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[www.nationalbottlemuseum.org](http://www.nationalbottlemuseum.org)

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**General Admission: \$5**  
**Seniors: \$4**  
**Children 12 and Under:**  
**Free**



National Bottle Museum®

*Educating the public on the history of bottles and bottle-making*



# THE BOTTLE MUSE

Fall 2024

## GOODBYE AND HELLO



We say goodbye to Kayla Whitehouse as Executive Director at the museum. But say hello to Kayla as a National Bottle Museum Trustee. We wish her much success at her new job with the State Museum at Schuyler Mansion in Albany, NY. Congratulations Kayla! But welcome back as an active board member! Our interim director, Molly Bingham, took no time rolling up her sleeves for the task at hand. The museum is extremely grateful to Molly for stepping in as we needed. And yes Molly will return to the Board of Trustees also. -A too quick hello but not a goodbye!

And now please extend a hello to our new Executive Director! Chris Leonard hails from Schenectady and since 2018 has been the City of Schenectady Historian. Chris is the owner, principal of Wordsmith Productions. He comes to the museum with many skills from grant writing, web design social media management to interior design. We look forward to the excitement Chris will bring to the museum. Stay tuned!



## FAN RESTORATION

The restoration of the 1896 Columbia Exposition fan is complete. The conservation was supported through the NYSCA/GHHN Conservation Treatment Grant Program administered by Greater Hudson Heritage Network. This program is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. The fan recognizes an award the Saratoga Vichy water received from the expo back in 1896. It will be traveling back to Ballston Spa from Williamstown Art Conservation Center where it was carefully restored. The fan will be on display at the museum soon!



“ this is a first for us... the layout and information were so interesting. My favorite exhibit was about baby bottles!”

Alex from Northampton, Ma

## FROM BOARD PRESIDENT, ELLIE DILLON

This summer and fall have been a whirlwind at the museum. The volunteer board has engaged in outreach in the community and beyond to educate the public on the history of bottle making. This outreach has been rewarding because it has attracted new bottle enthusiasts and members to the hobby. Please consider joining the museum for the 2025 year. The membership form is attached at the back of the newsletter.



On another note, the museum received a very generous charitable donation from lifetime member Nancy Voehringer. The Museum is very grateful for her thoughtfulness and generosity. We depend on donations and memberships to keep the doors open.

The Annual Meeting is scheduled for November 7, 2024 at 6:30 at the museum. All are welcome. Officers are on second year of appointments so elections will not be held but please join us! Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30pm..

## STATE BOTTLE—MISSISSIPPI

This Bottle from Mississippi is the forerunner of the Coca Cola bottle. In 1890 a coca cola sales person called on the Biedenharn Candy Company in Vicksburg, Mississippi with a 5 gallon keg of syrup and convinced Joseph Biedenharn to sell a soda that became very popular. In 1894 he began to bottle the popular Coca Cola. He is considered the patriarch of the system of bottling Coca Cola. This Hutchison has the typical short neck and stopper with a wire hook protruding from the neck when the stopper was pulled up. — so they were packed upside down in their cases to prevent accidental opening.



Eventually Biedenharn changed to the revolutionary new crown cork bottle which had the trademark Coca-Cola blown into the bottle.

This bottle is part of our 50 State Bottle Exhibit at the museum.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

October 12th - November 23rd: The Many Faces of Water. 2nd Floor Artists' Space

November 7th - Annual Meeting at the museum. 6:30.

November 12th - Ballston Spa Business and Professional Assoc. Networking break fast at museum. 8:00AM to 9:30AM

December –February—Kick off annual membership drive

February 14th 2025 - Village of Ballston Spa Chocolate Fest

## FROM VOLUNTEER DIRECTOR OF THE JRM ARTISTS' SPACE, FRED NEUDOERFFER



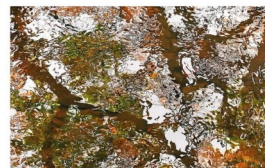
The JRM Artists' Space is a regional art gallery located on the second floor of the National Bottle Museum. The "Artists Space" features changing exhibits of important artwork in diverse styles, ranging from post impressionism to folk art, once again representing the art, history, and technology inherent in all things created by hand.

The Artists Space is lining up its fall and Winter shows. Currently 'The Many Faces of Water' will feature works by George Nicholson and Fred Neudoerffer and will run till November 22nd. November 2nd, there will be an Artists' Talk from

**The JRM Artists' Space**  
@ The National Bottle Museum  
Presents

*"The Many Faces of Water"*

Photography by  
George J Nicholson & Fred Neudoerffer



George J Nicholson



Fred Neudoerffer



George J Nicholson

On Display  
October 12 -  
November 23  
Artists'  
Reception  
October 20  
2-4pm



Fred Neudoerffer

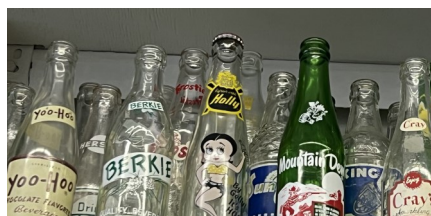
National Bottle Museum 76 Milton Ave Ballston Spa NY 518-885-7589 [info@nationalbottlemuseum.org](mailto:info@nationalbottlemuseum.org)



Some photos from Roy Topka's most recent dig. If only his shovel could talk!



## ON OUR DOORSTEP.....



Many additions to the Museum collection are "doorstop additions". 2 painted sodas recently found their way to the museum. Sodas were

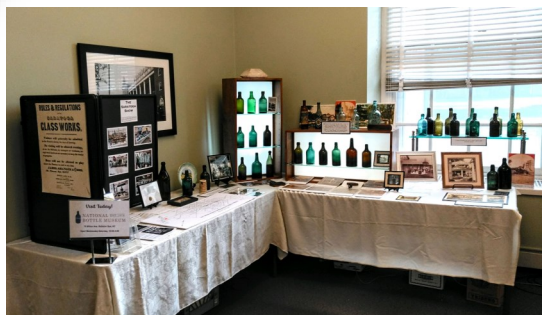
first made in 1806 and resembled ale and spirit bottles. The applied color label process of painting soda bottles began around 1936. These vintage soda bottles have become highly collectible and affordable, too. The National Bottle Museum has a large collection of painted sodas. Trivia fact: Schweppes is the oldest soda brand and was started in 1793.



## ON THE ROAD...

In August, the museum went on the road with its second BYOB (Bring your own bottle) event at the Real McCoy in Ballston Spa, NY. This is an event where people will bring their bottles to have Trustees tell them about their bottle. This invariably develops into a conversation about bottles and how to find them. A few hobbyists have been born at these events!

The International Spa Heritage Festival held at the Hall of Springs in Saratoga, NY on October 6. Adam Stoddard and Phil Bernnard set up a fine display which Roy says "This has raised the bar!" The



display highlighted the springs and geysers of Saratoga beginning with the Geyser Spring in 1870. The photograph here is of the Congress Spring Pavilion with the "new" Congress Hall Hotel in the back ground.

## DIGS AND STORIES FROM ROY TOPKA'S SHOVEL

Most bottle diggers, be they dump diggers or privy diggers, have hopes and dreams of digging their "Holy Grail". To some it would be an extremely valuable bottle, to others an unknown local piece, even if it's broken, because your reward is knowing it exists. One thing all would agree on, the thrill is in the finding. There is no escaping that feeling you get when your deep in the hole, out of nowhere your Holy Grail appears. The moment always stays with you. Indescribable. Over the summer in the construction area I had been digging from the last article, another five whole privies and a partial privy were taken out. They were all cleaned out of their original contents, but the three that did go pontil age had a few things left at the bottom, so I managed to dig three embossed Albany stonies & a green kinsella & Hennessy Albany squat, plus a few plain pontiled bottles.

Digging turned even more sour with the next half dozen pits producing literally nothing, one being a wet monster of a pit that from start to finish took three days and never broke the 1890's

You have to keep track of what's going on in your area, and a lot of time & gas can be wasted checking for new construction and construction sites. But you gotta do it. Such was the case on a project I heard about two years ago. When the area became vacant probing was attempted, and then probing making holes with a 6' bar. Nothing but concrete. Checking maps up into the 1950's (initially only older maps were used) it was evident that at one time or another most of the property was covered in buildings. Months later several existing structures were taken down & trees removed, I secured permission to check the area. With perhaps a foot of top obstruction gone over half the area, I concentrated on a strip of possible unbuilt ground, prying and probing. No luck. Almost a year went by with no activity, just work on other areas of the site, and I consistently made trips to check it.

Then recently, heading out for my normal Saturday morning check of that site I saw over the space of 5 days a huge hole was excavated behind the remaining buildings. Grabbing probe & shovel I headed in. Right behind one of the buildings where a thick cement pad once was I saw an opened dome cistern with fill that looked about 1880's - 1890. It was not bothered with as I knew what my goal was, to hopefully find privies or more likely the bottoms of privies, anything that

might have been missed by the excavators. There's no telling what, if anything, might be found. Much of the area was quickly eliminated leaving me to concentrate where the trackhoe was still removing dirt. Older glass and ceramic shards were noted in the ground disturbed by the Trackhoe with a higher concentration in one area. I shoveled away some overburden and hit darker earth & more ceramics. Using my probe there was no depth to the deposit & no kind of wall, usually wood, that could denote a privy structure. Using my hand to dig into the dirt it was a surprise to find a bottle. It was more of a sudden surprise that it was whole, a nice I. Covert's Balm of life. Nothing else came out of what I would say was privy contents, somehow left from previous demolition & excavation. I put the bottle in my pocket & stood up, and at eye height noticed a glint of glass in front of me. Expected a shard, I found myself holding another I. Coverts!! This was truly amazing and almost weird. Just a week earlier at the Albany bottle show I had been talking to good friend Mark Yates about his finding an I. Covert's in a privy dig, and how sometimes someone digs a rare bottle and all of a sudden others are found. This is truly an amazing, unpredictable hobby. The next day found me back digging the cistern which contained about 4' of 1880's ash & a few bottles before turning into clean fill & full of water. The next two days the site was visited after work was done. Each day the remainder of an early (c. 1830) privy was located, one about 10' away the other about 15' away from where the Covert's were found. It is possible either one of these pits could have had the Covert's bottles in them, and I was in the right place at the right time to find them. I have to admit I wish I could have found the bottles in one of the privies; worked all day in the black muck that is these older holes, and victoriously pulled one out. I could not claim these as privy dug bottles.

That was not in the cards this time. I had found, not dug, two great bottles. Regardless, I will be thankful I persevered, put my time in, and was graciously rewarded. I don't feel too bad. Take care all, I hope you have great fall digging,

Pics on panel page 5.



## National Bottle Museum

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Ballston Spa, NY 12020

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It's that time of  
year...  
Don't forget to  
renew your  
membership.

The museum  
appreciates your  
support!

## Memberships, Donations, and Grants

(as of 3/2024)

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Village of Ballston Spa    Town of Milton  
Charitable Donation—Nancy Voehringer

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In memory of Sonny and Joan Tyler



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**Memberships, Donations, and Grants**

(as of 6/2024)

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**BOTTLE MUSEUM**

76 Milton Avenue, Ballston Spa, NY 12020  
**518.885.7589** [www.nationalbottlemuseum.org](http://www.nationalbottlemuseum.org)

Membership Renewal Form:

**Annual Membership** in the National Bottle Museum is open to one and all in the following categories:

- \$20 to \$49 – **Friends**
- \$50 to \$149 – **Supporters**
- \$150 to \$499– **Benefactors**
- \$500 and up – **Patrons**

The National Bottle Museum is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational institution chartered by the Board of Regents of the New York State Department of Education. The museum is not subsidized, but raises all of its own funds and is governed by an elected volunteer Board of Trustees, operating under universally accepted museum policies. The Museum is a member of the Ballston Spa Business and Professional Association, the Southern Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce, and the Museum Association of New York.

Members receive a quarterly newsletter containing information on the museum, and the history of glass bottle manufacturing, identification, and collecting. Each June, the Museum sponsors a Bottle Show & Sale known as “The Saratoga Show” which attracts enthusiasts from coast to coast in the United States and several provinces of Canada.

PLEASE PRINT NAME AND FULL MAILING ADDRESS

Please make checks payable to National Bottle Museum and mail to:

**Membership Chairman**  
National Bottle Museum  
76 Milton Ave  
Ballston Spa, NY 12020

Name:		Phone:	
Address:			
City:		State:	Zip:
Email Address:			
Amount Enclosed: \$	Circle One: New / Renewal	Gift:	Date:
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