimately, although the precise date for the landfill site was capped is unknown, the artifacts are indisputably from before 1900.

This site, now covered with a new building, yielded a number of drug store pharmaceuticals including three different sizes (3.25 inches, 4.25 inches, and 5.25 inches) from Brace's Palace Pharmacy which is listed in the D.C. bottle book (Medicines/No. 27). These bottles are clear, rectangular with the following embossing on the front: "BRACE'S PALACE PHARMACY/COR 30TH & M STS/W. WASHINGTON, D.C." The corner of 30th and M Streets is located in Georgetown, which is located in the western portion of Washington, D.C.; however, it is unclear whether West Washington refers exclusively to Georgetown. The D.C. bottle book lists two other Brace bottles: (1) "Brace's Drug Store" (Med./No. 26) and (2) "W.D. Brace/Washington, D.C." which is embossed on the base "Pat 6/25/89" (Med./No. 28). In addition, there are rumors of a clear drug store bottle embossed "W.D. Brace Pharmacist/Cor 30th & M Streets/Washington, D.C." -- but I have not yet seen this bottle to verify its embossing. If this last bottle is confirmed, then W.D. Brace would appear to be the proprietor of the Palace Pharmacy or at least a prior or subsequent related owner. An unlisted find from the construction site throws a wrench into this analysis. This bottle is embossed on one side: "R. BRACE" in an arc at the top of the plate, in the middle has a mortar and pestle with "PURE DRUGS" written on it, and "GEORGETOWN/D.C." at the bottom of the plate in two lines. This drug store bottle is clear, square, and stands 4 and 5/8 inches tall. It is possible that there were two different Braces operating pharmacies at the same time in the same portion of the city; however, this is unlikely. Therefore, it is my hypothesis that by comparing the bottles uncovered at the Georgetown landfill and other known pharmaceuticals, the R. Brace bottle predates the Brace's Palace Pharmacy bottles. R. Brace could also have been the proprietor of Brace's Palace Pharmacy; however, it appears that R. Brace's proprietorship certainly predates the W.D. Brace era.



Hope you enjoyed this column. Any comments, suggestions or questions, please let me know either by calling me at 202/588-0543 or by emailing me at amg_sticky@yahoo.com. Good luck searching. Andy Goldfrank.



The Potomac Bottle Collectors (PBC) is a non-profit antique bottle club serving collectors from the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and the Maryland suburbs. The club was founded in 1972 and continues to be a dynamic, active organization. While some club members are diggers and general collectors of old glass, others specialize in areas such as fruit jars, inks, insulators, milk bottles, or pontiled medicines. Anyone with an interest in antique bottles, from junior collector to national expert, is encouraged to join the club.

The club meets at 7:30 PM on the last Tuesday of every month, at 4028 Williamsburg Court, Fairfax, Virginia. The meeting place is about five miles west of the Capitol Beltway (I-495) on the Little River Turnpike (Route 236). An important feature of PBC meetings is the presentation by a guest speaker. Past speakers have included museum curators, local historians, and club members with expertise in various aspects of the hobby. Another highlight of the evening is “show and tell,” where members show off recent acquisitions and old favorites. The PBC is dedicated to increasing enjoyment in the hobby as well as to preserving and disseminating historical information. Therefore, much club business is relegated to separate business meetings, which all interested club members may attend. Visitors are always welcome at the regular monthly meetings.

In addition to monthly meetings, club activities include an annual swap meet and picnic, an annual awards banquet, and publication of the monthly newsletter *The Potomac Pontil*. The PBC also publishes an identification and price guide to bottles of the D.C. area. For additional information, please visit our web site: members.aol.com/potomacbt/bottle2.htm. Club dues may be paid at any club meeting or mailed to Ken Anderson, 4028 Williamsburg Court, Fairfax City, VA 22032-1139.

Potomac Bottle Club Membership Application

Name: _____

Phone #: (____) _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Collecting Interests: _____

Dues are \$10 per year for individual or family. Make checks payable to Potomac Bottle Collectors.