

FOHBC VIRTUAL MUSEUM PROJECT

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Is this project still viable? Can we get the project back on track?

It has been almost 2 1/2 years since the presentation to the FOHBC Board of Directors for the FOHBC Virtual Museum of American Historical Bottles and Glass project. The excitement and expectations were high after the meeting and we all hoped to move forward rapidly, though we all knew that there would be many challenges such as design, logistics and financing, as initial financial projections were in the \$60,000 range. There is even material in the presentation suggesting that the museum would be open by now. The presentation material can be found and reviewed on FOHBC.org. The president of the Federation at that time was Richard Siri. Richard actually pulled me aside and asked if I would like to head up this landmark project, as it was his idea. I was not a Board Member at that time but was eager to get involved and do something positive for the hobby and the Federation.

Well Richard was not re-elected as President in July 2010 and the new President, Gene Bradberry, had higher priorities with the Federation such as turning around perceived negative FOHBC perceptions and declining membership. Gene is a veteran FOHBC'er and I have to say, was a great person to take over the helm this past 2 years. Membership is up dramatically, and as I have said before, the Federation Board is working together in harmony and many great things are planned for the future. Please read Gene's President's message in the front of this issue.

This period of time and inactivity was still frustrating for me as I wanted to get started on the project and plan ahead. I wanted to keep up the momentum. A real project or Museum is not build overnight. It takes many years to raise the money, find a location, develop the design and build the project. Just like the economy stalling and falling, this project stalled and became inactive.

I was able to occupy myself with a new project that was assigned to me and that was the development of a new FOHBC web site. As most of you know, our old site was way out of date and visually unattractive. To be honest with you, this project concerned me at first. I know I can design and get things done but I am not a web site programmer. To solve this problem, I developed a personal project and that was the creation of Peachridge Glass (peachridgeglass.com). This personal web site gave me a lot of confidence and practice in web site development. PRG as I call it now, has well over 200,000 visits and seems to be growing daily. The added support of web wizard, Bill Meier, who is always in my corner, allowed me to tackle these sites and tap into Bill's very technical mind. He has been invaluable. I now have the confidence and technical know-how to pull this off but I will need help and lots of it.



Conceptual image of opening web site page for the Virtual Museum

Zoom ahead to now. It looks like there may be a new president of the Federation come late June at the Reno Expo. The ballot is listed in this issue. If this happens, I can assure you that the new president, will prioritize this project and get it back on track. The knowledge that I have garnered from the other web projects noted above has also lowered the cost projection to a much more realistic \$20,000. I actually feel like it could be done for much less, as all my time is donated, but will still will need funds for outside consultants and marketing when it is needed.

The new Federation Board is very supportive of this project including our Business Manager, Alan DeMaison. He is also a champion for the project and has suggested a fund raising effort to raise the necessary capital. The new administration will take effect at the Reno Expo in late July.

I hope to have more information available soon and will be posting it on the Federation web site and within *Bottles and Extras*. I will also be contacting collectors with the hopes that they will volunteer to be on the Virtual Museum development committee and also on various advisory committees such as early American glass, inks, bitters, spirits, fruit and pickle jars, medicines, cures, recognition, research, merchandise, marketing etc.

So please step up and offer your assistance. This will be a museum that we will all be proud of and will be the nicest virtual museum in existence. High goals but achievable.