



The Cone Top Brewery Museum Presents “Northern Lights”

by Ken Quaas

Celebrating the “Great Outdoors”
and the enjoyment of hunting

Editor’s Note: This is the last in a series of three articles that features examples of the immensely popular post-World War II outdoors activities of fishing, hunting, and camping as portrayed in beer advertising.

Our first two installments in the Spring 2023 and Summer 2023 issues of this magazine focused on beer advertising that carried fishing and camping themes from the outstanding collection of the Cone Top Brewery Museum. In this issue, we highlight an assortment of period breweriana that portrays “hunting” themes.

Post World War II—a new era

As detailed in previous installments of this series, once the ordeal of World War II had ended, Americans endeavored to put the war behind them, seeking a brighter future. The country’s industries and economy flourished, ushering in a new era of consumerism.

Beer and “The Great Outdoors”

A pivotal marketing theme in this new era of “peace and prosperity” was the opportunity to enjoy (and find peace in) “The Great Outdoors.” From the late 1940s through the early 1960s, the nation’s advertising abounded with scenes of people enjoying outdoor leisure activities.



This classic scene was created by **Harold Anderson** (1894–1973), a well-known commercial artist and illustrator, whose work graced many national magazines, billboards and advertising campaigns. A contemporary of Norman Rockwell’s, Anderson’s work similarly could often be found on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*.

Cardboard sign, Stroh’s Bohemian Beer, The Stroh Brewery Co., Detroit, MI, 14 x 18 in., no mfg. mark, c. 1940s (on loan to the Cone Top Brewery Museum from the collection of Dave Reno).



Cardboard sign, Altes Golden Lager Beer, The National Brewing Co., Detroit MI, 24 x 15.5 in., no mfg. mark, c. late 1950s. This sign appears to use artwork created from photography.

A pair of self-framed cardboard signs for Grain Belt Beer, Minneapolis Brewing Co., Minneapolis, MN, 30 x 36 in., dated 1945, by Inland Litho Co., Chicago, IL. These signs are especially interesting as they identify the range of wildlife available to hunters in the region. The sign showing the animals features artwork by artist J.F. Kernan, who worked in oil on canvas and was noted for conveying humor in many of his works.

Brewing industry ads were at the forefront of promoting these themes—advocating beer as the ideal companion to enjoying the great outdoors. There was an abundance of point-of-sale materials depicting fishing, camping, and hunting scenes. Many of these were beautiful pieces of commercial art created by exceptionally talented artists, whose work also graced the pages of national magazines and periodicals.

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Cone Top Museum’s “Northern Lights” exhibit



The “Northern Lights” experience, as presented at the Cone Top Museum in June 2023 (left), and being enjoyed at the NABA Convention hotel, from July 31-Aug 4, 2023 (right).

To celebrate the “Great Outdoors” as it was featured in Post World War II beer advertising, the Cone Top Brewery Museum created an engaging and interactive exhibit called “Northern Lights.” The display was designed to create the experience of being in a North Woods cabin—the perfect environment in

which to enjoy some of the museum’s collection of breweriana with an outdoorsy theme.

This exhibit was introduced at the museum in Vicksburg, MI in June and July 2023 and was then stunningly re-created for NABA members to enjoy in a suite at the convention hotel in Schaumburg, IL in late July (see article in the Fall 2023 issue).

Hunting for original artwork



Printers proof for magazine/newspaper ad for Old Style Lager, G. Heileman Brewing Co., La Crosse, WI, 10.25 x 7.5 in., c. 1956.



It is a rare opportunity when a piece of original advertising art can be found to accompany the ad for which it is used. Such is the case with this view of a hunter holding a bottle of Old Style Lager. The original artwork is rendered in oil on canvas. Interestingly, the bottle is not part of the oil painting but is instead a paper insert, suggesting that this could have been intended as stock artwork with space for the bottle to be interchangeable for potential use by other beer brands/bottles.

This art was first acquired in 2008 by NABA Creative Director Barry Travis from a seller who had a number of artifacts that had been salvaged from Heileman's archives.



One of Mayo's most famous clients was Texaco, for whom she created this memorable ad, which ran in national publications in 1953. It features the highly relatable scene of a boy wearing a man's hat—in this case the hat of his dad—a Texaco dealer. The focus of the ad is to humanize the Texaco brand, which touts its services that can provide "safer, more enjoyable driving."



Another of Mayo's clients was Zippo lighters, which was the best-selling brand of lighters when she created the artwork for this 1952 print ad.

The artist: Mary Mayo

The artwork of the hunter in the Heileman ad on the previous page was created by **Mary Mayo** (1924-1985). Mayo was among the relatively small but highly talented group of women illustrators of the 1950s and 1960s, who worked primarily for the famed commercial studio Fredman-Chaite in New York, which supplied a great deal of advertising art for the agencies on Madison Avenue in that era.

Mayo was especially known for her wholesome depictions of children and family life, and her work graced ad campaigns for major brands like Campbell's Soup, Texaco, Florida Orange Juice, and General Mills, to create wholesome ad illustrations.



Mayo's work was featured in her studio's brochure, which characterized her beautiful illustrations as coming from "a warm, humane understanding of people." She drew high praise for her ability to capture emotion in the faces of her subjects.

Hunting scenes illustrated by notable artists

The artwork was by **Anton Otto Fischer**, (1882-1962) a well-known German-born, American illustrator for the Saturday Evening Post magazine for 48 years.



Tin-over-cardboard sign, Burger Bohemian Beer, The Burger Brewing Co., Cincinnati, OH, 20 x 15 in., by American Art Works, Coshocton, OH, c. 1940s.

This artwork, showing a happy retriever with a ring-necked pheasant in his mouth, would have been a welcome sign of success to any hunter. It was created by **Reginald Bolles** (1877-1967) an accomplished painter and illustrator who had many works featured on the covers of magazines in the 1920s and 1930s, including for the once-popular national magazines Collier's and Field & Stream.

Not surprisingly from this painting, one of his favorite subjects was game birds. Today, Bolles' original paintings sell at art auctions for into the thousands of dollars.



Cardboard sign, Griesedieck Bros. Beer, Griesedieck Brothers Brewery, St. Louis MO, 18 x 24 in., by Wolff Display Co, St. Louis, MO, dated 1958.



Tin-over-cardboard sign, Burger Bohemian Beer, The Burger Brewing Co, Cincinnati, OH, 15 x 20 in., no mfg. mark, c.1940s.

This visual was painted by noted artist **J.F. Kernan** (1878-1958), who specialized in creating images for the covers of popular American magazines from about 1910 to the late 1940s. His nostalgic illustrations depict the simple pleasures of everyday life, including the enjoyment of outdoor recreation.

This scene was painted by **George Hinke** (1883-1953), recognized for the classic, nostalgic style he used to depict American small-town life, religious scenes, and Christmas themes.

Cardboard "A Typical Minnesota Scene," Kato Beer, Mankato Brewing Co. Mankato MN, 22 x 17 in., c. 1940s.



Pre-Prohibition era Hunting scenes



Lithographed metal sign, John Gund Brewing Company, La Crosse, WI, 24 x 18 in., by The Meek Company, Coshocton, OH, c. 1905.

Hunting scenes in beer advertising existed well before World War II. There are many examples that date to the Pre-Prohibition era, like this beautiful piece recently added to the Cone Top Brewery Museum's collection.

These earlier examples are mostly made from more permanent materials compared to the widespread use of inexpensive cardboard for seasonal point-of-sale signage in the Post-War era.



Self-framed cardboard sign, Kato Premium Beer, Mankato Brewing Co., Mankato and Jordan MN., 16 x 12 in., c. late 1940s. Mankato owned the former Schutz & Hilgers brewery between 1946-1948. This artist's signature can not be identified.



Cardboard sign, F&S Beer, Fuhrmann & Schmidt Brewing Co., Shamokin, PA, 42 x 26 in., c. early 1960s. This sign, with its amusing play on words, seems to show the bears as victors—the hunters are seen in the background running off. The artist is unknown.



Composite, easel-backed sign, Gettelman Beer, A. Gettelman Brewing Co, Milwaukee, WI, 10.5 x 16.5 in., no mfg. mark, c. 1940s. Artist unknown.