

FOHBC

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



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FOHBC elections took place in Cleveland and we now have a new slate of officers for the 2018-2020 term. I am very excited to be able to work with such a great group of individuals. We have many new energetic officers coupled with some wise and knowledgeable leaders. I will affirm here that we have many real challenges facing our new board. However, we also have a lot of great things happening as I write this. The following is my perception on the state of the FOHBC.

Does anyone remember companies like Blockbuster or Toys R Us? Sure we do; but what happened to them? We know they failed to innovate, change, and eventually were replaced by competitors. They were slow to make decisions, afraid to move in new directions, and were content with "the way it has always been." This impacts ALL organizations not just for profit corporations, but including the non-profit, member-driven organizations such as the FOHBC.

We are in "trouble waters" and turbulent times in many ways. We have a number of current challenges, including but not limited to: national conventions, finances, the magazine, web presence, the virtual museum, and membership. While I would love to focus on only the positives and work in those areas, we have to address some of the long-standing problems that are hurting, even plaguing, the organization. I can confidently say that we have a board that appears to be very open to making the changes needed to move us in a positive direction.

As of today, we are on a dangerous path to obsolescence. In fact, the previous board had discussions on this topic to see if the FOHBC was even still relevant to the hobby with the local clubs and internet "satisfying" collector's needs. Think about it: less people are willing to travel to shows as the internet fulfills their personal bottle needs. Personally, I love traveling to shows and finding great glass, but times are changing and many no longer see the value for various reasons, including travel expense.

This is particularly relevant to the FOHBC National Conventions. We have had a few years of constructive feedback provided by members. This has proven very valuable. We have trialed a longer show format and for the first time put a show in an "Upper Tier" city, which proved to be too expensive. We have taken away much knowledge from these experiences. We are currently working to implement this knowledge. Many of you are aware, we have a new conventions director and board that are taking a deep look into the restructure of our national events. This much-needed analysis is currently underway. This is something to be very excited about for future conventions.

Financially, the FOHBC operates off of membership fees, donations, and investment earnings primarily. The expenses incurred in recent years have not allowed us to refund the principle balance in investment

accounts held by the FOHBC organization, effectively lowering our earning potential and therefore working capital each year. These funds are generally used to conduct our national shows, but also maintain basic FOHBC operating expenses. Being good stewards of our finances is critical to the longevity of the FOHBC. Simply put, we cannot spend more than we bring in. As a Board, we are currently evaluating budgets and looking at a revised financial plan for the future.

Bottle and Extras is currently in a transition phase. There are many complexities to this topic, but I will keep it short. We are in the process of evaluating a potential merger of two key magazines in the hobby. There are still many details to be discussed here as we get ready to dive into the particulars, details, and the pros and cons to make the best decision for the hobby. Beyond that, this magazine is currently in a transition era to a newly restructured group of contributors. We have just formed a small magazine subcommittee that will be working through the staffing and details of this transition. The committee has been given a very tight timeline of the Jan-Feb 2019 issue being the first under the new staff. This may seem like a long time, but that issue actually starts compilation in late October. Look for more to come on this.

We have recently expanded our social media platforms from the FOHBC website and Facebook to also include Instagram and Twitter. We have already seen great internet growth since the launch of this new effort. We are promoting a segment called "Find of the Week" in which a collector will get a spotlight on a great dig, find, or purchase. We have also been reaching out to show chairs to help promote local bottle shows via these platforms. The advertising is going very well and serves as another great benefit to member clubs. This is going to continue to grow. I am encouraged by the number of diggers and young collectors who are using Instagram. We now are reaching and engaging with a new segment of collectors. This is very exciting!

The FOHBC Virtual Museum is making amazing strides, thanks to the efforts of Alan DeMaison and Ferdinand Meyer. Recently, Alan has been traveling the West, making many visits to incredible collections. The quality and expanse of images that Alan is capturing is staggering. For those of you that attended Cleveland, Ferdinand gave a spectacular presentation on the first gallery: Bitters Bottles. Keep an eye out for more updates and a timeline on the opening of each gallery.

Our organization exists for you, the membership. We want to help keep you informed and up-to-date with the latest hobby news and help each of us grow in our knowledge and passion. We also want to encourage others to get involved in this fantastic and rewarding hobby. I would like to personally invite you to join the FOHBC to be a part of the great things that are happening and continue this great hobby. The FOHBC is also accepting donations to continue to advance our efforts in reaching the next generation of collectors. I know this hobby has been a blessing to me and it is a great feeling to give back to a hobby that has given us so much. Membership and support is critical to the survival of FOHBC. Efforts are currently underway to reach the next generation of collectors.

In summary, we have a lot on our plate to work on and improve. We must innovate, change, and grow. One of my personal missions is to engage collectors at all levels, and make the FOHBC and corresponding events more appealing and inclusive of everyone. Many on the board share this same sentiment. As always we look forward to serving the collecting community!