



SPAAMFAA ANNUAL WINTER MEETING



While the Houston vicinity was busy preparing for the annual Rodeo and Live Stock Show, Texas Gulf Coast Chapter members Eddie Kosar, Jim and Cheryl McGee, Chuck Buschardt, Tom McDonald, and Steve Dalpe were participating in the 2008 SPAAMFAA Winter Conference hosted by the Texas Fire Museum and North Texas Chapter. The Conference was held at their wonderful facilities on Chalk Hill Road. The

meeting dates were February 20—23, 2008, with exceptional cooperation from the weather.

For the inexperienced, it was a wonderful opportunity to learn many basic restoration tips. Information sessions included motor and driveline rebuilding, metalworking, pump testing, body work, painting, gold leafing, brakes, wood working, chapter newsletter publishing, tire mounting, electrical wiring, and battery maintenance.

For the more experienced, it was an opportunity to rekindle acquaintances. “I especially enjoyed meeting fellow restoration buffs from across the country, like Chip Lytle, Hal Fillinger, and Bill Darrow,” com-



mented Chuck Buschardt.

At the Saturday evening dinner, the keynote speaker was retired firefighter and DFD Chaplain Denny Burris. Presently he serves on the Board of Directors for the Dallas Retired Fire Fighter’s Association.

For more details, please see the Texas Fire Museum Website or contact North Texas Chapter President Scott Simpson. Additional photos of the event can be seen on the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter web.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CHAPTER NEWS	2
BIG MACK	2
AROUND EBAY	2
EDITOR’S NOTES	3
MCDONALD’S RETIREMENT	3
CHRONICLES 9056	3
FEATURED TRUCK	4



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- National and Local dues are due to Tom McDonald. Both fees are paid simultaneously
- Future meeting dates April 21, May 19, and June 16 at the Community National Bank on Bellaire. Mark your calendars
- Jackson MI Fire Flea Market on April 26th
- SPAAMFAA’s 50th Anniversary Summer Convention and Muster July 30th—Aug 3rd hosted by Central New York Chapter



Texas Gulf Coast Chapter members Eddie Kosar (center) and Jim McGee (right) receive instruction on paint application from Texas Fire Museum vendor. Photo—Steve Dalpe.



Texas Fire Museum member and 2007 past-president David Rounsley provides electrical instruction during one of the Information Sessions at SPAAMFAA Annual Meeting in Dallas. Photo—Steve Dalpe

## CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES IN SUMMARY

BY CHERYL MCGEE

The following is a summary of the Winter quarterly meetings:

**January meeting:** Tom McDonald mentioned local chapters would be collecting dues for National Membership. Cheryl McGee discussed several of the events over Christmas, including Annual Christmas Party and Friendswood Parade. Steve

Dalpe discussed website progress and proposed creating quarterly newsletter.

**February meeting:** Marla Buschardt discussed the upcoming St. Patrick's parade. She also discussed a fund raiser being held by the Hibernians at the Petroleum Club on the Friday night before the parade. Steve Dalpe sent "welcome" letters to new

Texas SPAAMFAA members identified in Silver Trumpet. Steve Dalpe discussed activities related to the progress of the club newsletter. Steve Dalpe stated he had received an inquiry from the Houston Rodeo about the possibility of providing fire trucks for the rodeo grand entry parade. Due to other conflicts, no one could be in attendance.

**March meeting:** March meeting was lightly attended due to numerous travel schedules. Many thanks to Ken Paradowski and Chuck & Marla Buschardt for "holding down the fort", so to speak. Topics were delayed until the April meeting.

See y'all at there!

## BIG MACK'S SHIPMENT DATE ARRIVES

BY CHUCK BUSCHARDT



Jim McGee inside cab steers as Chuck Buschardt tows 1950 Mack for pick-up to Memphis TN

With a heave and a tug, ex-Memphis TN Engine Company No. 42 started its (slow) roll towards its new home. The 1950 Mack is headed back to Memphis, to Larry Newsome - an avid collector of Memphis apparatus - for restoration after nearly 30 years as a Houstonian. This brute was purchased by Chuck Buschardt and Dr. Tom Greider in 1976. Model 480-S, Reg No. 21-LS-1082, it has Hall Scott 1091 CID engine, 1250 GPM pump, 150 gal water tank. The delivery date shows the truck was

put into service on 5-31-50. It has a unique, 4-door complete sedan cab. Interestingly, Chuck drove it from its original destination, hundreds of miles, without starter; he only had to push start it one time! In exchange, Chuck is trading (updating!) to 1976 Mack CF from Blue Hill CT. It last served at Bradley International Airport Windsor Locks CT in reserve. The new truck has 1500 GPM pump with 500 gal tank. Best wishes to both of the new owners!

## AROUND EBAY

BY STEVE DALPE



Ahrens Steamer #481 Builders Plate as show and listed on eBay

Much like telephone, radio, and TV did for earlier generations, the Internet has made the world a little smaller and a lot more accessible. I often enjoy surfing the Internet for fire memorabilia and seeing the level of interest in items.

Despite going out of business many years ago, the Ahrens Fox name still brings attention and often commands high prices. For example, accord-

ing to Ed Hass' *The Deans of Steam Fire Engine Builders*, the builders plate (left photo) is from Ahrens Steamer #481 delivered December 5, 1887 to Ripley Ohio by G. Fred Ahrens himself. The steamer was dubbed *Archibald Liggett*. It was an upright 25" x 56 1/2" tubular boiler with 4 1/2" x 7" pump. The wheels were 16 x 52, and 16 x 60. The item listed for several days with very strong

interest (evident by the number of bids) and sold for over \$630 on Jan 25th. In fact, the item was removed before the auction ended presumably from a deal cut with the seller. Hopefully this is the crowning finale to someone's restoration efforts and not just the beginning! Best of luck to whoever purchased it; hopefully it ends up being more than a fancy paper weight or wall hanging.

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to 2008! This is our inaugural 2008 issue and we hope that you enjoy the news and other information about Texas Gulf Coast SPAAM-FAA. We are still learning the newsletter software; please pardon any formatting issues. Every attempt is made

to capture information correctly; please contact the editor if you note any mistakes.

The Spring 2008 Edition is already underway. *The Olde Fire Bell* welcomes contributions from all our readers. It's easy—just contact the editor via the address on the

back page, or send an email to the Webmaster of the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter. Newsletters will be posted on the web and distributed at the end of each quarter. Please ensure your postal and email addresses are listed correctly with the Chapter's Secretary.



Ben Franklin formed the Union Fire Company in Pennsylvania in 1736.

## MCDONALD RETIRES FROM HFD

BY T. MCDONALD

Long-time Texas Gulf Coast Chapter member Tom McDonald retired this February after 26 years with the Houston Fire Department. McDonald's career started when he entered the HFD academy in November 1981. After graduating from training in April 1982, he was assigned to Station 3 near Greenway Plaza for a year, then moved No. 7 on Elgin, where he stayed for 3 years. He was in the department's first academy class required to undergo EMT training. After several years as a paramedic at

Stations 3, 16, and 33, he took a staff job as director of the Houston Fire Museum where he oversaw its historic fire service exhibits including several antique fire apparatus.

After the museum, McDonald was transferred to the HFD Dispatch Office, where he worked for another five years. "I finally got back to the station in 2001, by then as a Captain. I worked five more years on Engine 82."

When McDonald retired, he was a Senior Captain on Ladder 59, not too far from Sta-

tion 82 in southwest Houston.

When asked what he thought his greatest accomplishment was in his career, he replied, "Probably editing three history books about the department. They were essentially 'yearbooks,' done in 1988, 1995, and 2000, but I researched the history of the department thoroughly for them, and those three volumes are still ready references in thousands of firefighters' homes today."

TGCC wishes Tom the best!



Tom McDonald in HFD uniform. See Texas Gulf Coast Chapter website for more information about Tom's retirement.

## CHRONICLES 9056: THE INTRODUCTION

BY STEVE DALPE

There are several good books about the history of the Ahrens Fox Fire Engine Company of Cincinnati OH. Two in particular have achieved acclaim: John Sytsma's *Ahrens Fox Album* and Ed Hass' *Ahrens Fox: The Rolls-Royce of Fire Engines*. On pages 81 and 75, respectively, a very special vehicle is portrayed. Ahrens Fox Model HC Registration 9056 was constructed in 1938 along with two nearly identi-

cal "sister" vehicles for the City of Cincinnati. Over the next 42 years, it bore many names: Engine 37, Engine 7, Engine 1351, and Fire Department Equipment #25137. It served in Cincinnati for about 25 years and then in neighboring Boone County KY for another 20. Following its retirement, it headed north to NY for restoration but the job remained mostly unfinished. It re-

turned to KY in the mid-90's until 2006, when TGCC member Steve Dalpe purchased it and is currently undertaking restoration. In just a short period of time, the owner has come to learn the unique history and features of the vehicle. Future editions of *The Olde Fire Bell* will feature articles about its history, its service, and its restoration challenges. God's speed!



1939 Advertisement from *The American City*, Page 12



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## FEATURED TRUCK — 1947 MACK



The City of Baytown operates this 1947 Mack. It has six-cylinder Thermodyne engine with 750 GPM Waterous pump. It has 200 gallon booster tank and carries 2000 ft of 2 -1/2" hose. It started its service in 1947 and was officially retired in 1979. It is maintained at Station 2.