

Hello Midwest Regional Button Association friends!

We are very pleased to announce that plans are still under way for the Midwest Regional Button Association's 2021 show, which will be held October 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> in Bloomington-Normal, Illinois. As a state, Illinois is now in Phase 5 of their Covid recovery plan, which means that businesses are open and conventions, festivals, and large events can take place. The hotel this year will be a new venue for us, with lots of space to spread out and plenty of rooms to accommodate attendees.

Many of us have, by now, been able to take advantage of vaccines and are comfortable being out in public. However, we are still living in a pandemic, and we understand that some people may be vulnerable and need to feel safe in a somewhat crowded environment. Social distancing, hand sanitizers and masks are helpful, but we want to be mindful of settings where close contact can be problematic for some members.

After discussion, and with those in mind who may have health concerns, the board has decided to scale back on the competition aspect of this event. Feedback from a number of people who serve as judges has indicated that we will likely end up short on personnel and unable to get all of our trays judged. So, in order to ensure we can still have some form of judging, we have decided to take the following steps:

Only MRBA sponsored awards will be judged, which includes Presentation Awards and Junior Awards.

State sponsored awards will not be judged in the traditional sense, but a qualified judge will inspect trays and make helpful comments. Entrants will receive a special ribbon unique to this year, and we would encourage everyone to participate in these (now) non-competitive categories.

The state sponsored award monies will be applied to the 2023 awards list, and states can submit new awards without submitting award money (states may also choose to keep the same award if it is their preference).

There will be no cost for tray entry, and tray limits remain at 5 per person with a 3 tray limit for showroom dealers and MRBA board members.

Trays will be exhibited as they normally would for public viewing, including the 'Just for Fun' award.

All entrants must email Ann Olson at [perbuttons@mchsi.com](mailto:perbuttons@mchsi.com) by October 1<sup>st</sup> to receive an entrant number. Visit the MRBA website for more details about entering.

We recognize that these changes are not ideal, but our goal is to ensure that everyone can enjoy their time together comfortably. All other events will continue as planned, with educational activities, meals, and the showroom open to all. You can help us simply by getting the word out to your local and state button club friends.

Please join us as we gather once again to celebrate and enjoy our hobby!

Barbara Weeks  
MRBA President