



FEDERATION OF HISTORICAL BOTTLE COLLECTORS
FOUNDED 1969

FOHBC Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom December 2, 2025, 7 pm CT

Present: Michael Seeliger, President
Kathie Craig, Treasurer
Alice Seeliger, Secretary, Editor AB&GC
Doug Simms, Special Projects Director / Webmaster
Matt Lacy, Director at Large
Richard Siri, Director at Large
Charlie Martin, Northeast Region Director
Henry Hecker, Midwest Region Director
Eric McGuire, Western Region Director

Absent: Craig Cassetta, Marketing Director
Tom Lines, Southern Region Director
John O'Neill, Director at Large

Guest: Michael George, AB&GC Graphic Designer

President Seeliger called the meeting to order at 7 pm CT. Roll call was taken, and Guest Michael George was welcomed. Returning Board member, Matt Lacy, Director at Large, was welcomed back to the board acknowledging his past presidency and leadership of the Cleveland show. He noted he is glad to be back and is pleased to see the direction the Federation is taking under this leadership.

Update on Magazine Mailing

Michael noted that the November-December AB&GC magazine was recently mailed. He acknowledged that it is late due to transition issues and he has received numerous calls requesting its status. In one of the calls he received, Otto Chester expressed interest in organizing an eastern seaboard national show.

He thanked Michael George and Alice Seeliger for all the efforts they put into getting this magazine produced and assured everyone that they will be pleased with the outcome. Alice noted that members should receive the November-December issue by late December. The January-February issue will be completed by mid-December and should be received by mid-January. Alice and Michael George are intending to be back on schedule for the March-April issue which would mean readers would receive it in late February—prior to the issue date.

Membership Renewals

Michael discussed membership renewals, highlighting a cost-effective postcard campaign to members who do not have email addresses that yields about 6 renewals per 15 postcards sent. One complimentary issue of AB&GC is sent to expired members under the regular mailing rates in anticipation of renewals. It is \$.74 to send magazines this way, but \$4.20 to send by First Class for late renewals.

On the advice of Modern Litho, Michael will be transitioning Foreign and Canada subscribers to Digital. The cost and time delay for these magazine mailings is not acceptable. There are about 15 of these subscribers.

Financial Recap

Michael presented a financial update, noting steady investments and significant advertising revenue resulting from collection efforts by Alice. The Virtual Museum's funds remain steady. He thanked Richard Siri and the Reno 25 team for a successful national show which had a profit near \$20,000. The chair stipend for Richard Siri would be approximately \$4,700 for the 20% payout which Richard will donate to the VM to be able to accept the \$5,000 matching donation. Therefore, the VM would have \$10,000+ in their account. Monthly expenses for the VM and FOHBC websites now total about \$290/month including server hosting and plugins. The VM has a monthly income of approximately \$75. The Houston 24 account remains open and there has been no response from the certified letter sent to Ferdinand which is still sitting in the Brookshire Post Office.

Outstanding expenses include a \$1,290 tax preparation fee and \$2,500 to Michael George for magazine design and layout for the January-February issue. The group also reviewed PayPal fees, MailChimp costs, and postage expenses.

2025 Reno National Expo Results

Michael presented a preliminary Reno Profit and Loss Statement which he has been reviewing with DeAnna Jordt, show treasurer, clarifying that Federation expenses, such as the membership breakfast and audiovisual equipment for seminars, were paid from Reno's account and have been reimbursed by the Federation. Kathie and Richard clarified that the banquet expenses were show-related, not Federation expenses, and Michael noted the need to ensure no double-counting occurs in the financial records. Michael will work with DeAnna Jordt to finalize the P & L statement.

Reno 25 had a total income of \$79,000 and expenses of approximately \$56,000, resulting in a preliminary profit of \$23,000. It was clarified that certain expenses, including Federation golf/logo-shirts should be attributed to the Federation rather than the Reno show as shown on this P&L statement. Richard explained that business licenses were required for each dealer at the show, which was a one-time cost and is included in the cost of the first table for each dealer. No further reporting to Nevada is required.

AB&GC Magazine Review

Alice reported on the November-December issue's advertising performance, noting they brought in \$2,620 from ads, with 15 pages of paid advertising and 24.5 pages of FOHBC-related content. She mentioned losing a major advertiser, Jeff Wichmann, American Bottle Auctions, due to health reasons. Alice is actively exploring new advertising opportunities, including auction houses and insurance providers to cover collections. The magazine costs approximately \$10,000 per issue, with advertising revenue currently covering only about a quarter of the cost, though they are working towards increasing that to 50%. Alice will also be re-evaluating some advertising strategies including reciprocal ads with other organizations that do not bring in any revenue but hopefully bring in new members.

Alice mentioned other possibilities to reduce costs by decreasing the number of pages, increasing dues, increasing costs to club show advertisers, and seeking other printing bids. Alice discussed the successful completion of the late November-December issue in just three weeks with Michael George stepping in when Martin Van Zant was not able to take on the project. Alice and Mike shared their experience of working together, with Alice appreciating Mike's calming influence and support.

Michael Seeliger suggested including articles on older collectors and bottle clubs to engage readers.

Alice highlighted the positive response to their new Young Collectors Corner feature, which has generated 20 potential candidates for future columns, largely due to Greg Eaton's efforts and Craig's Facebook postings. Featured young collectors are given a free one-year digital membership and are sent several copies of the magazine in which they are featured. She also discussed setting up an editorial board to review articles and emphasized the need for current content, encouraging members to submit collection pictures.

Charlie expressed interest in reconnecting with Bob Strickhart, a former bitters column writer, to contribute to the magazine again. Michael Seeliger has talked to Bob several times and he believes Bob is ready to write for the magazine again. Charlie will follow up with a call to Bob.

Michael Seeliger suggested adding a flask-focused section to the magazine, with Matt agreeing to discuss this with Michael George.

Charlie is planning to collect "IT bottle" stories from members in his Northeast Region...the bottle that got them started collecting...and suggested including the stories in AB&GC maybe two times a year.

Michael George is looking forward to having some time to take a closer look at the magazine and each element, establish some standards, and develop our style. He agreed this first issue was a whirlwind but is pleased with and proud of the outcome. He encourages continued collaboration with Facebook and reminding members to send in

articles and photos. He is pleased with the Young Collectors Corner feature. He proposed soliciting and featuring pictures of bottle shows as a regular element.

Doug Simms was complimentary of the magazine and thanked Michael George for stepping up to the plate. He appreciated all the efforts Michael and Alice put in to get the magazine produced and was pleased with their really interesting changes.

Michael George and Alice are reviewing the reciprocal ad agreements and updating the ones we submit for their publications; some were seriously outdated. There are approximately six of these in place. Charlie suggested also offering a special-rate membership in FOHBC to those with whom we have a reciprocal ad agreement.

Social Media Growth and Young Collectors

Alice reported that contrary to concerns about a lack of young collectors, there is growing interest in bottle collecting. She highlighted that Facebook has become a key platform with over 110,000 visits in three months to the FOHBC Facebook page, and suggested participating in social media engagement by Liking, Commenting, and Sharing posts. Craig is doing a great job posting on the Federation's Facebook page. Doug reported that Facebook metrics showed over 4,100 followers and recent high engagement periods. The group discussed strategies to promote the magazine through social media, including featuring content on Facebook and incorporating social media information in the magazine itself.

Exhibition Book Sales/Promotion

Michael S. noted that we are continuing to sell books through eBay (\$40 or best offer) and at shows. He has provided numerous clubs with a supply to sell and use as fundraisers, especially during his recent northeast region tour. Directors were encouraged to let clubs know about this opportunity. The club would need to pay for shipping. If they sell a book for \$40, they send \$20 back to the Federation, if possible. There are 1275 sets still available, so it's important to get them distributed as soon as possible. Bill Taylor is pursuing partnering with Barnes & Noble or other book sales outlets. As coffee-table books, they are in less demand than reference books.

Special Projects – Social Media, Websites, Auction Price Report and Virtual Museum

–Social Media

Doug presented the statistics on Facebook and FOHBC websites. Facebook for last 60 days showed over 100,000 views. He thanked Craig for his continual posting efforts. 30% are following the site—4,125. Non-followers need to specifically seek us out, which they are doing. The Young Collectors post had 9,200 views on one day. There's interactive dialog going on and it is becoming a resource. Multiple statistics are available which Doug can provide, including gender, age, location, etc. Michael George suggested efforts to translate these views into memberships. It was agreed that we need to develop a magazine/membership campaign for Facebook. And one for the books, also.

Charlie suggested putting a social media page in AB&GC, to bring in more members, especially to bring in more youth. He also suggested posting the promo card on Facebook. Michael Seeliger is getting calls from people who have bottles that they want to know more about. He wonders if these are coming from Facebook exposure.

Doug suggested using page 5 of the magazine for showcasing Facebook features, etc. The new website announcement has appeared in the last two issues.

Alice wondered if we could put a link to one article on Facebook periodically. The cover of each magazine should be posted as soon as it is mailed.

–FOHBC.org Website

For the month of November, 30 people joined the Federation through the website. In the last 30 days there were 4,000 sessions; 8,183 pageviews with an average session duration of 1 minute, and 3,000 shares. There were about 3,000 new users (stats just began being generated and tracked). Doug will prepare a report on this in the future and email it to everyone.

Doug noted that he, Alice, and Craig are working together to post all of the bottle auctions that are advertised in AB&GC on Facebook and on a special Auction page on the website. Posting show flyers is going smoothly but these are not limited to advertisers as we want to have the most comprehensive listing of bottle shows to bring people to the site.

–APR Progress

There are no statistics for the APR page because it's a database, not a WordPress site. Doug will see if there is a way to generate statistics.

Doug reported progress on the Auction Price Report, with Jeffrey Evans agreeing to provide his auction data and Connor Rush, a former employee of Evans, helping to format the data to prepare it for adding to the APR. Hopefully we will be able to include the images.

–Virtual Museum

Doug also reviewed upcoming activities with the Virtual Museum. There are 350 spins from Houston, with about 250 already having write-ups in the H24 Exhibition books that could be used as starting points. The plan is to add 6-12 items per month, with Alan identifying potential writers among bottle experts. Doug has the cobalt gallon Harrison from Houston ready and just needs the description to finalize the posting.

Doug briefly explained the process of removing backgrounds from images, content creation, and groupings to select. Previously, an add on called Paddle was used to remove the backgrounds. Doug is experimenting with Photoshop for removing backgrounds, will continue to receive images from Alan DeMaison, and will be seeking experts to add descriptive content to the images.

FOHBC Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom

December 2, 2025, 7 pm CT

Page 6

Alan took many photos of cures at Houston, and Dann Louis is coming out with a cure book very shortly. Doug will be establishing a list of experts to provide the descriptions. Lisa Connors will be helping with the posting project. Gina Pelligrini is also ready to start helping. The group suggested starting with a dozen bottles from various categories to begin content creation, with Michael George suggesting a mix of different types of bottles.

Michael G. knows those who wrote the descriptions for the Exhibition books so he can contact them about providing digital content.

Election of Officers for 2026 to 2028 Term (July/August 2026)

Michael S. mentioned that he needs a Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of officers. He thanked the current board members and hoped they would all decide to stay on for another term as he and Alice will be doing so.

Federation Logo

Michael S. asked the board to think about a change to the Federation logo for future discussion.

Miscellaneous

Alice mentioned she and Michael would be attending an upcoming bottle club holiday party at Mike and Kathie Craig's house.

Adjourn

Charlie made a motion to adjourn, Doug seconded, meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm CT.

Next steps

- [Michael: Check with the anonymous donor about the duration of the \\$5,000 Virtual Museum matching donation](#)
- [Doug: Follow up with Kathie to identify what the "paddle" monthly charge is for the FOHBC Virtual Museum](#)
- [Doug: Generate and email detailed Facebook metrics reports to the board](#)
- [Doug: Coordinate with Connor Rush and Bill Meier to integrate Jeffrey Evans auction data into the Auction Price Report](#)
- [Doug: Review Houston spins received from Alan and begin processing 6-12 per month for the Virtual Museum, including testing Photoshop for background removal](#)
- [Mike: Contact Jeff Noordsy to request digital write-ups for the VM spins from the Exhibition books](#)
- [Doug: Reach out to Gina Pelligrini to bring her in to the Virtual Museum project](#)

FOHBC Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom

December 2, 2025, 7 pm CT

Page 7

- [Doug: Begin adding bottle auction information to the website for paid magazine advertisers](#)
- [Michael: Form a committee to recruit volunteers for upcoming board elections](#)
- [All: Consider ideas for new Federation logo and potential contest](#)
- [All: Like, Post, and Share on the FOHBC Facebook page](#)

Respectfully submitted,
Alice J. Seeliger, Secretary