



The Signevierist

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The Official Newsletter of the Fire Mark Circle of the Americas

2014 MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, CONVENTION

ON THURSDAY, conventioners were greeted in the lobby of the Embassy Suites by the smiling faces of our hosts, Jack and Jane Brunson . After checking their overflowing goodie bags and the updated agenda, people caught up with old friends. At 5:30 most were enjoying light snacks and beverages at the Manager's Reception. Dinner was at the Capital City Club. After dinner the Hospitality Room was open with a chance to view some of the Silent Auction items. We had a chance to meet up with later arrivals and to swap stories.

Friday morning's first bus stop was at the grave of Hank Williams. Check out the site at www.exploresouthernhistory.com/hankwilliams.html. At the next stop we were dropped off at the State Capital and had the choice to view the building and/or the grounds, visit the Museum of Alabama, or tour the First White House of the Confederacy.

With strict instructions to make our way to the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church by 10:30, we assembled and were given a very special tour of the church where Martin Luther King was pastor from 1954 to 1959. After learning about the church's history and the role of Dr. King, the tour moved upstairs to the main church. There, assembled for us was the fully robed choir of the George Washington Carver High School led by their director Mr. Henry Terry. It was a moment not to be forgotten.

Back on the bus again for a short trip and lunch. After lunch we went to the Rosa Parks Museum with video footage that reenacted the events of December 1, 1955 on the bus that launched the historic civil rights Montgomery bus strike. Back on the bus again and off to the former residence of F. Scott & Zelda Fitzgerald, 1931-1932. It is the only museum dedicated to their lives and works and contains their letters, photos, manuscripts and paintings. The last stop on the tour was the Hank Williams Museum, whose music still continues to be enjoyed. Considered a top tourist attraction in Montgomery, it was a fitting finale to an enjoyable and memorable day. Thank you Jack and Jane for sharing your city with us.

Bill Pope, our President, conducted the Saturday morning business meeting expeditiously. (The report of the meeting is included as an attachment.) Following the meeting, retired Birmingham firefighter J. D. King and his wife, Bobbie, told us about the concept of The Alabama Firefighters Museum & Education Center, Calera, AL. set to begin in 2015. The museum will focus on prevention and safety educational experiences, discovering firefighting history, and honoring fire and rescue heroes. More about this museum may be found on their website www.AlabamaFirefightersMuseum.org/.

After a buffet lunch, we made our final bids on the silent auction items and returned at 1:00pm for the main auction. Gabe Laubacher ran the auction of 135 items with gross sales of \$15,230.

The evening's banquet, accompanied by the beautiful guitar sounds of Lamar Morris, was thoroughly enjoyed by all. During the evening, awards were presented: Gabe Laubacher received the Max Klein Silver

Salver for meritorious service to the FMCA, John Truitt and Tom Hardy received the Max Klein Trumpet for enlisting the most new members for the year and Linda Anderberg recieved the Morton T. Werner award for outstanding contributions to the FMCA. Congratulations to all the recipients! Bill thanked and presented a plaque to our hosts, Jack and Jane Brunson. Bill then introduced the incoming President, Logan Smith, whose first official duty was to present the outgoing president with a plaque for his service from 2012-2014. As Bill closed the 2014 meeting he wished everyone a safe journey home with the hope that all will attend the next year's convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Thank you Jack and Jane for a wonderful convention.

Bob Shea, Editor

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## ***SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI; THE ANDES INSURANCE COMPANY***

**T**HE FOLLOWING appeared in *The Insurance Times*, Volume III, Number 7, July 1870, page 481. *Google Book Search. Web:*

**Andes Insurance Company.** - No insurance company in the West has had so auspicious a starting as the Andes. The integrity and ability of its founder and president J. B. Bennett, Esq., has been exemplified in the rapid subscription even during a period of financial straitness [sic] of capital of one million dollars. The whole amount was raised within a hundred and five days from the opening of the books, and \$200,000 offered in excess of the sum required. We anticipate a grand career of usefulness for this company. It is our opinion that it will do much to remove petty sectional differences and to place the business of underwriting upon a broad national basis. When Western men perceive that this company, founded and built up by themselves, is freely welcomed and patronized, as it certainly will be, in the East they will admit the folly and impolicy of local exclusiveness. Let Western companies join in the great race of national advancement. The Andes may take the lead of all. It has the same chance in the East as our most popular companies, for it has the qualities which are held in the highest esteem - ample cash capital, good repute, and a staff of officers of extensive experience, practical knowledge, and admitted ability. We have the pleasure of announcing, in addition to the excellent choice made in the company's president and secretary, that J. J. Berue, Esq., has been appointed superintendent of agencies. This gentleman is well known in the insurance world as a thorough adept in science practice, and law of fire underwriting. He was selected for the position on account of his popularity with the Western insurance agents, and the high reputation he enjoys as one of the most skillful and correct adjusters in the country.

The above is the kind of praise that follows when a large Cincinnati insurance company takes out large, half page ads in the New York City insurance press of the time. Unfortunately, the company underwriters and agents wrote a ton of business in Chicago and Boston, and the Andes went bankrupt after the great fires in those cities.

Bob Shea

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FIRE MARKS OF THE AETNA OF HARTFORD

THE FOLLOWING appeared in "Fire Insurance on a Grand Scale." *The Insurance Times*, Volume XXXI, Number 1, January 1898, page 18. *Google Book Search. Web:*

Ask any schoolboy, particularly in a small town, for the name of a fire insurance company and he would at once reply, "Aetna of Hartford." It would be hard to explain just why this is so, but nevertheless it is so. It is the way American boys grow up. Their fathers and grandfathers and great-grandfathers would have given the same answer. Possibly the reason lies in the fact that it has been the great dwelling-house [fire insurance] company of the country. Its gold and black tin signs used to be tacked up over every front door. Insurance signs have now gone out of fashion as ornaments, but still everybody knows of the Aetna.

Bob Shea