

MIDWEST GLASS CHATTER

MIDWEST ANTIQUE FRUIT JAR & BOTTLE CLUB

Since 1972

Midwest Glass Chatter
May 2012

Club Officers

- *Dave Rittenhouse, Pres.*
1008 CR 900 W.
Farmland, IN 47340
765-468-8091
- *Richard Cole, Vice Pres./Lib*
2904 W. Moore Rd.
Muncie, IN 47304
765-288-8717
- *Colleen Dixon, Treas./M.C.*
2602 W. Brook Dr.
Muncie, IN 47304
765-281-6973
- *Joe Coulson, Sec./Editor*
10515 Collingswood Ln.
Fishers, IN 46037
317-385-0956

An Index to the Club Lending Library is available online. Please contact Dick Cole about items which you would like to check out.

Membership

The Midwest Glass Chatter is a monthly publication and is a forum through which collectors can share information.

Membership cost is \$15.00 per year, per family, due each December 31. All jar/bottle related collectors are welcome. Send to MAFJBC, Attn: Colleen Dixon, 2602 W. Brook Dr., Muncie, IN 47304

Meeting Minutes, May 1st, 2012

The May club meeting was held at Minnetrista in Muncie, Indiana. Club President Dave Rittenhouse opened the meeting and welcomed 9 members and 2 guests.

Colleen Dixon gave the Treasurer's report for May. There was income from two membership dues renewals. The club continues to maintain a positive bank balance.

Dave brought up the topic of creating a new Show Flyer for our January Show. He would like to emphasize that the show is not just for fruit jars, and that other items will be available. This includes bottles of all kinds, insulators, table-top antiques, and other collectible glassware. Anne Szopa mentioned that our club had a flyer in 1994 that might have illustrations like what Dave is looking for. Dave indicated that it would be nice to show a state outline with a star where Muncie is located.

Dick Cole gave an update on the Club Library. He told us that he received a generous donation from Brona Williams on behalf of Charlie. Dick brought several of the books that were donated: Whitall Tatum & Co. 1880 (catalog reprint); Albany Glass; National Glass Co.; 1908 Catalog of the Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. (reprint); and Hemingray Glass

Co.: A Most Colorful History. Dick told us that the Club Library has been moved from his rental downtown office to his second house ("summer cottage"!) on Euclid. A motion was made to name the library the "Charles Williams Memorial Library". The motion was seconded and unanimously passed. Dick told us that Brona Williams is in good health.

Joe Coulson mentioned that he would not be at the June meeting due to a business trip, so someone else would have to take meeting minutes in his place.

Dave reviewed the list of upcoming bottle shows. The Mansfield, Ohio and Columbia City, Indiana bottle shows are held in May.

Bob and Mary Hilton



from New Palestine, Indiana were the two guests at our meeting. They brought several containers of fruit jars to unload! They were no longer going to do home canning, and they wanted to find good homes for their old jars. Almost everyone purchased something. There were a few nice jars from the 1920s and 1930s.

See you all at the next club meeting,

Joe Coulson, Secretary



Members searched through the jars that the Hiltons brought!

Show and Tell

The theme for Show and Tell for the May club meeting was to bring items made of milkglass, including white, green, blue, or opaque glass.

Jean Harbron couldn't think of any milkglass jars to bring, so she brought some of the first jars she acquired. Jean said that she started collecting jars in 1995. Jean displayed a light green quart Ball (undropped 'a') Special; and an aqua quart Atlas E-Z Seal (purchased at an antique mall in Anderson, Indiana).



Jean also shared a Ball blue quart Ball (undropped 'a') Ideal Pat'd July 14, 1908. This jar was brought back from India by a friend of hers. The jar was found in a cupboard at the Wesleyan Methodist Mission Compound in Pardi, Gujarat, India. It's possible that food was sent to the mission a long time ago from someone in the United States.

Lou Ebert brought his only milkglass jar. It was an older unembossed cold cream jar.

Dick Cole shared the club's 2012 display award pottery jar "(figure of jar) The Leader 2012". There was a mix-up this year on the design that appeared on the award jar. The same design was accidentally re-used from the 2011 award jar (The Leader jar), but it had the correct year (2012).

The company that makes the award jar, Strawtown Pottery (Noblesville, Indiana), made 4 new pottery award jars at the request of Dave Rittenhouse, after he pointed out the mistake. The re-made jars have the figure of a Ball Mason jar on them. Dick told us that he believes June Lowry has the most complete collection of our club pottery award jars. Dick said that he donated one pottery award jar to Minnetrista every year, so they have a big collection too.

Dick had another story to tell us. He was shopping recently and came across honey for sale. The honey was packed in fruit jars. At first he thought the jars might be filled with motor oil, since he was shopping in an automotive store! It turns out that someone was selling the honey for a neighbor. Naturally, being a collector, Dick examined the jars much more closely than the average person. He was very surprised to find the jars had special employee retirement lids on them!

Colleen didn't have any milkglass jars, so she brought a very nice amber set of Trademark Lightning jars to share. She had recently completed the set (pint, quart, half gallon).

Colleen also displayed two big chunks of glass. They were given to her by a friend of hers. The chunks had belonged to her friend's grandparents. The story that came with the chunks is that when Ball cleaned out a furnace, the company would let farmers know in the surrounding area.

The farmers used the fragments for fill and many other utilitarian purposes.



Joe Coulson brought a fancy pint mustard jar made of white milkglass; and a blue milkglass bottle commemorating the 100th anniversary of the American Flint Glass Workers' Union (AFGWU) 1878–1978.



Joe also shared a frosted glass bust of Michael J. Owens, inventor of the Automatic Bottle Blowing Machine.



Dave Rittenhouse dis-

played a milkglass quart figural owl jar; an aqua quart Mason's Patent Nov. 30th 1858 (crude glass character) with a milkglass immerser cap; a large milkglass decanter with a label under glass; a milkglass half gallon reproduction Mason's Patent Nov. 30th 1858; and an aqua quart Triumph No. 2 jar (a recent acquisition).

Anne Szopa brought a fancy pint mustard jar (blue milkglass); a milkglass jelly tumbler; a footed milkglass jelly tumbler with a metal lid for Jumbo Peanut butter; and a blue milkglass snuff jar.



Sue Wilson displayed two plain mustard jars. Both jars were pints, but one was blue and one was white.



Sue also displayed an amber quart Atlas E-Z Seal jar with a milkglass lid. It is believed these jars originally contained apple butter.

Show and Tell, cont'd



Half gallon Mason's Patent



Label under glass decanter



Owl figural jar



Triumph No. 2



Set of amber Trademark Lightning jars



Amber Atlas E-Z Seal



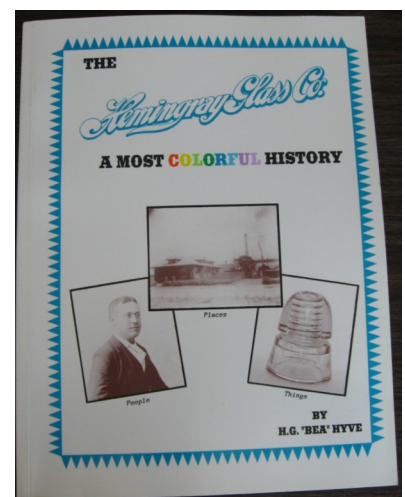
Newer jar filled with honey



1908 Catalog of Hazel-Atlas Glass Co.



Albany Glass book




Hemingray Glass Co. book



The lobby at Minnetrista (during the May meeting) contained an elaborate display of the homes of the Ball family

A Gathering Place By the Water


Do you recognize this scene?



The five Ball brothers, Lucius Lorenzo Ball, William Charles Ball, Edmund Burke Ball, Frank Clayton Ball, and George Alexander Ball, moved to Muncie between 1888 and 1897, a time of expansion and prosperity.

In 1894, Frank, Edmund, and George purchased approximately thirty acres. Located north of the Muncie city limits, the property extended along the White River from Wheeling Pike to the intersection of Walnut and Granville Pikes. A boulevard was to be built along the bluff.

Family lore says that the Ball sisters, Lucina and Frances, created the name "Minnetrista" by joining the words "minne," for water, and "trista," a gathering place. Between 1894 and 1907, the brothers constructed the impressive homes that you see in this diorama.



Lucina Ball

This sign below the display case describes where the name "Minnetrista" originated



LEGENDS OF THE JAR!

[Editor's Note: This article is a result of long time collector and author Bruce W. Schank reaching out to long time collector Jim O'Connor.]

I first met Jim way back at Winter Muncie 2008. Both he and his son John were walking the halls with a couple of outrageous colored jars in their hands. My first thoughts were holy cow; one of those jars is exactly what I'd love to have. I even offered what I believed was a fair price to no avail. Little did I know at that time, that I would be doing these articles and that I would get the chance to go to Jim's home and get his story? Of course I've seen Jim at various Winter Muncie Shows since then and the 2011 Mansfield, OH and he always has great jars when I see him. Both Jim and his son John have fabulous fruit jar collections and between the both of them it's all quite spectacular to behold.

When I arrived at Jim's home I didn't know what to expect. It was a modest ranch in a modest neighborhood. As I waited patiently for him, I noticed a beat up old red compact pulling up behind me and in the car was Jim. He was very congenial and seemed happy that I was there and I was happy to be there too. When I entered his home I was nicely surprised by the first items I saw. Two nice one gallon jars, two rare half pint salesman sample



jars and best of all, in the living room a shelf full of just about the Best amber jars possible that you can assemble in any line-up. My head was already swimming with all of these outra-

geous fruit jars when he tells me his collection is really in the basement. I gulped and said ok, let me get a hold of myself and then we'll go down stairs and take a look-see.



Absolutely fabulous line-up of rare amber fruit jars!

By the way, I was really impressed by his living room floor. It was made with antique bricks and was extremely appealing to the eyes. As a matter of fact, I was floored (pun intended) by the sheer amount of antiques in Jim's home. He collects so many different things including weather vanes, lightning rod balls, insulators, sodas, beers, tins, bottle openers, phones, bells, toys, miniature whiskeys and more. Jim has amassed an incredible amount of fantastic treasures from yesteryears and they all blew my mind. Every nook and cranny in his home has something neat and exciting to see. All I know is I was thinking to myself that this man knows his stuff and he gets around. The sheer mass of the items he has everywhere is mind boggling.



Jim's living room floor was handmade with antique bricks

As I walked down into his basement or should I say antique lair, I was astounded by what I saw. Stuff everywhere and anywhere and yes there were jars too and great jars in many cabinets strategically placed around the basement. It was really cool being down there. Everywhere I looked was a new discovery of some sort. Unfortunately I did not have the proper amount of time to digest all that I saw and all that I needed to do but I made the best of what time I did have.

Jim was born Jan 25, 1939 in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. Jim also grew up there and went to St. Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa

Extremely rare half pint salesman sample fruit jars.



where he received his BA degree. Afterwards he went to the Quad City School of Technology and then acquired a position at the Oakdale TB Sanatorium in Iowa City as the head of the Laboratory. He then went to the University of Iowa for graduate studies and received a Masters in Microbiology and Immunology. Then he took a position at the University of Iowa in the Pathology Dept. in the clinical Laboratory Science Program and remained there for 34 years before retiring in 2001. According to Jim,



Just a portion of Jim's basement chock full of goodies everywhere.

Unusual amber colored Candy jar and cobalt grenade.

he has been running around scouring Iowa since his retirement for anything and everything and I must say, after seeing the sheer amount of stuff he has he's accomplished quite a lot.

When Jim was about 12 years old, his mother bought a Globe amber pint because she thought it was cute. She never collected another jar besides that one. Jim would frequently go and take the clamp and lid off of the jar and he just thought it was really neat. Jim actually started collecting fruit jars when he was 30 years old but that early experience with that pint amber Globe is what drew him in. He was mainly an insulator collector in 1968 but he thought they were becoming too expensive so he became interested in fruit jars and weather vanes and went crazy on them. Little did he know what would become of insulator and fruit prices down the road?

From the beginning, Jim always liked colored 1858's and that's what he started out collecting and although he also thinks Globes are



the neatest looking jars, the 1858 colors just dazzle him. Then he started coming across tough jars in amber so he just naturally wanted to find more different types of jars in general that were amber in color and difficult to find. And believe me; he has lots of gorgeous amber jars in his collection that would make anyone envious including yours truly. Amazingly, for most of Jim's collecting life he was a "closet collector."

He never belonged to a Bottle Club but he did set up at a few different shows namely the Cedar Rapids Show. He told me he also collected anything that caught his fancy for many years. He's owned a lot of really good bottles in his day including many great flasks but he only owns one flask now but it's a really good one.

Jim says he met Leon Shores way back in the 70's and he bought many good jars from him including the Gem gallon, an all original Van Vliet qt and a few nicely colored 1858 quarts. For about five or six years whatever profit Jim would make at a Bottle Show he would turn it



Wonderful colored jars including a very scarce amber quart Mason's Improved Jar.

One of Jim's many cabinets full of great colored jars.

immediately around and buy a good jar from Leon. He also knew John Christianson too whom he had some dealings with. He did get a bottle magazine back then and he would see ads about different shows and always wanted to go. He told me that when the kids were young he really couldn't afford hardly anything let alone drive eight hours to a show and stay overnight. The two main Shows Jim now attends are Muncie and

Mansfield. Although he's been coming to Muncie for the last ten years, Jim told me he wished he had known about it sooner because that is where you see unbelievable jars and best of all meet really nice people. He's made many friends due to Muncie.

What I find amazing is how Jim has picked up so many good jars over the years for practically nothing such as an amber hg and quart N.C.L. Co jars for \$60 and \$50 respectively. All of his N.C.L. jars came out of farm house auc-



tions in the Wellman and Kalona area. Jim would go there and stand all day long waiting for a particular jar to finally come up for sale which usually was at the end of the day. One day 35 years ago Jim saw a ¼ pint National 1876 jar in someone's house. He tried to buy it then but the owner wouldn't sell at that time. So he put his name in the jar and over the years stopped by many times inquiring about it. Finally, three years ago the owner decided he would sell it only this time he had spoken to so-called experts

and knew what the jar was worth. Jim claimed he hemmed and hawed but realized that if he really wanted it he'd have to pay so he did. After all, according to Jim there are only four known examples including his jar? One must remember, it's not always about price but about opportunity.

I drooled as Jim told me about the olive-amber pint 3L Ball Mason with amber swirls he bought one time for only \$40. He said there were two of them there and his wife

wouldn't let him buy the second jar because he was spending too much money. Later defying his wife, Jim called the guy back but the owner of the jar decided he wasn't going to sell it any longer. He told Jim, "Nope, nope, I'm going to keep it. I kind of like it." As he told me about the jar I gasped and started feeling ill thinking



A few of the many insulators in Jim's collection.

about that wonderful second jar and the unbelievable missed opportunity. Maybe that's why I personally don't involve my other half when it comes to buying jars because it would only put a chink in my style. The hobby is best off left up to the collector as far as I'm concerned. I've learned the hard way too that once an opportunity has passed you by it usually doesn't materialize again.

Jim told me a long but very interesting story about an amber N.C.L. midget he acquired many years ago. He was at the Rochester, Minnesota Flea Market (which is just down the road from the Mayo Clinic.) Jim walked into a shop and saw a midget 1858 jar in a case. He couldn't tell what it was so he asked the owner if she could open the case so he could look at the jar. The midget was amber and as he was looking at the jar he thought to himself, "This jar is going to turn out to be a repro midget." Then he felt embossing on the back of the jar so he turned the jar around and low and behold N.C.L. embossed on the back. The owner had \$300 on the jar and Jim asked what her best price was for the jar. The owner said she could take \$250 for the jar and Jim said fine. As he was writing out the check he asked her if she happened to have anymore amber midget jars like this one. Well, she said, "I had one only 1 ½ hours ago but I sold it." She told him that the guy who bought the jar didn't even haggle and just started writing out a check and she thought,



Very nice Leader jars.

Cabinet full of Iowa City bottles.



"Boy, I must have under sold that so that's why I put \$300 on this jar."

Jim the ever curious person that he is asked if by chance she knew who the guy was and she said, "Yes, I have it right here on the bill of sale." The buyer just happened to be the head person who ran the bottle show up in Minneapolis. By sheer luck, Jim and his son John were hooking up the next day to his home in what was a prearranged meeting. Jar Karma? So when they arrived there they asked him how the amber midget was that he bought yesterday. The guy stunned asked how in the world they could know that. Jim told him how he bought one also from the same lady. He was very surprised and said, "What, did she have another one?" Jim told him she had this in the case and showed him the N.C.L. midget. You bought one only a 1 ½ before I got there and said, "You bought an N.C.L. too." He said, "No I bought an amber 1858 with a peened out Hero Cross on the back." He told Jim he'd much rather have the N.C.L. midget but of course Jim wasn't going to sell it. Yet before Jim and John left his home, John ended up buying that midget from him. Wow, opportunity at its best.

This story has a very unusual twist to it though because two years before buying the amber N.C.L. midget, Jim met a lady at a flea market in Iowa City. Looking around her table he didn't see anything he was interested in. Shortly after he left, a lady came by and happened to see a box behind a curtain by another table. She noticed there were some jars in the box and asked if they were for sale. The lady who owned the table said, "Well, I brought those for a man from Cedar Rapids who was interested in some jars I had but if you're interested in them, I'll sell them to you." So she brings the box to the table and there's an amber N.C.L. midget sitting in the box and she sells it to the lady for a mere \$40. Incredibly, that's the amber midget Jim ended up buying. How Sweet It IS!

Later on the guy who was promised the jars came by and asked to look at his jars espe-

All I can say is Wow! I lusted for a few of these jars.



cially the amber N.C.L. midget. So she told him straight faced that she sold it. According to Jim (chuckling about it), the guy just absolutely lost it. He started ranting "That was my jar. You brought it down for me" and literally cursed the lady out and called her every name in the book. He also said, "You sold a jar for \$40 that should be several thousands of dollars" and continued cursing the lady out. After his outrageous temper tantrum the lady told him she would never sell him another jar ever again.

And there's yet another unbelievable twist to all of this. What no one knew was that that lady had another amber N.C.L. midget at home. What are the odds of that? Jim ended up getting that second amber N.C.L. midget from her about a year or so later when she was set up at the show in Minnesota. And even more incredible as it sounds, she sold Jim the jar for the same price as he bought the first jar for from the other lady.



Nice colored lightning rod balls. Notice the old phone.

There's a valuable lesson to be learned here and it's as follows: 1. You get more with honey than with vinegar. 2. The early bird gets the worm. 3. Always look thoroughly when out exploring because it's a possibility you can pass by a great opportunity simply due to oversight. 4. Always ask someone if they have other jars like the one you are buying when you find a good jar. 5. Luck or jar karma goes hand in hand with hard work, determination, beating the bushes and being knowledgeable.

I really enjoyed talking and visiting with Jim. He's a good ole boy with a great sense of humor and he not only knows how to tell a good story, he has plenty of them to tell. I will definitely visit with Jim the next time I find myself in Iowa and this time I'll make sure I have more time to spend because it's worth the time and effort.



Jim holding the 1st jar he ever bought.

Two one gallon jars and a nice colored 1858 quart.



Unfortunately, the blue 1858 quart is stained but it looks nice.



Some great colored Lightning's.



More nice colored Lightning's and Globes.



More of Jim's many treasures in his Antique Lair.

MIDWEST ANTIQUE FRUIT
JAR & BOTTLE CLUB

A jarrific place to share and learn

Send articles and info here:

Joe Coulson, Editor

10515 Collingswood Ln.

Fishers, IN 46037-9598

Email: JCoulson@LeaderJar.com

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.FRUITJAR.ORG

Announcements

- Tammy Johnson is the author of "Rings & Things III" ©2007, a publication that lists over 900 Fruit Jar Ring Boxes along with photographs, manufacturer/distributor information and approximate values. Tammy also maintains a website for ring boxes:
<http://fruitjarrings.multiply.com/>
- Doug Leybourne would like everyone to know that he will be retiring from his life insurance practice of 43 years on July 1st. Doug fully intends to continue the Red Book and is working on the 11th edition. Here is the website for the book:
<http://www.redbookjars.com>
- The Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors website is a great resource. Our club is a proud member of the FOHBC. One of the useful tools on the Federation website is the bottle show listing:
<http://www.fohbc.org/shows>
- Our upcoming club meetings:
July 11th–15th; Summer Muncie Jar-B-Q at The Signature Inn

August 5th; Annual Picnic at Jerry & Colleen Dixon's home

September 2nd; Bring your first jar (the one that got you started); Minnetrista Cantina at 1:30pm



New retirement lids are still being discovered. These metal topseal lids were made at the plant in Muncie. Dick Cole discovered this on a jar of honey that was being sold locally. He was more interested in the lid than the contents of the jar!



This year we're calling the 2012 Summer Muncie Fruit Jar Hotel-Show/Get-Together a JAR~B~Q!

That's because our favorite chef, "BBQ Bob" Rhineberger, is going to be cooking up a mess of meat for all you jar nuts!

Contact the event organizers if you would like to volunteer your time:

Jerry McCann: fjar@aol.com or 773-777-0443

Marianne Dow: finbotclub@gmail.com or 419-455-1112