

# FOHBC

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



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As your newly elected representative, I wanted to first thank all of the past and current officers and board members for the hard work in continuing to serve the FOHBC. Coming into this position I wanted to have a complete understanding of what it takes to serve the membership, and most members would have no idea of the work going on behind the scenes by the board members, the committee members and their individual and collective group efforts to put out our *Bottles & Extras* Magazine, plan the shows, keep us solvent, manage the business affairs, attend to the website, undertake the enormous efforts of the Virtual Museum, and recognize those who have served the hobby in an extraordinary capacity through our Hall of Fame. It's no small feat. I certainly took it for granted. The Postal Service delivered me a magazine, I opened the envelope, I read the magazine cover to cover and then gave it to a friend, who has now become a member and receives his own copy. I really gave no thought into the collective efforts required to put out this fine publication, all in the age of Covid-19 which is further challenging to our hobby in its ability to carry on group events and social functions. So Kudos to all those that volunteer their time in making this happen.

I call this paragraph meet your President. I am 62, married to my wife Cheri for almost 40 years, have two grown children, Justin and Christen. My career in the insurance and risk management business is a second sort of marriage, and I am now humbled that my family continues our fourth generation in insurance. I am a managing director at Risk Strategies Company, a Boston-based insurance brokerage and risk management firm. I reside in Belmont, California, a small town in an area that is affectionately referred to as Silicon Valley.

I call these next paragraphs meet the Collector. I honestly believe in our DNA is a switch that either is turned on or it's just not there. I call it the "Collector Gene." You either have it or you don't. I think it first triggered at age six when my Godfather brought me a box of pennies and one of those blue pressed cardboard books that show the date and mint mark. I think the original goal was to keep me quiet while my parents and Godparents had a nice dinner. I was fascinated by this and putting them all in order appealed to my need for structure and organization while unleashing a powerful yet unknown force in the universe that has survived in me to this day.

Bottles came on the scene when I was ten years old and out hiking in the woods finding my first bottles in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The dead horse in the dump was just too appealing to pass up. A

few years later the local San Bruno library also had a display of old bottles as a promotion for an upcoming Bottle Show by the Peninsula Bottle Collectors Club. The librarian suggested a book called *How to Collect Antique Bottles* by John C. Tibbitts, and the rest as they say is history. I probably owe them a new copy as I am sure I wore the pages down in that book. To this day I can still recall every page in that book in my mind.

At one of the bottle club meetings I met John Shroyer, one of my closest friend of almost forty years, who shares the same passion for old bottles, and whose collector Gene may be more severe, but without a proper diagnosis by a team of professionals that's purely speculation on my part. These days we call one another asking about a bottle on Ebay, or an auction saying do you think I should buy that (hoping for a response of "no, you really don't need that" but all too frequently the answer is of course you should buy it). My wife now believes rare, one of kind and only one known are fake news terms. She doesn't believe anything is rare based on the number of bottles we have. You can't even display what you have so why would you buy more? It's a perfectly rational question asked to a perfectly irrational collector. Honestly, I know she is right and I am sure she is not the only suffering wife or husband out there facing this dilemma. Maybe it's time to offer another service for obsessive collecting addiction counseling to our members. Could be a real money maker in the long run.

I have collected Pot Lids, San Francisco Glass, Western Sodas, Western Medicines, San Francisco Beers and Brewery Material and I have sold off collections of Pot Lids, San Francisco Glass, Western Sodas, Western Medicines, etc. Well, you get the point. I like to build collections and then I move on to the next area of interest. My good friend Louie Pellegrini, also a past FOHBC officer has tried to nickname me Flip, but I have resisted the new name tag. My current area of interest is the San Francisco Saloon Flasks, and I ended up trading with my good friend the late Ralph Van Brocklin a large part of my California Stoneware Collection for his pumpkinseed and coffin flask collection. I also collect Wells & Hope Tin Litho Advertising Signs, which were made in the 1870s and 1880s.

I have made a lot of great friendships over the years, all forged from our common interests in bottles and glass across the United States. Over the last five years I have tried to attend every National Show and enjoyed them all, seeing different parts of our great country.

In the next *Bottles and Extras* issue I propose to provide you, The Members, with a State of the Union address. This will be a candid non-political sharing of data for your review. The data will enlighten you about the realities as to where our membership stands today, what the future may hold, and the challenges facing the organization. I respectfully ask you the Members to consider providing your thoughts and solutions. Right now I am committed to speaking with every current or past officer to obtain their opinions on the top two issues they see facing the organization and their proposed solutions. Remember this is your organization, so in closing I will leave you with the slightly altered words of John F. Kennedy, "ask not what the FOHBC can do for you - ask what you can do for your FOHBC."