



# The Signevierist

Issue Number 2008 – 4

The Official Newsletter of the Fire Mark Circle of the Americas

## 2008 West Palm Beach Convention

EVERYONE AGREED that there were two foreign languages spoken at the convention; the Americans heard German and British, the Germans heard American and British, and the British heard German and American. Believe me, when John Truitt speaks with his southern accent, it's another language to the overseas guests. Kidding aside, this was a wonderful convention and learning experience for all 52 attendees, which included four from England and six from Germany.

Events started at a Past President's Reception in the hotel's Club 10 Lounge followed by dinner on your own. Later, the Hospitality was abuzz with people introducing themselves, and catching up from last year's convention. We all got along fine speaking "fire mark." Where was a copy of Bulau when you needed it?

Friday morning's bus ride left us at the Everglade's Holiday Park for an airboat ride. Watching an alligator swimming towards you is a humbling experience. Now I know why they say, "Never smile at a crocodile." Later, we witnessed an alligator wrestler put his hand in a croc's mouth. We all gasped when the croc snapped his mouth shut just missing his fingers.

After a picnic box lunch, we departed for a tour of the Milhous Museum, which is a private museum of one-of-a-kind collection of mechanical music pieces that also includes classic cars, an airplane and a working carousel. Our host, Bob Milhous, aided by the resident organist-curator, Dave Wickerham, overwhelmed us by explaining and demonstrating the music collection. When Dave Wickerham played the "Bells of St. Mary," you could almost see Bing Crosby and Ingrid Bergman. We even got to ride the carousel. The Milhous Museum does not charge an entrance fee, but suggested that we make a Contribution-ship to a Parkinson's charity. With each member and guest contributing \$10, the FMCA subsequently donated \$510 to the American Parkinson's Disease Association in honor of the Milhous Museum. [Pictures of the museum may be found at <http://clubs.hemmings.com/clubsites/goldcoastmodela/pictures.html>. Just click the box "Milhous Museum."]

While still overwhelmed with the hospitality and collection at the Milhous Museum, our next venue, the "Evenden Museum," was another showstopper. Fabulous is the only word to describe Bill and Lore's collection of British and American fire marks. Shown on two and a half walls, with recessed lighting, each company was arranged vertically in two columns, rather than horizontally, so that you could easily see and grasp the nuanced varieties of the marks from the same company. We'll have to return when the German marks go up. We all wanted to stay longer, but all too soon because of the time, we had to get back on the bus to return to the hotel for dinner, view the Silent Auction items, and more Hospitality Room.

Gabe Laubacher, our President, ran the Saturday morning business meeting. Bill Evenden, with Lore doing the slides, was our speaker; he talked about how he got started collecting fire marks. Surprisingly, Bill started to collect fire marks in order to swap for antique automobile items. The pictures of Bill taking marks off buildings, and Lore holding her breath, were a delight.

After a quick buffet lunch, we viewed the live auction items and made final bids on the silent auction items. Gabe Laubacher ran the auction of 150 items like a pro. Total auction sales were \$35,994. The highest sale price was for the City Insurance Company of Cincinnati, B157, at \$3,700. See Ed Schlesinger's review of the auctions in this issue.

After a wonderful buffet banquet and pleasant chatter at the tables, the following awards were made to the most worthy recipients; Max Klein Trumpet Award to Bill Evenden, Morton T. Werner Award to Ed Schlesinger, Max Klein Silver Salver Award to Ted Lussem and the Host Award to Bill and Lore Evenden. Plaques for past recipients of the Silver Salver Award were given to Glenn Hartley, Ed Tufts, Jim Giles, Carol Smith, Bob Shea and Howard Girdlestone. The outgoing president passed the gavel to the incoming president, Linda Anderberg. Linda closed the business portion of the convention with a wish for a safe journey home and the hope that all will attend for the 2009 Convention in Albany, New York.

Our last event was a Sunday tour of Dr. Joel and Pam Jancko's private American History Museum. The museum tells the story of the development of various aspects of the American culture, such as soda fountains and movie theaters, and their influence on our language and social contact. Please visit the site at [www.ourbackyardmuseum.com](http://www.ourbackyardmuseum.com). It's no wonder that Dr. Jancko's narrative of the different aspects of the museum was full of unusual insight and entertaining; he acquired and researched all the objects, and built the displays himself. An extra treat was the captivating talk by Marty Persky, an automatic musical instrument specialist, on the development of the phonograph. For the couple that has everything Americana, Bill Evenden presented the Jancko's with a piece of our favorite America, a fire mark of the United Firemen's Insurance Company to hang in their fire station exhibit.

Thank you Bill and Lore for a wonderful convention and introducing us to your gracious friends, Bob Milhous, and Dr. Joel and Pam Jancko.

Bob Shea

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

**I**T IS WITH A HEAVY HEART that I inform you of the death, on September 14, 2008, of Dan Urbanek. Dan and long time friend, Jane Cyva, have been regular attendees at our conventions for many years. Even at 88 Dan was planning to join us in Florida. Our Directory lists "Friends" as the category of interest that Dan collected. He was, indeed, a successful collector of "Friends" and will be missed.

Also, long time FMCA member and, until the past few years ago, a regular attendee at conventions, Guy Fiorenza died on August 24, 2008. Our sympathies go out to his wife, Gloria and the family.

Donations in their memory were sent to the Dale Carnegie Scholarship Fund at the University of Central Missouri and the American Parkinson's Disease Association, respectively. May our good friends rest in peace.

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## **WHO BOUGHT MAX KLEIN'S HUNGARIAN FIRE MARK, ADDENDUM NO. HU-1A-2, ALLAMI BIZTOSITO?**

Dr. Vito Platania is writing a book on Hungarian fire marks, and he asked me to help locate this mark. as he would very much like to get a good colored photo of it for his book. Would the member who owns this mark please contact Bill Evenden at 561-585-0160 or Email [evenden@earthlink.net](mailto:evenden@earthlink.net).

## THIS AND THAT

**A**NOTHER mea culpa from your editor; perhaps your editor could use an editor or fact checker himself. Ed Schlesinger, the owner of the Virginia F&M Insurance Company reported in the last issue, advises that the mark is Bulau #124 and not 123-V-B as reported. As Roseanne Rosannadanna would say, "Never mind." Please toss out the addendum page. Thanks Ed.

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**T**HE CONVENTION'S MAIN and silent auctions posted \$35,994 and \$1,262, respectively, for a total of \$37,256. Special thanks go out to Gene Alair and Howard Girdlestone for donating items.

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**M**EMBER JANET KOHLENBERGER reports that the Richmond History Center has a photographic exhibition of firefighting, public safety and fire disasters in 20<sup>th</sup> century Richmond, Virginia. Information on the exhibit, "Stop, Drop and Roll: Firefighting in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Richmond" may be found on their site, <http://www.richmondhistorycenter.com:80/index.asp>.

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**S**AVE THE DATES **October 15 – 18, 2009** for next year's convention at the Holiday Inn Albany on Wolf Road, Albany, New York. We will visit the fantastic FASNY Museum of Firefighting in Hudson, NY, which has the finest collection of hand apparatus and memorabilia that you'll ever see. Please visit their web site at <http://www.fasnyfiremuseum.com/> to just get a taste of what's in store.

## WEST PALM BEACH AUCTION PRICES

Item-sold for:

1-10	26-1,700	51-75	76-175	101-105	126-pass
2-260	27-15	52-100	77-15	102-pass	127-1,550
3-525	28-65	53-pass	78-250	103-70	128-pass
4-repro	29-100	54-60	79-240	104-180	129-2,100
5-3,700	30-pass	55-400	80-125	105-65	130-pass
6-25	31-50	56-35	81-150	106-50	131-30
7-pass	32-75	57-70	82-pass	107-70	132-80
8-repro	33-pass	58-70	83-225	108-pass	133-pass
9-50	34-pass	59-pass	84-240	109-pass	134-440
10-300	35-125	60-repro	85-190	110-130	135-repro
11-repro	36-39	61-600	86-pass	111-180	136-pass
12-125	37-40	62-180	87-2,300	112-50	137-20
13-40	38-75	63-repro	88-pass	113-pass	138-pass
14-250	39-pass	64-50	89-pass	114-65	139-60
15-230	40-pass	65-repro	90-430	115-80	140-25
16-pass	41-pass	66-70	91-80	116-60	141-pass
17-120	42-pass	67-290	92-40	117-300	142-300
18-pass	43-pass	68-95	93-pass	118-40	143-95
19-375	44-200	69-50	94-150	119-250	144-50
20-25	45-60	70-120	95-pass	120-25	145-225
21-690	46-30	71-85	96-1,700	121-65	146-80
22-120	47-150	72-160	97-1,700	122-900	147-120
23-repro	48-900	73-170	98-290	123-275	148-10
24-300	49-50	74-160	99-1,700	124-120	149-pass
25-140	50-repro	75-375	100-100	125-75	150-270

## A Review of the West Palm Beach Auctions

THERE WAS SPIRITED BUYING in both auctions at our 2008 Convention in West Palm Beach.

79% of the lots in the Live Auction and 86% of the lots in the Silent Auction were sold. The percentages of lots sold in both auctions exceeded the percentages of lots sold in the auctions in Louisville last year.

### ***The Live Auction***

The Live Auction contained 141 lots [nine lots having been removed because the Auction Lot Verification Committee determined that they were reproductions] consisting of the following types of material:

- A. Fire marks:
  - 1. United States: 46;
  - 2. British Isles [United Kingdom and Ireland]: 45;
  - 3. Other countries: 20;
- B. Signs: 11; and
- C. Other items [ledger markers, grenades, etc.]: 19.

111 of these lots were sold.

As may be expected, nine of the ten lots realizing the highest prices consisted of American fire marks, with these ten lots being dominated by four marks from Indiana companies, including one from a previously unreported company, and two marks from Ohio companies. Of these ten fire marks, seven were composed of tin, two of lead and one of cast iron.

The following is a list of the top ten Live Auction lots, ranked in the order of the price realized by each lot:

<u>Lot No.</u>	<u>Bulau No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Price Realized</u>
5	157	City Ins. Co., Cincinnati, cast iron	\$ 3,700
87	US-RC-1	Richmond Ins. Co., Richmond, IN, tin	2,300
129	5	The Philadelphia Contributionship, lead and wood	2,100
26	219	Rock River Mut. Fire Ins. Co., Rockford, IL, tin	1,700
96	US-HC-1	Home Mutual Ins. Co., Indianapolis, tin	1,700
97	208	Indiana Fire Ins. Co., Indianapolis, tin	1,700
99	360-V-A	Germania F. & M. Ins. Co., Cincinnati, tin	1,700
127	US-CF-1	Central Ins. Co., Springfield, MO, tin	1,550
98	US-FB-1	Franklin Ins. Co., Indianapolis, tin	900
122	\$19	Hand-in-Hand Fire & Life Ins. Society, London	900

## ***The Silent Auction***

There were 152 lots in the Silent Auction. 130 lots sold.

Lot No. 79, a 9 ¼" high porcelain figure of a fireman with a horn, realized \$130.00. Lot No. 60, an enameled auto tag from the Lincoln Mutual Casualty Insurance Company in Detroit in mint condition, realized \$90.00.

Of the ten Silent Auction lots realizing the highest prices, the remaining eight lots were:

<u>Lot No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Price Realized</u>
83	Reproduction of clasped hands, Baltimore Equitable Society	\$60
62	<u>Addendum to Footprints of Assurance</u> , American fire marks	59
70	Wright, <u>The British Fire Mark 1680-1879</u>	40
85	Ice bucket	39
87	Paperweight, Home Ins. Co.	35
61	Auto tag, Maryland Motor Car Ins. Co., Baltimore	30
139	Auto tag, State Automobile Ins. Ass'n., Indianapolis	26
7	Tufts, <u>Hunneman's Amazing Fire Engines</u>	23

FMCA thanks all consignors and bidders who participated in both auctions for making them as successful as they were.

Thanks to the Auction Lot Verification Committee [Bob Shea, Chair, and members Bill Evenden, Peter Faber and Tom Hardy] for its yeoman work in examining and authenticating all of the fire marks in the Live Auction.

Finally, thanks to Linda Anderberg, our Auction Chair, to Gabe Laubacher, our auctioneer and to everyone – Joe Baczewski, Helen Buerger, Tom Hardy, Jan Hardy, Tom Hewitt, Bette Higgins, Jim Giles, Ted Lussem, Sherrie Lussem, Logan Smith, Bill Thomas and Linda Borgstrom – who assisted them in staging both auctions.

Ed Schlesinger

## EVERYBODY, AND I MEAN EVERYBODY, HAD A GREAT TIME

NOT ONLY did the conventioners have a great time with the tours Bill and Lore set up for the group, so did the bus driver. Bill Evenden asked me to share the note of our driver, Don Redden, with you.

November 3, 2008

Dear Mr. Evenden:

Thank you for having Midnight Sun Tours and myself serve The Fire Mark Circle of the Americas. It was a pleasure and an honor to have your wonderful group on board the bus.

Thank you also for allowing me to view the spectacular collections on Friday and Sunday. Each was unique, and much appreciated.

It was great to see the Fire Mark Circle folks having a super time. I appreciated the many smiles, kind words, and kindnesses and courtesies.

Thank you again for allowing us to serve The Fire Mark Circle of the Americas, You have my best regards.

Sincerely,  
Don Redden  
Midnight Sun Tours

Deutscher-Feuer-Versicherungs-Schilder-Verein e.V.  
André Peetermans, 1. Vorsitzender  
Osterfeldweg 15  
85586 Poing

Poing, 12.12.2008

To: **Fire Mark Circle of the Americas**

Dear Mr. President, dear member of the FMCA,

as some of you know, in the year 2009 the German Fire Mark Circle is celebrating its 25 years foundation jubilee. The meeting will be held in Berlin on the weekend 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> of April at the "Feuersozietät" fire insurance company. With this I invite all members of the FMCA to visit this jubilee convention. Some of you did already attend the 20 years jubilee meeting at Gotha and I am sure they enjoyed the visit very much. There will be a large programme with interesting sightseeing of Berlin.

Interested parties may let me know their participation soon by e-mail: [andre.peetermans@t-online.de](mailto:andre.peetermans@t-online.de)

Rooms have been reservated at the "Suite Hotel Potsdamer Platz" in the centre of Berlin. I will give the particulars of the hotel below, but I recommend for room reservation to contact me and I will do the reservation for you.

Suite Hotel Potsdamer Platz, Anhalter Strasse 2, 10963 Berlin, Tel : (+49)30/200560, Fax : (+49)30/20056200, E-mail : [H3745@accor.com](mailto:H3745@accor.com). Reservation by mentioning „Feuersozietät“.

As your member Bill Evenden is one the founders and still a member of the German Circle, he will be able to provide you with additional information.

I am looking forward to seeing you in Berlin in April 2009

André Peetermans  
1. Vorsitzender DFVSV