

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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We recently attended the Suncoast Antique Bottle Collectors Show & Sale in Tampa, Florida and the Chattanooga North Georgia Antique Bottle & Collectibles Show in Dalton, Georgia to set up the FOHBC booth and encourage membership and early reservations for sales tables at Houston 24. We were highly successful in both! (Who could miss us in our "Together Again" Cobalt blue bottles t-shirts!)

Our Webinar #11 "*Clear & Aqua but Uncommonly Colorful*" is up on the website. It was fascinating and, if you missed it, I encourage you to take time to watch it. Andy Rapoza did a fantastic job bringing to life many long-passed patent medicine proprietors from Lynn, Massachusetts. By the time you are reading this, we will have completed #12, "*The Collections of Jerry Phelps*." Keep an eye on our webinar schedule on the FOHBC website. And if you have a topic you'd like to present, or have presented by someone else, let me know.

Seems most bottle collectors have one bottle that is their favorite. Maybe not the most expensive, the rarest, or the one they dug up out of a privy. Maybe it is one the collector was searching for and finally found. Whatever it is and wherever it was discovered, it's the favorite, with a backstory that gets told each time bottle collectors get together. For me, it's a common double-collar-top Warner's Safe Kidney and Liver Cure with a small flea bite in the top embossing of the safe. The ding is from my shovel hitting it square in the middle on a cold, dreary afternoon spent digging on the banks of the Wisconsin River. I had seen a Warner bottle in the Museum in Salt Lake City in 1970 and thought it was a fantastic bottle...one I hoped to find some day. This was that day! After the clink of the shovel, I slowly uncovered the bottle with my hands. I was thrilled to see it was upside down (which is good in Wisconsin since that meant it had not filled with water and frozen over the years), and intact! I just stared at it, searing it into my memory. Eventually, I pulled it out of the dirt, held it in disbelief, and then scurried up the riverbank to put it safely in my car. Altogether, that dig produced five Warner bottles and pieces of maybe 25 more spanning the years 1881 to 1915. Few other types of bottles were in this dump site. Guess the landowner stuck to one medicine to cure whatever ailment he had.

Discussions I've had with collectors include the same type of stories showcasing the passion for our bottles. A conversation I had with David Hughes revealed that day's sad collecting story (we all have them, right?). He showed me a demijohn he unwrapped and promptly dropped onto the cement floor. It now sported a large crack. He was not as upset about losing the money the demijohn

represented as he was in knowing that this bottle had existed for over 200 years before being entrusted to him, and then he broke it! That meant more to him than the \$800 price tag he carefully removed.

We are just temporary custodians of our bottles. Maybe we unearthed them or acquired them after diligent searches. Whatever the case, we gather these objects, research their history including the path they took to end up in our hands, and eventually pass them on to someone else for continued safekeeping. In compiling the history of the three blue bitters which will be on display at Houston 24, I found the provenance winds through a myriad of well-known collectors which makes for a very interesting story you'll hear at my seminar at Houston 24.

I strongly believe collections need to be documented for future reference. Our webinars are doing just that. National collections, collections from one geographical location, and even those from just one drugstore in one city. Andy's in-depth study of the people involved in the history of patent medicines in just one city made me realize bottle collectors are great historians.

Just a few months away, Houston 24 will surely be a gathering of a great body of bottle knowledge. We will be privileged to view collections of masterpieces of glass in a once-in-a-lifetime exhibit setting. It would be great to record discussions from visitors as they recount stories about the objects on display, or ones they have seen in other collections, or have only heard about. There will be talk of discoveries, color comparisons, past ownership, rarity, and, inevitably, guesses on values. This is a great part of our hobby...telling the stories. The sales floor will be filled with a wide variety of collectibles as we seek diversity in dealers. And, of course, there must be a treasure or two to be found at the Houston 24 pre-event Peachridge Glass "Glass in the Grass."

I'm planning to meet with Warner collectors to talk about recent finds, speculate on what might still be out there, and add to the historical research. I'm hoping others will hold impromptu sessions like this throughout the event. I'll be scouting out potential webinar/seminar presenters and topics. Sharing knowledge always enhances the hobby and I hope you will help me to continue my efforts to do so.

Finally, don't forget the Membership breakfast where we will be presenting the proposed bylaws changes for a vote by members in attendance. A complete report of the proposed bylaws will be posted on the FOHBC website prior to Houston 24 so that you can be well-informed to cast your vote. A great deal of thought, time, research, and planning have gone into preparing these new bylaws which are designed to reflect changes in communication methods and streamline responsibilities and operations. I'll be happy to answer any questions you might have after you have reviewed them. See you in Houston!

