

2009 National - The West Coast Event

By Dar Furda

Photos by Tom Tyshko & Ken Lawler

The Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors National Awards Banquet was held July 31, capped by the two-day show August 1 – 2 in Pomona, California. Host club was the Los Angeles Historical Bottle Club and the show was the first Federation event to have been held on the West Coast.

Looking around at the attendees at the Friday evening awards banquet, it seemed that more than a quorum's worth of FOHBC officers were in attendance. Most of them came in from different states such as Nevada, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Missouri, Florida, Kentucky, and New York. A few of them live in California.

Alan DeMaison was the recipient of the President's Award, receiving a plaque from President Richard Siri for his outstanding contribution as Federation treasurer, combined with his additional feat of tracking the monies for this year's national show. I worked with Alan regarding the program advertising money that I collected. He produced several detailed spreadsheet reports that those of us involved with volunteering relied upon to check on our own numbers. He was a great guy to work with.

The Hall of Fame gained another member this year. Johnnie Fletcher was originally nominated by Ed Stewart for inclusion on the Federation Honor Roll. It turns out because of his enormous dedication to the hobby, that board members voted him into the Hall of Fame. Some history on Johnnie is that he was a founder of the Oklahoma Territory Bottle & Relic Club. He had been president of the club multiple times and has been the on-going editor of the *Oklahoma Territory News* since the club was founded in 1987. He has made several publishing contributions to the collecting world such as the *Oklahoma Drug Stores*, first edition of his *Kansas Bottles 1854-1915*, a second edition of *Oklahoma Bottles* and is currently working on a St. Joseph, Missouri bottle reference book.

The annual contest winners were announced at the banquet. The winning newsletter was *Glass Chatter* from the Midwest Antique Fruit Jar & Bottle Club, Joe Coulson, editor. Second place went to *The Ohio Swirl*, Ohio Bottle Club, Phyllis Koch, editor. The first place show flyer award went to the Huron Valley Antique Bottle Club. The Antique Bottle Club of San Diego won second place. Jack Sullivan won the best researched article award for his "The Night the Axe Fell on Cleveland." Dave Maryo, President of the Los Angeles Historical Bottle Club, won for his article "Forsha's Balm is Endorsed by President Lincoln." Mike Byrant, from the Antique Bottle Club of San Diego won both the original true story and the best fiction categories. His "A Snake in the Glass," won the true story award. His best fiction column "Aunt Blabby" made him a winner, as well. Both Mike Bryant and Dave Maryo were present to accept their plaques.

Banquet raffle donations were abundant, this year. Ferdinand Meyer V donated \$200. Juaane Herrold won that donation. A second \$200 donation by Jeff Wichmann was won by LAHBC member Erika Lomeli (coincidentally it was drawn by her daughter, Isabella). Michael Craig, member of the San Jose Club, won another Jeff Wichmann donation which was a pontiled and handled amber Chestnut Grove whiskey. LAHBC member Dar Furda donated \$100 which was broken down into three segments of \$50, \$25 and another \$25 prize. Show volunteer Val Berry, from New York won \$50. Johnnie Fletcher won \$25 and Ed Stewart won the other \$25. The President of the San Jose Club, Kathy Craig, won the Blackburn Press donation of their book, "The Bottle Book." Jeff Wichmann also won a book donated by the Blackburn Press, "Bottle Markers and Their Marks."

Local ghost town historian Roger Vargo and his wife Cecile took the banquet audience through a video adventure of some of California's famous ghost towns. Roger's expert knowledge of California mining history and geology of Southern California was complemented by his professional photographic skills.

Not only did this show have board members from across the country, but dealers were also not shy about signing up and either driving or flying to the West Coast. Folks also came in from Nevada, Kentucky, Florida, Georgia, Arizona, Ohio, New York, Washington, Wyoming, Oregon, Kansas, New

Mexico, Texas, Michigan, Oklahoma, Missouri, North Carolina and Montana. There were even folks from England and Australia. Hopefully I didn't miss anyone.

There were thirteen displayers this year. Elaine DeMaison, from Ohio, displayed her jelly jars. Nevada's Bob Ferraro brought in some of his finest Nevada Pottery. I have to congratulate Elaine and Bob for toting their collectibles out here to California. The rest of the displayers were from California. Gary Frederick brought in his J.V. Baldwin Liquor Vault. Dave Hall brought in his Valverde Colorado glass factories display that covered the time period of 1896 – 1910. Dick Homme showed his detailed 50 State Hutchinson collection. Jose Lomeli, a new member of the LAHBC, did an outstanding job with his "Lomeli Family" California milks. President of the LAHBC, Dave Maryo, brought in some Midwestern glass. Steve Mello showed some unembossed Western glass. Terry Monteith had a variety of colors and sizes of demijohns and carboys. Richard Siri brought a display that explained how Native Americans used old bottles. Richard Tucker brought some of his fine historical flasks. Ken Loakes had a display of examples of Hires Extract. Lance Westfall, Tom Quinn, and Jon Lawson put together some vivid colored shards of rare old bottles. The broken fruit jar (AP Brayton, San Francisco) in that display would be worth \$10,000 to \$20,000 if it was in mint condition. Ken Lawler said someone told him that when the display was at the June San Diego show, the display was aptly named "The Bottle Graveyard from 1869 – 1885."

Two displayers were awarded ribbons. The People's Choice Ribbon went to LAHBC's Richard Tucker for his historical flasks. The FOHBC's Most Educational Ribbon was awarded to Terry Monteith from the San Diego Club for his demijohns and carboys.

Each displayer received a FOHBC Appreciation plaque that was designed and created by LAHBC secretary Ken Lawler. He kept with the western theme by adding the California flag and a piece of Pyrite under the flag to indicate "California Gold." He dug the bottles he glued to the plaques and cleverly added the Jesse Moore Whiskey labels to them.

From what I could determine, there were dealers from the following clubs: Northwestern, San Jose, San Diego, Forty-Niner, Phoenix, Montana, Genesee Valley, MAFJ&BC, Ohio, Washington and of course, the host club. Hope I didn't miss a club. At least you get the idea that the support was pretty evident. Anyway, who would want to miss a FOHBC national show?

Photographer for the banquet and show was Tom Tyshko, long-time librarian of the host club. I think you will enjoy the pictures he has taken capturing the excitement of the show. Also, some of you may have noticed Alan DeMaison with the video camera interviewing the displayers in front of their displays. He believes this is the first time this has been done by the FOHBC in several years.

I personally enjoyed the fact that Florida dealer Don Carroll came out west. Don had an abundance of what I collect -- teakettle inks. I got acquainted with Don's inks at the York Expo last year. Between my volunteering efforts, I devoted some time to selecting some beauties to bring home this year. He mentioned to me that he thought that he would have a customer out here.

In addition to stopping by Don's table I decided to sit down and talk with the treasurer of the Northwestern club, Frank Ritz. I enlisted his help in coming up with a list of some of the most impressive collectibles that were available at the show. Some of the prime choices were historical flasks, Western whiskeys, Western whiskey flasks, Eastern handled whiskeys, E.G. Booz old cabins, Hostetters Bitters, figural bitters, Indian queens, figural pigs, ear of corn bitters and various barrel bitters.

The host club also awarded raffle prizes. Two of the prizes were donated by Jeff Wichmann. FOHBC Board Member Jim Bender won Jeff's amber E.G. Booz whiskey. Host club member Scott Yeargain won Jeff's aqua Maulton's Oloroso bitters. An L. Nicholas Jug was won by Mark Acardi. Henry Johnston won a white grape vase. Karen Smith won a decorative plate, Frank Ritz won a Coronation plate and host club member Val Wippert won a purple grape vase.

The FOHBC and the host club thank Jeff Wichmann for his generous donations of money and bottles.

The seminars were varied and heavily attended. We had some folks from out of state such as past Federation president Carl Sturm from Florida, who talked about his favorite subject, black glass.

Sheldon Baugh from Kentucky and Ferdinand Meyer V from Texas held an open forum for those interested in talking about bitters bottle collecting. Stan Paher came in from Reno, Nevada to present his seminar on Death Valley California Ghost Towns and Mining Camps. LAHBC members Richard Tucker and Dave Maryo shared their expertise in historical flasks and Southern California wineries. Maryo, president of the host club, met the challenge of organizing the seminars as well as presenting one.

I decided to chat with a few dealers and get their take on the show. John Pastor from Michigan mentioned that it gave him the opportunity to meet with new collectors that he had corresponded with. He also mentioned that the seminars were another great feature. "There were not as many displays as expected but they were phenomenal," he said. His overall impression of the show was that it was very good and that he saw more quality table top items than usual. John said that he was enjoying the show and had a nice time, but he added that he would have liked to have seen more sales tables.

Warren Friedrich from Nevada City, California responded to my question of what was the best bottle that he would hope to sell at the show. He said that he would hope to sell more of a collection. He explained what he needs for his collection. He says that "he specializes in early Western bitters made and marketed during the 1860s decade." He said that there are probably only a dozen "out there" and that he is missing three examples. To give you an idea of the quality of what this man collects, during Sheldon Baugh's Bitters Seminar Warren proudly showed and talked about his Cassin's and Rosenbaums. The highlight of the show for Warren was what he called "the shard display." He remarked that he spent a lot of time looking at it. His overall impression of the show was that it was better than expected with some disappointing expectations (he had come to the show with some "hearsay" information). He was pleasantly surprised to see that the show had over 150 tables. Another happy point was to say that he "spent time with fellow collectors he seldom sees." He ended by saying that the best memory of the show was "the displays."

I went to the "overseas" folks for their input. I started with David Van Loon and Richard Wormsley from Leeds, England. They both shared the same thoughts on the show. First of all, I found out that they are avid followers of the FOHBC Expos and national shows. They have attended two Expos and four Nationals! They were hoping to sell lots of their poisons at this show. They enjoyed the atmosphere of the show and meeting old friends from other shows. They found that the show was "very good and well organized." They said that the best memory of the show that they will take back to England with them will be the "friendliness of it all."

I met up with Australian James Bell at an aisle intersection. He flashed a wide smile and told me that he hoped to sell everything he brought with him. I asked him what he thought was the highlight of the show for him. He found "nice items for sale. The venue was excellent and the show was well organized." His most sincere impression was that it was "mainly the people" that he enjoyed. James thinks this is what it is all about: "The people we meet and the friendships we make."

My opinion is that the entire event was a positive one and I sensed a new direction and a rekindling of excitement evolving at this show. From my standpoint, this new direction started from discussions held within the confines of the board meeting. The rest was borne out in Sheldon Baugh's "Bitters Bottle Forum." As a result of the board meeting and the forum, the idea of determining new ways to grow the membership and entice younger folks to accompany the well-seasoned members of the FOHBC became a subject of interest.

As Sheldon proceeded with his forum his enthusiasm became contagious. He explained his feeling about collecting. He stated that he could get as excited over a \$50 bottle as one worth thousands. He drew the audience into volunteering as to what category of collecting they were interested in such as color over geographical location. Ferdinand Meyer V, from Houston, Texas, explained his involvement in the hobby and said that he was rather a new collector compared to some of the others in the room. (Note: Check out Ferdinand's "cobalt Fish Bitters" he proudly guarded on his table at the show. A picture is included with this article.) He added to Sheldon's enthusiasm. Both men were also at ease with adding a little humor to their conversations. Statistics were quoted from Warren Friedrich, from Nevada City, California as he stated specific facts concerning the Cassin's and Rosenbaums he talked

about during a portion of the forum. These three men kept the audience intensely interested. When Sheldon took the lead again he encouraged input from the audience as to what folks collect. The forum started at 7:00 and was to last an hour, but it was 9:15 before the group broke up. Sheldon made the remark at the end of the forum that he didn't want it to end. Neither did the audience. You could sense that by the way the audience gravitated toward the front table to get a closer look at Warren's examples and carry on further conversations.

With the enthusiasm level rising, it might be a good idea to check out how you can join in and become a part of this group of collectors. Contact me if you would like to learn more about how to become more involved by becoming a member of the FOHBC. I can point you in the right direction.

Now is the time to thank everyone from volunteers to dealers, displayers and the public who purchased. A special thanks to the FOHBC Convention Director Wayne Lowry and business manager June Lowry and the LAHBC Show Chairman, Pam Selenak for their tireless pursuit in keeping the show on track.

On Page 2 of the 2009 FOHBC National Show Program many of you were greeted by Pepper "the unofficial 2009 greeter." Pepper realizes that my article is finished so he says that this is THE END

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