

## **Art Santen “Mr. Opener” (1933-2021) 41 for 41 at JFO Conventions**

Arthur “Art” Santen who was an early member of Just For Openers (#158) passed away July 15, 2021. Art started collecting openers in the mid 1960s after getting some openers passed down to him from his father’s bar business. He thought he had the St. Louis area to himself but he kept hearing dealers at a flea market say there was another guy buying openers. It was during the mid-1970s when he finally bumped into the other collector, Ollie Hibbeler. They began a life long friendship collecting openers.

Art had his own way of collecting and bought anything that would open a bottle so just not beer or soda advertising openers but anything and I mean anything. He took over the Just For Openers Editor’s job in 1989 and ran the newsletter for five years before I took over in 1994. We had several collectors in JFO who never traded out of their collection unless they had a double and Art never did until the late 1990s when he traded a couple out and finally in 2010 decided to concentrate on Anheuser-Busch and Micro openers. In 2011 I started selling his U. S. Beer openers and by then estimated he had over 40,000 openers (counting duplicates) in his collection. One his side collections was trying to getting to 1,000 different beer brand or company beer advertising openers and had accomplished that feat by 2010. When the micro brewery market took off that made his quest much easier.

Early on it was any openers but he always had an affinity for Anheuser-Busch openers and corkscrews since his father’s bar had been near the brewery. When he decided to start selling in 2018 he held onto a lot of A-B openers as they were his babies. Over the years he made many trips to the brewery to buy new openers and a few local gift shops carried them as he always those places also.

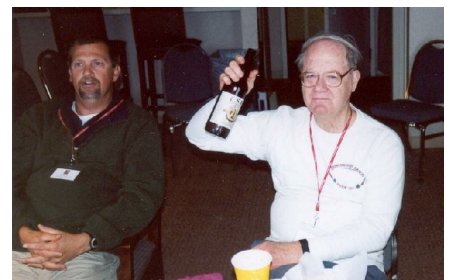
When I took over the Editor’s job in 1994 I was not into plastic openers too much and always kidded Art and called him “Mr. Plastic”. A lot of his plastic is sitting in my closet now. He said you really need to appreciate all aspects of the hobby and he was right. It took him many years to start using a computer and always kidded his fellow JFO members about “battling out” for openers on eBay. He starting really liking computers because he could learn lots of information about old and new breweries.

Another passion he always had was bringing a display to the JFO Convention. He always had some kind of display and many had been labor intensive to put together. He won numerous awards over the years. I always chuckled in 2006 when wife Dorothy passed away, he quickly filled up the house with his openers. She had limited him to certain rooms in the house but after her passing took over the whole house.

He was a walking encyclopedia of knowledge about the history of St. Louis. I got a couple of tours of the town and he seemed to know everything about every old building in town. Art was also known for volumes of handwritten notes he kept to catalogue his collection. He had a bunch of little black books and each one was dedicated to a year so he had lots of little books. After redoing the Handbook in 1994 I could never convince him to transfer all of his notes into the new Handbook. He had his method and he stuck to it.

Once he started selling in 2010 I visited his house many times. As with many big collections you always saw something you had not seen before just because he had so much. Art was a one-of-a-kind collector and there has not been or never will be another collector like him. Condolences to his sons, Steve and Scott and his daughter, Susan. The opener hobby lost a giant of a man.

Right: Art with John Cartwright at the 2004 JFO Convention in San Francisco.





A final tribute to Art Santen: he attended the first 41 JFO Conventions.

A great St. Louis Missouri ambassador. He rented a ride on a plane and flew over the Gateway Arch the day it was completed on October 28, 1965.

He loved all openers but especially Budweiser, St. Louis and Missouri openers and corkcreepers.

Also included are newer plastic openers. He had a collection that will never be duplicated.

RIP Arthur Santen



[www.guinnessworldrecords.com](http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com)

10 May 2005

Arthur Santen  
6126 McPherson  
St. Louis  
MO  
63112  
United States

Dear Arthur Santen

I am pleased to inform you that you have been successful in setting a new Guinness World Record under the category of 'Largest collection of bottle openers'. A certificate to commemorate this achievement is enclosed.

Details of this record have been entered into our records database as follows:

The largest collection of bottle openers belongs to Arthur E. Santen (USA) who has amassed 32,411 since 1966.

Although this certificate does not automatically guarantee an entry in our annual book, our managing editors do consider all new records for potential use in future Guinness World Records publications and products.

Once again welcome to the very select brand of Guinness World Records holders!

Yours sincerely,

Scott Christie  
Records Research Services



**CERTIFICATE**  
The largest collection  
of bottle openers  
belongs to  
**Arthur E. Santen (USA)**  
who has amassed  
a record **32,411**  
since **1966**

Keeper of the Records  
GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS LTD

## **Larry Sherk “Mr. Canadian Opener” (1936-2021)**

Larry Sherk another long time JFO member (#175) passed away September 4, 2021. Larry wrote the original Handbook on Canadian Beer Openers but was a leading authority on all aspects of collecting Canadian Breweriana. He wrote a book on Canadian Beer Labels for Canada’s 150th Anniversary. In 2012, Larry donated his label collection to the “Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library” at the University of Toronto. The remainder of his collection was bequeathed to “Niagara College”, which offers degrees in brewing, wine & cider making, & distilling. Larry attended several JFO Conventions over the years and was the go to man on Canadian Openers. He was always willing to share information and anytime he would get an unusual Canadian beer opener he would send me a photocopy. A true gentleman in the hobby and in the early days of eBay you could see who was bidding and most collectors learned pretty quickly if you wanted to something you had to “snipe it” which means bid at the last second. There was some Canadian opener on eBay and for some reason I wanted it and Larry bid early and the first bidder. Swooped in at the last minute and beat him with a snipe bid. I got an email lecturing me that “real gentleman” do not bid against a fellow collector who had already on the item. I just apologized and thankfully we did not bump heads again on eBay. A man with a wealth of knowledge will be sorely missed by all who knew him.



## **Shirley Hibbeler (1936-2021)**

Shirley Hibbeler, wife of Ollie Hibbeler, and the life of the party at a JFO Convention passed away August 15th, 2021. Shirley loved meeting people and with Ollie were great ambassadors for JFO. You always knew when Shirley was in the room. From the early 1980s until 2009 Ollie and her attended almost all of the JFO Conventions. Her daughter told of Shirley’s favorite saying, “When you meet me you may not like me, but you’ll never forget me”. That fits Shirley to a tee. I tried to talk to her once a year after Ollie passed in 2009 and always enjoyed our conversations. She was a great family person and just a great person in general. Our condolences to the Hibbeler family. (Shirley and Ollie at the 2009 JFO Convention in Detroit).



## **Cornelia Hoffman (1930-2021)**

We lost another great spouse on October 28, 2021. Attendees may remember at Quakertown that Ben’s wife was in an assisted living facility. Ben would visit her everyday but after a long life Cornelia passed a month after JFO. She was always by Ben’s side at JFO and any beer show or flea market he went to. She called me her “adopted red-headed son”. I stayed many times with Ben and Cornelia and she would always take care of me. She was a special lady and our condolences to Ben, Jeff, Marlene and their families. (Cornelia and Ben at the 2011 JFO Convention in Cedar Rapids).



## **Jackie Young (1935–2021)**

Jackie Young half of the Joe and Jackie team passed away November 28, 2021. Joe and her were experts in kitchen collectibles with a special emphasis on can openers and corkscrews. They amassed an awesome 40 year collection, were widely known on the mid-west flea market circuit and travelled all over the country building their collection. Jackie was as knowledgeable as Joe on their collection. Jackie had been doing okay but the family said her body just gave out. Joe and Jackie were regulars at the JFO Convention for many years. Pat and Jackie were like sisters. It has been a rough couple of years and JFO has lost several great members but Jackie leaves a huge void in the Stanley's lives. Our condolences to Amy and Stephanie (her daughters) and to their families.



Above is the Syme Patent corkscrew Jackie found for \$35 (sold for \$21,500). Right are two desirable Can Openers: 1873 Champion nicknamed the "Star Trek" Can Opener because it resembles the Starship Enterprise. Very desirable Pat. Pend. piece.



## **Don Williams (1939-2020)**

Don Williams passed away December 20, 2020. Don really started collecting once he retired in 2000. He attended the 2004 JFO Convention in San Francisco. He collected glasses, openers and general beer items with an emphasis on Falstaff. Our condolences to Diane and the Williams family

