



# The Signevierist

Issue Number 2005 - 4

The Official Newsletter of the Fire Mark Circle of the Americas

## The 2005 San Diego Convention A Good Time Was Had by ALL

THOSE OF YOU that missed this year's convention missed a good time and a Great Auction.

After the board meeting on Thursday afternoon, and the "Welcome Reception," we were on our own. Our San Diego host, Bill Pope, steered us to an "out of the way" Italian restaurant called Arrivederci Ristorante where you could have the best that they had to offer at a reasonable price.

On Friday we were off on a tour of the City... Starting with the world famous San Diego Zoo. This was a private tour with our own "open air" bus. We saw lions and tigers and bears (Oh, my!!). There were also giraffes close up and personal... who would "slobber" on you if you weren't careful, and much, much more.

A box lunch and a tour of the Fire House Museum were next on the list. There were some surprises here when we came across the fire mark display...They had "marks" that were never seen before by our members and are not in Bulau or any of our "Addendums".... We could have stayed longer.

If you like cars ...I mean old cars ...no, I mean vintage cars; you would have loved the Evans Automobile Museum. It is open by appointment only and, for a few minutes, on our arrival we weren't sure that they would unlock the doors. (Had someone in our group taken steroids and been caught??) After a two-

minute wait they let us in. Mr. Evans has put together 40 or 50 cars in his private two-story

display that is awesome. Not only were they vintage cars, but also they were restored to their original luster with no dust on anything!!!

Back at the hotel we had to decide where to go for dinner. While some of our group went to a restaurant called "Fifth and Hawthorn," the bulk of our contingent went to one called the "Fish Market." (Martha Girdlestone even gave some of our members an unplanned tour of San Diego). I haven't heard how Fifth and Hawthorn turned out but the Fish Market was fantastic.

Saturday, after breakfast, was the annual business meeting, with few surprises... 'Cause those would be saved for the Auction. After that, we heard from a member of the "U. S. S. Midway Museum" on the restoration of a carrier that is a tourist attraction in the San Diego harbor.

Then it was off to the "Live Auction" as it was described in our Agenda. ...And that is what it was ..Live and Lively. There were 110 items on the original list and John Utting brought along nine others from the UK that were really first class. The total amount of the items auctioned was nearly \$43,000 ...The largest amount in many years.

There was a great banquet on Saturday evening to wind up our visit. Thank you Bill and Blaise Pope for being wonderful hosts.

Ted Lussem

## MORE on REPAINTING FIRE MARKS

IT'S NICE to know that there are other FMCA members who repaint their marks. Dave Winges sent me a photo of some of the English marks he repainted. They look beautiful. It seems Dave took Brian Wright's advice, who wrote in his "The British Fire Mark: 1680-1879," "a few examples carefully and accurately repainted among a collection of marks can demonstrate the striking appearance that they would have originally presented." I too agree with Brian because I never cease to admire my repainted Bulau 93.

Bob Sawyer also wrote that he was more than pleased when he removed an ugly coat of black paint from a fire mark he acquired. The iron underneath the paint had such a beautiful patina, that Bob decided to leave the mark unpainted.

Bob Shea

## 2005 AUCTION RESULTS

THIS YEAR'S AUCTION was a record smashing success. Linda Anderberg assembled quality pieces and auctioneer Gabe Laubacher kept the pace moving. There were numerous marks that had never been seen before at auction. Bidding for choice marks was lively. So intense was the bidding that a number of times the audience applauded, when the hammer finally fell. 106 fire marks and 13 other than fire marks sold for \$42,000 plus a 10% buyers premium. Following is a range of prices realized for only some of the marks:

\$500-749: 2  
\$750-999: 2  
\$1,000-1,499: 8  
\$1,500-1,999: 2  
\$2,000-2,999: 3  
\$3,000-3,999: 2  
\$4,000: 1

The highest price of \$4,000 was for a cast iron Fire Department Insurance Company, Cincinnati, BU# 138. If you go by weight, the highest price was \$2,510 for a tin Fire Association of Philadelphia, BU# 84VB.

Thank you Linda and Gabe for an exciting and memorable auction!

## THIS AND THAT

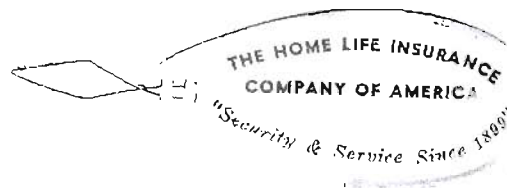
THE PRICES brought for fire marks at the San Diego auction made me think of what the early INA policyholders paid for their marks - \$2.00 for a cast iron eagle or \$1.33 for a star mounted on a board. At those prices, I would have taken a dozen of each.

<<<>>>

For the PC challenged, the complete auction results are included as an insert. Please refer to the auction list sent to you. The auction list and results are also posted on [firemarkcircle.org](http://firemarkcircle.org).

## THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE "HOME"

THIS ISSUE'S "Home" insurance company is "The Home Life Insurance Company of America," Wilmington, DE, which was incorporated in 1899.



## A SPECIAL OFFER TO FMCA MEMBERS

I RECENTLY LOCATED a quantity of authentic American fire marks in mint condition. These are from the Ohio Farmers Insurance Company that was located on Leroy, Ohio. The marks are shown in "Footprints" as Bulau #175 and are from circa 1920. These were obtained from the safe in the Home Office, when they went out of business. These tin marks are in unissued (mint) condition. They are guaranteed 100% to be authentic American fire marks.

You might want to add one to your collection or possibly purchase several to be used as gifts to customers, friends or employees. Another idea might be to use some of these to be mounted on a wooden plaque to be given to employees who are deserving (length of service or outstanding performance).

I don't believe that you will find an authentic American Fire mark in mint condition for such a bargain price as this.

You may purchase as many as you wish until there are none left. The price is \$21.00 per mark plus \$4.00 shipping. (The one time \$4.00 shipping charge is a per order charge regardless of the quantity ordered.). They will be shipped via United States Priority Mail.

For every mark ordered by a FMCA member, a donation of \$2.00 will be made to the FMCA.

Send orders with payment (no credit cards) to:  
Ralph Jennings  
675 Forest Creek Drive  
Ambler, PA 19002  
Phone 215-646-7178 (evenings only)



## FMCA 2006 CONVENTION WILLIAMSBURG, VA October 26-29, 2006

KEETA AND TED HODSON advise that they have secured a block of rooms for the upcoming Williamsburg, VA convention. The hotel is the Best Western Patrick Henry across the street from the eastern end of Colonial Williamsburg. The rates based on 30 rooms is \$65 per day + about \$10 tax. Price includes Continental breakfast and free parking.

Rates are valid 3 days prior and 3 day after, so come early and stay late.

If you've never had the Williamsburg experience, or, even if you have, this is a great opportunity to "explore the history of this nation and learn what it means to be an American." More information to follow in future issues.

---

## EVER GIVEN ANY THOUGHT ABOUT THE INSURANCE COVERAGE ON YOUR COLLECTION?

THE FACT IS, your Homeowners policy is usually not the best place to cover your collection, particularly if you are into items that can be damaged by water or smoke.

Peter Faber has been in contact with an insurance agency about coverage for our auction as well as providing information to the membership for their consideration.

Peter advised that this agency specializes in providing insurance designed for collections of all kinds and is endorsed by a goodly number of national associations. Peter became familiar with them 20 years ago through the American Philatelic Society when insuring his stamp collection. The coverage is written with a highly rated domestic insurer, on a blanket basis, and provides very broad coverage. Included is coverage for shipping and new acquisitions. They will be an advertiser in our next newsletter.

---

## IF THE SIZE FITS

THE FOLLOWING is an eBay listing for a Fire Association fire mark:

"From my knowledge of fire marks this is the real thing. It is listed in the Footprints of Assurance which is the most comprehensive book on fire marks. On page 47, item #87 it is dated from 1860. It is weathered and rusty and is missing the drainage knob off the back. This could be for a number of reasons. This is the first Fire Association of Philadelphia mark to begin having drainage knobs and this may not have had one installed. The other reason could be that it was removed. [Emphasis added] In either case from text books, experience and the way this mark appears I am confident this is the real deal."

I had to read this two times to get the seller's story right. The mark for sale is a Bulau 87 without the drainage knob. The seller's explanation of the missing drainage knob intrigued me. I like a good story and I'm open to new ideas on fire marks. I asked the seller to send a photo of the back, dimensions and weight. The back photo did not show that a drainage knob was ever there and removed. The size was 6 5/8" x 10 3/4" and weighed between 4 to 6 pounds. The size fit a Bulau 87 but the weight did not.

Explanation: The seller matched up the size of the offered mark to one that fit the dimensions listed in "Footprints of Assurance." Unfortunately, the #87 had a drainage knob, but he didn't. This fact accounted for the involved explanation of the missing knob. Also, the seller missed the fact that the mark had water coming out of the hose.

I sent these observations to the seller and suggested that he check out the FMCA website article on reproductions, especially the section on the Fire Association. The seller acknowledged that it MAY [Seller's emphasis, not mine.] be a reproduction, but that his mark does not match the provided description of reproductions. Besides, the water is not gushing out as in #83. He would get an exact weight and check some other sources.

The next day the seller added the following comment on eBay: "This appears to be a reproduction."

Two days later the following comment was added on eBay: **THIS IS A REPRODUCTION.** [Seller's emphasis, not mine.] I would guess the some other people sent him comments on the offering.

Bob Shea

