

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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**Houston 24** is now behind us. What a whirlwind event! The big takeaway from all this is the closeness of the bottle world. I want to thank all those who had a hand in making this a truly successful event. So many people chipped in and did whatever was asked of them. Long-time friends pitched in to fold boxes, move displays, set up cameras and basically just answer the call to do whatever was required. We made

new friends and strengthened relationships with others. The bottle community clearly showed its love and passion for the hobby.

Tuesday evening we set up a fire brigade to fold 250 boxes for the commemorative blue Drake's in preparation for inserting the Drake's the next day. We had lots of laughs and it went pretty fast with the number of helpers who showed up. Scouting out all the areas for the bottle show and sale, and displays, took up the rest of the day. (The Drake's sale was successful and we have a few remaining for sale to FOHBC members who could not attend.)

Wednesday's "Glass in the Grass" was great with the temperatures among the Meyers' pecan trees quite bearable all morning. Ferd and Elizabeth graciously opened their home to show enthusiasts their collections. The air conditioning provided a welcome respite, and it took some time to see their very eclectic and perfectly placed treasures. A big Thank You to Ferd and Elizabeth for sharing this with all of us. At first it was only going to be a select few who could enjoy the tour; but just the day before Ferd posted "All are welcome" and the house was filled with wide-eyed guests.

Thursday gave dealers a chance to bring in wares to tuck under their tables. And they had time to attend some seminars. This was also the first chance to see the exhibits at the Museum. WOW! Was that an experience! Words fail me, and almost everyone else, in explaining how spectacular the two exhibits were. The action-packed day concluded with the well-attended Texas Hold'em bottle competition.

The "full breakfast" membership meeting on Friday morning was really well-attended. Bylaws changes were explained and approved and the 2024-2026 board of director members were inducted into office. Promptly at 1:00 the gates were opened for over 100 VIPs to check out the bottle sale and exhibits. Later that evening the annual awards banquet was held under the dinosaurs in the Hall of Paleontology at the Museum. What a photo op that was! With over 150 in attendance, a chance to hear Joel Bartsch's short but sweet keynote address, a lovely meal, and robust awards presentation, this banquet will surely be remembered as one of the greatest. We were grateful to finally meet Joel Bartsch, president of HMNS and a major sponsor of Houston 24. Couldn't have done it without him!

Saturday's sales were brisk and lots of items changed hands as many bottles and related items went up for sale for the first time. With hardly a chance to catch our breath, the on-line and live auction filled the rest of the day. Although it started slowly, it soon turned into a lively and entertaining bidding frenzy for some very cool items. Crowded House Auctions and Martin Van Zant and his crew did a fantastic job and helped to make this a really successful event for sellers, buyers, and FOHBC.

By the time Sunday rolled around, bringing the Expo to its end, we could see that it had been a huge success and everyone who attended thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

A few comments about our membership meeting on Friday morning: we acknowledged our accomplishments of the last few years such as the Virtual Museum additions, Auction Price Report activity, the successful merger of Bottles and Extras and Antique Bottles & Glass Collector magazines, and one year of monthly on-line webinars. Looking ahead, we outlined our major goals: updating the Auction Price Report is first on the list, and a new website is another high priority project. An on-going priority is to continue to increase our members' activity on our website and other social media platforms. And, of course, we want to continue to bring in new members.

Changes to our bylaws were adopted and we have a new organization chart for the board of directors. Many changes involved bringing things up to date in our technological world. Major changes were made to each Director's responsibilities. Each Director will now have an active role in the administration of the Federation with their individual duties outlined and spread out throughout the 15-member board. We are grateful that all 2022-2024 board members chose to continue for another two-year term!

Conventions and their national placement will now reside in a committee of Regional Directors to best move the conventions around and ensure that optimal proposals are chosen. The Membership Director will help grow the organization and organize the membership which has grown with the magazine merger. Our public relations, newsletter, merchandise, webinars, and social media are now under our Marketing Director. This hopefully will allow us greater exposure to growing social media contacts. Special Projects are grouped together to coordinate the AB&GC, our website, Virtual Museum, and Auction Price Report activities. This restructuring will allow committees, led by a board member, to make decisions affecting our operation and allow for new ideas and activities to flourish. Rather than having a few people volunteering to do all the required activities, more Board members will be involved in a variety of new endeavors. Committees are being formed, so be sure to let us know where you'd like to get involved.

I'm sorry if you missed Houston 24 but we will share as much as we can in the November-December issue of AB&GC. You can catch a glimpse before that on our website and social media sites where attendees are posting personal photos and sharing their experiences. And now...Bring on Reno 2025!

