

The Doorknob Collector

Number 102

July-August 2000

A Publication of The Antique Doorknob Collectors of America

ADCA TOUR 2000 PREVIEW

Members participating in the opening Tour Day event are in for a visual and gastronomical treat! Arrangements have been made for private tours of three landmark properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places - American Swedish Institute ("Turnblad's Castle"), Purcell-Cutts House in Minneapolis and James J. Hill House in St. Paul.

Lunch is at Dixie's in the historic Calhoun Beach Club overlooking Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis. Dixie's has created a special summer luncheon menu of their "all time favorites" for us. The cost of your lunch is not included, but checks can be issued individually.

ADCA member, Jim Schmitt, will host a post-tour reception for members in his architectural salvage house, Art and Architecture, in the warehouse district of Minneapolis. Members can relax and mingle over a glass of wine or beer before returning to the hotel.

Reservations for the Tour Day event are requested. Cost of the tour is \$30 per person and covers the charter coach service and property entrance fees.

AMERICAN SWEDISH INSTITUTE

Built in 1904 by Swan J. Turnblad, a Swedish immigrant who made his fortune as a newspaper publisher, the house is considered one of the finest historic buildings in Minneapolis. Dubbed "Turnblad's Castle," the house has 33 rooms and is an excellent example of turn-of-the-century chateausque architecture. The castle-like exterior is made of Indiana limestone-complete with gargoyles, three turrets and five chimneys. In 1929, Turnblad donated his "castle" to the American Swedish Institute. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.

The interior design features intricately carved woodwork. The centerpiece of the house is the Grand Hall with its two-story fireplace mantle hand carved in African mahogany. During the four years of construction, 18 woodcarvers were employed for two years to execute the mansion's elaborate woodwork. The principal wood sculptor was Albin Polasek (1879-1965), who later headed the sculpture department at the Art Institute of Chicago.



"The Castle" Photo by Greg Helgeson

Newsletter Deadline - August 30, 2000
Newsletter will go to press on September 2nd

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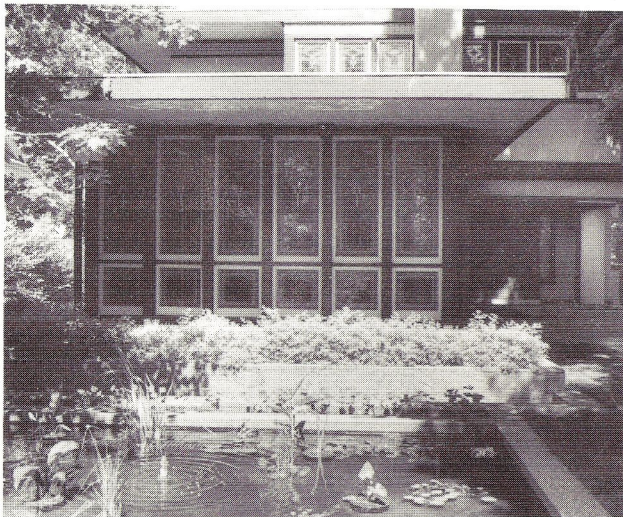
Another feature of the Turnblad mansion is the prominent stained glass window known as the "Visby Window." Scenes from a famous painting by Swedish artist Carl Gustaf Hellquist called "Valdemar Atterdag Levying Contributions on Visby" are reproduced in this window. Detailed painted plaster sculpturing decorates the ceilings with design elements as griffins, cherubs and fish. Perhaps the most charming of the home's furnishings are 11 different kakelugnar, or porcelain tile stoves which were imported from Sweden by Turnblad for decorative purposes only.

PURCELL-CUTTS HOUSE

Designed in 1913 by architects William G. Purcell and George G. Elmslie, this home is a significant example of the Prairie School of architecture embodied by their contemporary, Frank Lloyd Wright. The house, built for Purcell's own family, was the firm's most innovative and carefully detailed residential building. Challenged by the unusual lot proportions (50 x 150 feet), the architects designed a long, narrow house and disregarded many traditional ideas about room divisions.

On the first floor a vaulted, or "tent," ceiling covers both a sunken living room and an elevated dining room, creating one of the first open floor plans in the 20th century. Purcell and Elmslie believed the hearth was the center of the home and built a fireplace surmounted by a painted mural by Charles Livingston Bull. The brickwork is enhanced by iridescent glass applied to the mortar.

Whimsical details, like the "peek-a-boo" glass panels that frame the front entrance, are every where in the house and were intended to be antidotes to the sobriety of earlier Victorian dwellings. The architects also designed all of the furniture including a built-in desk and chair. Many of the original furniture pieces remain in the house. Interior lighting was another major concern of the architects, who created a "window wall" at the east end of the living room. On summer evenings, Purcell observed the sun would send ribbons of orange red squares of light down the entire length of the 50 foot length of the living room. Even the landscaping was integral to the design of the house. The plan features a reflecting pool in the front yard with a narrow fountain.



Reflecting Pool and Fountain.
Photo by Greg Helgeson

In 1985, the house was bequeathed to The Minneapolis Institute of Arts. From 1985-89, the Institute

fully re-stored the house to its appearance during Purcell's occupancy from 1913-17.

JAMES J. HILL HOUSE

Commissioned in 1888 and finished in 1891, the Richardsonian Romanesque style home of railroad baron James J. Hill was the largest and at \$931,725 to build, the most expensive Minnesota home built in its day. Peabody, Stearns, and Furber of Boston were hired to design and oversee construction of the house but were fired by Hill in 1891. They were replaced by the firm of Irving and Casson of Boston to finish the job. More than four hundred carpenters, masons and other craftsmen worked on the house. According to original records as many as one hundred workers were on the job daily during the early phases of construction

The mansion is over 35,000 square feet in size and has 13 bathrooms, 22 fireplaces, 16 crystal chandeliers, a two-story art gallery with sky lights, a 100 foot long reception hall and elaborate mahogany and oak woodwork. Perhaps the most outstanding decorative detail in the house is the carved

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Richard and Faye Kennedy, Editors
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Founded Sept 1981, the **Antique Doorknob Collectors of America** is a non-profit organization devoted to the study and preservation of ornamental hardware.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Board of Directors of ADCA or the editors.

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woodwork by John Kirchmayer, one of the country's leading wood carvers of the day.

Built in a transition period in lighting technology, the 16 chandeliers contained carbon-filament electric bulbs while the wall sconces featured both gas and electric lighting. Most of the chandeliers had three switches, allowing the lights to be set at different levels. Electricity for the home was generated in the basement and was one of the first and largest domestic electrical plants in the country.

Ventilation and drainage systems were engineered with special concern for sanitation. Two drainage systems were created by engineers: one for ice water melting from the food refrigeration areas and one for the waste drainage from the bathrooms and kitchen thereby eliminating the possibility of waste waters backing up through drains and contaminating food supplies.

Other advanced mechanicals built into the house included a system to pipe hot steam into the copper downspouts to melt ice build-up on the roof and gutters during the winter as well as elaborate security and internal communication systems. One novel system was a stop on the pipe organ labeled "blowers signal" which alerted the boiler room attendant that a concert was starting and, therefore, to start pumping the organ bellows.

The house was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1961 and acquired by the Minnesota Historical Society in 1978. Restoration began in 1979 with major projects initiated in 1983-84.

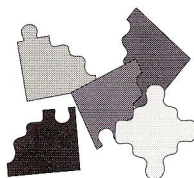


Front Entry of the James J. Hill House
Photo by Greg Helgeson

*Materials reprinted by courtesy of The Minneapolis Institute of Arts,
American Swedish Institute and Minnesota Historical Society*

Bits and Pieces

By Win
Applegate



Some of our members have, again, been "published".

Donald Dion (#177) and his lovely partner Brigitte Ostiguy have recently published their third book in a recent series; *Quebec, A North American Treasure*. The other two books are: *Saint Anne de Beaupre, An Inspiration* and *Island of Orleans, Enchanted Isle*.

In case you hadn't guessed, Donald, Brigitte and their book subjects are all in Canada. While each of the publications has been in collaboration with

others, the superb photography and the sheer perfection of each book reflects strongly on the talents of Brigitte and Donald.

Interested? You may contact them at (418) 522-8965.

In the June 2000 issue of *The Old House Journal*, Web Wilson (#266), with B. D. Coleman has written an article entitled "Mechanical Doorbells". It is a nice presentation that gives good insight into the mechanical and historic aspects of these devices.

As our world of doorknobs changes, we respectfully recognize Webber as one of those in the fore. His recent book, *Antique Hardware, a*

Price Guide has been previously mentioned here and it is

certainly recommended reading for most who follow the collecting and historical aspects of ornamental hardware. The best way to reach Web is through his (what else) 'Web' site - webwilson.com.

Humor From the Internet.

A recent description on EBAY for a green glass doorknob included the following: "I believe that it is either made of glass or a very rare South American emerald that was brought over on a pirate ship".

Peace, and hope to see you all in Minneapolis.

Finalized 2000 ADCA Convention Schedule

TUESDAY, AUGUST 22

Pick up your Welcome Packets at ADCA registration table in the DoubleTree Hotel lobby and then plan to greet old and new ADCA friends for a drink in the Hospitality Suite from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23

Gather in the hotel lobby at 8:30 a.m. to board the ADCA charter coach for private tours of 3 landmark properties listed in the National Register for Historic Places. The first tour begins at the Swedish Institute in Minneapolis, also known as "Turnblad's Castle." Next we head to the Purcell-Cutts House, a masterful example of the Prairie School of architecture. Lunch at noon is but a short bus ride around Lake of the Isles to Dixies in the Calhoun Beach Club overlooking Lake Calhoun. From Minneapolis, we head east to St. Paul for a private tour of the James J. Hill House. We end Tour Day 2000 at Art and Architecture in the warehouse district for a reception hosted by owner and ADCA member Jim Schmitt. Our charter coach will return to the DoubleTree Hotel in time for dinner. Board members meet early evening in Board Room. The Hospitality Room is open from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 24

Doors to the Crystal Ballroom open at 8:30 a.m. for setup. Then, it's buy, sell and trade!! Ballots for the "Flora and Fauna" display contest will be distributed for voting members to complete and hand in on

Friday. After lunch, Robert Roscoe, chairperson of the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission, will give us an overview of the historic preservation movement in the Twin Cities, its future and their implication of preservation efforts for collectors. Plan on dinner early to return for the ADCA Open House from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. All members are asked to help host the event; field questions about the ADCA, membership, collecting doorknobs and so forth. The Hospitality Room is open from 9:00 to 11:00 p.m. to accommodate the Open House.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 25

Doors to the Crystal Ballroom open again at 8:30 a.m. for more buying, selling and lots of trading! Laura MacLennan, vice president of Sotheby's Twin Cities Office, will join us at 1:00 p.m. to talk about how the Internet is changing the market for art, antiques and collectibles. She'll also share the caveats of e-commerce and tips the savvy buyer or seller needs to know. Plan to take down exhibits and displays by 4:00 p.m. Join fellow ADCA members in the Grand Salon for a no-host cocktail hour from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. and then dinner. The evening's program includes presentation of the Arnie Fredrick Award, naming the winners of the display competition and drawing a name for the early registration contest followed by the ADCA Business Meeting.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26

Enjoy a old-style Minnesota breakfast from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. in the Mendota Salon and is immediately followed by the Live Auction from 10:00 a.m. to

1:30 p.m. And then, we say farewell for another year!

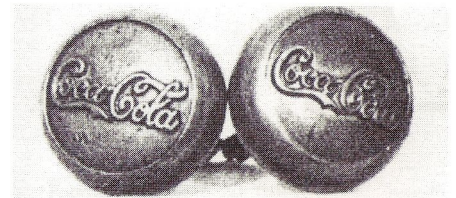
New Member Policy

Membership in ADCA runs from July 1 through June 30. Anyone joining between July and April is enrolled for the current membership year and receives all the issues of **The Doorknob Collector** for that membership year.

New members after April 30th will be enrolled as members for the following membership year and will begin receiving **The Doorknob Collector** with the Jul-Aug issue.

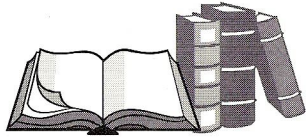
It's The Real Thing

We have been showing the fake knobs that have been available on the web. Shirley Meece (#465) thought all of you Coca-Cola lovers might like to see what the real thing looks like.



She also enlightened us as to what KeenKutter was as that was one of the fake knobs listed in TDC#101. KeenKutter is the brand name chosen in 1870 by the Simmons Hardware Co. for a line of high-grade tools and cutlery. In 1923 Winchester merged with Simmons and continued the full hardware line. In 1940 Shapleigh Hardware Co. took over until closing in 1962. Today the logo is owned by the Val-Test Co. of Chicago.

From the Archives



By Steve and Barbara Menchhofer

Catalog Order Time

Your catalog order form is enclosed with this issue of TDC. Special attention should be given to it because we have added more catalogs to the form. Included are a catalog from P. & F. Corbin, doorknob design pages from Mallory, Wheeler & Co. - 1876, and selected pages from The Ornamental Wood Company - 1870.

Len Blumin gave a wonderful talk about Mallory, Wheeler & Co. and it's hardware at our convention last year. After the convention, he donated his copies of doorknob pages from the 1876 catalog that he used in his presentation. Thanks, Len, for we are now offering these to our members. These are great copies to have.

Remember the article in the January-February 2000 issue of TDC that was about wooden doorknobs? The Ornamental Wood Company was mentioned in it. Well, we now have a copy of selected pages from their 1870 catalog courtesy of Tom Hennessy. Thank you Mr. Hennessy. These pages are a must-even if you do not collect wooden doorknobs. There are some shutter knobs, lots of curtain knobs, rosettes, and many other ornamental items in this catalog and it would be an excellent addition to your library.

The deadline for sending in your order will be August 31, 2000.

Any orders received after this date will be returned. We will either e-mail you or send a written confirmation when we receive your order. Orders will not be processed until after the deadline date. It will take several weeks to fill your orders but we will get them done as soon as possible. Master copies are fragile, so we only offer the catalog copies for sale once a year. Please avail yourselves at this time to take advantage of this offer. Educate yourselves-use catalogs.

If you have any questions about catalogs or ordering, please call us at 317-291-6043 or e-mail us at smenchhofe@aol.com.

When we go the convention this August, we will have a few catalog copies for members to peruse. We'll see you there.

Contributors

We would like to thank the following people for their contributions.

Win Applegate
Maude Eastwood
Sally Hyslop
Shirley Meece
Barbara and Steve
Menchhofer

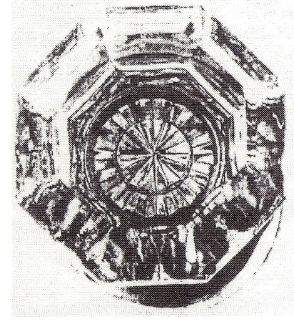
The Doorknob Exchange

Members are reminded that your dues entitle you to advertise items for sale, trade or wanted at no charge. ADCA is not responsible for any transaction or the condition of the items advertised.

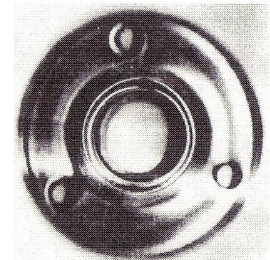
Vicky Berol (#450) is searching for several different hardware items.

Wanted: I need a Mallory Wheeler H244 (preferably cast iron) and Russell Erwin F121 (steel with copper overlay).

Also looking for several pairs of pressed glass knobs, round top octagon with starburst interior.

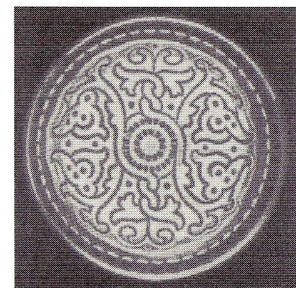
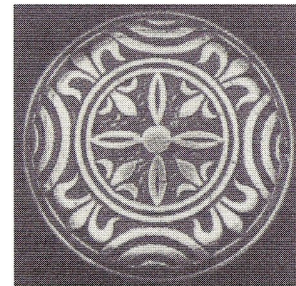


Several pairs of cast brass rose, 2" diameter, small seating, three screw holes.



Thanks: I got the M knob I was looking for.

Debbie Fellenz, (#31)



Hold That Knob

By Maude Eastwood

During the late Eastlake early Bardsley wood knob era, several specialty companies manufactured patented knob attachments that would also accommodate wooden knobs (in addition to knobs of metal and clay). These innovations were for one purpose, to produce an assembly wherein the knob would not loosen with use.

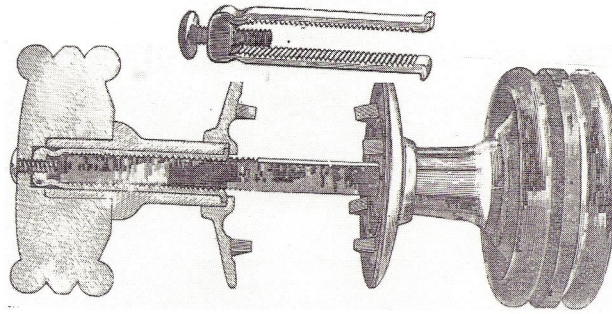
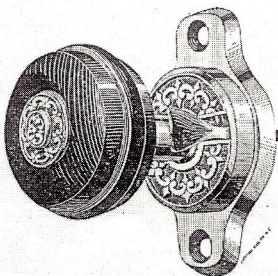
Termed "foolproof", features of these early patents sometime included non-turning knobs requiring specific types of locks or latches, and often, devices involving knob-top to knob-top spindles secured by buttons, rivets or screws.

Among the specialty companies thus engaged were the Gilbert Lock Co. that perfected and sold latches with stationery knobs and side levers of pivot action to activate an inner mechanism, and thus retracting the latch bolt. In their 1880 ad they boste that, "One of the great temptations to profanity (a loose knob) is removed".

The New England Butt Co. produced A. A. Prount's Rigid doorknobs - one of center push button action. The 1882 patent obviated the need for a full spindle, the second (1886) a full pinned spindle and turn knob.

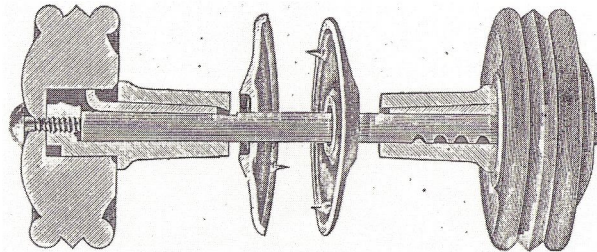
Edward Phipps who assigned his first knob attachment patent to the Milford Door Knob Company was a prolific

*Gilbert Lock
Note
Thumb
Latch*



Hidden's patent; the grooved "clothespin" was secured by a screw at the top of the knob and the spindle tightened into the knob. No screws were used in the neck. Pat. No. 255,858

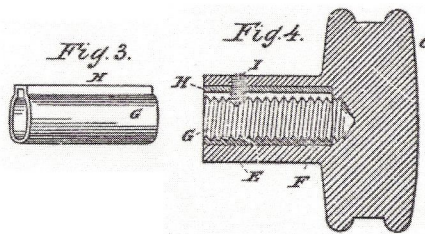
inventor, dreaming up several involved shank-to-spindle-to-knob innovations, all of which required the outer face of the knobs to hold a screw or button.



Phipp's patent features wedges to keep the knob tight.

The Phipps' patents were largely issued in 1882. A Phipps' patent knob that appeared in a Buhl Sons catalog of 1884 featured a design in pressed wood for inside door use.

The Gonne knob attachment



Jos. Bardsley 1884 patent

patents again required a fitting through the knob tops. The Climax Door Knob Company was involved. William Gonne was a Canadian who was also involved with Oliver Hidden in the quest for a tight fitting assembly.

The Union Door Knob Co. produced Oliver Hidden's 1882 patented knob attachment devices (see above), one of which involved a steel yoke that

was notched to correspond with notches on the spindle to accomplish the fitting without screws in the spindle, shanks or roses.

But, it was Joseph Bardsley whose less specialized methods of knob attachment enabled him to satisfy and capture the larger market, while the specialty concerns and their wares were relatively short lived.

Of the Jos. Bardsley patents, the most unusual was the model patented in 1884 and 1885 with the shank turned in-one with the knob body, then drilled longitudinally to receive a threaded sleeve to hold the spindle. Bardsley spindles were largely threaded on the angles only. (Existing specimens of this knob reveal that the wood shank tended to split in time or under certain conditions.)

In conclusion, the Hemacite knobs of William H. Dibble and the composition from which



Hemacite knob

they were made, should be addressed, insofar as the main component of the early Hemacite knobs was sawdust not pulverized, but granulated mixed with animal blood, thus

qualifying them to be listed as wooden knobs. The mixture could be molded rather than carved. Dibble took out two patents on his composition, with the possibility that number of other organic and non-organic

material could be used, but always incorporating animal blood in the mix. When the mix was pulverized, the finished product was vastly different in appearance.

The largely sawdust, Hemacite knob designs are distinctive with boxed, knurled

or grooved design sides. Their overall appearance is granular with the unmistakable look of wood, and of sawdust, in particular. Three different knob top designs are illustrated in 1880s Corbin Buhl Sons & Co., J. B. Shannon, and Phillip Gross Hardware catalogs.

Convention 2000 Info

CAR RENTAL AVAILABLE AT HOTEL

Should you decide you need or want to rent a car during your convention stay, don't worry! Be happy that Thrifty Car Rental has an on-site rental service for guests of the DoubleTree Hotel. While a car reservation is always encouraged, especially in the busy summer season, rental cars of all sizes can be secured-- subcompacts, compacts, mid-to-full size and luxury cars. Want to sightsee with lots of ADCA friends? Rental vans are also available.

To reserve a car from Thrifty at the DoubleTree Hotel, call 612-854-8080 direct, or use their toll free number 1-800-THRIFTY.

TRAVEL TIPS FROM THE MINNEAPOLIS /ST.PAUL AIRPORT TO HOTEL

The DoubleTree Hotel offers free shuttle service daily from and to the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport. Shuttle service is available between 5:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m., every half-hour.

The metered rate for a one-way cab ride from the Minneapolis/ St. Paul International Airport to the DoubleTree Hotel is approximately \$10-\$12, including the \$2 airport use fee. Gratuity is optional. The rate is based on one to four passengers per taxi.

The airport taxi stand is supervised by a "cab starter" and operates on "first come, first out" policy for all cab companies doing business at the airport. Several cab companies accept reservations such as Northwest Taxi and Limo Service. Their local phone number is 612-890-0980 and toll free number is 800-837-1867.

The Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport, like many facilities around the country, is under constant construction and renovation. Congestion is everywhere and can be trying. Stay calm and cool while at the airport. Soon you can relax with your ADCA friends back at the hotel!

Reserve Your Hotel Room Now and Save!

Don't delay another day! Club members who book their hotel reservations by August 1 will receive the special ADCA room rate offered by the DoubleTree Hotel. To obtain the discounted pricing, you must call the hotel direct at 612-854-2244 to book your hotel room. Be sure to tell them you are a member of the ADCA.

If you would like to share room expenses with another ADCA member, contact Sally Hyslop at 612-377-8747. She'll keep track of roommate requests and will make referrals to other ADCA members as requested.

Pre-Shipping Boxes to Minneapolis Convention

The DoubleTree Hotel will accept pre-shipment of boxes up to three days of a scheduled function at the hotel. Drayage fees at the hotel are:

All incoming boxes/pallets \$5.00 per box \$50.00 per pallet

All outgoing boxes/pallets \$5.00 per box \$50.00 per pallet

A storage fee of \$5.00 per box or \$50.00 per pallet per day will be charged on all boxes/pallets received three (3) days prior your arrival or left one (1) day after the conclusion of the convention. A secured storage area is available but is on a first come, first serve basis. For other pre-shipping and storage arrangements, contact Sally Hyslop at (612)-377-8747.

SPEAKERS TO LECTURE ON THE PAST AND FUTURE FOR COLLECTORS

By Sally Hyslop

Robert Roscoe, chairperson of the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission and head of Design for Preservation, and **Laura C. MacLennan**, vice-president of Sotheby's Twin Cities Office, will be guest speakers at the Minneapolis convention. Mr. Roscoe and Ms. MacLennan will focus their remarks on issues relating to the ADCA's mission to collect, protect and research hardware now and into the future. Lectures are scheduled for Thursday, August 24 at 2:00 p.m. and Friday, August 25 at 1:00 p.m. in the Crystal Ballroom.

ROBERT ROSCOE

Mr. Roscoe will speak on the historic preservation movement in the Twin Cities that commenced with Earth Day in 1970; its evolution and urban renewal over the last quarter century; how preservation has now moved into the suburbs and the implications for collectors of building and architectural elements, like hardware. Mr. Roscoe will show slides of various preservation projects and address questions following his remarks. He will speak at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 24.

For the past 19 years Bob Roscoe has served as Commissioner on the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission, as a writer for *Architecture Minnesota*, published by the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects. He was also editor (1985-early 2000) of *The Minnesota Preservationist*,

a bi-monthly newsletter published by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota. As head of Design for Preservation, a practice primarily devoted to design for rehabilitation of residences with an emphasis on historic preservation, he has been involved in many significant restoration projects in the Twin Cities. Mr. Roscoe lives in the Twin Cities with his wife, Sally, an avid collector of antique celluloid dolls.

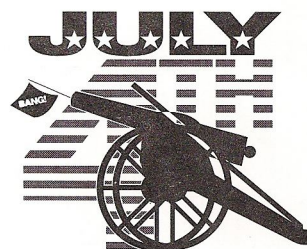
LAURA C. MACLENNAN

Laura MacLennan, vice president of Sotheby's Twin Cities office, will present a brief overview of the history of buying art, antiques and collectibles via Internet auctions dating back to the early to mid-1990's. She will discuss how Sotheby's, one of the world's leading auction houses of art and collectibles, entered the on-line auction business including their partnership with e-commerce partner Amazon.com. Ms. MacLennan will share the primary challenges in developing Sotheby's "e-commerce" business, thoughts on what works and doesn't work as well as how the Internet is changing the market for buyers and sellers of art, antiques and collectibles on-line. Ms. MacLennan will speak at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, August 25.

Laura MacLennan joined the Chicago office of Sotheby's in 1989 as the Midwest Trust and Estate Services representative, working with trust and estate professionals throughout the upper Midwest. In 1991, she transferred to the New York headquarters as Director of Sotheby's Appraisal Department. Following her marriage, she returned to

Minneapolis to open the Twin Cities office to work with private collectors, dealers, museums, foundations and various community organizations. Ms. MacLennan was closely involved with Sotheby's development of sothebys.com, their live Internet auction site that launched in January 2000 and exceeded \$8 million in sales during the first quarter of 2000.

Ms. MacLennan is a member of the Fine Arts and Library Committee of the Minneapolis Club and a past president of the Associates of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in Minneapolis. She lives in Minneapolis with her husband and two sons.



Keep in Touch



Mail:
ADCA Box 31
Chatham, NJ
07928-0031



FAX:
(973) 635-6993



Phone:
(973) 635-6338



e-mail:
KnobNews@aol.com



Web Site:
<http://members.aol.com/knobnews>