By Ione Laffey of Wildwood Crest, N.J.

I have always been a collection kind of gal. Magnets, frisbees, rubber ducks, you name it. The recent chance to remodel my kitchen has allowed me to put the largest of my collections - Coca-Cola memorabilia - on display.

My Coke collection first appeared over thirty years ago when I started acquiring Coke keepsakes from flea markets while in college. Soon family and friends found me easy to shop for and I quickly received Coke gifts. Now that vintage is in, it is difficult to keep all of my collectibles in the house, as my daughter's apartment is already host to a giant Coke ice box and wooden Coke bottle carrier case. Her favorite item in my collection epitomizes the 1970s, a pair of bell-bottom Coke beach pants that sold for $2.98 with proof of purchase.

From salt and pepper shakers to place mats, I can eat an entire meal using only Coke knickknacks. Hobble-skirt Coke bottles from the 1900s, with green raised lettering, are one of the many kinds to adorn my kitchen shelf. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the kitchen is the floor, as red tile has been laser cut into white to show the famous Coca-Cola logo.

While growing up in Wernersville, PA, I remember a man at the drug store pouring the Coke syrup into a small cup and then adding the carbonation. Casting only a nickel, this fountain Coke remains as the best soda I have ever enjoyed to this day. Once Coca-Cola began changing its formula back in the 1980s, I found that it no longer tasted as good as the original. Although Coke is my collection and to this day the best fountain soda I have ever had, you will not find a can of Coke in my refrigerator. It is currently Pepsi that tastes like "the real thing" to me.