

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.

I thought I would use my space this issue to share our 2020 year-end Virtual Museum report that we delivered to the FOHBC board on 02 January 2021.

FOHBC Virtual Museum 2020 Year-End Report - 02 January 2021

Dear FOHBC Board Members and Virtual Museum Team:

Overview

The FOHBC Virtual Museum has now been open for a year as we had our 'Soft Opening' in January 2020. This initial opening allowed us to test the site mechanics and visuals while getting user input. It also allowed us to finally open the doors as we've been under development for so many years. People had contributed money but had only seen reports and teasers.

This past year we tested site admission models, at first charging annual admission and providing day passes. FOHBC members received a discount. This trial produced less than satisfactory results as many felt the museum should be free for any number of reasons. A model to provide all this work on this project with minimal visits does not work. We always wanted to give exposure to the FOHBC at every touch-point hoping to grow our membership, along with saying how great our bottle and glass hobby is to an exponentially larger group of non-member collectors. We want to be around 5,000 + FOHBC members if possible. This might mean segregating the *Bottles and Extras* magazine subscription. More on new membership tiers later.

In March 2020, in a period that we will never forget, we shut down our economy and learned to quarantine due to Covid-19. Bottle shows were subsequently canceled, our favorite restaurants were closed, and we could not go to museums, among many other things. Our Reno 2020 Antique Bottle Convention was canceled. Because of all this, we opened the doors of the museum for free. Our attendance figures jumped dramatically by monitoring comments we were receiving and by using Google Analytics.

Our museum core team (DeMaison, Meyer, Pellegrini, Ruiz and Siri) used this period as we all stood still during the pandemic, and worked at an accelerated pace, to learn, open new galleries and populate the museum. Alan DeMaison is in the process of clearing out his previously imaged archives and has developed hundreds of specimens. He is nearing the end. Team member Gina Pellegrini started our second imaging station on the west coast, working under Alan's tutelage. We went from 100 examples in the galleries to 450 or so as I write this report. We learned and reported often in *Bottles and Extras* via *Virtual Museum News* or bottle articles and we marketed

heavily on social media. Each new museum piece was posted on Facebook with grand success. We are now using Instagram for this task too. Museum examples are also posted on the FOHBC and Peachridge Glass web sites.

We can say with confidence, that every example in the museum has the best 3-D imaging possible as Alan has mastered the challenging craft of photographing glass. Gina is producing excellent work starting with her father Lou Pellegrini's award-winning food and sauce bottle collection that some of us saw at the 2012 FOHBC National in Reno. He would have displayed this past year too had we not been canceled. We looked at the seamless use of video at first for imaging bottles and found the cost at around \$700 per piece which we could not support. Maybe sometime down the road as we have the infrastructure in place. We have the most comprehensive and exciting mixture of static support imagery of similar and related bottles and historical ephemera.

Team member Miguel Ruiz, working out of Almaty Kazakhstan in Central Asia, is coding each 36-stop spinner and building the museum site infrastructure as we grow. He is a consultant that is paid monthly. Ferdinand Meyer V heads up the research component using the latest research material in the form of books, online sites such as Google, Ancestry.com, Newspapers.com, and others. He works with the top antique bottle and glass auction houses such as American Bottle Auctions (Jeff Wichmann), American Glass Gallery (John Pastor), Glass Works Auctions (Jim Hagenbuch), Norman C Heckler & Co. (Norm Heckler), and North American Glass (Greg Spurgeon), among others. He has connections with the top researchers and writers in the hobby for each bottle group such as McGuire, Bubash, McCann, Finch, Vanaman, Leybourne, Friedrich, Ham, Ullman, Plank, Von Mechow, and many others. With his design background, he lays out each specimen page with imagery and text. Any errors, updates, or new images are constantly added to the museum. This is the great beauty of all this. Once you print a book or write a magazine article, you cannot easily update or correct. There will always be new discoveries. Our museum is the most comprehensive source for bottle information in the hobby world. It will be this way for generations to come if we maintain our goals and schedule. Ferdinand considers this museum the "project of a lifetime" and has worked on many complex projects in his career.

During this shut-down, Alan and Gina, in the interest of precaution, correctly decided to not visit new collections to image. They will not travel until they and the consignors feel safe. We also did not image at the FOHBC 2019 Augusta National and 2020 Reno National so we lost opportunities to grow with new pieces that we scheduled to be brought to us for imaging. We lost the opportunity to raise money in face-to-face solicitation. We have a growing backlog of persons wanting their pieces in our museum. Using Google Sheets, we have a cloud version inventory of every piece in the museum. We also use this tool to avoid duplicates and to project deficiencies and recommend remedies as far as balancing out our galleries and specimens. It is updated daily.

We now find ourselves at a financial crossroads. The FOHBC Virtual Museum has never used money from FOHBC coffers and has relied solely on donations. We've come to realize that maybe we maintain this model as a "Gift from the FOHBC" that relies on donations to survive. Kind of like public television and other not-for-profit organizations. Unfortunately, we are running out of money. Though we've raised close to \$40,000 over the years, we are down to about \$5,000 in our operational account. We are on target with our overall cost budget that was developed for the museum and presented to the board ten or so years ago. Raising money during this pandemic while we are in quarantine is not an optimum time to solicit funds. We do realize, like any fund-raising campaign, you must, "pick up the phone" so to speak. Just this past week, we received two (2) \$1k plus donations (Bartsch, Bubash) so we know that the benefactors are out there. Also, remember the Wichmann \$5k donation challenge that was met and matched by Lou Pellegrini in Cleveland at our 2018 National banquet? We survive by the generous gifts from others but we must perform. We are very grateful whether the gift is a few dollars or more. We record every gift on our Donor Wall.

We operate and curate our museum on the mantra that we are a museum, and we act like a museum. We practice "Less is More." We are not a library that has everything. We want to appeal to everyone in the hobby at every level. We are not a flea market or bottle show. We are not eBay or Peachridge Glass or any bottle and glass web site for that matter. As we have said, many times before, "Rome wasn't built in a day."

Continued...

FOHBC Virtual Museum - The Future - 2021 +

The following list is a grouping of thoughts and ideas on where we would like to take the FOHBC Virtual Museum in 2021 and beyond. The list is not in any particular order as far as priority.

1. We are ramping up a new museum fund-raising campaign that had been delayed in 2020 as it was overshadowed by the pandemic and specifically the sharp rise in cases and deaths in the fourth quarter of 2020. We cannot wait. We do not want to tap into FOHBC accounts as we are struggling there too. How can we do this efficiently with tact is the question?
2. We would like to engage Ken Hall, our Public Relations contact that we use for our national shows to send a press release to the antique world he is connected to. We will develop with text and imagery. This will include top museums in the country plus corporations with a direct link to our hobby for example Seagram's, Ball, Schweppes, Remington, etc. We feel confident that we have enough in our museum to be taken seriously.
3. We are considering sending a mass email to all FOHBC members for each new piece in the museum. This almost daily email is currently only sent to Virtual Museum team members. By placing a fundraising icon on each transmission, we can start the ball rolling without being heavy-handed.
4. We would like to sell Galleries to sponsors. For example: "Seagram's Gallery of Spirits" or "Smith Bitters Gallery." Thinking \$25k minimum. This could also apply to rooms within a gallery at a lower cost.
5. We will be developing our Research Library working with FOHBC board member Michael Seeliger. Mike has already scanned Collecting the Cures by Bill Agee and his latest H.H. Warner book. We hope to add select auction catalogs that are full of historical information and provenance such as Blaske, Ring, Mebane, Aprill, McCandless, Ferraro, Finch, etc. All pieces would be in cover-to-cover ISSUU format. All would be indexed. We are working on legal and copyright issues. Some of this material will be segregated for the FOHBC web site. Mike is also spearheading the effort digitally documenting the older grand collections before it is too late and information is lost.
6. We would eventually like to do a few select short videos from consignors. Alan has experience in this area. We would work with Jeff Wichmann who developed this technique for his auctions.
7. We would like to start planning our first Exhibition. For example, "Bininger" or Warner's" or "Watson Collection" or "Sandwich Glass or "Gold Rush Bottles."
8. We will be focusing on further developing the Galleries for Foods & Sauces, Medicines, Inks, Early American Glass, Spring & Mineral Water, Lightning Rod Balls, Poisons, etc. Areas we are light with examples so we can comfortably say a gallery is open and you are welcome to visit. We will be imaging more bitters, jars, historical flasks and spirits. See gallery floor plan. Alan and Gina have a shifting imaging plan to get out there when the dark pandemic cloud goes away.
9. We are updating our museum history timeline. We have a working draft that we will release sometime this month.
10. We would like to open our museum Gift Shop working with board member Val Berry.
11. We would like to send Gini Pellegrini Ott to Antwerp, Belgium to image the great Willy Van den Bossche collection and to Potsdam, Germany to visit and image the Hans-Jürgen Krackher collection. The FOHBC Virtual Museum, in the early discussion days, was an "American" museum. We dropped that restraint as the museum is a global endeavor.
12. We would like to get more volunteers to help in our effort.
13. We need to resolve and possibly develop a new tiered FOHBC membership. We are presently working on a proposal for our March FOHBC board meeting.
14. We would like the FOHBC Virtual Museum to partner with the proposed American Bottle and Glass Exhibition opening in Houston, Texas on August 1st 2024. The exhibition would be a feature component of the FOHBC 2024 Houston National Antique Bottle Convention & Expo. Details forthcoming.

Thank you all for supporting our effort. If you have any ideas or suggestions please share them with a FOHBC board member or Virtual Museum Team member. Please take care, be safe, and enjoy antique glass. Remember, Every bottle has a story.



VIRTUAL MUSEUM OF HISTORICAL BOTTLES AND GLASS

Phase 1 Goal:
\$30,000
ACHIEVED

Phase 2 Goal:
\$30,000



PLEASE HELP US FILL OUR JAR!

Current Operational Account: \$10,464.33 - Development Gifts to date: \$38,796.98

FOHBCVirtualMuseum.org



For gift information contact: Alan DeMaison, FOHBC Virtual Museum Treasurer,
1605 Clipper Cove, Painesville, Ohio 44077, a.demaison@sbjglobal.net

22 January 2021



GI-73 "Genl Taylor" And Bust - "Fells Point Balto" And Monument Portrait Flask
HISTORICAL FLASK GALLERY



Crowleytown Mason Jars
JAR GALLERY

EVERY

BOTTLE



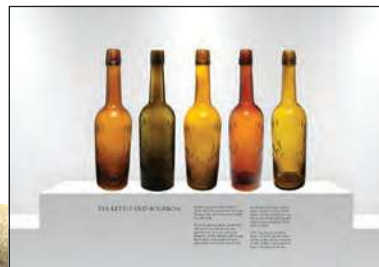
Lynch & Clarke New York
SPRING & MINERAL WATER GALLERY



Wm. Ritmeier's California Wine Bitters
BITTERS GALLERY



Blue Fish Bitters
BITTERS GALLERY



Tea Kettle Old Bourbon
SPIRITS GALLERY



HAS A

STORY



GI-68 "General Jackson"
and Bust - Floral Motif portrait flask
HISTORICAL FLASK GALLERY



Mustard Manufr - By H. Baader Phila
FOODS & SAUCES GALLERY

