

OUR 42ND ANNUAL SHOW (Or Hints on Putting on a Show)

By Linda Buttstead, Secretary
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Well, it's come and gone again and we get a short reprieve from all the work involved putting on our show at The Manatee Convention Center. It was basically the same work as last year, and I started in June again, planning, writing ads, designing the hand out cards, doing a "Letter from the President," applications, contacting hotels for reduced rates for dealers and out of town visitors, and more. Doing one thing here or there, saves time as the show draws closer.

Something to take advantage of, if you are at all computer savvy, is the free posting of your information online. First, write up a small description for your show, then check the papers in your city (and surrounding cities) for their online calendars. Do the same for the radio stations and the television stations. All you have to do, is copy/paste the short description onto the calendars. Now, some TV stations might use the same service (for example Z-Vents) but regardless, post to it for every station—it gives more food for the search engines if someone is doing a search for your show.

Newspapers are another gold mine (besides their online calendars). A lot of daily papers have a small magazine type insert that lists all the events for the upcoming weekend (it may even be called the Weekender). You can use your previous description for submission to these or elaborate as you may have more space. Make sure you start looking in plenty of time to submit to the papers, no less than 3 weeks out from your event. It's worth a phone call to find out who to send the submission to, the fax number or email address, or even a mailing address. For just a little bit of extra work, you get some free (FREE) publicity.

Our show is held in Manatee County, Florida. I submit information to the Bradenton Herald, the Sarasota

Herald Tribune, the St. Petersburg Times and the Tampa Tribune. I've tried other papers, such as the Miami paper. but they let me know it was too distant to put in their paper. It can't hurt, if you want to do some poking online, you can also find some antique or travel magazines from Canada that might just be willing to mention your show in their Travel Section! If it's FREE don't turn it down. The more you spread the word, the more you describe what an Antique Bottle Show is really like, the more folks you will have come through the doors.

This year we had 160 tables full of all sorts of goodies, and manned by some of the most fantastic people we know. I will be the first to admit I am not great at names, so it's good to make the name tags for dealers, and it sure helps the folks that come through the doors looking for the special bottle.

I make signs for the doors, and use two large posters that I created to put by the admission table with photos I took from various activities, also a single page, double sided information/application sheet for anyone interested in a tidbit of antique bottle information and/or joining the club.

One thing our club has at the show is a door prize drawing, usually four or five items, and we don't require the winners to be present. At the entrance where admission is paid, there is a box with forms to fill out, names/addresses/phone numbers/emails addresses and it also states we do NOT sell or give out their information (lots of folks won't sign up if they think you will do that). There are three places to check BY EMAILS ONLY: if 1) you want a show notice only; 2) you get 3 Free Newsletters by email only; or 3) you are interested in joining.

If you charge admission, maybe a wife of a member can help out at the Admission table. Make sure they have enough change, and they know the

details of mentioning the door prize form. This is important as it's not only for your door prize but also for being able to send out show notices by email (free advertising). And if you really want to notify everyone who entered, but don't have their email address, you can make a list of names, and call them, or send a postcard notice about the next show. The good thing about postcard notices is if you mention they will get an extra drawing entry by using the postcard, it will tell you if it's worth the effort on the postcards for the following year.

The club bought signs to put out along the road last year, plus we put them out this year and went around and collected them at the show's end. Just a word of caution, check with Code Enforcement in your area about putting out roadside signs. Our rules had changed for this year.

Anicething about using the Manatee Civic Center is a huge digital display sign with running advertisements for the activities that were happening there. Our show advertisement ran for three weeks last and this year. It started out with a variety of colored bottles lined up, then our show name, the dates, and then three rolling signs with items that could be found inside. Folks are learning that there is a lot more to antique bottle shows, and that's what draws them in, especially if they've never been to one/

We ordered pizzas again this year (45), and also supplied soda, coffee and water, all for the dealers. After all the dealers had gotten their fill, I announced that the early buyers were more than welcome to come help themselves and they sure did. A husband and wife commented on how much they liked our show and were amazed that we also let the early buyers partake of the goodies.

This year we had several T-shirts that I designed for the club and for sale at the show, and they were also used for door prizes. It's amazing the response you get from the winners. First I tried calling them as I needed sizes, but I had to leave voice mails which included our club email address. Most of the winners responded by email and all were tickled they won a shirt. One fellow said he

had bought some nice bottles at the show (last year also), and was tempted to buy a shirt but he resisted. He said he NEVER wins anything and he was so pleased. Another winner stated he didn't expect anything but he was so very pleased and would wear the shirt proudly. I could go on about the responses but you get the gist, it's so nice to hear reports from the people who pay to get in.

It's very important is to have club members willing to volunteer. If they aren't good on a computer, then ask them to volunteer to 1) make coffee and 2) make sure it doesn't run out. Volunteers are needed to help keep the pizza boxes open and removed when empty and napkins and plates supplied. Make sure you buy soda in cans and put them in coolers full of ice, after the dealer gets their pizza—just point at the coolers for the soda, they are gifted folks and will know what to do! Ask for helpers to tape up signs (that go on the doors) or put them up roadside. And if anyone can use a computer, maybe someone can keep in touch with the show chairman and create name tags for the dealers. Any little detail that can be taken care of by someone else, will help free you to help the dealers come set-up time.

During the time before the show, when you visit antique shops, pick up free copies of antique advertising newspapers. Place ads in there, even if it's only for the month before your show, make mention of the variety of items at "bottle shows."

Design 4x6 postcards to be placed in antique shops starting about 3 months before the show. We have 5,000 two-sided cards printed in full color (look for businesses online that will do it inexpensively) and distribute them at meetings for members that live in different cities. They take them (about 25) to each shop, and put them with the other notices there. If anyone sets up at a flea market, put them on the table along with the antique bottles and if anyone shows an interest in the bottles, give them a card! Talk about the show, be enthusiastic about your hobby, ask them if they have any special interests and so on.

Antique shows may have a table for other shows and sales to place their flyers, cards, etc., so make sure you take advantage of these locations to. What better place to pique the interest of folks that are more likely to come to your show. Don't be a lump on a chair, the more you talk with folks, the better it is.

Definitely place ads in the magazines devoted to bottle collecting! It reminds folks that the show is coming up soon. You can get a display ad at a reasonable price, and if your club bank doesn't allow for much paid advertising, they will run a line ad for your show at no cost. Some of the antique advertising papers will do that also.

Oh! One thing you can't forget is to post your event on Craig's List under events for your state/city area. It's free and runs for a considerable amount of time. It can be tricky. Make sure you sign up with Craig's List, use a name

and a password and don't forget to write it down immediately. When creating the ad, you can receive requests for information by their anonymous method which you need to use, otherwise, if you use your real email address, you will get spam out the ears.

Another person not to be forgotten is the show chairman (ours is a wonderful guy named George Dueben). I don't know the half of how he does what he does and keeps it all organized! He runs to the post office daily to check for applications, keeps lists of who paid what for how many tables, sends postcard acknowledgements, AND THEN he has to plan for which dealer wants to be next to another dealer, and still allow for the dealers that want to stay where they've been for years. Once the day of set up arrives, George has a layout of the tables, all numbered in coordination with the list of dealers names, and he places numbers on the appropriate tables, so when the dealers arrive, all they have to do is look at the list and the layout and they can walk straight to their tables. (We won't mention that this changes from year to year).

Now you have an idea of what is involved in show planning, what ideas you can come up with to get the word out. You will be surprised how many folks out there collect bottles in your area and never knew about the show. Placing contact information for your club, on the handouts and flyers may also bring new members to your club.

Remember the adage, "the more the merrier."

Where there's a will there's a way to leave Donations to the FOHBC

Did you know the Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors is a 501C(3) charitable organization? How does that affect you? It allows tax deductions for any and all donations to the FOHBC.

You might also consider a bequest in your will to the FOHBC. This could be a certain amount of money or part or all of your bottle collection. The appraised value of your collection would be able to be deducted from your taxes.

(This is not legal advice, please consult an attorney)

I give and bequeath to the Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors, 401 Johnston Ct, Raymore, MO 64083, the sum of \$ _____ to be used as its Board of Directors determines.

The same type wording could be used for bequeathing your collection or part of it, however, before donating your collection (or part of it), you would need the collection appraised by a professional appraiser with knowledge of bottles and their market values. This is the amount that would be tax deductible.

Thank you for considering us in your donation plans.

Gene Bradberry, President

Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors