



# FOHBC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



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President John F. Kennedy, in his inaugural address on January 20, 1961 said, "Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country." One of the greatest sayings ever. Let us now apply this to our great hobby and say "What can you do for your hobby?"

There is an alarming communication from the Pennsylvania Bottle Collectors Association in the FOHBC News section of this issue considering the dwindling membership of their club. Apparently back in the 1970s, they had over 200 members and now they are down to about 20 members with only 12 or so being active. This is consistent with concerns that we hear with any club, organization or business that has not kept a close eye on or kept up with the pace of the rapidly changing world. We can not continue to rely on our laurels, our past successes, our memories or the great persons in our hobby before us. We must change. Change is good but we have to take our medicine to get better. Generally speaking, people are uncomfortable with change because they know it will get them "out of their groove" and that they may have to do some unanticipated work. We need to plan our new roads to the future and we need to repair our roads of the past. We need to build.

Does this all mean that people do not like antique bottles and glass as much, or that people do not like to get together and look at and collect glass like the past golden shows or clubs of yesteryear? Of course not. There are more people, from every age group, in our hobby than ever before and they are from all areas of our great country and globe. As our core demographic for a typical collector hovers around the age of 50 years old or so, we see more children, young adults, women and diverse groups in our hobby than ever before. So what is happening?

It is simple. Just like the horse and buggy, 8-track cassette, fax machine, the newspaper, music store, book store and soon the library, the bottle show and the local club meetings will go to the wayside too unless we adapt to the new world and access how we are doing things and understand who our audience is. Are we providing an experience for this new generation of collectors who are accustomed to instant gratification and access to any information they need in a few quick taps on their keyboard? Readers, these new collectors collect any possible glass object you can imagine and they communicate 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week looking for camaraderie

and knowledge. They are as passionate, if not more, about antique bottles and glass than any generation before us.

You may be getting discouraged at this point and think that there is no hope. Stop. As we mentioned above, with all of the things that are leaving our familiarity and comfort zone, we still have the museum. For the most part, museums have evolved with change better than any other faction of the antique and historical world. Museums have adapted and are growing, they are bringing in more people, they are increasing their membership through many types of programs and they have an active digital presence. We must remember, nothing will ever replace or beat looking at a real piece of art or glass in an educational, constantly changing and awe-inspiring environment. The museums will remain and be our portals to the past. Can we apply this to the Federation, our shows and our meetings? You bet.

We need to marry this new generation of collectors who live online and we must make the Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors our 'museum' and the "go to" organization and source for rejuvenation, regeneration, information and friendship. We need to help make our member club shows be multi-dimensional, we must embrace all generations and areas of collectability and we must have an experience at every bottle event or touch-point. Communication, dialog, competitions, exhibitions, seminars, banquets, picnics, field trips, assistance in identifying and related bottle events that occur around a major bottle event work. Just look at our FOHBC National Shows, the Baltimore Antique Bottle Show and club, the Columbus Day Heckler Hayfield Event or the 49er Antique Bottle Show and club to see why some clubs and shows prosper and grow.

The FOHBC is working harder than ever to provide value and experience to your membership with a rejuvenated Bottles and Extras, a refreshing web site, exciting national shows, bottle events like our recent 'shootout' in Reno and upcoming "New England Bottle Battle" at the 2013 National Antique Bottle Show in Manchester, New Hampshire in July, the planned Virtual Museum of Historical Glass, contests and awards, an electronic newsletter, etc. The membership deserves this and it is our privilege and pleasure to bring these efforts to you in excellent order.

Please consider stepping up to help your local club, attend your club meeting, write about your collection or digging adventures, exhibit your passion, be a volunteer, become an officer, provide security, set-up or take down a show, and give us your ideas. Once we get the dust off our shoulders and tables, take that medicine, we will get better. Better than ever that is. Change is good. Please step up and ask yourself, "What can I do for the hobby?" Thank you, we hope you are all having a wonderful holiday season and that Santa has brought some new bottles and that your New Year is prosperous, safe and healthy.