

# FOHBC National Show

by Ralph Van Brocklin

## Auction

Green..... Green..... Green!!!

A green Drake's Plantation bitters, a green embossed irregular hexagonal poison and a green Benecia Steam Soda Works Hutchinson soda... Add to that a nice blend of flasks, other bitters, medicines, sodas, stoneware and mineral waters and you have the recipe for a great Saturday evening at... the FOHBC live auction!

Held Saturday evening, August 13, 2005, in a wonderfully ornate ballroom at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, Michigan, this live auction represented a continuation of a Federation tradition. In an era where very few live auctions with quality glass are held, the Federation is pleased to have the opportunity to make a yearly auction of this nature available to attendees of the National Shows and EXPOs.

Norman Heckler, Sr., again graciously agreed to handle the auctioneering for the Federation, and he hammered down 78 catalogued lots and 9 uncatalogued offerings to a crowd estimated at 150-200 and a handful of absentee bidders. As has been the case since the Federation began handling the auction after the 2000 EXPO, John Pastor first procured and then beautifully photographed the offerings for a full color catalogue. (This catalogue is available to anyone interested at \$5.00, postage paid. A post-auction price list is included. \*)

Among the highlights of the sale were:

Lot 6: A lovely medium-olive with yellow tones half gallon jar MASON'S / PATENT / NOV 30<sup>th</sup> / 1858, \$725.00

Lot 26: 6-1/4" bright green and pristine irregular hexagonal poison embossed DYKEMA'S, \$2050.00

Lot 37: Aqua, open-pontiled Southern medicine with full label and embossed CLEMEN'S INDIAN TONIC / (motif of standing Indian with headdress) / GEO. W. HOUSE, \$625.00

Lot 47: A crude and scarce golden amber West Virginia semi-cabin bitters OLD

HOME/BITTERS –LAUGHLIN/SMITH & CO. – WHEELING, W.VA., \$2100.00

Lot 65: Michigan collectors were offered a very rare medium teal-colored mineral water IRON MAGNETIC MINERAL / SPRINGS / FRUITPORT MIC, one of three known in this coloration, \$2300.00

Lot 69: Golden yellow and filled with tiny seed bubbles, a pint WASHINGTON – TAYLOR (G1-52), 1100.00

Lot 73: Yellow, blending to yellow-apricot DRAKE'S PLANTATION BITTERS, \$1100.00

The true head-turner of the auction was lot 74, a DRAKE'S PLANTATION BITTERS in bright medium citron green clear enough to read through! Found in an abandoned home in Portland, Michigan, we were privileged to be able to offer this Michigan find and pleased to place it in a home where it will be greatly appreciated—the home of successful bidder Ferd Meyer! Hammer price — \$10,500.00!!!

Plans are in the works for a live auction at the National Show in Reno, Nevada, in August of 2006. We are seeking consignments in all categories, but really want to encourage those of you with good quality Western glass, stoneware or advertising to make those items available to some mighty ardent bidders!

Contact John Pastor for details.

Special thanks are due those who assisted John Pastor with the auction, including Liz Maxbauer, Sue Louis, Dann Louis and Jodi Hall. Without their assistance, chaos would reign!

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## Seminars

The FOHBC 2005 National Show featured an excellent series of seminars covering a broad spectrum of topics. With eight different speakers presenting in a three hour period, overlap was necessary and the only gripe I heard was that it was not possible to hear all of them! Excellent presentations were the rule and the enthusiasm each of the presenters lent their topic made the morning truly memorable.

The schedule of seminars, presenters, topic and a brief synopsis follow:



9:00 10:00

“A Perspective on Fruit Jar Closures”

Doug Leybourne

Well-known in fruit jar collecting, and to bottle collectors as well, Doug has been publishing the *Red Book of Fruit Jars* since 1993. Accompanied by Jim DeGrado, who gave a brief discussion of fruit jar rubbers, Doug provided a history of most of the fruit jar closures from the time of the wax and cork tie cloth closure (a pontiled olive-colored French jar was presented), through the pontiled wax-sealers and then into the specialized and patented closures. He advised that many are so rare that even the reproductions have assumed a premium value to collectors.

Jars and closures were available for reference during and following the seminar and these were later assembled into a display in the show facility. A great introduction to the subject for those who



< Benicia Steam Soda Works, Gustav Gnauck from Benicia, California \$300.00



< Lot 65: \$2300.00



Lot 74: \$10,500.00 >



Lot 47: \$2100.00



Lot 26: \$2050.00



"Compliments of Stratton, Seay & Stratton, Nashville, Tenn. Lot 45 - \$225.00"



Michigan ACL Milks - Steve DeBoode



The "Art" of Privy Digging - Scott Hendrichson



Grand Rapids, Michigan Bottles - West Michigan ABC



Glasshouse Whimsies - Lori Knickerbocker & Whimsey Club



Fruit Jar Colors and Closures - Doug Lebourne

## DISPLAYS



Mountain Dew - Joseph Scharnowski



Demijohns - David Hooper

collect in other areas and a nice summary for those who collect jars and closures.



### **“Black Glass – Identification and Dating”**

**Carl Sturm**

An avid collector of cures and half-pint flasks, Carl has also collected black glass for many years. In an area where few Americans have significant knowledge, Carl is the exception. For those interested, this seminar provided a nice summary of what is available to the collector, as well as the references available to those who might wish to begin a study of and collection in this category.



**10:00 – 10:45**

### **“Hysterical over Historicals”**

**Mark Vuono**

One of the undisputed authorities in American Historical Flasks, his passion for this area of collecting was apparent to all who attended his seminar. Punctuated by slides of some absolutely beautiful specimens, this seminar was one we hope can be repeated over-and-over in the years to come.

A great introduction to this area of collecting and a seminar lauded by neophyte and advanced collector, alike.



### **“Collecting the Cures”**

**Dann Louis**

Dann is one of the truly ardent collectors of the cures and his seminar detailed what he considers to be the major categories of

collecting, including pontiled and colored pontiled examples, of which he indicated there were only about 25 total known with all but ten of them virtually impossible to obtain. He detailed that picture cures and cures in unusual shapes, such as the Davis' Indian Cure, always kindle great interest, and his slides certainly demonstrated why.

Other categories covered, with slides to illustrate, included cobalts, greens, milk glass, squares, Kilmer's, Warner's and Warner's "Wan-A-Be's."

Dann further schooled us in the world of rare cures with a display of most of the known 24 Michigan-embossed bottles.

**11:00 – 12:00** (*The time period known as... 'there's no way that I can give you a significant synopsis on all of these!!!'*)

### **“Michigan Bottles – A Presentation and Open Discussion”**

**Dan Simons**

How I hated to miss this one... Scheduled as an open forum on all categories of bottles from the host state, Don acted as moderator. Digging in Michigan, specific bottles from Michigan and a consideration of what the top bottles from the state are were topics of discussion.

### **“Infant Feeders Through The Years — 4000 Years of Infant Feeders”**

**Dr. Darroll Erickson**

The Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors has been fortunate to have a nice relationship with this specialty group of collectors over the years. In the past, they have jointly held their yearly meeting at the time of our National Shows and we are pleased to have the opportunity to interact closely with them. We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to have had Dr. Erickson present a nice seminar detailing the history of the infant feeders — an educational seminar that presented all collectors with the possibilities of collecting in that area, as well as the factors that drove changes in the style of infant feeders.

### **“Connecticut Glass”**

**Rick Ciralli**

Rick is an independent scholar, collector and dealer of early Connecticut glass. President of the Pitkin Glass Works, Inc., he is actively involved in the excavations and cataloguing of finds at the old glassworks. In May, 2002, he announced the initiation of a book project on Connecticut glass of various forms from the



Connecticut glasshouses of Pitkin, Coventry, Willington, Westford and New London.

Rick's seminar detailed finds at these sites and provided insight into how certain bottles are now able to be more certainly attributed to specific glasshouses. He presented a great slide show and a wonderful detailing of the history behind the glass.



### **“How To Clean Bottles”**

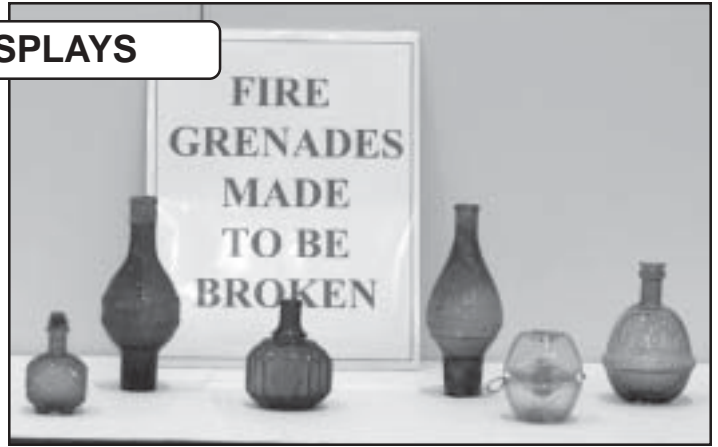
**Wayne Lowry**

Affectionately known as "The Jar Doctor," Wayne has been cleaning bottles since 1988 and building cleaning systems since 1992. His seminar was a comprehensive presentation that included the components of a cleaning system (cleaning machine, motor package, cleaning canisters, tumbling copper and polishing/cutting oxides), advice on loading the canisters, time involved and the "most common 'rookie' mistakes."

**MORE DISPLAYS**



Michigan Mineral Water Bottles - Dan Simons & Gordy Hubernet



Fire Grenades - Jim & Jodi Hall



Michigan Bitters - Jeff Scharnowski



Michigan Cures - Dann Louis



Pattern Molded - John R. Pastor



Scroll Flasks - David Beadle



Black Glass Whiskey Bottles - Carl Sturm

# THE 2005 FOHBC NATIONAL SHOW AUGUST 13-14, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

by Steve Ketcham

It is 7:45 A. M. and we are sitting on the sunny, wind-swept deck of the car ferry Badger, waiting to sail from Ludington, Michigan, to Manitowoc, Wisconsin. We are returning from a two-week journey which included many a stop to shop northern Michigan's antiques shops and culminate in Grand Rapids with the FOHBC National Show. It's been a great trip.

During the first leg of our trip, Chris and I enjoyed the beauties of Michigan's "West Coast," including its miles of sandy beaches and magnificent dunes. We visited quaint towns like Manistee, Ludington, Leland and Charlevoix. We stayed at inns like Falling Waters in Leland. Here one can step to the balcony and drop a line into the Carp River, sit and gaze at the vast beauty of Lake Michigan, or look over the shanties of Fish Town, remnants of Leland's past, now converted into trendy shops.

We were pleased with the quality of the goods in nearly all of the many shops and malls we shopped during our two-week trip. Bargain-priced finds included a yellow-amber, six-log Drake's Plantation Bitters; an enameled, amethyst barber bottle; and a pre-Prohibition Conrad Pfeiffer, Detroit, beer mug.

In one small town shop, the woman minding the store asked us what we collected. "Bottles, advertising, and stoneware," was the reply. She then invited us to her home, and we were able to purchase three advertising trays and two salt-glaze, cobalt-decorated crocks.

Our most unusual find was uncovered in a shop in Frankfort. Sitting by the door were two wooden crates, each filled with a gross of clear, unembossed, six ounce shoo fly flasks. It is amazing to see the manner in which the circa 1890 flasks were packed for shipping. The wooden crate is skeletal in construction, with large gaps in the sides where the thin, early cardboard padding can be seen. The end of one crate is stamped, "J. Morris, Packer. One Gross 6 Ounce Shoo Fly Tall." The bottles themselves are in two layers of 72, one stacked atop the other, with little padding between. Each layer consists of six rows of flasks, shoulder-to-shoulder. Each row is 12 deep

and the flasks stand face-to-face with no padding between them. Somehow the flasks survived this treatment for over 100 years with only minimal damage.

They were found in an old barn, and at least four cases were sold to dealers in the area. We brought one case home with us. Though such bottles have little monetary value, their historical value merits respect.

After nine days of hunting and buying, we headed south to Grand Rapids and the big show. Over 200 eight-foot tables were sold for this event, and there were three dozen very fine displays. Along one wall, show participants were treated to exhibits of glass whimsies, scroll flasks, black glass, inks, target balls, perfumes, demijohns, and so much more. Along the opposite wall, with large banks of windows providing a natural-light background, the collectors of Michigan assembled a stunning array of displays featuring their state's bottled past. From sodas to stoneware, milks to medicines, and bitters to beers, the Michigan collectors put together displays of which they could be very proud. I especially enjoyed the great cobalt sodas, the vast assortment of bitters, and the amazing collection of Michigan cures assembled by Dann Louis.

The sales tables were brimming with great quality advertising, stoneware, and bottles. More importantly, as we shopped we were able to catch up with old friends from around the country, many of whom have attended the Minnesota show: Bill and Kathy Mitchell, Mike and Alice Seeliger, Dick and Dar Boosted, Jim and Jodi Hall, Bob and Barbara Harms, John and Claudia Panek, Keith Leeders, Carl and Mary Ann Malik, John Pastor and Liz Maxbauer, Norm Heckler, Paul Welko, Jeff Burkhart and Jeanine Kral, George and Ruth Hansen, Wayne and June Lowry, Mike Burgraff, Jim Mitchell, Norm and Junne Barnett, Dave Beadle, Dean Rein, Mark Nelson, and many more. Chris and I weren't the only Minnesotans to appear in Grand Rapids; Steve and Phyllis Showers were in attendance, and Bill Heminger, too.

Prior to the show we enjoyed a Friday night awards banquet at the host facility, the opulent Amway Grand Hotel. Chris and I had the pleasure of dining with Jeff

Burkhart and Jeanine Kral, Jim and Janice Hagenbuch, Bob Ferraro, and Owen Neils. Following dinner a variety of FOHBC awards were presented, and the after-dinner program was a real treat. We had the opportunity to ask questions of a panel consisting of Dick Watson, Norm Heckler, Bob Ferraro, and Jim Hagenbuch. They told stories and shared insights for two hours, and the crowd still wanted more. We heard tales of wonderful finds, anecdotes about legendary collectors, and opinions on topics ranging from e-bay to bottle values. The audience was spellbound.

Show chairman John Pastor had arranged an impressive selection of speakers who offered a nice variety of morning seminars prior to the Saturday afternoon set up. Wayne Lowry, the Jar Doctor, spoke on bottle cleaning. Red Book author Doug Leybourne covered fruit jar closures. Carl Sturm discussed dating black glass. Dann Louis shared information on collecting cures. Dan Simons led a discussion of Michigan bottles, and Dr. Darell Erickson addressed infant feeders. I took in Rick Ciralli's very informative session on Connecticut glass, and I also attended Mark Vuono's excellent Historical Flask presentation.

The DeVos Place facility was ideal for this show. The loading dock was large, allowing roughly a dozen dealers to pull up and comfortably unload at one time. Friendly volunteers were available to help in any way possible, and before we knew it our goods were all tucked under the table, awaiting the afternoon set up. When set up finally arrived, the air was fully charged with that special excitement only a bottle show can generate, and sales were strong. A lot of money and a lot of glass changed hands across the 200-plus sales tables during the Saturday set up and the Sunday show, and a good deal more was spent at the Saturday evening auction.

After enjoying a complimentary spread of tasty hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar, an eager crowd of collectors and the just plain curious filled the room to partake of a fun and interesting auction of over 80 quality lots. Norm Heckler served as auctioneer for the event and kept the crowd on its toes with his witty style. Even Chris was in

attendance. When a nice amber Chestnut Grove Whiskey caught her eye, and she observed that it might look good in the living room, I knew what I had to do. The piece came home with us. Highlights of the auction included a green Dykma poison (a Grand Rapids bottle) which brought over \$2000; a rare, ice-blue Saratoga-type

mineral water from tiny Fruitport, Michigan, which also commanded over \$2000; and a green Drake's Plantation Bitters which saw heated bidding up to \$10,500. Following the auction we had a chance to enjoy drinks and catch up with Norm and Junne Barnett, Adam and Phyllis Koch, and Dick Watson.

Before we could blink it was Sunday afternoon and hurried farewells were heard above the rustle of wrapping and packing. Kudos to John Pastor and his volunteers for staging a national show which set the bar high and exceeded it. I wish everyone could have been there.



Large Examples of Rare Poisons - Jim Adams & Jerry Jones

## AND MORE DISPLAYS



Target Balls & Wild West Display - Ralph Finch



Victorian Illumination Lamps - Rick Baldwin, Mary Ballentine, Margie & John Bartley



Prohibition Beers - Chas Ford



Chicago Sodas Before 1880 - Jim & Jodi Hall



< Kerr History - Doug Lebourne & Jim DeGrado



Chicago, Illinois Beers - Tom Buettner



Torquay

**SPARKS  
PERFECT HEALTH  
FOR KIDNEY AND LIVER  
DISEASES**

“ Mr. William H. Sparks began making Sparks Perfect Health medicine in 1865. His concoction was finally patented on January 31, 1888 for the Sparks Medicine Company of Camden, New Jersey. Sparks Perfect Health enjoyed moderate success especially when the First Lady of the Land, Mrs. Grover Cleveland, endorsed its soothing virtues.

Mr. Sparks may not have stayed in business very long, but he has given us two great medicine bottles. In addition there are smaller sample bottles in amber and in aqua along with a matching shot glass. All these are considered rare.

There is a debate over which of the two great bottles came first:

- Sparks Kidney and Liver Cure or
- Sparks Perfect Health for Kidney and Liver Diseases

History and tradition are not helpful, so the choice is yours. ”

Dewey Heetderks  
Grand Rapids, MI




Above and left: Dr. Sparks Bottles & Go-Withs - Dewey Heetderks