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## The Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors

### Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

Augusta, GA

31 July 2019 8:00 AM

#### Current Board Members

( X = in attendance on location; P = participating by phone; N = not in attendance)

X - Matt Lacy	President
X - Louis Fifer	First Vice President
P - John O'Neill	Second Vice President
X - Jim Berry	Treasurer
X - Andrew Rapoza	Secretary
X - Jim Bender	Historian
X - Lindsey Fifer	Conventions Director
X - Ferdinand Meyer	Director at Large
X - John Pastor	Director at Large
X - Richard Siri	Director at Large
P - Jeff Ullman	Northeast Region Director
N - Brad Seigler	Southern Region Director
X - John Fifer	Midwest Region Director
X - Eric McGuire	Western Region Director
X - Elizabeth Meyer	Business Manager
X - Val Berry	Merchandise Director
X - Linda Sheppard	Membership Director
X - Elizabeth Lacy	Public Relations Director
N - Martin Van Zant	<i>Bottles and Extras</i> Editor

#### Meeting Agenda

1. Call to Order (M. Lacy) – 8:10 AM
  - a. Welcome
  - b. Roll Call
  - c. Guest Recognition –
    - Shelton Baugh recognized. Has attended every national show and expo; he pointed out: "I love this organization. ... Ever show is a good one, just some are better."
    - Bella (Meyer's granddaughter) a show volunteer; her 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row.
    - Mike Newman (reception; Sweet Peaches bottle competition).

## 2. FOHBC 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary National Antique Bottle Convention

- a. Thank Consortium. (Matt:) Everyone has done an awesome job. Ferd has done an amazing job coordinating this event. Bil Baab is so passionate about the hobby. Has written press releases that were released to over 60 media outlets. (Ferd:) Bill is a model of excellence. (Matt:) He is constantly in contact with everybody. Mike Newman has done a terrific job, too, with the finances for the convention, plus he and his wife have gone above and beyond putting together the open house at his home. Eric and Marty are on the show floor right now, setting up the tables, etc. The consortium has done a great job overall.
- b. Thank Donors (M. Lacy) (Ferd:) listed individual donations, including Sandor P. Fuss, Jeff Wichmann (America Bottle Auctions), Will be all recorded in financial report.
- c. (Mike Newman): With all the expenses that have been paid, we still have \$2,000 in the bank.
- d. Overview of Events (Ferd:). Reviewed conference & show events:
  - Mike Newman Reception – Food has a southern flair. Displays: Black Glass (50-70 pieces) from Tommy Ryan collection; Edgefield jugs & pottery. Careful security. Ends promptly at 3:00 PM.
  - Reception at Augusta Historical Museum: a lot of Augusta bottles and the Baab collection. 3:30-6:30 PM
  - Sweet Peaches Bottle Competition - categories: (1) southern pottery; (2) historic bottles; (3) southern sodas.
  - Seminars Friday, 9 AM - 12 PM.
  - Friday: 1 PM Early Admission
  - Saturday: General Admission – the public is our backbone; hopefully there will be a good turnout. 171 tables.(Jim Bender:) 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary history display is updated from Springfield. Looks nice, colorful. Banner on front promoting 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, etc.
- e. (Ferd:) We also want to mention that we're thrilled to have Elizabeth Lacy volunteering her service as our official show photographer.

## 3. Reno 2020

- a. Contract (Richard Siri:) Had a \$15K contract for the same room as we had in 2012, but the hotel then said that room was not available, so they gave us 2 rooms in the lower level of the hotel, but gave us a 50% concession, so it will cost \$7,500. The two rooms are on the ground floor so easy load-in. The two rooms are separate by 200 feet, but our security costs will go up. Sales will be in one room, displays in the other. Have reserved 275 tables for the show; deposits have been paid. Haven't decided yet if there will be an auction yet. One thing that will be in the show is a display of the 25 top western whiskies. Some of these are valued at \$50-\$60,000 each. We don't have a local collection

to visit; there are some great museums in the area; bowling alley (perhaps a bowling tournament?), driving range, etc. Plus side of Reno is that the airport is in walking distance to the hotel, plus free shuttle. There will be a shootout Sachems, Barrell Bitters, Western Whiskey, Western Sodas, etc.

- b. (Ferd:) Possibly turn the bowling tournament into a profit center. Everything's coming together. Next step is mapping out tables, finish info packet, etc. We're rolling; I think we'll sell out.
- c. (Richard:) There's lots of interest; people have been asking for table contracts for last 6-8 months. Everybody who sells in Reno has to pay \$20 license, so first table = \$100; second table will be \$75 (\$10 discount) to offset. Other shows (coin shows, stamp shows, etc., require \$250-\$500 table fees), so our fees are very reasonable, while at a level that allows us to still come out okay.

#### 4. 2021 National Antique Bottle Convention Progress

- a. (Lindsey:) Sent out info packets end of Feb first of March to the Northeastern Region. Responses from two clubs; Buffalo area (Peter Jablonski) but he doesn't have the backing of a club. (Other response was no interest)
  - Reached out to Baltimore and Hartford, CT. Both showed some very promising details.
  - Reached out to Midwest clubs as well, but has not heard back from anyone yet. I've reached out to several clubs on my own, but no interest indicated yet.
  - (Ferd:) The key is getting a team in place. Having a show team makes a major difference to find a hotel, facility. Clubs and people are shy. Find a team and put them to work. It's too much work for one or two people to take on.
  - (Matt:) For a long time past, someone from the board or connected to the board has stepped up to make the National show happen. No one has stepped up to do so for the 2021 show. If we don't have somebody from the board do so, there won't be a show in 2021.
  - (Ferd:) That's absolutely correct; until somebody signs on to get it going, it won't happen.
  - (Lindsey:) Our theme plan is we will go back to the larger Expo shows every 4-5 years, rotating regions; short shows will be every year.
  - (Ferd:) We need a location now; we have a serious problem that we need to work out at this convention or we're going to just spin our wheels. ... What about cancelling the show – take a breather?
  - (Matt:) It's an option but we'll talk about that later.

5. Website & Social Media Update
  - a. FOHBC update (Ferd:) Website is current and up to date; a spinner has been added; it's in good condition.
  - b. Social Media Update (Elizabeth Lacy:)
    - Facebook Page Comparison Data:
      - FOHBC = 2,933 followers
      - National Insulator Association = 685 followers
      - International Perfume Bottle Association: 2,086 followers
    - Facebook Bottle Group Comparison Data:
      - Bottle Collector's Group: 8,599 members
      - Antique Bottle Collection Group: 9,000 members
      - Early American Glass Collectors Group: 1,483 members
      - Antique Bottles for Sale Group: 6,200 members
      - National Insulator Association Group: 4,200 members
    - My biggest thing is more interaction nationally. Once Augusta is over, we're going to go through a lull on content. So bottle show reports, etc., to keep our FOHBC name out there, active. The NIA page does 1-4 posts a day; I'm averaging one post every couple of days. (Ferd:) is easy to do, but you need help.
    - (Matt:) Social media is instant communications, instant sales. Websites (like eBay) are becoming outdated and not used. Social media is commonly used on the phones (a lot of people don't use laptops anymore).
    - (Ferd:) It's crazy the amount of effort and expense we're going through for 800 members [given the social media numbers above] The challenge is turning the social media participants into bottle club members. That's the paradox.
  
6. Virtual museum update – (Ferd:) I will send the board a backdoor link to see the working page for the virtual museum in the next week. Our biggest problem right now is getting the writers to do the write-ups. The museum should be up and running very soon. "We're dangerously close to going live."

[BREAK]

1. Membership Statistics – (Matt:) Since 2017 our membership has declined by 9%; In the last year we have declined by 11%, so we are accelerating in decline and I've been thinking about why this is happening. People are aging and passing away; that's certainly one of the elements. But we're also legitimately losing members. Props to Elizabeth Meyers' membership drive efforts this year; she's going over and above to make sure that our attrition rate is as low as possible, but it's still decreasing.

## 2. Bottles & Extras Update

- a. (Elizabeth Lacy:) We haven't been given a line-by-line map (ladder) for the current issue.
- b. (Ferd:) You've asked for it numerous times and it's been promised to the board members. Martin is not an organizer; 70-80% is done by other people. Martin's a "put-it-together" person. He's terrible about answering emails, etc.
- c. (Matt:) We recently decided (as a board) to raise his pay to \$1,200 per issue, provided that he does what is required, but that's not happening. The facts are the facts. I really like Martin; he's a great guy; there are some of us in this room who like him, but we have a job to do; there's a difference between liking somebody and having a job to do. We have to separate those two things.
- d. Contributions /Article Backlog Status – (Elizabeth) Thanks to Val, she worked on getting permission to use some of the articles winning awards at our banquet tomorrow evening. We've gotten a few articles in the last few weeks. We have 6-8 articles in our backlog of various lengths. I'm also now reaching out to those in our membership who checked off willingness to submit articles. It's just a matter of following up with those who have indicated they are currently or willing to write articles. Use of articles from other bottle groups; prize-winning articles from the past, etc. (Ferd:) And there's nothing wrong with Val's idea of going to the International Perfume Bottle Association, milk bottle clubs, local clubs; they're more than glad to have their names and logos on the page. (Elizabeth:) And I think it's great that it can be seen they are prize-winning articles.
- e. Call for Articles – (Matt:) Eric McGuire wrote a very well-written article about how to write an article. Most organizations have an editorial board that will put a submission into simple English. We need people to submit articles. It doesn't have to be polished – we have people than can help to polish it. I'll let him talk about it for a little bit.
  - i. (Eric McGuire:) I wrote an article to help people to get off their seat and do something. Got some good comments on cutting it down to the essential message: "please submit" and basic background on what to do. My biggest concern is an editorial board; most organizations have one but we don't have that, but hopefully we'll get around that issue.
  - ii. (Ferd:) Does your article cover imagery? Also can we get to see the longer version too?
  - iii. (Matt:) I wanted the short version to get out first. I was concerned that Eric's article was great, but to someone who's never written for the magazine before, I was worried that they would be scared to death to submit an article.

- iv. Ferd made the point that both the FOHBC and Pastor magazines, by virtue of their titles, embraces items other than just bottles (“& Extras,” “and Glass”). So many things you can concentrate on other than just bottles.
  - v. (Val): We get a weekly paper that had an interesting article about Rattlesnake Oil; I asked if we could have permission to publish the article in our magazine; I got it and they’ve already sent it to me by email.
  - vi. (Ferd): I have some great images of that bottle on my website (Peachridge) that can be used. We have 32,000 images on the site archive and the Federation has a big archive, so don’t ever worry about images.
3. State of the FOHBC (Problem-solving meeting led by Matt:) Matt kicked off the discussion by reading the Federation’s mission statement “*The mission of the Federation is to encourage growth and public awareness of the antique bottle hobby and to enhance the enjoyment of such through collecting, dealing, and educational endeavors and to promote fair and ethical conduct within the antique bottle hobby.*” It’s important as we go forward to keep our mission statement in mind. Matt then conducted an exercise to identify the biggest challenges the board feels the FOHBC needs to deal with.
- a. *Bottles & Extras Magazine*: What are the key challenges with it? (Board members listed challenges currently confronted in the production of the magazine and then, by show of hands, prioritized which each person thought are the two biggest challenges. Shelton Baugh was also invited to vote):
    - No leadership – 12
    - Content gathering – 6
    - Magazines are obsolete – 4
    - Communications – 3
    - Mail service – 2
    - Cost – 1
    - Lack of editorial team – 0
    - Contingency plan – 0
    - Competent layout person – 0

Brainstorming solutions for the top 3 challenges above, starting with “No leadership” –

- Leadership:
  - (Ferd:) professionalize it (outside organization like FMG, Pastor’s, or IPEA, which means paying for it) (Matt:) I have to play pessimist and consider the membership decline (as an indicator of the challenge to pay for this service). (John:) I agree with Liz; if we do away with the magazine, we can kiss most of the membership goodbye. I still think the magazine provides a very valuable purpose.

1. Look at bylaws, adjust position
  - a. Create a Magazine Director position
2. Be creative at other avenues, keep magazine
  - a. Consortium approach
  - b. Outsource to the task to professionals (cost) but we need to keep the editor position within the FOHBC. (Matt:) Should the editor position turn into a leader position for the magazine? Should it be changed from Editor to Magazine Director? (Several agreed; no one disagreed.)
3. Life members (160-180) getting the magazine free is a big cost (drain) on our budget. (Ferd:) It was set up this way in the by-laws back in the day that we were producing a newsletter. We're doing way too much for way too little and we need to reinvent the wheel. I'm afraid I disagree with John about keeping the magazine running for much longer; we're putting Band-Aids on a bleeding artery. We need to face it now; we can't wait. There would be problems if we just stopped the magazine, but we have to develop the product and get our membership up to 3, 4, or 5,000 like on social media, but we've got to give them something back: the virtual museum, a great website, a great social media presence, discount at nationals, and maybe a great virtual newsletter.
4. (Matt:) Did you know you can do a closed paid-only subscription through Facebook? You can.
5. (John:) There are so many who love the magazine, it's premature to say we should stop the magazine altogether today. We don't always have to do a 72-page magazine?
6. (Matt:) The IPEA does only a quarterly publication.
7. (Ferd:) It's crazy that we're not soliciting more ads; we need an advertising point person on the editorial committee. Advertising is out of control and needs to be fixed. We can give away some (courtesy) ads, but we have to generate enough – we need to run this magazine on a budget.
8. (Matt:) We definitely need a cost analysis.
9. Phase out magazine, introduce new element for subscription/cost

**ACTION ITEM:** Form subcommittee for review re: how to evolve needs of organization of the FOHBC publication and how it relates to FOHBC membership. Report by October 1<sup>st</sup>.

1. (Matt:) I appoint the following to this ad-hoc committee:
  - John Pastor
  - Ferdinand Meyer V
  - Elizabeth Meyer
  - Elizabeth Lacy
  - Andrew Rapoza
2. Regular conference calls from committee for report on idea.
3. (Matt:) Should we decouple the magazine from membership? I.e., a price based on just magazine subscription vs. membership plus magazine.
4. Cost Analysis to report to Board.
  - a. Jim Berry, Elizabeth Meyer

(Matt:) We're going to carry 3.b. National Shows and 3.c. Mission & Relevance to Collecting Community on to other Conference Calls.

[BREAK]

4. Elections Committee (Matt:) According to the bylaws, we need to know who the slate is going to be by March/April. I appoint the following to a Committee for 2020 Elections:
  - Val Berry (Committee Head and Liaison to the Board)
  - Eric McGuire (Western)
  - John Pastor (Midwest)
  - Ferd Meyer V (Southern)
  - Jim Berry (Northeast)

I think we're going to have a big void on the board (I'm expecting upwards of half the board) in 2020 and so we have to look at who the replacements are going to be and what direction the Board is going to take after this.

(Ferd:) The membership applications often have people expressing willingness to serve.

(Matt:) Need to know who's running and who's not in a month from today: October 1<sup>st</sup>.

5. Financial Report (Jim Berry:) On 6/11 we received from Burton Spiller's estate left \$20,665.08 in his will to the FOHBC. We're still trending downward in our expenses vs revenues. In the last couple of years, the shows have hit us hard.

Meeting closed: 11:39 AM.