

Ben Hoffman (12/14/1928-1/9/2023) #261 “Mr. Pennsylvania”

Ben Hoffman passed on January 9th after a short illness. I first met Ben and Cornelia at the 1987 JFO Convention in Chicago. They were always very friendly and very happy together. The first lesson I got from Ben was anytime we made a deal, he went out of way to make sure you were happy with the deal.

They attended both of the NC JFO Conventions in 1990 and 1991 and at the second Ben had gotten a large collection and he brought to sell. They had driven all day to get to the Research Triangle Holiday Inn and said about 6PM they would turn in early. About 8PM Roger Jarrell and I went to knock on their door and no answer. They had definitely turned in early. For this convention I was staying at home at night and would come back early each morning.



The next morning I come back to the hotel at 7AM and meet Herb Danziger in the hallway. He says Ben has his room open and has a lot of openers for sale. I hurry down and sure enough people are browsing a couple of table full of openers. I always remember Eileen Johnson spotted a M-3 Senate Beer slide-out opener at the same time Harold Queen did. She was closest to it and bought it. Harold always talked about missing out on one he really wanted. I ended finding a few openers and Ben and I ended up doing some trading as I had a bunch of ‘B’ I had gotten from ray Braeuner.

Ben and Harold hosted a great JFO Convention at Reading, Pa. in 1994 and the next year I started visiting and staying with Ben and Cornelia for the Spring ECBA Show at Merchant’s Square in Allentown, Pa. Ben would tell me he had always worked Saturdays and missed most of the local beer shows because of work. He had recently retired and would be doing shows and flea markets every day of the week. At that time he rarely had to travel more than 50 miles to get a flea market or show in area every day and sometimes had to pick between two going on at the same time.

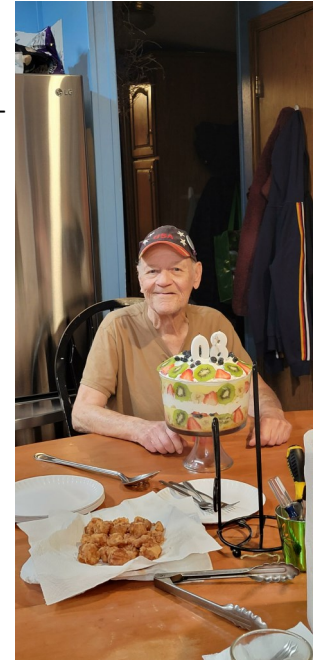
It was also about this time that he had been collecting all openers and still did but really started concentrating on Pennsylvania openers and corkscrews. The next 25 years he amassed the best Pennsylvania opener collection in the world. Ben also started going after micro openers and had an awesome collection of those openers. I made many trips to Perkiomenville over the years and amenities were a little sparse, a single bed and one bathroom for everybody but we had a lot fun. In recent years I had scheduled trips so we could visit Boots Queen and about five years ago Cornelia said she could not handle getting the house for a guest so I started staying at the Hampton Inn in Quakertown.

About this time Ben was slowing up do to bad legs so we usually just hanged out at house and talked openers. I am thankful he made one last Convention at Quakertown in 2021. Unfortunately Cornelia passed shortly after the show. Ben made it to 94 and a great life. The family is keeping the collection as no one will ever match the collection he formed, at least Pennsylvania wise.

Gary Deachman (9/8/1942-7/4/2023) #91 “Mr. Bottle Shape”

Gary Deachman passed in his sleep at 5AM on July 4th, 2023. He was one of the first year (1979) JFO members who was very active in the hobby from day one. For many years he collected bottle shaped or openers with bottles on them before expanding into any Breweriana with bottles and the last few years he had concentrated on older opener types and especially ones with a square hole.

Gary started in Aurora, Colorado in the 1970s collecting openers. He said in the early days he was raising three kids and money was tight but then you could get most openers fairly cheaply. He would hit the local flea markets on the weekends and was told that someone else was also collecting openers and he was hustling around trying to stay ahead of that person until they met one day at a local show. That person was Bill McKenzie and they became fast friends and ended up going everywhere together. Their interest was sparked further when they met Don Bull at the NABA Convention in Denver in 1980. They attended the early JFO Conventions together in St. Louis and Indianapolis (1980 through 1983) before they jointly held consecutive JFOs in Denver in 1984 and 1985. They both amassed early nice collections of openers. Gary from day one liked the bottle shaped openers or openers if they pictured a bottle on them. He won the first two Convention display award contests in St. Louis in 1981 (B & C types) and Indianapolis in 1982 (Corkscrews).



Gary 80th Birthday

I met Bill at my first JFO Convention in 1986 in Ft. Myers, Fl. As usually would be the case Bill had some nice openers available at the Convention for selling and trading. The next year in Lisle (Chicago) I met Gary for the first time. He also had nice openers and I realized I had a lot of catching up to keep up the two of them. Gary and I did some trading and I remember selling him a mint E-19-1 American for a \$1 more than I paid for it (\$11). I also traded him a near mint M-1-8 Liebmann Old Scotch Brew and figured I can get another one sometime. I have never seen a nicer one but maybe a couple came close. The 1988 JFO was in St. Louis with Gary and Bill in attendance. Pat and I had been married less than a year so it was her first JFO. I will always remember walking into Bill and Gary's room and Gary says, "look Bill, he came back." I realize maybe I was an easy mark on dealing. This was the show that I was slow to get up and go down to the Saturday Public Show. Bill and Gary knew that Ray Braeuner was bringing some awesome openers for trading mainly but some nice openers to sell also. They were both down real early and scored some great stuff. Again I was a slow learner.

Gary attended many JFO Conventions over the years and we became roommates when he first came down to the Blue-Gray Beer Show in 2003. We attended many over the next 15 years with many highlights. One year early on I had a NABA Meeting one afternoon and left Gary in charge of selling. There were about 12 zip-lock bags on my bed with any opener being \$5 each (your choice). After my meeting Gary meets me and is all happy giving me \$60 for the 12 bags. Yes he sold each bag for \$5 and not each opener. Word got around the show and the next day, the "lucky" buyer, Erik Amundson came forward. He eventually gave me another \$100 and actually used the bags to start the opener section on his website, Tavern Trove. We had a lot of laughs over the years about this and many collectors would ask me if I had any \$5 bags for sale.

One of my favorite show stories was in 2008 when Gary was really excited about a new show in New Jersey called "The New Show" and he convinced me to come up for the show on Wednesday. It was the first year of the show and we were hoping it would become a fall version of the February Blue-Gray Show. We arrived at the hotel about the same time late Wednesday afternoon and checked into our room. Right off it was strange as we saw no other collectors and

as it would play out only one other collector showed up the next day and it would be Friday before everyone arrived. I am not sure how we got the timing so wrong but we spent two days sitting in the room making deals with each other on openers. This was the first "New Show" and may have been the last at least as far as our attending. In the end we both did pretty good.

One job Gary was always great at was helping with the JFO Convention Auction. Whether it was Vern Vollrath or Jeb Burruss, Gary was great at running or getting bids. There was never an opener no matter how common that he would not present as rare. We had a lot of great auction memories from Gary's time as the "JFO Auctioneer". My favorite was at Omaha in 2005 when Bill Hanold had entered a really nice P-3-1 Pabst Holweg patent corkscrew. Jeb was high bidder at about \$75 and Gary was saying the going going gone but drug it out an extra minute when Mike Krejci made a late entry through the auction back door and starting bidding. Jeb lost out at over \$100 and just kept saying Gary sold have said sold when it was at \$75. We had a lot of fun auction times.

Gary last attended a JFO Convention in 2021 in Quakertown. He always brought some nice openers to sell and always went home with a few treasures. His health problems did not allow him to make shows the past year but he was rehabbing hard when his health went down hill quickly at the end. He made it to 80 and really had an amazing life and left a great family (Dell, Karen, Denise along with Rick and Darlene and many other family members). Anyone who met Gary realized he was one of a kind and there will never be another "Deach". The collecting community lost a great one July 4th, 2023.

A few days after his passing Darlene wrote me and said the kids wanted to move quickly on Gary's Collection. A service was planned July 12th and Rick was planning on packing up the collection and shipping to me. A little back and forth and after searching Southwest Airlines I got a decent flight up to Manchester NH and told her I would come up the 10th, box up the 11th and leave after the service on the 12th. I contacted Gary's good friend, Rus Hammer, and worked with him for me to get the openers and he would pick up the non-opener part of Gary's Collection.

The flight up was touch and go until the last minute but I arrived Monday evening. The family was at Gary's the next morning (North Woodstock NH) and we started at 9AM. I realized pretty fast that this would be an all-day job packing and in the end filled up 10 large flat rate boxes, one medium flat rate box and a large bag of better openers I would carry back on the plane. Gary's kids were working hard to clean the trailer out as his son Dell had a daughter who would be moving in the next week. Rus showed up at 11AM and by late afternoon had filled his SUV up with a lot of Gary's non-opener Breweriana. At one point I told Karen (Gary's oldest daughter) that I could sell on commission or buy straight out. After they discussed the options we went with the straight purchase. Rus did the same and bought straight out what he picked up.

Before Rus arrived the family did tell me that Gary wanted me to have his best beer tray, a Providence Brewing Company tray with an old man drinking and an A-59 Providence Brewing opener sitting on a table. I now have it at my computer table and look it all day every day. When Rus did come in the door it was the first thing he looked for. It is a nice tray. It was late afternoon when I boxed the last of the openers. Rus even looked in storage building Gary had full of cheap cans but told Dell to haul them to the dump.

That evening we had a nice meal with the family at Woodstock Brewing in North Woodstock. After supper I went to



Gary and Rick Atwood

Dell's place (next door to Gary's) and with his wife (Christine) and son (Daytona) help print the labels for all of the boxes. I slept well that night and the next morning picked up the boxes from Gary's place, went to his post office and even though they were not open yet, the postmaster brought a cart out and 11 packages were shipped. Gary's graveside service was mid-day and went well. It was fairly warm and I wore shorts, Rus did also and the minister had shorts on too. Gary would have loved it. Dell and Christine manage a restaurant in town and we all met there for light refreshments and a last get together. I made it back to Manchester in plenty of time and was worried about the large plastic bag of good openers but TSA Security was nonchalant about it and just did a quick scan and I was good. Thank you Deachman family for letting me buy Gary's opener collection. Certainly one of the better collections in the country. Gary always had good tastes (openers and family). The timing was awesome as the NABA/JFO Convention in Chicago was coming up in two weeks.



Darlene and Gary at an early 1980s Beer Show



Gary receiving his second "Best of Show Award" from Joe Balaban at 1982 Indianapolis JFO



Gary giving away daughter Karen (mid-1990s)



Rick with Gary's daughters on either side, Denise & Karen at the 2010 JFO San Antonio Convention



Denise, Rus Hammer, Karen, John S and son Dell after the funeral service