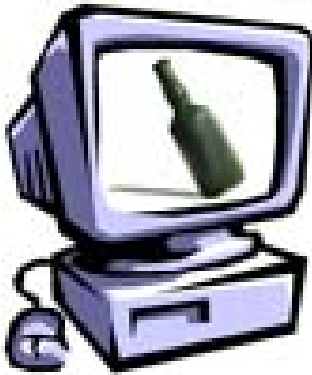


# It's Beyond Me!

*A look at the bottle collector in general in relationship to the ever changing world*

by Stan Hallett



I listened to a presentation a while back given by a long time collector of a specific category of antique that I will not mention here so as not to give away his identity. It was a very nice presentation indeed. The talk moved along at a rapid pace since there was so much information to share and it was a real nice snapshot of his hobby.

Toward the end of his presentation he made the comment that eBay® was ruining the hobby. I let this settle in for the evening and it came to mind later and it began to irk me somewhat. I wished in hindsight that when we were asked if we had any questions that I would have asked how it was that he felt that eBay® was ruining his collecting hobby.

I do remember that he stated that some folks were pricing some of the items way too high and some unsuspecting newcomers were paying too much. Was his concern for the common man paying too much or for prices in general being driven up by newcomers getting into the hobby and thus creating demand and increased prices?

There are two real truths at work here. One is that nothing stays the same forever. The second is that the law of supply and demand is always at work no matter the venue.

The personal computer began coming into its own in the 80's. The Internet really did not come into its own until the 90's. It's usually the kids that really get involved with the new things. The teens of the 80's and 90's are now in their 20's and 30's. Which is most likely the reason that the age of the average Internet user in his mid 30's.

Many of the older duffers get overwhelmed just trying to turn a computer on. The ones with the mindset that says "old dogs can't learn new tricks", are probably the same ones that say that eBay® and the Internet are ruining the hobby.

While the Internet and eBay® will never replace the thrill of the dig, and it will never replace the personal relationships and camaraderie, and it will never be able to take the place of being able to hold a perspective treasure in your hands and hold it up to the light, it certainly is not

going to ruin the hobby. If anything the Internet overall has brought the worldwide-collecting community closer together. It has allowed us to exchange information with each other all over the world in an instant.

Case in point: I collected poisons and as I evolved into the hobby my interests settled on jug poisons. I have since learned that jug poisons outnumber all other antique poison bottle categories combined. Most jug poisons come from foreign countries all over the world. So the fact is that if it were not for the Internet I would not have been able to assemble a small fraction of the collection that I now own.

In addition, I have made many friends all over the world, primarily in Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Australia and New Zealand.

Is eBay® ruining a hobby? I don't think so. But then it has always been true that a fool and his money are soon parted, eBay® or no eBay®. It's the same in live bottle shows and it is on the worldwide web, as always, Buyer beware!

Want to get an idea of the power of the web? I have friends that have collected the same jug poisons that I do for well over twenty years. I just began collecting (with a vengeance I might add) about three years ago. Yet my collection now rivals theirs and I own many jugs that many have never seen before.

While some of you may wait weeks or months between bottle shows, I am involved with buying bottles and exchanging information every day or the week. Ruining the hobby? The Internet has been the greatest boon to collecting ever!

It's clear to me however that most members still have their heads in the proverbial privy. Just look at how few have submitted their information to be included on the online BABC Members list. This is the BABC's Internet face to the world. This is information that some one can use to contact you about an item you may be interested in, or perhaps a sale for you, or just possibly a shared interest. Come on folks, make these wonderful tools work for you!



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