



## VIRTUAL MUSEUM NEWS

By Richard Siri

The FOHBC Virtual Museum has been established to display, inform, educate, and enhance the enjoyment of historical bottle and glass collecting by providing an online virtual museum experience for significant historical bottles and other items related to early glass.

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Federation members will sometimes ask, "What's up with the Virtual Museum? Why isn't it up and running at this time?" I suppose that individuals or groups who have contributed money to the project want to know if they will get their money's worth?

Ironically, the only new spinner that you can find now is a teaser spinner on the FOHBC web site home page. We just added this component where the image is changed out each week. It certainly does catch your attention.

OK, what's the hold up? We, the Virtual Museum board, want to present categories or galleries that show many bottles that also have background history or information to compliment the bottle. Therein lies the problem, history. It takes time to research, validate and submit this information.

The category for bitters, our first gallery, has enough information for the bottles included in the gallery as Ferdinand is a bitters collector and has plenty of support information, so Ferdinand has this gallery under control.

It should be known by now that Ferdinand had a serious fall and broke both his legs so he has been kind of laid up. With lots of time on hand (no pun intended), Ferdinand has been setting up other galleries. To assist him, we have engaged one of Ferdinand's studio designers to freelance some of the web site coding work which should help.

Our planned second gallery is for historical flasks which was one of the first groups imaged. So far, only a few flasks are documented with historical information, so very little has been completed. The spectacular flasks, for now, sit on virtual shelves.

The spirits gallery which includes whiskies, bourbons, gins etc. is being worked on by Eric McGuire. This will be our third gallery. Eric is moving forward nicely and we are looking good here. Eric, as some of you know, is a first rate researcher who has written many articles for *Bottles and Extras*.

The fourth gallery, fruit or canning jars, we are severely lagging with write-ups for each of our wonderful pieces. We decided that with some coordination, we can conjure up the history or information from Jerry McCann's *Fruit Jar Annual*, Douglas Leybourne's *Red Book* and Greg Spurgeon's *North American Glass* auction house which specializes in fruit jars.

Initially, we were thinking about only opening a gallery if it was 100% complete. This has become unrealistic. We are now thinking about opening our initial galleries with however many completed pieces are done. Completed pieces meaning the 3-dimensional imagery and support information. Incomplete specimens will sit statically on shelves waiting to be completed. This should encourage gallery visits and the developers of the information for each piece.

Target balls and related information, our fifth gallery, is being furnished primarily by Ralph Finch and from the Target Ball auction catalog by John Pastor with *American Glass Gallery*. The spinners are in deep development and we are confident with our resources for information.

We will use the food bottle books by Betty Zumwalt and others for that category, our planned sixth gallery. One great book of hers is *Ketchup-Pickles-Sauces, 19th Century Food in Glass*.

There is also a good book on Western blob sodas by the Markotas that has the history of the bottles that includes names, dates and places or origin. This will be a nice group to spin for our planned seventh gallery which will also include Eastern, Midwestern and Southern sodas.

The Virtual Museum strives to provide information along with the spinning images. We don't want to overwhelm with technology without having depth and purpose. We want to wow, give wonder and to educate. We want to show provenance and the known history behind the bottle. A bottle means so much more when you tell the story behind it.

With historical flasks, the history might be what's embossed on the bottle, or the person or event or glass works associated with the flask. Who sold it and what did it contain? There are a few that even have the merchants name embossed on them. This adds to the history and write-up a great deal.

There are a lot of collectors out there that have researched bottles and glass from their area and know the history about them. We need content providers to assist with a category and that's the challenge.

With all that said, we the Virtual Museum team, want to present to the bottle world and our membership, an experience with value. Please bear with us as we endeavor to make this happen. This is the biggest project ever in bottle collecting. Nothing of this scale is without challenges and setbacks. We should applaud our progress which we have achieved at every milestone. We are as excited and motivated as day one and thank you all for understanding our challenges and realizing our passion and dedication to see this project through.

Please support the FOHBC Virtual Museum!

