

## Open Letter to the BCCA – Why I have NO plans to rejoin

I have finally returned home from the Milwaukee Convention...

First off, a major **“Thank You”** to all the volunteers for hosting an amazing private party. Two days of great beer can fun, a chance to visit with so many great collecting friends, and a trade floor so vast that in my two days I barely completed two full trips around the entire floor! The hotel room was perfect, location easy to reach from Milwaukee airport, and everything was very well organized and ran so smoothly. Thank you for such a great experience and allowing me to attend Thursday and Friday as a “guest”.

That’s correct. I attended as a guest, quitting my BCCA membership in 2007, and based on the following years of decisions, lack of decisions, flat out BAD decisions, and recent conversations with officers at Dallas and again at Milwaukee, I do NOT see myself ever rejoining the BCCA. Yes, the BCCA consists of many amazing people, but something is majorly broken in the organization, with the following being some items I just can’t understand.

### **Afraid or unwillingness to take advantage of technology**

The BCCA just hosted a major successful Convention, over 1,000 collectors from around the world, maybe the best attended in decades. Taking a look at [www.bcca.com](http://www.bcca.com) over the past year and information about the Convention:

- No updates as to hotel status, numbers of people pre-registered, or frequently updated information leading into this major event. Where was the hype, where was the weekly status leading up to the show?
- Why couldn’t the Convention booklet be web hosted instead of snail mail? It would take just minutes to web host, anyone could see, even the many members NOT able to attend.
- Someone was producing major quality daily Convention newsletters. How, printed to shiny paper. In 2015 someone couldn’t take this awesome daily update and a few minutes to post digitally to the BCCA website for ALL members to easily see electronically?
- It has now been several weeks after a great show. Where are updated minutes, pictures, stories etc., from such a great event? The [www.bcca.com](http://www.bcca.com) should be the first place for sharing this information in real time. What has been web hosted? Nothing.

It is not about a flashy web site, it is about taking advantage of what is there! Where are the weekly or monthly blog updates from the BCCA officers as to status of the club? Has a BCCA officer EVER posted current content to [www.bcca.com](http://www.bcca.com)? Even the RB message board (the message board of the BCCA) why no regular updates/posts? Speaking with a BCCA officer at Milwaukee, “we don’t really need an active web site, we have Facebook”. This is so wrong! Facebook is a tool, the web site [www.bcca.com](http://www.bcca.com) should be the FIRST site that appears whenever anyone does a search for “beer cans”, and open/public for ANYONE to view.

### **Officers have no powers**

I have had many very good conversations with past and present officers. To an officer, "We can't make a decision; we must take the topic back to the board for discussion". And discussion, more discussion, likely committee discussion, and maybe a decision some many months down the road. Short of making decisions to disband the club or drain the treasury, must all decisions take approval of the board and then blessing of long time founders of the BCCA to approve anything?

The Rusty Bunch succeeds and advances because the officers quickly email/voice/phone chat, reach a consensus and done. Often in minutes, sometimes hours, rarely more than a few days. Do the RB officers always make the correct decision or popular decision? Nope. However, they get things DONE, and if really do make a mistake, this is a beer can hobby, simply change the decision later as necessary. No need for quarterly forums to form a committee to drag out decisions long enough to table decisions until next round of officer's problem.

### **Why no transparency?**

This is a hobby, not about preserving nuclear secrets. Board meeting minutes and other decisions should be actively updated, and web hosted under [www.bcca.com](http://www.bcca.com) for ALL to see. No reason to password protect, let anyone see what/why is going on behind the scenes. Technology exists to do make this trivial, so many have computers, laptops, tablets or smart phones. Seriously, the board must have a formal meeting to "approve" minutes before they can be shared? The RB secretary web hosted RB Convention minutes less than 30 minutes of the completion of the meeting. What is mentioned in board minutes that must be "approved"?

### **Ready, aim, fire??? Hell, just fire, fire, fire, fire!**

Again discussions with a current officer, the BCCA must plan, plan, plan before taking any action. The BCCA must not "ready, fire and only then aim". Why? This is a beer can hobby. You are not preparing an army for battle where there are real life and death implications. As a hobby we should be fire, fire, fire, fire and trying so many different ideas to improve the health of the hobby. Try to make good and informed decisions but quickly, fire, fire, fire, MAKE some decisions. DO SOMETHING!

First we need a "mission statement"? Seriously, I know of ZERO tech companies that get bogged down with 1960's way of running businesses. Today, it is all about progress and doing something, not just talk about doing something. The organizations that succeed do so by making decisions and moving forward, not talking about maybe doing something.

### **Volunteers are NOT BCCA "indentured servants"**

There is plenty of volunteer effort out there, plenty of projects just waiting to happen, plenty of people willing to contribute major hours and personal \$\$\$\$. However, volunteers must be

allowed to \*\*\*volunteer\*\*\*. Instead of a simple “thank you, how can we help”, working on a project with the BCCA is so often met with “how will the BCCA profit” and “the BCCA must own and control the project”, and “you can only make project decisions if approved by the BCCA”. That is NOT how you attract volunteers. Or members! If someone is willing to help or offer something beneficial to the hobby, let these volunteers run and actually try to HELP them!!!

### **Work smart, not hard**

I hear so often “we are just volunteers, not paid positions, and simply don’t have the time to do everything”. Well stop trying to do everything, just do something. Two perfect real examples:

- Complaint from a BCCA officer that too many Convention rumors, if you want information, come to me and ask. Really? Instead of everyone coming to YOU, how about using the [www.bcca.com](http://www.bcca.com) website and posting updated information. Spend a few minutes sharing information, everyone can read the same FACTS, no rumors; people can read on their time, not yours. Work smart!
- Past BCCA president getting slammed with phone calls asking for information. Why? Again a few minutes of posting information about an upcoming show, decisions in progress, near term plans in a blog/discussion forum, all able to see what is going on, very little to need to call and ask the same questions again and again and again. Any calls should be FUN about the hobby, not “please repeat the same thing”.

### **Educational status**

I saw nice banners at the Milwaukee Convention that the BCCA is the leader in educating the collecting hobby. Can someone please enumerate THREE items last year where the BCCA lead in this area? Can someone please enumerate ONE? I have seen multiple initiatives squashed, and road block after road block erected. Me personally working on the BMV project and my attempt to digitally share so much great information about the history of the hobby, something I consider very “educational”, I received nothing but “thank you” and “how can we help” from all the BCCA **chapters**, but working with the BCCA **national** it was nothing but “how can the BCCA profit”, not about getting information into as many person’s hands as possible.

### **Why afraid of digital content?**

Why has the rest of the world gone digital but the BCCA remains printed paper? Why are so many commercial magazines and all the chapter newsletters available digitally, PDF format, but not the BCCA magazine? The answer seems to be if “digital” then people will no longer join the BCCA. Strange, I see many examples where open and digital are thriving, and the Rusty Bunch continues to grow its membership, and keeps its costs very low, because we are digital.

Digital keeps costs much lower. Strange how electronic bits/bytes/pixels cost essentially the same whether you use a little (BCCA) or a lot (RB). I now web host over 9GB of digital hobby information, including 7GB of BMV content, and only costs me \$160 every two years (my costs,

never have asked for a dime from the BCCA). Yet the BCCA must keep raising dues, mainly because a printed/glossy magazine and printed roster which will be used once or almost never.

### **Unwillingness to try something different**

Conventions have always been after Labor Day, doesn't matter if members associated with teaching and other professions have nearly zero chance of attending during these dates. Please, don't spout the usual "well it is cheaper after Labor Day". Based on my bill from Milwaukee, there was NOTHING cheap. Not hotel, not parking, not transportation, not food. Whether a collector needs to spend \$600 or \$650 isn't doing to make much of a difference.

Why unwilling to try a summer (June/July) Convention? Interesting there was a poll on the RB message board and by far the numbers were in support of June/July. I know, this is a dead horse, but my wife whom works for an elementary school has no flexibility to take off mid-August through September. For those in similar situation, sorry, no Convention for you.

### **Where is the marketing?**

Well there can't be much regarding Convention since this is a private party. Flying into both Dallas and Milwaukee I chatted with person in seat next to me where I was going. Two people seemed interested and asked "can I stop by and check things out"? Not so nice to answer that nope, not unless you want to drop \$40 for membership and \$40 for trade floor access.

Flying into Milwaukee I am flipping through United's in-flight magazine. What do I see, a nice two page spread about [www.craftcans.com](http://www.craftcans.com). Two pages showing craft cans from around the United States. Not a mention of [www.bcca.com](http://www.bcca.com) anywhere. Why don't we see [www.bcca.com](http://www.bcca.com) printed on so many of these craft cans? Why isn't [www.bcca.com](http://www.bcca.com) a paid Goggle item on EBay, Google, Facebook, Twitter, etc.?

### **The BCCA is NOT the hobby**

This may be the problem right here. To some the feeling the BCCA is the hobby, and the hobby can only survive with the BCCA. The hobby is going to do just fine with or without the BCCA, and be around until the current generation of collectors passes on (maybe 20-25-30 years?).

I do believe there should be a strong national organization, blazing trails and promoting the heck out of this hobby. Sadly to me, and anyone willing to listen to many collectors who have left and not coming back, the BCCA it not even close to leading. Way too many examples where the decision is "best interest for the BCCA, not best interest of the hobby". And too many stories with friends whom were long time BCCA members and their reasons why they no longer justify membership.

This is not intended as rant/flare but I often get asked "why won't you rejoin the BCCA"? Well, none want to actually listen to reasons why, let alone really want to do anything to change. And let me leave things with this, when people STOP commenting, they have stopped caring...

-Randy Karasek, RB #636