



# The Signevierist

Issue Number 2021-4

The Official Newsletter of the Fire Mark Circle of the Americas

## 2021 Annual Convention – Indianapolis, Indiana



The Fire Mark Circle of the Americas annual convention was held in Indianapolis Indiana on October 14th to the 17<sup>th</sup>, with 15 members gathering at the Embassy Suites Hotel members started to arrive on Wednesday the 13<sup>th</sup>. Thursday afternoon at 3pm we held the annual board meeting by Zoom which was well attended. Then Thursday night was dinner on our own, after dinner we came back to the hospitality room to visit and check out items brought by members to horse-trade and sell. Friday, we boarded the 55-passenger tour bus with driver Lisa at the wheel. Our first stop was downtown at the Indianapolis Fire Museum which is also headquarters for the Indy Fire Dept. Union Local #416. We were all pleasantly surprised at the size and scope of the museum. They only had two original fire marks and a few reproductions but several apparatuses and lots of other neat fire

artifacts to view.

From there we journeyed to Koorsen's Fire and Safety to view the collection of fire related items in the private collection of Randy Koorsen, what a place!!! There were over 300 fire extinguishers of all types and sizes, fire grenades, helmets, buckets, call boxes and fire station gongs, fire apparatus from horse drawn to motorized. We

all could have stayed much longer. There we ate lunch in their training room which was a catered in buffet and provided to us courtesy of Randy Koorsen. Tyler Rice was our host for the tours and his office staff was wonderful in helping get things set up.

We left there around 1:15 and headed again by our great bus driver Lisa to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum arriving around 1:45, what a spectacular place everyone really had a good time, Indy 500 cars to see that had actually been driven in the race which started in 1911. There was a simulator to drive and my wife Norma tried her hand, look out drivers she did the three laps 2.5 miles in 47.23 seconds at an average speed of 191.47 miles per hour!!!! Look out Danica Patrick!



We also got to see an actual race at the track going on, The World GT Tour was racing that weekend so we could watch inside the museum and from the parking lot outside. From there we went back to the hotel arriving around 4:30. Dinner was on our own again, and the hospitality room was opened for visiting and the usual horse-trading. Then Saturday started with the general meeting at 9, with the live auction items set out for viewing. Lunch was buffet style a make your own meat sandwich with all the trimmings, potato salad, chips and dessert and arranged in the Greenhouse room.

The live auction was held at 1:15 with long time auctioneer Gabe Laubacher in command. Linda Anderberg and Linda Borgstrom will get the totals and be sending out the final invoice totals so items can be paid for prior to shipping to the winning bidders.

We concluded the convention with a fine buffet banquet dinner at 6:30pm on Saturday evening after which the hospitality room was again opened for visiting and some final goodbyes. Hope to see all of you next year when and where we hold the next convention.

Dave Oldham  
Tom Hewitt  
Co-Convention Hosts

## FAMILIAR IMAGE?



The American Fire Insurance Company  
**D**AILY make Insurance on Property of every description, from Loss or Damage by Fire, on terms as reasonable and liberal as any similar Institution in the United States.  
Applications at the Office, No. 101 Chestnut-street, either personal or by letter, promptly decided on.  
JOHN BACON Secretary.

The above image from *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January 10, 1826, should be familiar to the fire mark collector. It is the identical image used on the fire mark of the Associated Firemen's Insurance Company, Baltimore, Maryland, Bulau 166. The newspaper image predates the fire mark image by twenty-one years.

The fire mark of the Associated Firemen's Insurance Company, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Bulau 191, closely resembles the newspaper image. The newspaper image predates the Pittsburgh fire mark image by twenty-four years.

Although Philadelphia's American Fire Insurance Company issued their own fire marks, they did not use this image for them. Their marks, Bulau 67, 68 and 68X1 were "tin", not cast iron, and only one had the image of an American eagle.

Most likely, they did not use the fireman's image because they were not an insurance company organized by and for the benefit of the volunteer firefighters as were the other two insurance companies.

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**An Honest Mistake by Bulau Discovered**



The mark pictured above (B.288) is from the Smithsonian's collection and is attributed to the Western Mutual Fire & Marine Insurance Company of St. Louis. The material listed by Bulau states that it is made of Zinc which makes sense being from St. Louis. Recently I had a discussion with member Bill Evenden about his collection as I was trying to get more information on the number of tin marks, he had in his collection, in preparation for the planned rarity guide. Bill looked at his collection and compared it to the comprehensive list of tin marks I had provided for him and noticed there was a mark missing from my list. When I looked up the mark in Footprints of Assurance it stated the mark was zinc, so I didn't bother to add it. Bill assured me the mark was tinned sheet iron and not zinc so I went to my museum database and realized the Smithsonian had the exact mark as Bill, which is the picture above. I wanted to see if maybe there were two different versions of the same mark but if you look at the picture above you can see that there are shiny areas on the right near the mounting hole that you would not see in a zinc mark. Sure enough, the Smithsonian also lists the material as being "iron". So, it would appear, that Bulau probably only had a black and white picture to go from and assumed the mark was made of zinc since it originated from St. Louis.

Michael Brankowitz

PS If you have not turned in your list of tin fire marks please do so at your earliest convenience! Not only will it help other members determine the rarity of their marks, but it may also help us uncover mistakes made like the one above. If you need assistance, please reach out to me at [mbranko24@mac.com](mailto:mbranko24@mac.com).

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**New Members!**

Please help me in welcoming new member Dominick Swinhart and returning member Dave Fannin. Dominick is a fire chief from Washington State who is interested in fire marks and fire artifacts in

general. Dave is from Maryland and is interested in signs and fire artifacts. The latest member directory should have been emailed via constant contact from Bill Pope so check your emails for contact information. Once again Dominick and Dave, welcome to the FMCA!!!

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While not known to issue a fire mark the Faneuil Hall Insurance Company sure knew how to advertise, but it cost them dearly! The following paragraph from an article in the Insurance Journal, dated February 1880, page 331 is quite interesting. Who knows maybe there is a mark out there?

“The Faneuil Hall insurance company of Boston has concluded to imitate the example of the Alliance by issuing no more policies, at least not for the present, and probably never, such decision having been reached at a meeting of the stockholders held this month. This action has been imminent for months, and it was only a question of when it would be taken. The cause assigned is not a new one – low rates. We are afraid that their enormous advertising bills and that new tin sign had something to do with it.”

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