

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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This is my final column as President of this wonderful organization. I am thankful for the historical mentorship provided by all those who came before me and guided me along this path. This includes all the past officers and board members and those individuals who provided positive feedback and suggestions for improvements going forward. I want to say your voices have been heard, and we will continue to evolve as an organization.

This hobby will need to continue to meet its challenges as we move into an increasingly digital age.

Eric McGuire asked me to join the board many years ago, and I feel it is fitting that I will close out my term with Eric as our keynote speaker at this year's Reno 2022 Convention. He is absolutely one of the foremost researchers I know in our field, and every time I find an item that sparks my curiosity, I turn to Eric. By the following day, I usually have a response with a complete history of the background and age range of the item.

Ferdinand and Elizabeth Meyer are the glue of this entire endeavor, and they have shouldered a heavy burden over a long tenure. I offer my sincerest thanks to them, they are always willing to step up, and I hope, going forward, they can step back and have others share in that burden. Still, it will be challenging as they are just so good at what they do that it is hard to find others with their talents, drive, and commitment.

To Jeff Wichmann, who so graciously accepted my invitation to be Vice President, I thank you for all the wonderful ideas and your financial support over the long term to the FOHBC and your efforts on the Auction Price Report.

To Jim Bender, and Jim and Val Berry, I thank you for keeping us solvent, keeping us grounded, asking the tough questions, and being committed to the cause for such a long period of time and still to this day, adding your values and skill set and pointing out the pitfalls. Jim keeping History's Corner alive as a tribute to your past friendship is admirable. Many thanks to Martin Van Zant, who kept the magazine running for so many years and balanced your work life.

To our Regional Directors, Steve Lang, Fred DeCarlo, Jake Smith, and Eric McGuire, keep up the good work and the local representation, as you represent us at the local bottle shows in your region. We hope you will continue your work at the local level and recruit some of those members you meet that you feel could contribute to our efforts.

To Richard Siri, one of our past presidents and director at large, I thank you for making our upcoming show a great success and for the friendship with your family, including Bev, Rick, Delores, and your late brother Ted and his wife, Theresa. Your contributions are many, and I could dedicate an entire column to multitudes over many years. And for anyone and everyone that I may have forgotten to mention, including all my family and friends that put up with my passion and pursuit of this hobby, I thank you now for your support. The list is long, but you know who you are.

I also want to take the time to introduce and welcome our new President, Michael Seeliger, and his wife, Alice, who will be our new Secretary. They are dedicated to their new positions, and I appreciate them both stepping forward to take the reins. In working with both Michael and Alice, I think the one word they exemplify is teamwork; they have a great working relationship, are very organized with new ideas, and are well-positioned to help the board succeed. I also want to welcome Henry Hecker as a new Midwest Regional Director. I have met Henry over our appreciation for stoneware and his work in that area.

The next time I will see the membership will be at the Reno 2022 Membership Meeting Breakfast. We will confirm the new officers who are running unopposed in their positions and formalize the vote and installation.

The show promises to be a good one. The Grand Sierra Resort is a great place to hold these gatherings, with lots of showroom space and entertainment venues, and Richard and the team have put a lot of work into making this a very successful show. I have never come away without adding some significant new acquisitions to the collection. I want to remind everyone to get your rooms booked now. Please reserve your sales table before they are all sold out. Take all those bottles sitting in boxes and make them someone else's new acquisitions sitting on shelves so everyone can enjoy them. A bottle in a box is lonely and needs to be with its comrades shining and brightening someone's day.

In closing, I want to remind all the members and our new officers and directors that, while no longer President, I will remain a director at large and will be there to support their efforts and will always be available to listen to and discuss their thoughts should they wish my counsel and guidance.

In the words of the late 60 Minutes commentator Andy Rooney, "life is like a roll of toilet paper; it starts off slow and spins a lot faster as you get to the end of the roll," so spin away and have fun doing it.

Make a difference and be proud of being part of the solution.

