



Federation of Historic Bottle Collectors

President :

President's Message

Spring 2003

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Most of you will receive this issue just after the close of the Louisville National Show. I hope that many of you were able to attend and that those of you who sold had a profitable show, while those of you seeking additions to the collection found the item you have always dreamed of owning at a bargain of a price! The collectors in the Louisville area, Show Chairs June and Wayne Lowry and your Board have enjoyed the opportunity to bring you this show and we look forward to providing you with a superb EXPO in Memphis, August 13-15, 2004.

I am at the one-year point of my two year tenure as President of this fine organization. This seems an appropriate juncture to comment on the changes which have occurred in the organization over the past 12 months.

When I agreed to allow having my name placed in nomination for the position of President, I had no inkling what lay in store for me. Within a month of that decision, I was advised by our previous Editor, David Cheadle, that he would be leaving his position and entering into the ministry. Our Business Manager, Wendy Smith, had given notice several months prior that she would step down in August, 2002, but no candidate had been identified to replace her. We'd had no Advertising Manager for at least a year, plus we had a publications budget that was wildly out of control surpassing our income from all sources by several thousand dollars each of the prior three years.

Before these matters came to the fore, my primary goal for the organization was fairly straight-forward—to establish a budget that did not require dipping into the investment funds we hold, so that those investment funds remained available for future programs to be developed by the Federation. That goal has remained the centerpiece for what we have tried to accomplish over the past year and we have come very close to reaching that goal. No

monies have been withdrawn from the investment funds in the past twelve months. Although we continue to spend slightly over what dues, alone, will support, other Federation functions have helped make up that difference— income from the National Shows, income from the Federation sponsored auction, advertising income, as well as donations from our Life members, Board members and others.

My sleepless nights about what to do about a new Editor were, happily, answered by a suggestion made by Bill Baab (our Southern Region Correspondent), that I contact Kathy Hopson, who was publishing an online periodical *The Soda Fizz*. Kathy has made my job as President a pleasant one. I commend her for the improvements she has made in the magazine, for her efforts with the newsletter and her willingness to take on many additional duties. The improvements to the website (www.fohbc.com) have been due primarily because of her resolve and industry. Kathy's job could be simplified, and the Federation put in a more comfortable position for the future, if individuals interested in serving as an Associate Editor could be identified. If you have interest— please contact her!

I am pleased to have June Lowry on board as our new Business Manager. After three months of serving in that capacity I was thrilled to have my work load cut considerably, allowing me to begin to answer other matters requiring attention. Still, it was probably good for me to perform this function for a period of time, as it identified certain procedural matters that were interfering with membership renewals and pointed out certain problems members were having. I hope that many of these matters have now been addressed and that we will function more smoothly as an organization. If you have concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your Regional Representative or myself.

Alan De Maison has recently joined the Board as Treasurer, following the passing of Elma Watson. I am impressed and encouraged by his thoroughness. Bill Wrenn has offered to take the Advertising Manager position and I am looking forward to working with him as we try to improve that section of the magazine.

We have tried very hard over the past twelve months to make this organization more responsive to its members and I will continue to strive in that direction over the remainder of my term. You, as members, can help us in a number of areas— please consider taking advantage of the free "For Sale" ads we have offered you and consider placing block ads and "Wanted" ads (these will be very appealing to those seeking additions to their collections or wanting to sell items and it makes generating additional members through the magazine much easier). Attend or sell at the National Shows. Consign a nice piece or two to the Federation auction, buy a catalogue (even if only for reference), and bid on the items we offer. Offer your assistance to your Regional Directors. Let us know of your likes, dislikes and suggestions for improvement. Lend your enthusiasm to our members by writing about the items you collect, auctions, digs, shows and new finds. And, finally, please consider running for the Board in some capacity. New ideas will move this organization ahead in this new century! The hobby is changing – the approach of the Federation will, as well, with new and insightful members and leaders!

Ralph Jay Van Brocklin, DMD