

FOHBC

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



JOHN O'NEILL

1805 Ralston Avenue,
Belmont, California 94002
650.619.8209
joneill@risk-strategies.com

As I reflect back on our Holiday gatherings the new normal sets in. We had our kids at the Holiday Table and that was it: no Cousins, no nephews, no aunts or uncles, no friends or new friends with no place to go. It was actually a welcome change. Not that I don't like my relatives, quite the contrary; we all still laughed, we still told the same stories that we hear each year, we still had a wonderful holiday dinner prepared by my wife, and still enjoyed the company. The really sweet news is it's really easy to put on a dinner for seven people, instead of the usual twenty to thirty, and the dishes are done in under an hour. We had so much extra time, we actually all got to sit down and enjoy a holiday movie after dinner, something that would have been a figment of my imagination in years past. The point of the new normal is we still honored our traditions, just in a new way, smaller numbers, practicing social distancing and staying home long enough in advance to protect the attendees. With the vaccine on the horizon, we will get back to our normal. Maybe come spring, most shows can resume on a smaller basis, perhaps outdoor venues like they did at Shupps Grove back in October. By mid-summer the government is projecting that most of the general public should be able to obtain a vaccination at your local pharmacy or medical facility. I am hopeful that will be the case and that we will conquer the Covid-19 Pandemic, barring any unforeseen virus mutations screwing up our futures or breakdowns in the distribution chain.

Like most people, I set out each year with good intentions, but come March or April, (sometimes sooner) I fall by the wayside in terms of honoring the commitments I make to myself which generally include the usual list of suspects, eat less, exercise more, lose weight, bring more order and organization into my life, and to start letting go of parts of my collection (this one is the hardest at times), especially without buying more bottles, pot lids, signs, and related memorabilia to bring into the house. I am far from someone you would see on the reality show Hoarders, but I do have a problem. If I have things sitting in boxes and not out on the shelf to be enjoyed, do I really need them? No one is enjoying them when they sit in a box in my closet or garage. I am guessing many of you can relate to what I am saying. Perhaps it's best to sell them to another collector who will put the bottles on display so someone else can enjoy them. I honestly bet I could select my

two hundred favorite bottles and would I actually not miss anything beyond that. Sometimes I rationalize my passion by saying to myself, "Well, I really want to write a book about a particular subject, so I need to have every available and related piece to tell and illustrate the entire story." The problem then becomes, when do you stop and actually try and tell the story? Afraid that you might find a new find that will further that story, and so because of that you never actually start. It's a terrible cycle to get caught in, one I am afraid many collectors/researchers can relate to.

What I will try and do in this New Year is bring two new members into our organization and if everyone could make that small commitment we would triple our existing membership. Please try and volunteer whatever time you can provide, and I can assure you we will appreciate your efforts. Those could be in form of writing an article and sharing your knowledge on some aspect of bottle collecting, whether that is a digging story or a historical piece on the history of a particular company or subject matter. There is a tremendous base of knowledge among our members and I always say, "Knowledge that is not shared is of little value."

One of my favorite memories was when I was a young member of the Peninsula Bottle Collectors Association, (a club that has passed into Legacy status). Gene Whited, a club member, had dug a lot of really nice bottles out of the construction site of the Transamerica Pyramid Building in downtown San Francisco in the late 1960s. He put on a presentation about the bottles and interwove both history and the glass as examples of that history. It made quite an impression on me that to this day, I credit that as a really good example of the influence we can have on bringing new members into the hobby.

Consider making a presentation to a local historical society and its membership base. I know several members that have successfully done that and have been invited to dig some of the older homes in the area after the presentations were well received. The bonus is you will meet some very nice people and make some new friends. The local newspapers are usually very happy to provide some additional press and it helps not only the local historical society but your standing in the community as a local resource. I recently did an article about the old saloon I had built into my house in a local magazine and it was very well received and I was contacted by several people who read the article and either had contributions of their own or additional questions. My point is try something new and you might be surprised by the response you receive. I will enclose a copy of that article with my submission deadline for publication in a future issue. It's a fun human interest story. It's not as good as Ralph Finch's endless commentary on toilet paper, toilet paper holders and his collection, but it's not a load of crap either...

Kudos to Ralph as he always makes me smile when I read his material, and isn't that the true measure of success? Until next time stay safe and healthy in 2021.