

# FOHBC

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



JOHN O'NEILL

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

What a great hobby we have and how lucky are we to be part of this wonderful community of collectors who are so passionate about their collections and the history associated with the bottles and glass? Maybe I am truly stoked coming off our FOHBC Board of Directors bi-annual Zoom conference call board meeting this morning that normally would have taken place to coincide with the March 2021 Baltimore Antique Bottle Show.

We had excellent attendance by both the board and fellow collectors who were offered and accepted an invitation to listen-in from an observational perspective. Your understanding and participation achieve positive things in that it exposes the board to you, and it allows you to get to know us a little better. Certainly, no pressure, but if you have a desire to participate with a great group of people, we would love to get you involved. We need and appreciate your help with any assistance you can provide. It does not require you to take on a big commitment, maybe it's helping Michael Seeliger with our new history project, or maybe your passion lies in getting involved with the Virtual Museum or even assisting our regional directors in outreach to our bottle clubs. Please email me if you would like to get involved and I will respond to you. I find it uplifting and inspirational to be contributing to this great organization.

How we communicate has changed as a result of Covid-19. A year ago, many of us had never heard of a Zoom or Microsoft Teams conference call and now that is the FOHBC's main means of communication. We certainly miss all the in-person events like our club meetings, our bottle shows, and picnics and there will be a time soon where we will gather again. Human contact will always be relevant and cherished. My point is, communication will continue to evolve and the FOHBC's communication will also need to evolve. We accomplished a lot during this morning meeting, and we are at a precipice of a new evolution of our hobby. The FOHBC Board is asking questions and setting a path to make this a better organization to serve your needs.

During our bi-annual board meeting, we covered a lot of new ground that centered around a 19-page, dozen step presentation called "The New FOHBC" that was presented by past president Ferdinand Meyer V. This presentation addressed the strength of the FOHBC and our hobby, our weaknesses, and where we should apply our resources to grow membership and adapt to a new world. You can see this presentation on our website FOHBC.org and a copy will be emailed to the membership.

The first step of "The New FOHBC" involved studying the feasibility of merging the two bottle magazines as a method to create a better product and grow our hobby. The second step involved opening the

Virtual Museum from its construction mode and taking it national and international. The third step was revamping how and when we have our national events. We are hoping to have our 2021 Syracuse Antique Bottle Show. If we do not have enough reservations by mid-June, we may need to cancel and move to 2023. You can always get a refund if we do. Of course, we discussed Reno 2022, a year off in 2023, and a mega event in Houston in 2024. More on that later!

The fourth step was research and historical indexing and archiving. We have started to index many past legacy auction catalogs, reference books, and old bottle and glass images for member access. We also are in discussions to resurrect the auction price report project that I'm sure many of you are familiar with. The last time one was done was 2012. As most of you know, just about all past issues of *Bottles and Extras* articles have been indexed and stored online within the members portal of the FOHBC website. We hope to do this with *Antique Bottle & Glass Collector* too.

The fifth step was communication and social media. For instance, we will be resurrecting our digital newsletter to members and sending out more emails. We already have a strong Facebook and Instagram presence with a new consultant we engaged. The sixth step was financial security and developing new income streams, the seventh step was education. It looks like we might be conducting monthly seminars online. This video event might include a virtual visit to a collector's home or a seminar on a topic such as the History of the Pacific Glass Works. The eighth step was conducting online bottle shows each quarter, the ninth step was fun projects such as organizing regional in-person tours and gatherings. The tenth step was restructuring the Federation board to be more relevant to our future. It certainly would be great to have associate directors such as a youth director or point persons from all the other great niches of our hobby such as insulators, perfume bottles, fruit jars, etc.

The eleventh step dealt with new tiers of membership. We will be revisiting our levels of membership with various options and a different set of deliverables to each level of financial commitment. Certain levels of membership may include free educational events, while other levels may have an additional cost. We need to continue to strive to raise the interest level and engage both our existing and new membership. The goal here is to reach more members with a choice of membership levels to serve their needs as well as the organizations.

The twelfth step was restructuring our regions. We're considering creating a few additional regions with new directors to address the clubs and members in those areas. We need to be relevant to our members with better outreach, assistance, and participation. Are four regions currently too large for a single director to oversee and can they effectively remain in contact with each club and every member in a multi-state region? Take the Southern Region, for example, it includes Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida. That is a huge region, so maybe it's time to consider more regions broken up into smaller regions of geography and more regional directors or even associate directors.

As Ferdinand Meyer stated after the presentation, we have been debating and writing about some of these items for years. It's time to act.

Again, I thank you for taking the time to engage us and the community at large in reinforcing our primary mission statement of education around antique bottles and glass and our hobby.