



# FOHBC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



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I really cannot believe how fast time flies by. I sometimes, amusingly to myself, create arbitrary gauges of distance and time. For instance, the distance from the larger United Airlines planes at O'Hare Airport in Chicago to the smaller United commuter planes, when I make a connection, is four Starbucks walking distance away or Elizabeth and I passed 100 or so exits with McDonald signs traveling to the Lexington National from Houston. Since the last time I wrote a President's Message, there have been so many glass auctions or bottle shows that dates and events become a blur, my mind has to grab on to something. I realize I am rambling but...time flies, especially if you are having fun. Bottle collecting is fun.

I have been carrying something around on my chest that has been weighing heavily since the 2014 Lexington National Antique Bottle Show, this past August. A respected FOHBC member and past Board leader, came up to me and was rather upset that starting in 2016, our national shows were going to be an extra day and called a "convention." It's basically the Expo format, which we have every four years. He said this was too much time, and if I did not believe him, he said I should "ask the dealers." In a way, we already have because many of the board members are dealers and regional representatives and we certainly try to listen and look out for the best interests of the hobby and membership and try to stay as connected to each and every one of you if possible.

Our typical National Show has dealer set-up and early buyers on Saturday afternoon and General Admission on Sunday. The new Convention format is dealer set-up and early buyers on Friday afternoon and General Admission on Saturday and Sunday. Again, just like the "Expo."

I see why this might be too long, especially if our show is poorly attended and was a non-exciting show. Sunday afternoon drags on. We have all been there. But let's look at why our shows should be longer.

1. The Federation Bylaws state, "There shall be a national convention held annually during the summer unless otherwise voted on by the Federation membership. Typical convention activities may include sales tables, educational seminars or programs, educational displays, a banquet, recognition of Hall of Fame and Honor Roll members, an auction, a general Federation membership meeting, a Board of Directors meeting and other functions and events as approved by the Board. If possible, the convention shall be held in a different geographical region each year, on a rotational basis from the Midwest to the Southern to the Western to the Northeast region." You can read the rest on the FOHBC web site under Bylaws.

2. We need to distinguish our show from a regional or local show; many are either two days or one and one half days like our typical national show.

3. This is our national show and a good chance for many of us to connect with friends we may have not seen in a year or more.

4. Many National Show attendees make a special vacation or excursion out of the show. Visiting collections, site-seeing or connecting with family to and from. They may be traveling a substantial distance in a car, train or plane. Some come from overseas.

5. Our shows have gotten bigger and better with our annual board meeting, general membership meeting, registration, membership sales, cocktail party, banquet, awards, seminars, auctions, bottle competition, displays, raffles, contests, etc. We are busting at the seams. An extra day is needed. Having the bottle competition right after the banquet is problematic. Having the general membership on a Friday, before many people arrive, is not right. Maybe we spread out the seminars too so you do not have to decide.

6. Many persons including myself never get a chance to see all the tables and vote on a display. We are so busy on Saturday. Sunday would be a great day to catch up and truly enjoy the show room floor.

7. Other national groups have longer shows like the National Insulator Association Convention and Show (3 days), Brewery Collectibles Show & Crownvention (3 days), International Perfume Bottle Collectors (3 days), National Association of Milk Bottle Collectors (3 days), etc.

8. Sometimes the public attendees are busy on Saturday and visit our show on a Sunday. Sometimes they are busy on Sunday and need the Saturday. We need flexibility.

9. We need room to arrange site-seeing tours. If per chance a National Convention was ever in my hometown of Baltimore, I would try to have organized tours to the B&O Train Museum, Washington Monument, Bromo-Seltzer Tower and Fells Point. These location have a direction relationship to the bottles we collect. There are tons of other destinations for visits prior to or after the show with less of a direct relationship.

10. Personally, after packing up, traveling and attending a national show, I am amazed at how fast one and a half days goes. A lot of work for a short period of time.

11. We need more children, teenagers and young adults to attend and participate. They are busy on the weekends as you might imagine. They need an option. We could have scavenger hunts, show-and-tell and simulated bottle digs on the showroom floor. Wouldn't that be cool?

12. Some attendees like an extra night for dinner out on the town with friends though like any convention, we will have great events every night.

With show attendance stagnated or dropping, we need to lead and think bigger and better. Make this an experience. After reading all the communications I receive after a National Show, I am 100% convinced that this is the right direction. We just need to pull it off every year. Easier said than done. Step up with your ideas and volunteer to help. The future of our hobby rests on our strong direction and unification as the FOHBC. Make plans, attend our shows and have fun. I guarantee that there is no other show like a National. The memories will last a lifetime. I hear this all the time from the veteran national show attendees. Happy New Year and Happy Bottle Collecting.