

# THE OLDE FIRE BELL



WINTER 2012

GULFCOASTSPAAMFAA.ORG

SINCE 1975

## HOUSTON ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE



The Texas Gulf Coast Chapter joined the 2012 Grand Marshall Sean Kearns and his family to celebrate St. Patrick's Day during Houston's 53rd annual parade on Saturday, March 17th in beautiful Downtown. "The St. Patrick's Day Parade, A Houston Tradition, Past, Present, and Into the Future" was the theme of the parade. While the parade boasted a "rain or shine" event, luckily this Saturday was one of the most beautiful of the entire year. Four trucks were present, driven by Jim McGee, Chuck Buschardt, Bill Lofton, and Clinton Johnson. The staging area was along Hamilton Street next to Minute Maid Park, home of the Houston Astros. Other TGCC participants included Cheryl McGee, Teresa Johnson, Cynthia King, Steve Dalpe, Emmanuel Buentello, Karen Witt, and Zach Buschardt.

This year's parade marks the end of the traditional route due to light rail development in the area.

*The Olde Fire Bell* offers its congratulations to Chuck Buschardt for attending yet another parade. With only minor exceptions, he's been at every parade since 1976.

For more photos of the event, see Pages 8 and 9 of this Newsletter; or check out the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter website.

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### CALENDAR

- Future meeting dates: Monday at 7 PM on April 16, May 21, and June 18 at the Community National Bank on Bellaire Blvd.
- Moonshine Hill Involuntary FD Annual Pumpnic, Sat., April 7
- SPAAMFAA Summer National, Frankenmuth, MI, July 25 - 28, 2012

## UPFRONT

Welcome to 2012! *The Olde Fire Bell* hopes everyone is having a great New Year.

The 2012 SPAAMFAA National dues notifications were mailed early in the year. While making you payments, consider a donation to the Lee Soderbeck Memorial archives fund. For non-members, consider joining. You can find details on the National SPAAMFAA website, or contact any member of this Chapter.

It's not too early to complete your plans to attend the 2012 SPAAMFAA Summer Conference hosted by the Great Lakes International Antique Fire Appara-

tus Association (GLIAFAA) in Frankenmuth, Michigan, from July 25 - 28. It's sure to be a fantastic event in Michigan's "Little Bavaria." The registration deadline is July 1, 2012.

Member Kim Stellhorn submitted this email: I just found out today that the friend of mine and my grandfather, Harry Hermes, shown in the picture of the Sparta Rescue truck (see page 10 for article) dressed in the aluminized suit, passed away recently. *The Olde Fire Bell* offers its condolences to friends and family.

Clinton and Teresa Johnson are once again hosting the Moonshine Hill Involuntary Fire Department Pumpnic. This

year's event is going to top all previous, we're told. We look forward to your attendance. It's located in Humble on Belleau Woods Road. See page 7 for more details, or log onto the Chapter's website.

Two new members this quarter, and a new Mack truck in the Club! Read about them in this newsletter.

*The Olde Fire Bell* thanks Chapter members for submitting material for the Winter Edition. This Newsletter is made possible by your contributions! A special thanks to Kim Stellhorn, Clinton Johnson, Tom McDonald, and Bill Wilcox for submissions.

## CHAPTER MEETING SUMMARIES

The following is a summary of the Winter 2012 monthly meetings:

**January:** Doug Kindred and Trina Falk of the Texas Fire Museum drove from Dallas to update the group on Dallas events, and to discuss possible partnering of a future winter event. The Group welcomed Houston Fire Department member Terry Parker to the meeting. Chuck Buschardt narrated a slide show of historical photographs from his collection. A working day was set for the Braniff Museum. A motion was accepted to pay the National Insurance. Elections were held; congratulations to Clinton

Johnson for being elected the 2012 president. The remaining officers were re-elected for another term. Bill Lofton, Eddie Kosar, and Jason Barnett were elected to the Board.

**February:** Second month with great attendance - the Bellaire Bank conference room was filled to capacity! New Chapter rosters were distributed by Cheryl McGee. A printed history of previous officers dating back to 1992 was also provided. New graphics and recruiting poster were displayed and discussed; each member was urged to sign up a new member and bring them to a meeting. One pro-

spective new member was introduced and welcomed! A discussion was held concerning recent clean-up/work party at the Lone Star Fire Museum! We also discussed the need to hold a "clean up/work party" (prior to the Pumpnic/Muster) at Moonshine Hill IVFD Museum in Humble. A motion was made to order 50 new patches in time for the 9th Annual Pumpnic. Four designs for new tee shirts were reviewed; an email pole will be taken to choose a design.

**March:** Minutes from the March meeting will be included in the Spring 2012 Newsletter

*The Olde Fire Bell*

*The Olde Fire Bell* is the official quarterly publication of SPAAMFAA Texas Gulf Coast Chapter, issued in March, June, September, and December.

The mission of the newsletter is to highlight SPAAMFAA National initiatives, to spotlight events of the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter, to foster a spirit of friendliness and of cooperation among its members, and to increase public involvement in the preservation, restoration, and operation of equipment in fire service

*Acknowledgements*

*The Olde Fire Bell* is continuously seeking input from members and guests for future editions. The editor wishes to recognize the following contributors for making this issue possible:

Tom McDonald Kim Stellhorn

Bill Wilcox Clinton Johnson

Please send information to the webmaster at GULFCOASTSPAAMFAA.ORG, or send to editor at the address on the newsletter back page

## AROUND THE CHAPTER

### FOR SALE



Member Kim Stellhorn has glass grenade-style fire extinguishers available, and 3 soda /water extinguishers, including a Quickaid with trigger. He's willing to swap for something or sell.

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Terry Parker, Senior Captain of the Houston Fire Department, joined the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter at the January meeting. Terry graciously provided a brief service history. He joined the Friendswood VFD in 1975 first to see if he would like that kind of work prior to quitting a well paid job in a refinery. Naturally it grew on him, and he couldn't think of anything else he would rather do. He stayed a volunteer until 1985. Also, during that time he worked in the Fire Marshal's Office on and off until 1998. He worked as a paid fireman in Baytown from March 1978 to June 1979. He joined the Houston Fire department in July 1979 and have been there ever since. He plans to retire at the end of this year after 33 years service.



The daughter of retired Houston Fire fighter Harry J. Peake, Debbie Leggett joined the club after her son, Luke, presented her with her very own 1939 fully-restored American LaFrance 500 Series fire engine this past Christmas, in memory of her dad. Debbie has been an avid collector of Houston FD memorabilia since her dad passed away in 1985. We'll feature Harry Peake in a future newsletter. You can read more about the Christmas Surprise in the Fall 2011 edition of the *The Olde Fire Bell*.

### TRANSPORT



Phil Moelker of Allendale MI has been quite busy moving Texas Gulf Coast Chapter members' trucks. In this quarter, he transported both Kim Stellhorn's Mack and Steve Dalpe's Seagrave. A member of SPAAMFAA himself, Phil is highly recommended for moving your truck. And his prices can't be beat! Contact the Chapter via the webmaster if you'd like additional shipping information.

### WORLD RECORD PARADE

Member Tom McDonald submitted the following article:

ATOKA, OK - Friday, January 20, 2012. The City of Atoka was full of excitement. Firefighters from all over Oklahoma broke a world record Friday night. Atoka was grid locked with fire engine red. Hundreds of Oklahoma firefighters, and a couple from Texas, lined the highway to break the Guinness World Record for the most trucks in a parade. More than 300 trucks, with their hoses and ladders, drove into town. The previous title holder was Switzerland with 159 engines. With a color guard and bag pipes, the fire crews kicked off their annual training in style.

"This regional school is the single largest training event in the history of Oklahoma," Bob Allen said, OSU fire service training supervisor. "We really appreciate it. We couldn't do it without them," Atoka Fire Department Lt. Buddy Faulkenberry said. "We're so glad that they've taken the time to come here. It takes money to come here and it takes time, and we're glad that they're here to help us."

By Jennifer French, Reporter/Produce, KTEN News, Jan. 20, 2012 9:15 PM CST

### NEW LOGO



Many thanks to Jason Barnett for designing the new Chapter logo. It features an American LaFrance 700 series, with a Lone Star background. The design was used to create a new 8' x 2' Chapter banner to be used during upcoming events.



### CONGRATS BILL DAVIS

Bill Davis, our Regional Trustee, was elected as Vice President in the recent SPAAMFAA elections. His term as Central Region/south Trustee has a year remaining. The Board appointed John Zangerle to fill Bill's unexpired term (jpzangerle@gmail.com). TGCC looks forward to working with John on future activities. The board also awarded the bid for the 2016 Summer Convention and Muster to the Catskill Chapter, Middletown, New York. Dates will be early August 2016. *The Olde Fire Bell* wishes both Bill and John success in their new positions as Vice President and Regional Trustee.

## WAREHOUSE WEEKEND

"Clean up, clean up, everybody do your share....." You know the song; admit it. Probably sung it with your parents or children, maybe with the grand kids. Or even accompanying that purple dinosaur on PBS.

At the January Chapter meeting, a motion was made and accepted to conduct a "clean up" day at the 8314 Braniff Shop (located on the South side of Hobby airport). On Saturday, January 28th, the projects started in the late morning and continued throughout the early evening. The work consisted of organizing items to free up floor space, discarding items of scrap-only value, and move several items from the exterior of the warehouse to the interior.



Members that participated in the event included Ken Paradowski, Steve Dalpe, Jim McGee, Chuck Buschardt, Karen Witt, Eddie Kosar, Jason Barnett, Charlie Womack, Bill Wilcox, Zach Buschardt, and Emmanuel Buentello.

Chuck Buschardt thanked all those that attended. "The shop day went well, got done what we had hoped to, thanks to all."

Cheryl McGee made a wonderful Taco Soup with chips and cheese for everyone to feast on. Everyone, that is, except Bill Wilcox who made a dash to his favorite eating establishment: Whataburger. Bill learned for the first time that Whataburger actually sells salads, too, at the request of another participant.

It was a great day for camaraderie, friendship, and fun! Everyone agreed to have a repeat in the near future.



## SPAAMFAA NATIONAL

# SPAAMFAA National Summer Conference

Frankenmuth, Michigan

July 25—28, 2012

Hosted By



# GLIAFAA

Great Lakes International  
Antique Fire Apparatus  
Association



As far as the eye  
could see

## HOUSTON FD HISTORY

BY SCOTT MELLOTT

## “The Pictorial History of the Houston Fire Department from 1895 to 1980”

Published this summer, this book will be 224 pages, hard bound and contain the history and never before seen photographs of the Houston Fire Department!

We are proud to announce that Balfour/Taylor, who produced the 1971, 1977, 1988, 1995, and 2000 Houston Fire Department Yearbooks, is publishing this book! Balfour/Taylor, a Texas based company, has been in business for 99 years.

The authors of the book are **Scott Mellott** (Retired) HFD and Story Jones Sloane, III, local photographer and historian.

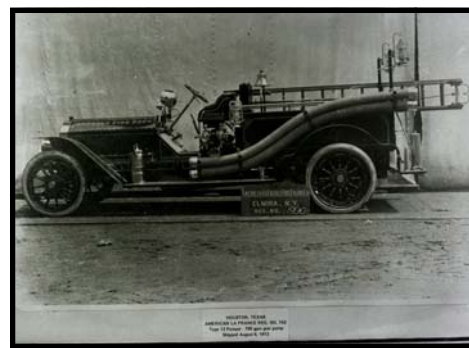
### Pre-sale has begun!

Pre-sale price is \$29.95 plus tax & shipping and is available through the website, **www.hfdhistory.com**, which will take you to the company's secure order page. This site will contain updates on the status of the book's production, or you can call 1-800-944-5930.

Pre-sale is from February 1st – April 30th, 2012. After April 30th the price will be \$39.95 plus tax and shipping.

A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Houston Fire Department Honor Guard.

Any questions, please call **Scott Mellott** 713-598-6125 or Email [scottmell@juno.com](mailto:scottmell@juno.com)



In 1837, the town of Houston grew so quickly that fires become more frequent. Log homes were the most common abode, although there were many living in tents. The original plat of Houston consisted of 62 blocks. By the end of 1837 there were over a 1,000 people within the city limits. Augustus Allen organized a bucket brigade, named it “Protection #1” and applied for a charter in 1838. On August 14, 1838, the city fathers formed Protection Fire Company No. 1 and constructed a firehouse for the company at the corner of Fannin and Preston. (Source: Wikipedia)

## NEW MACK IN TOWN

BY KIM &amp; CINDY STELLHORN

Kim and Cindy Stellhorn just received their 1975 Mack CF 685F1784, from Gary Neff, Harrisburg, Pa. The Mack was purchased 7/25/1975 along with its sister engine F1785 as Harrisburg Engine 4, became Engine 8, then Wagon 4, and Reserve Engine 2. Engine 8 was placed in reserve for about 15 years as Reserve 2, the back of the engine was refurbished in the mid 90's by LDI. A 1976 photo of the Harrisburg Bureau of Fire shows it just after being placed in service (slightly Mack heavy!). The pictures (bottom page) show before and after refurbishment, and delivery in Santa Fe (right).



Another email from a Captain that once rode this engine: "I was a member of the Mount Pleasant #8 in Harrisburg in the late '70's and early 80's, and was the Captain of Engine 8 for a while. That time period was affectionately called The War Years because of the amount of working fires experienced with the urban environs, drug activity, and absentee landlords. As stated by others,

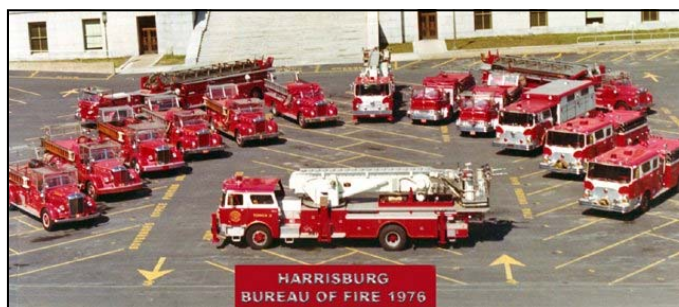
the CF was one of a pair of identical engines purchased by the bureau and lettered Engines 3 and 4. Because of the station assignments, however, they were referred to as Engines 7 and 8. Ultimately, the volunteer contingent convinced the city to re-number the 4 to an 8, and the job was paid for out of pocket by then Chief Edward Henry.

During this period, the rig itself ran roughly 2,500 calls per year, with a 50% false alarm rate, making it one of the busiest engines in the state. The majority of calls were room and contents, but we



managed several multiple alarms a week when a fire would communicate to an entire row of homes via common lofts. Our first due was called the Hill District, for Allison Hill in Harrisburg. Because of the active volunteer contingent, with several live-in firefighters, the engine was second due for the entire city.

The unit was unique at the time because it was one of the first enclosed CF cabs outside of the FDNY, there were at least 7 pre-connected handlines, and the hosebed was configured to lay dual 3" supply lines. For that time period, the rig was far ahead of national trends. I should also mention that the original body had only low cabinets curb side, and low with two 10" lateral cabinets street side. It was purely an engine company."



Delivery from Harrisburg to Santa Fe was provided by Phil Moelker Trucking. A SPAAMFAA member himself, Phil does a lot of truck shipping for members. He genuinely treats the trucks like he would his own.

According to several firefighters in the Harrisburg area, when they found out the engine had been sold and was moving they sent messages such as "Treat her with care... she was a real work horse in her day!" and "No other engine in Central Pa has caught more fire than that 75 CF Mack!" And "There's a lot of stories about that engine as well. BACK DURING THE CITY'S WAR YEARS SHE WAS ONE OF THE DEPARTMENTS WORKHORSES. Let me paint the picture; Let's say after some 20,000 calls over the years with no major mechanical breakdowns, I don't think they ever made another quality truck like it."



# MOONSHINE HILL INVOLUNTARY FIRE DEPT.



## ANNOUNCING

**NINTH ANNUAL PUMPNIC AND FIRE APPARATUS EXPO**  
SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 2012, 11:00 AM TO WHENEVER WE RUN OUT OF GAS. THE LOCATION IS WOODS POND PARK ON BELLEAU WOODS RD. 1 1/2 MILES NORTH OF FM 1960 (see attached visitors guide for directions)

Featuring the latest in fire apparatus technology from the lesser known rural portions of the Great State of Texas and/or other unique portions of the greater USA.

It's that time of year again. The birds are heading north, leaves returning, alligators are sunning, snakes come out of hibernation, and the elite of the fire service are returning to Sparkling Downtown Moonshine Hill for the thrills and spills of the annual SPAAMFAA Pumpnic. This years event is expected to be a real twist off, with overflow crowds. Be there to view demonstrations of the latest cutting edge fire fighting technology, so often associated with this occasion. Come one, come all. Drive, Drag, or Haul your rig if you got one. Just bring yourself and a picnic lunch if you don't. (We always need extra help rollin hose or pushing rigs out of the mud). Admission is "**FREE**". The crew on Moonshine Hill is going all-out this year (we even have porta-potties) and are working feverishly to reduce that nasty alligator infestation. Bring your chairs, bug spray, umbrella, and whatever you drink.

Awards will be presented for:

1. Longest Distance Traveled
2. Oldest Apparatus
3. Best All Around Engine
4. Best All Around Ladder Truck

Activities:

1. Pump Testing class
2. Pumping demos

For more information contact Clinton Johnson at 281 802 8702 or [cjohnson@cityofmumble.net](mailto:cjohnson@cityofmumble.net)



## ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

BY STEVE DALPE



On St. Patrick's Day, everyone is Irish! The St. Patrick's Day custom of "wearing the green" is demonstrated above by Karen Witt, sporting her clover-leaf crown and green beads. Bill Lofton had probably the most unique outfit of the day, green suspenders with a tuxedo-like tee-shirt. Too cool! After the parade, Texas Gulf Coast Chapter Members and friends gathered for a pot luck lunch in nearby parking lot adjacent to the new Houston Dynamo Stadium. There was plenty of food and drink thanks to the generosity of the participants. "Can't wait to do it again next year" was everyone's comment.



Fire trucks bring out the curiosity in kids, especially at a parade. These kids can't keep their hands off the deck gun on Chuck Buschardt's 1975 Mack CF. Proud mom's look on from the rear. Wonder if rubbing the nozzle brings good luck, similar to finding a four-leaf clover or catching a leprechaun? May the leprechauns be near you!

Four Chapter trucks spanning 1948 - 1976 enjoyed positions 49 - 52, front third of the parade. Friends and family filled the tailboards and hose-beds. Daisy May, shown below sitting on Jim McGee's lap, may not be a Dalmatian or Irish Setter, but she is the official dog of the Club. She's logged more time in a fire truck than most of the Chapter's members.



## ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

BY STEVE DALPE



The Houston St. Patrick's Day Parade has always been a free event - except for the fuel to get there! Emanuel Buentello shines the glass of Chuck Buschardt's Mack. That glass actually looks like it's tinted green for the occasion! Below, Buschardt family and friends wave to the street viewers.



The Houston St. Patrick's Day Commission did a great job organizing the entire event. Everything went like clockwork. The two-hour parade has historically been one of the largest in the U.S. and each year includes over 100 entries. Above, standing-room only in the hosebed of the 1948 American LaFrance.



Anybody need a lawyer? The Texas Gulf Coast Chapter wasn't the only club to bring antiques. Right, the Houston Irish Lawyers Association brought their yellow Seagrave. There was also a 1981 America LaFrance ex Leon Valley Fire Department. Right, one of the many leprechaun floats in the parade. See if you can catch a leprechaun this year and find his hidden treasures.



## SPARTA BELL

BY KIM STELLHORN

My grandfather was a member of Sparta VFD in Sparta, IL. from the early 40's through the mid 60's, until the time when he moved to Galveston, Texas. My grandfather passed away in 1969 while back in Sparta for his father's funeral. The Group photo was taken in October 1947; my grandfather is in the back row, 3rd from the left.



Panel truck #8 was acquired in 1961, a 1950 bread truck. I remember my grandfather bringing it to his house the day they got it, it was a stripped out bread truck with racks in it.



In that picture, my grandfather is kneeling on the left side of the truck and his friend Harry Hermes is dressed in the asbestos suit with hood (Harry is the one who originally told

me about the bell.)

In the summer of 1985 while on vacation in Sparta, we had dinner with a long-time friend of grandfather who was also a volunteer firefighter in Sparta. While we were outside waiting for dinner to be ready, he pointed to a bell that was located on a pole in the garden and mentioned how it was just like mine. I told him I did not have a bell. He went on to tell me how my grandfather and him had removed the bells and other items from 2 fire trucks before they went to the scrap yard. He said my grandfather was giving me the bell he had removed. I was really surprised because I had never heard this story before or had seen a bell in my grandfather's belongings.

When we returned to Texas, I asked my uncle about it. My uncle said he had the bell, that his dad had gotten it for him. My mom said that since I had mentioned it she had remembered her dad, my grandfather, had mentioned a bell being for me.

About a year later out of the blue my uncle gave it to me and I had the bell on display in my home. In 2001 sometime my uncle wanted to know if he could have it back, I politely declined.

In 2002, my uncle asked if his church could use it for a 9-11 memorial they were going to have. I thought that would be nice so I sent it to my uncle. It never was returned, so after awhile I thought maybe I had misunderstood and they were constructing a memorial to the 9-11 victims and it was mounted somewhere. I just never brought it up again.

My uncle passed away in Nov 2008. A couple of months ago I began thinking about the bell and wondered if I could find what church it was at and if they might return it to me in me replacing the bell with another type of bell. I asked my aunt if she knew what church had it, she did not know and did not think she had even seen it, but she would check. About a month ago while talking with her she said she had found the bell and I asked what church it was at. She said it was actually found in her workshop under some other stuff. After seeing it she did remember it had been used for some school activities but did not realize where it had come from.

I now have it back to display along with the large floodlight and wooden scuttle hole ladder possibly from the same fire truck. As far as I know, it may have also come from that 1927 fire truck. The bell I originally understood was removed from the fire truck before it went to the junkyard. My grandfather stored in from the 50's or 60's to be given to me. He passed away in 1969.



1927 Dodge.

## Application for Membership

TEXAS GULF COAST CHAPTER  
Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of Antique Motor Fire  
Apparatus in America  
(SPAAMFAA)

Please mail this application with \$20 dues made payable to:

Texas Gulf Coast Chapter of SPAAMFAA

PO Box 697

Bellaire TX 77402

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Street or Box No. \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Nine Digit Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Business: \_\_\_\_\_ Pager: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about us? Web page \_\_\_\_\_ Friend \_\_\_\_\_ Publication \_\_\_\_\_ Muster \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Interests: Collecting Fire Equipment \_\_\_\_\_ Photography \_\_\_\_\_ Attending Musters \_\_\_\_\_ Parades \_\_\_\_\_

Restoration Activities \_\_\_\_\_ Helmets/Gear \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Department or SPAAMFAA Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

If you own a piece of firefighting apparatus that is at least 25 years old, please provide the following information. Attach separate sheet if multiple vehicles. Ownership of apparatus is not required to join Texas Gulf Coast Chapter

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Make: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: (Pumper, Aerial, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Mfg. Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Mfg. Serial #: \_\_\_\_\_

Pump Make: \_\_\_\_\_ Pump Size GPM: \_\_\_\_\_ Tank Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Owner and History of Rig: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership in Texas Gulf Coast Chapter is open to all upon application to the Board of Directors and payment of annual dues. Join today and share in the preservation and appreciation of fire fighting and antique fire apparatus.

All new members are also encouraged to join the National SPAAMFAA Chapter. National SPAAMFAA provides additional resources for restoration and insurance for all sponsored events. National Membership is mandatory for Officers of the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter

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Treasurer - Tom McDonald  
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*To stimulate and cultivate interest in the restoration, preservation,  
and operation of antique fire apparatus*

## TGCC ARCHIVE: 1979 PRESENTATION OF AWARDS



Member Kim Stellhorn submitted this picture of

Bill Wilcox reading off trophy winners. Kim Stellhorn is accepting the trophy for best of class for 1936 Seagrave. Dave Miller is wearing Cairns Senator fire helmet, and Charley Wilson is looking on