

## Fletcher 'shocked' by nomination to Federation's Hall of Fame

By Bill Baab  
*Southern Region Editor*

Last March following his nomination to the Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors Hall of Fame, I e-mailed Johnnie Fletcher to learn his reaction to the news.

"I was absolutely shocked when Ed Stewart called with the news," Fletcher declared. "I had no inkling that I had been nominated for any FOHBC honors until his call. In fact, when Ed told me about the nomination, I just sat there, stunned, for a few seconds because I didn't know how to respond.

"Anyway, I am very appreciative of the honor and the people who nominated me. Over the years, I've seen other people nominated to the Hall of Fame and remember thinking, 'They sure deserved it.' I just don't picture myself in the same category and even now I'm wondering if I'll get a call telling me, 'Sorry, a mistake was made in your selection.'

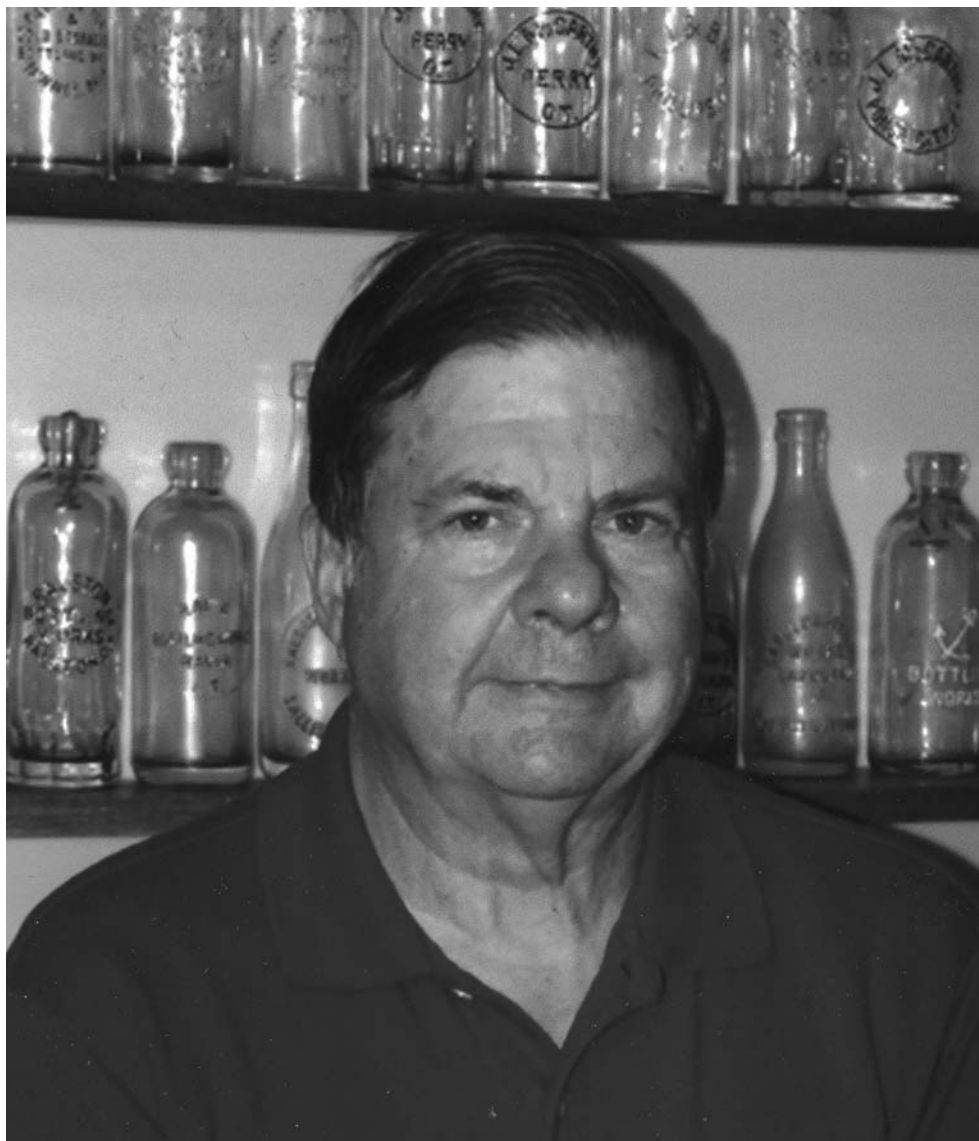
"Until then, I'll be very thankful about all the nice people in the bottle collecting hobby of which I play a small part."

What made the whole thing so satisfactory to Fletcher's nominators was that the original intention was to put him in the FOHBC Honor Roll, no little honor in itself. But at the Federation meeting during the Baltimore Bottle Club show in March, board members decided Fletcher's contributions to the hobby deserved the ultimate honor.

Fletcher's friends and sometime digging buddies Stewart, who lives in Paola, Kan., and Kenny Burbrink, from Newton, Kan., designed the book containing messages from nominators during the fall of 2008.

Nominating letters were from myself; Richard Carr, president of the Tulsa Antiques & Bottle Club; and collectors Jerry Callison, Ed Tardy and Mark Wiseman.

As Southern Region editor, I am a direct beneficiary of Fletcher's work as editor of the *Oklahoma Territory News*,



newsletter of the Oklahoma Territory Bottle & Relic Club which he helped found back in 1987. He volunteered to be newsletter editor and it appears to be a lifetime position.

He is closing in on 300 newsletter issues. One can sense his enthusiasm for the hobby in each issue, which rewards readers with digging adventures, Oklahoma bottles sold on eBay and other features. He complements his stories (sometimes written by himself, other times by Mark Wiseman of Des Moines, Iowa (with Elsie the Pup), Stewart, Burbrink and others).

I have no problem adding excerpts from many of those stories to my

Southern Region reports carried in *Bottles & Extras*.

In addition to finding time to go digging and handling the newsletter, Fletcher also has published a number of bottle books. I just purchased a copy of his *Kansas Bottles, 1854-1915*, which contains a fantastic amount of well-researched information in its 389 pages. I also own a copy of his *Oklahoma Drug Store Bottles* book. Another Fletcher book is *A Collector's Guide to Oklahoma Bottles, 1889-1920*, and he is working on a book about St. Joseph, Mo., bottles.

Other Federation honors include Best Newsletter and Best Story awards in 2003.