



# FOHBC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



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November 9, 2015: As I sit here this Monday morning on a flight from Houston to Washington, D.C., I am saddened and find myself having a hard time focusing and concentrating on a few laptop tasks. You see, there is a profound sadness in my head as I saw an update about Federation member, New York collector and historian Brian Wolff posted by his wife, Sherri, on Facebook this morning. Typically, I would not rewrite something like this here, but I do have a point after the sad message that was posted on multiple bottle collector sites, including our own.

*"I know many of you have so many questions about what is happening with Brian. As a family we have been trying to come to terms with everything that has happened in a relatively short time. Thank you all for all of your support. On September 3rd, under the advice of our family physician, my father and I left for the Cleveland Clinic. Little did we know that we would end up spending almost two months there in hopes of making Brian well. On September 8th after many tests and scans, we were advised that they would need to do a biopsy of the "lesion" on Brian's brain stem. After discussing all of the risks involved in both not doing it and doing it, we decided we needed to agree to having it done. On September 10th, Brian went in for surgery (one of the longest days of my life). The next day (ironically) 9-11, we received the news that Brian had "Glioblastoma Multiforme Grade IV (GBM)," in other words, brain cancer. My world shattered into a million pieces that day. Everything became a blur after that. Only a few words stuck out that will haunt me for the rest of my life, "terminal," "12-14 months," "Chemo" and "Radiation." The following week Brian began his treatments, and shortly after he entered the acute rehab center. While there he received physical, occupational and speech therapy. He also developed a pulmonary embolism (blood clot in the lung), which resulted in 3 days in the ICU. On Thursday, October 8th, Brian was finally released from the hospital. We spent four days in a hotel while we waited for a room to be available at Hope Lodge. Even though we were only there for a couple of weeks, we met some wonderful people that will be lifetime friends. We shared tears, stories full of sorrow and memories, hugs and laughter. On Monday October 19th, my world was shattered yet again. Brian's oncologist told me we had 4-6 months or less and to call in hospice as soon as we arrived home. On Friday October 23rd, my father and our daughter made their last drive to Cleveland to bring Brian and I back home to cherish every single second we have left."*

Like bottles changing hands, collections being built and collections being dispersed, we see time passage and challenges in our great hobby represented in many ways. Certainly time has changed for Brian and Sherri as they face this ultimate challenge.

Brian Wolff is one of those great people that I met somewhere along the way. He often helps me on my Peachridge Glass posts if I am struggling with some obscure bottle or merchant from the New York State area. Some of you may remember the great seminar that Brian gave at the FOHBC 2013 Manchester National titled: "Mount Vernon Glass Co. - History, Products & People." Brian Wolff and his co-presenter, Mark Yates, touched on early

central New York glass houses and provided information on key people and a historic timeline of the Mt. Vernon/Granger operation. Our write-up in BOTTLES and EXTRAS said, "Attendees walked in the footsteps of pioneer researcher Harry Hall White and rediscovered the evidence he found in the 1920s. Flasks, medicine and utility bottles, blown three-mold patterns and other items were discussed, confirmed and new discoveries were revealed. Yates, collector, researcher and enthusiast of early central New York glass, also provided additional commentary. Mark has a wealth of knowledge on early central New York bottles and has been collaborating with Brian for the last four years, with shard identification and additional research. Brian and Mark have a passion for glass that is contagious. The presentation was well-received by a room full of collectors who were treated with so much interesting material." This is how we think of Brian.

What is just as remarkable is how our bottle collecting community collectively received, digested and reacted to Brian's news. In short order there was a new Facebook page called "Brian and Sherri Wolff Supporters" where we could get the latest news and reflect our thoughts. There were various ideas proposed to help defray the Wolff's mounting expenses.

Next, there was a GoFundMe page that took off like a rocket. When the site was established, a link was posted on many of the bottle web site and Facebook pages. A nice sum of money was raised very quickly. Our collecting community really stepped up to the plate here which was really good to see.

Then, our champion bottle collector, Mother Hen and Fairy God Mother, Dana Charlton-Zarro, stepped up as she was our collective face to organize and promote a series of fundraising raffles. As Dana states, "The one thing that most bottle collectors are familiar with is a raffle when they attend a bottle show. So I proposed the idea on the Early American Glass Facebook page, and Michael George offered to donate a beautiful HUNTER/FISHERMAN calabash for the raffle. He also did the artwork needed for get people's attention. It was the "Brian Wolff Benefit Raffle" and collectors from across the country donated from \$1 to \$100 for raffle tickets to help Brian and Sherri, including people who don't even know Brian, but wanted to help. Tickets were sold via PayPal and in person at the Keene Antique Bottle Show where the winning ticket was drawn. As Michael said, it was a "Happening." I asked Mark Yates to draw the winning ticket because he and Brian are close friends and colleagues in their study of the Mt. Vernon Glass Works. More tickets were sold at the show, reaching \$2,086 for 2,850 tickets. Matt Greig won the raffle, which was very exciting because they are friends and I have photos of them together from the previous year at the Keene show. Every dollar was sent to Brian.

*When I learned that Brian would be coming home after 6 weeks of treatment for his cancer, I started a new raffle, the "Brian Wolff Homecoming Benefit Raffle." John Antonez donated a beautiful spring water bottle, MIDDLETOWN HEALING SPRINGS, blown at Stoddard Glass Works, and Mike again did the artwork. This was another successful benefit, with tickets sold via PayPal, at the North Jersey Bottle Show and the Albany Bottle Show. This raised \$772 for 1,011 tickets, also all proceeds were also sent to Brian. I asked Rick DeMarsh to draw the ticket at the Albany show. The winner of this raffle was Mark Yates! It couldn't be more appropriate!*

*These benefit raffles proved that bottle collectors come together in times of true need. The best part was Sherri's note that she and Brian were very grateful and amazed, and said, "We truly didn't realize how many friends we have."*

Let's all keep the Wolffs in our prayers.