

FOHBC

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



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It is hard to believe how time has flown by! We are only a few weeks out from the Cleveland National Convention as this is being written, and closing out over two years of planning and execution. We are humbled and thankful for all the great individuals that pulled together. This has been one of the most challenging yet rewarding experiences imaginable in the bottle hobby. It has allowed me to reflect on our past events and admire all those that worked so hard to make them possible. We are truly blessed with amazing leadership and character in this hobby.

With new roles and responsibilities, one must also take the time to look back and acknowledge the great people and leadership that have guided the Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors. Earlier this week, I was flipping through a draft of the souvenir program and stopped at the Hall of Fame and Honor Roll sections. Two hours later, I looked up and realized how engrossed I was in the amazing lives of those who have revolutionized this hobby. I would encourage anyone that wants to become more connected to the hobby at a deeper level to read those pages. There were many names that were very familiar and others that I knew little about; however, all had a profound impact on the hobby.

We are fortunate to have had a remarkable board of directors over the past few years. Many on the board have dumped their heart and soul into continuing our great hobby. Any board with passionate and motivated members goes through its fair share of turmoil, which is not bred out of a place of discord, but rather a true desire to grow their hobby. These differing perspectives provide the bond that will make a board stronger as a whole.

As President, Ferdinand Meyer has brought the FOHBC into the age of technology. The website, social media presence, virtual museum, modern magazine, and much more can be attributed to his leadership, drive, and heart for the hobby. He has enhanced the conventions with updated logos, an updated souvenir program, and signage. In addition, the format of the conventions has been updated to include many additional events to make them a true annual expo. This doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of all the contributions he has made. I greatly admire what he has and continues to accomplish for the FOHBC and the hobby.

I am very excited about the current slate of officers. We have a number of tenured members and some new members that will bring fresh new perspectives to the table. I am looking forward to discussing a number of topics we will be assessing. How do we reach a new generation of collectors effectively? How can we make conventions more inclusive of all collectors and dealers? How can we earn more

support from regions that are hosting conventions? What can the FOHBC do to better serve clubs and membership? How do we grow a hobby that is experiencing natural attrition? All of these questions are important to the future of the bottle collecting community.

I am always surprised when many of the new collectors I talk to have never even attended a show! Almost without exception, my first objective when learning this is to invite them to a local show. I would encourage all of us to do the same! Let's get them plugged in. Connecting to a local club is also very important to a good foundation in the hobby. Many collectors want to have a sense of purpose and a place to belong to make a positive impact. Bottle shows and club meetings across the country have such a profound impact on collectors. These events not only provide a means of learning, but also extend a view of the opportunities collecting allows. There is also a great deal of satisfaction to be found in the thrill of the hunt. Sure, we can buy great glass online or at auction, but there is nothing like going to show after show, meeting great friends and mentors, and procuring that treasured piece that was nowhere to be found online.

Technology is a great tool, but in many ways it has stripped us of the simple joys that the hobby once allowed us. The excitement that once echoed the walls of a show or convention has been replaced with the glare of screens and noise of cell phones. There is simply no equivalent to attending a FOHBC annual event. The events have improved greatly, but we have identified some refinement areas that I would like to address in the next couple of years. Rising expenses have left many feeling excluded and deterred. Extensive event schedules have put strain on personal obligations. It is time to come full circle and make conventions affordable and fun for all collectors. I am looking forward to working with our new board to generate ideas congruent to this path for 2021 and beyond. I am also very excited to work alongside our new Conventions Director and the amazing teams assembled for the 2019 event in Augusta and the 2020 event in Reno.

My objective is to rally a grassroots movement to get back to the simplicity, fun, and excitement that allowed this hobby to flourish. This can be accomplished through a servant leadership mindset. How can we, as the FOHBC, best serve you? How can we serve your club? How can we serve your region? How can we serve this hobby and promote it to those who may not be aware of the greatest treasure hunt on earth? How can we share the beauty and artistic value in the craftsmanship of early glass? The answer is simple. We share our hobby with others by serving them and inviting them to get plugged into an organization that acts as a launching pad to make a difference in the hobby.

Over the years, I have personally shared our hobby with dozens of people who didn't know bottle collecting was even "a thing." It always amazes me how many people have close ties to antique bottles in some way. It was only last week that a co-worker brought in bottles to show me that he found wading in the Virgin Islands. I followed his sharing immediately with an invitation to our national event. Will every invite turn into the next Hall of Fame inductee? No, but it might.

I want to conclude by saying that I am thankful for the support network we have in our hobby. Thanks to all those who help the hobby grow and continue on. I look forward to serving you.