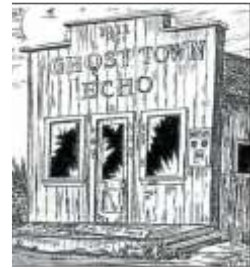


# GHOST TOWN ECHO

FALL/WINTER 2014

---



President: Niel Smith

VP: PETE HENDRICKS

TREASURER: WARREN  
LHOTKA

SECRETARY: KEITH  
FERGUSON

## DECEMBER MEETING

Friday DEC 12 2014

TOPIC: **Annual Holiday Potluck** – bring dish to share  
with your family and WBCA friends

---

## Fall Meeting Highlights

Hello fellow collectors and all folks interested in the antique bottle hobby! We are experimenting with a quarterly newsletter this month to see if this will generate interest in someone stepping up to the plate to become the regular editor for this fine organization!

We have had three successful meetings since the beginning of the calendar year and have seen a marked increase in both participation and interest in expanding others knowledge of glass manufacturing and categorizing of types of bottles and related historical context.

- Our first meeting in September highlighted members' finds of the summer which is always popular and wets the appetite for the coming year of fun! There were many examples of dug objects, eBay conquests and general informational tidbits for those in attendance. We discussed the Reno show which, while fun, was somewhat disappointing for those who attended as sales were less than in years past due to date changes and the venue which was sub-standard and led to less participation in several members opinions! There however, deals to be had and several members showed off items such as: Drakes Bitters, a Rick Rack Hotaling from Portland and historical flasks a plenty!
- Our October meeting highlighted not just 'spooky' themes, but odd forms and color and was really an informative with participants showing of bottles that don't usually see the light of day very often.
- Finally, our latest meeting involved a great suggestion from a member who wanted to learn about how to recognize Pontils! What a great turnout this was with people bringing every type of pontiled bottle possible. There were bottles with iron, tubular and ground glass present along with "runs" of famed patent and proprietary medicines and a very informative presentation by members who correctly dispelled myths about re-fired pontils. I personally learned more than I had in a long time at a meeting. There was even a substantial display of pontiled bottles that were dug in Washington State proving that persistence and perseverance can really pay off!

As said earlier, each of these meetings saw an increase in participation with some members bringing displayable items that not only increased our common ties as a collecting community, but strengthened the interest in education of antique glass in general! It was exciting for this President to see folks really 'digging' out bottles that they themselves commented, "I had no idea anyone would take such interest!" Well that's what it's all about folks!

Always need your story ideas or articles. Go paperless today! Email us at [wbcaweb@gmail](mailto:wbcaweb@gmail.com)

## THE BIG THRIFT STORE FIND by President Niel Smith

As most WBCA members, I am a thrift store junkie of the worst kind!! My wife Ellen and I frequent at least 3-5 thrift stores a week in search of treasure for our collections, or eBay sales. Most times we strike out, but persistence is key and with constant discipline we average ten or more valuable finds a year (about one a month) So back in October of this year I got a wild hair while at work one day and ventured out on my lunch hour to a Seattle suburb where I have had luck in the past (back in 1992 I found an Amber Flaccus fruit jar for \$1.00 in perfect condition) In 20 plus years of serious searching that's the best antique bottle I ever found at a thrift store. They show up from time to time, but usually you just hear about the 'lucky find' someone else had. I see a lot of junky \$1 bottles, but the good stuff is very illusive just like everywhere else I search.

This day was different than most in that I had a "feeling" that was unstoppable like I just knew that there was something out there. In England if you are good at antiquing you are called a "Divvy" like the divining rod user who can detect water, or Gold ore. Well, I was feeling it this day, so off I toddled toward 4 thrift stores which sit within a mile of each other and usually don't produce, but you can always hope. For some reason I can't explain I was drawn to the one I always find the least productive of search areas. As I entered the store I started my usual search pattern. Every store I go to on a regular basis I have a defined 'pattern' or path. On the very first shelf there was a Weir bailed heavy stoneware jar! Wow! That's weird....you don't usually run across those and it was priced at \$39.99 which is typical for thrift stores who seem to find ridiculous over-valuation in EVERYTHING that is actually old! As usual I shook my head in disgust and moved ahead with less enthusiasm. On the next shelf was another unfamiliar sight. An embossed barrel mustard jar in excellent condition! This was priced at \$4.99 which is better than the previous item, but sadly that's all it was worth. Oh well, no use crying over spilled milk I must have just had a sense that those 2 bottles were 'calling' me and that I missed the mark by a long shot!



Now feeling discouraged, I decided as a last ditch effort to see what's in the display case. The display case at a thrift store is where all the fancy cheap crystal and otherwise worthless tchotchkes are kept at high prices, but I could use the laugh. Well, I rounded the case and "Boing!!" Jackpot!! The case was filled with nothing but rare and valuable bottles and fruit jars! I'm not kidding, just fruit jars and beer bottles and they were all good ones!! I could immediately see two embossed blob beers from Seattle in green and a bunch more in amber that were embossed. Several of the fruit jars were colored and there was even advertising stoneware too!!

"Open this case NOW!" I screamed at the woman who was fiddling with the clothes racks and she hustled over sensing my urgency. "I need to see all these bottles right now!!" I calmly, but tersely implored. Dutifully, she emptied the case and I marveled at the amount of great stuff that was being put in front of me. Just like the Weir jar, most was overpriced, but the one's I wanted were priced way under value! Yay! The woman helping me quipped, "Why are these so expensive?" I mumbled something like, "Oh, there kind of neat I guess....."

So I ended up with the following: 1) Seattle Brewing and Malting blob in green glass, 2) Bay view split size blob in green, 3) Claussen brewing split Seattle in amber with rare ladies leg style neck,

3) a pure green Crown fruit jar with a wild amber streak running through it, 4) a straw colored mason jar, 5) a stoneware Mason fruit jar (red wing) and a few other great pieces. Now what's



odd is what I left behind. There were tons of neat and desirable bottles and jars left over, but it wasn't worth what the store had had priced them at! A good example was the mint clear Flaccus jar in clear with simplex lid for \$399.00! Yikes!! So in the end I got 10 great bottles and sold them all in one auction for a good profit, but the question begs, where did they all come from?! I mean it's really unusual to see an entire collection make it into a thrift store which means the whole collection was from someone who specialized in beers and fruit jars and obviously had passed away. This can only mean that their kids looked at the stuff

on the shelves and said, "What should we do with all this worthless crap now?" Well they donated it to the thrift store....Oh my god!

So the post script to the story is: Warren Lhotka and Rick Miller, (who are both very knowledgeable) figured out whose collection it was! I took one of the amber beers to the meeting because it had a really old price tag affixed to it and we agreed it was Warren's hand writing. Rick recognized the damage to one of the green beers and Warren said, "I know collected just beers and Fruit jars, Mark Megalea!!" It all made sense suddenly. Mark was an old WBCA member who collected only those two categories and lived in the same neighborhood that I found the bottles in. He had died at least 10-20 years prior, but the bottles had just suddenly all showed up at once in 2014. The only thing we could figure is that his parents had outlived him and they possibly had recently passed away or just didn't know what to do with them and the estate donated them. We will never know! The really weird thing is I went back two weeks later and most of the overpriced stuff that I left behind had sold!! I couldn't believe it! The only thing left was the clear Flaccus jar and a couple of other fruit jars. I was back again just three days ago and it's finally all gone. Like they were never there.....

Never say never, because even a blind pig can find a truffle once and while!

**STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS about The SPRING BOTTLE SHOW - MAY 15 & 15h 2015 at the Kent Commons, Kent Washington.** In the meantime here's where you can get your "fix" on bottles and such.

### **Upcoming Bottle & Antique Shows**

17/18 January 2016- Palmer Wirf Antique show at Clark County Fairgrounds, Ridgefield WA

23/24 January 2015 - Anderson, California Superior California Antique Bottle Club

14 & 15 February 2015 Las Vegas, Nevada The Las Vegas Antique Bottles & Collectibles Club

14 & 15 Feb 2015 - Ocean Shores Antiques & Collectibles Show, Ocean Shores WA

### **21 & 22 Feb 2015 - Aurora Oregon - Oregon Bottle Association (OBICA)**

27 & 28 February 2015 Phoenix, Arizona Bottle Show

13 & 14 March 2015 Chico California - 49th Annual Chico Bottle Show

20 & 21 March 2015 Morro Bay, California Bottle Show