

# The Potomac Pontil

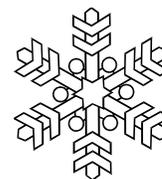
The Potomac Bottle Collectors Serving the National Capital



## January 2001

In this issue:

Potomac Bottle Collector Awards for 2000.....	page 2
Bottle Show Reports.....	page 3
Around the Swamp by Andy Goldfrank .....	page 5
A letter to the Potomac Bottle Collectors.....	page 6



## January 30<sup>th</sup> Meeting

**Business Meeting:** Lee Shipman will host a business meeting before our regular meeting. Anyone who is interested in discussing plans for a club bottle show is welcome at 6403 E. Halbert Rd., Bethesda, MD beginning at 6:30 PM. We are considering June 23<sup>rd</sup> as a possible show date.

**Show & Tell:** Help us brighten up a dark winter meeting by bringing some odd-colored glass. We hope to have a discussion of the terms collectors use to describe different colors of glass. If anyone has been fooled by painted or color-altered glass, we would also like to hear about that.

## Library Displays

**Peter Rydquist** has lent some Portner bottles to be included in a display on “The Life of Robert Portner” at the Prince William County Public Library, Bull Run branch in Manassas. This display was put together by Michael Gaines who is writing a book on Portner. It features about 20 bottles (from early blobs to crowns), pictures of his Annaberg estate in Manassas and the brewery along with a few go-withs. It’s housed in three cases. The display will run through the end of January. If you are in the Manassas area, please visit it at 8051 Ashton Ave., Manassas, VA 20109-2892, (703) 792-4500. Hours are Monday through Thursday 10AM-9PM, Friday through Saturday 10AM-5PM, and Sunday noon-5PM. Take 234 Business south from I-66, turn right on Sudley Manor Drive, right on Ashton Ave., library will be on the right.

**Allan Einseln** has been given approval for the club to display bottles for remainder of January and all of February at two Fairfax County Library branches: George Mason Regional Public Library in Annandale and the Thomas Jefferson Community Library, in Falls Church. This is a great way to promote our club and the hobby. He would like this to be a club effort and needs volunteers to work with him to set up a display or to lend bottles. At George Mason the display case is locked, secure, and is 5’ wide by 5’ high with glass shelves. A theme for the display needs to be developed; some possibilities are: bottles of each respective type: (Bitters, medicines, beers, sodas, milks, whiskey, etc.), northern Virginia bottles, or D.C. bottles. The display case is currently vacant and the library is waiting on the club to get it set up, so the display needs to be set up soon. Please give Al a call at (703) 289-1282 if you can provide assistance or ideas. Al is currently having difficulties with his computer, but Peter Rydquist ([pehraub@aol.com](mailto:pehraub@aol.com)) can forward messages to him.

## Club Web Site Updated

Peter Rydquist has recently done a great job of updating our Web Site:

<http://members.aol.com/Potomacbt/bottle2.htm>. The site is a good source of club information including back issues of the *Potomac Pontil*. It now features a navigation section on every page. Also, the site is now listed under “Potomac Bottle Collectors” by most major search engines including Yahoo. Peter welcomes comments and suggestions at [pehraub@aol.com](mailto:pehraub@aol.com).



Meetings: 7:30 PM on the last Tuesday of each month in the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 6201 Dunrobbin Dr., Bethesda, MD 20816.

President: Phil Godwin

Vice President: Allan Einseln

Secretary: Jim Sears

Treasurer: Ken Anderson

*Pontil*: Jim Sears (email: [searsjim@usa.net](mailto:searsjim@usa.net), PH: 703/243-2409) & Andy Goldfrank (email: [amg\\_sticky@yahoo.com](mailto:amg_sticky@yahoo.com), PH: 202/588-0543)

Web Site <http://members.aol.com/potomacbt/bottle2.htm>

Maintained by Peter Rydquist: [pehraub@aol.com](mailto:pehraub@aol.com)

## Potomac Bottle Collectors' Awards for 2000 by Andy Goldfrank

### Helping Hand: Jim Sears

The Helping Hand Award is given by the club president to honor a member whose efforts have particularly benefitted the Potomac Bottle Collectors during the year. During the last year or so, to quote Phil Godwin, "Jim has gone beyond the call of duty" in taking over "the publication of the monthly newsletter, has perfect attendance at all board meetings, and repeatedly organized food for banquets, changes to the meeting schedule and club happenings."



### Collector of the Year: John Hunsaker

The winning entry in the Collector of the Year category is a sparkling mint, graphite pontiled, emerald green 1850s soda, embossed "W. H. BUCK" and "NORFOLK, VA." John acquired this rare beauty at the festivities surrounding the re-enactment of the Civil War's Battle of South Mountain in Boonsboro, Maryland. He purchased (for a nominal sum) this soda from a flea market vendor in the town with the intent to cart the bottle around to re-enactments as an authentic Civil War era artifact. It was not until much later that John actually learned about the rarity of his bottle – it is now occupies a safe place on a window shelf! For obvious reasons, John is still looking for less valuable Civil War era bottles for re-enactments . . . if you could help, he would certainly appreciate it.



Collector of the Year entries included colored Mason jars, a cobalt barber bottle, a previously unknown D.C. flask, and a bottle shaped like baby Moses.



John Hunsaker displays his winning bottle, a deep green Buck soda.

### Digger of the Year: Andy Goldfrank

This award, intended for a club member who recovered a bottle or glass-related artifact by digging or similar exploration, went to Andy for the early 1860s "Arny & Shinn" green soda he dug in downtown Washington, D.C. See the "Around the Swamp" article in the September 2000 issue of *the Potomac Pontil* if you are interested in the history and digging of this bottle.

### Go-With of the Year: Jim Sears

The winning go-with appears to be a fruit jar torture device. It clamps onto a table and tightens to hold various sized jars while the lids are removed. Jim had been looking for this odd item ever since Mike Jordan displayed one several years ago. This go-with was tested on Roland Longerbeam's "collector of the year" entry, and it proved very handy for holding onto a valuable jar.



### Shard of the Year: Peter Rydquist

The champion entry in the Shard of the Year category, also known as the "darnit" of the year, went to Peter for the bottom half of an olive-green, open-pontiled medicine

excavated on a construction site in Baltimore's Little Italy near the Inner Harbor on January 2, 2000. The shard is part of a "TRUE DAFFY'S ELIXIR" that is literally covered with embossing such as "SEE THAT THE WORDS DICEY & CO. ARE PRINTED IN THE STAMP" plus the name and address of the proprietor "DICEY & CO., No. 10 BOW CHURCH YARD LONDON." This amount of embossing is atypical for a bottle from the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is said that this English patent medicine was the first to place product advertisements in American newspapers (*Boston News-Letter*, October 4, 1708). The shard was pulled from a 4 foot square, 6 foot deep, brick-lined privy, that was filled with artifacts including black glass, crockery beers, puffs, porcelain and pottery dating from the 1810s to the 1840s. See the Digging Stories section of the club's website for pictures of this excavation.



## Bottle Show Report

The Midwest Antique Fruit Jar and Bottle Club's semiannual show in Muncie, Indiana is truly a national event for fruit jar collectors. The January 14, 2001 show featured the release of the jar price guide *Red Book 9* by Doug Leybourne as well as the *2001 Fruit Jar Annual* by Jerry McCann. While Ebay may have reduced attendance somewhat from levels seen in previous years, the quality of glass offered seemed as good as ever. One odd coincidence was that two different sellers arrived with emerald green Lightning jars, which sold for at least \$4,000 each.

Mike and Betty Jordan came up from Florida to attend the Muncie show. They send their greetings and hope to see many of us at the Baltimore show in March. Mike finally bought an early "Crowleytown" Mason jar in Muncie, which is something he's been meaning to add to his collection for a long time.



## Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

**February 4 (9 AM to 2 PM) South River, New Jersey:** New Jersey Antique Bottle Club's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Show & Sale at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 88 Jackson St., South River, New Jersey. INFO: NJABC, 24 Charles St., South River, NJ 08882 or call JOE BUTEWICZ, PH: (732) 238-3238, E-mail: [joseph.butwewicz@bms.com](mailto:joseph.butwewicz@bms.com) or ERNEST BOWER, PH: (732) 868-0510, E-mail: [botlman@aol.com](mailto:botlman@aol.com)

**March 3 (9 AM to 3 PM) Maryland Line, Maryland:** The Chesapeake Bay Insulator Club 13th annual Insulator Show & Sale at the Maryland Line Volunteer Fire Department Hall. INFO: Larry Novak - Phone (301) 680-8910 email: [cbic@clubs.insulators.com](mailto:cbic@clubs.insulators.com)

**March 4 (8 AM to 3 PM) Baltimore, Maryland:** The Baltimore Antique Bottle Club presents its 21st annual show at the Essex Community College, 7201 Rossville Blvd., Baltimore, Maryland. (off I-95 exit 34) Admission \$3.00. INFO: Bob Ford - Phone (410) 531-9459 or email: [antiquebottles@home.com](mailto:antiquebottles@home.com)

**March 25 (9 AM to 3 PM) South Keyser, West Virginia:** The Potomac Highlands Antique Bottle & Glass Collector's Club, 3rd Annual Show & Sale, to held from 9am to 3pm at the Keyser Fire Hall INFO: Dale Murschell , Phone (304) 492-5563. email: [mountainmonster@mountain.net](mailto:mountainmonster@mountain.net)

**April 22 (9 AM to 3 PM)  
Harrisonburg, Virginia, Sunday:**  
Historical Bottle Diggers of Virginia's 30th Annual Show & Sale at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds, Route 11 South (I-81 exit 243), Harrisonburg, Virginia. INFO: Sonny Smiley, Phone (540) 434-1129 or Casey Billhimer, Phone (540) 289-9866 email: [historyed@webtv.net](mailto:historyed@webtv.net).



The Baltimore club had already sold more than 250 tables for its show by December 15<sup>th</sup>. Anyone hoping for a Baltimore dealer table should contact Bob Ford immediately.

**BALTIMORE  
ANTIQUÉ BOTTLE CLUB**





**21<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL SHOW AND SALE**

**Sunday - March 4, 2001**  
*8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.*

Athletic Center  
Essex Campus of the Community College of Baltimore County  
7201 Rossville Blvd. (off exit 34 I-95)  
Baltimore, Maryland 21237

*Bottles, glass, advertising, tins, jugs, pottery, etc. - free appraisals*

**The largest show of its kind on the East Coast—over 300 tables**

**Admission - \$3**

Information:  
**Bob Ford - Show Chairman**  
Telephone: 410-531-9459  
E-mail: [antiquebottles@home.com](mailto:antiquebottles@home.com)

## Around the Swamp . . .

### Bottles from our Nation's Capital

by Andy Goldfrank



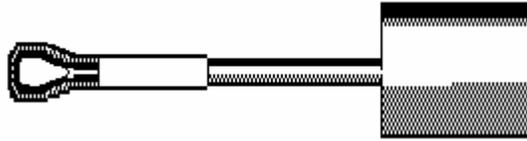
A work assignment in Florida since last summer has curtailed my ability to do research for this column, let alone dig for bottles, which may explain the paucity of articles over the last few months. As I sat down to write this column, I gazed at some local bottles and stoneware sitting on my windowsill about which I still have several unanswered questions. That's when it dawned on me that my inability to research artifacts at this time does not mean that others are unable to research their own glass and pottery about which they may have questions. Thus, I decided to write a column about research and pass on to you some of what I have learned. Much like finding quality bottles, the key to learning about our historic treasures is knowing where to go for information and learning that in that quest, never leave any stone unturned.

All the rage today is information available over the internet, such as maps, histories, pictures, lists (of anything you can imagine), census data, real estate, genealogical compilations, and a plethora of other material. At this time, however, the best information needed for detailed research is not accessible through your desktop computer. No doubt that eventually this will change, but at present, community census listings, local maps such as Sanborn and Dripps, neighborhood and building histories, photograph collections, newspapers, and business directories, are only available in hard copy and/or on microfilm or microfiche at your local library, historical society, Atheneum, college, and the Library of Congress. There is no substitute for a visit to one, if not all, of these institutions.

In Washington, D.C., a great place to gather a tremendous amount of information about local history is the Martin Luther King Memorial Library on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor in the Washingtoniana Division, Room 307, at 901 G Street, N.W.. See [www.dclibrary.org/washingtoniana/resources](http://www.dclibrary.org/washingtoniana/resources). Here you will find on microfilm business and telephone directories dating back to the Civil War, which are critical for finding former merchants and determining their years of operation; maps in book format and on microfilm of the original design of the District up to the present; government publications such as sanitation and sewage records, which are favorites of mine for finding bygone landfills; archaeological studies and reports on excavations in the area, which often contain insightful data on the history of communities and merchants; and photograph collections (the depths of which I have not yet plumbed) dating back to the advent of photography. In addition, you will find numerous books on or relating to historic Washington, D.C. The Washingtoniana Room is open during regular business hours.

Another resourceful Washington institution, with similar but not identical information, is the Washington Historical Society on New Hampshire Avenue; however, the research hours at this facility are much more limited. Alternative sites for data are local colleges and universities, such as Georgetown University and the University of Maryland. The University of Maryland College Park has a room dedicated to the State of Maryland which also contains loads of information about Washington, D.C., including Sanborn maps dating back to 1885; this information is noted at [www.lib/umd.edu/UMCP/RARE/washington](http://www.lib/umd.edu/UMCP/RARE/washington). In contrast to any other research institution, the expanse of information available at the Library of Congress is staggering – albeit more difficult to track down a specific tidbit of information than at a local library or historical society. For a mere sampling of the Library of Congress's assemblage, visit their website ([www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)) and make sure to click on the American Memory Collection. An actual visit to the Library of Congress requires some forethought as to your research goals for that day because materials are not always in one location which may require traveling to several different buildings; for example, on one of my recent visits, maps were located in one building and books were across the street in another building. Going back and forth between buildings, and waiting for documents can be time consuming.

Because each of these institutions offers unique materials, visiting more than one often is necessary to uncover the complete story behind a particular piece. During my forays into some of the dustier archives, I quickly learned that sometimes the only way to gather all of the available information is to visit several institutions several times each. In addition, asking for help and ideas from the research librarians you encounter is invaluable because oftentimes these librarians are familiar with the institution and its collections, or may even be familiar with your particular questions, and sometimes can bring a fresh approach to a research problem that has previously stumped all (including other research librarians). Much like being a good bottle digger, perseverance is important in gathering information because more times than not the critical research lead comes to you just before you reach the end of the rope. In addition, it is important to become familiar with all of your artifacts and keep as many as you can at the forefront of your mind, because the missing element behind a particular piece seems to surface when you are working on an unrelated project.



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](mailto:amg_sticky@yahoo.com). Good luck searching and researching, Andy.

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## A Letter to our Club

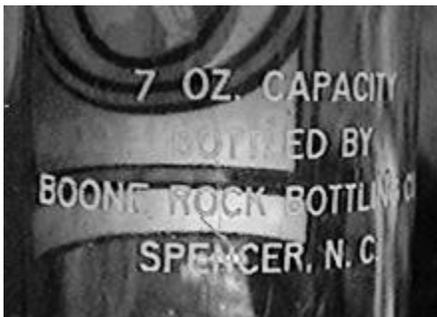
Dear Potomac Bottle Collectors,

My name is Mark. My humanities class and I went on an archeological dig at Tyler State Park. We found many things. One was a piece of a glass bottle. It is clear and has around twenty air bubbles I can see. It's not a beer bottle. There is writing that says Z CAP or Z GAP. The Z is probably from a different word. If it's CAP it's probably something ounce cap, and if it's GAP it's probably something from Great Atlantic & Pacific. This bottle is full of uneven thickness.

I think the bottle company closed, and I also think the circumference of the bottle is about four or five inches. It looks to be from around the late eighteen-hundreds.

If you know anything about this company or about this bottle, please write back to Hillcrest Elementary School, 420 East Holland Road, Holland, PA 18966-2370. Please write back. This whole project took lots of hard work.

Thanks,  
Mark



Mark,

The picture on the left shows the writing on a Boone Cola bottle, but plenty of other companies also marked soda bottles with capacities in ounces. The shard you found was probably marked with some number of ounces. While we cannot say what company used it, it is very unlikely to be from the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company. That company used the abbreviation A&P rather than GAP. The typical A&P bottle shown above at right is embossed THE GREAT ATLANTIC & PACIFIC TEA COMPANY NEW YORK on the front and also says A&P EXTRACTS on the side.