

The Doorknob Collector

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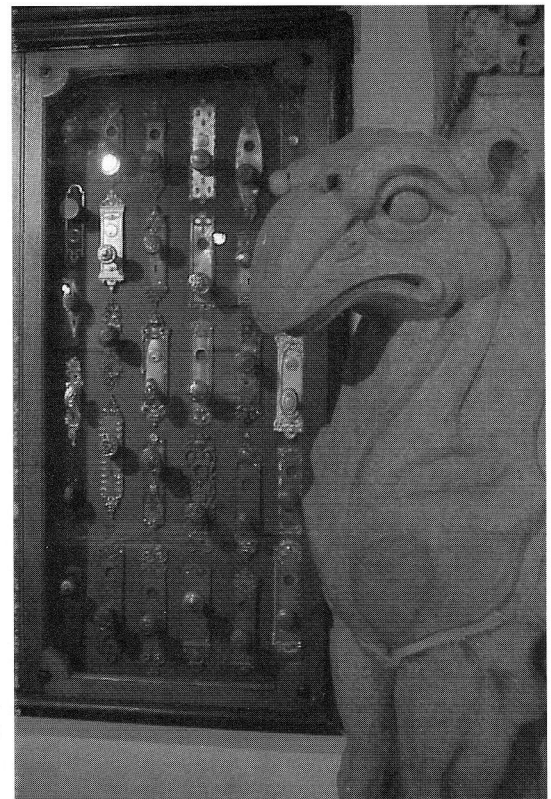
Jewelry for Buildings A World Class Exhibit

The display at the St. Louis City Museum is a real gem. We have been urging our members to get to the museum to see this display if at all possible. For those of you who are too far away, we offer some insight into the exhibition in the centerfold of this issue. Several members gathered in St. Louis in January (see Bits and Pieces) to view the display. They were pleasantly surprised when they arrived at the airport and saw posters in the concourse with photographs of doorknobs advertising the museum display. The exhibition continues through May 20, 2001, so get there if you can.

Spectacular, Fabulous, Awesome. These were only a few of the words used by visitors to describe the Antique Doorknob Collectors first major exhibit at the City Museum in St. Louis.

The "must-see" show is the brainchild of Bruce Gerrie, director of the St. Louis Architectural Museum. With the help of several other members of the ADCA from the area, namely Patti Ramey, Steve Arnold, and Dave Becker, the exhibition took shape. Bruce is quoted in the December issue of *Interiors* as saying, "I saw thousands of [knobs] in one place for the first time 15 years ago, at a collectors' convention. I was absolutely transfixed by the variety and the art." So from that ADCA convention a seed was sown and the resulting exhibition is breathtaking.

This exhibit is much more than just viewing the vast array of hardware. Visitors were able to make rubbings of the hinges to get a real "feel" for the art involved in this early hardware. Gregory Kramer, a glass blower was on hand and explained to the visitors the processes involved in making bubbles in glass knobs. He also gave a demonstration of the glass blowing art. (see photo, page 5)



Newsletter Deadline - April 16, 2001

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Jewelry for Buildings

Cont'd

All of the members of the ADCA that were there were involved in speaking to the visitors to the show. All ages seem to have been fascinated by the knobs. We have personally received phone calls from people who have seen the display singing the praises of the show. It certainly piqued the interest of many.

Articles have been written about the display not only in the local papers, but also in the

magazine, *Southern Living*. An article by Donna Pulese-Murphy says, "Jewelry for Buildings [is] a wonderful way to describe the beauty and decorative features that are often overlooked when we think of doorknobs. While most doorknobs produced over the centuries have been created purely for functional purposes, in 19th- and early 20th century America, the doorknob progressed from a purely utilitarian object to a decorative art form.

"So unlock the door to collecting an artistic and architectural antique doorknob which you can

either display as a functional object on a door or cabinet, or in a display case as pure visual pleasure."

A guest book is at the exhibition for comments from the visitors. Our hobby has hit home with many people through this display. It gives us pleasure to have so many others enjoying the beauty of the hardware.

This exhibition is truly a tribute to our club. To the left is a reproduction of a plaque that is hanging at the museum. It is a testament to our members and their willingness to loan hardware from their collections in order to have a display of this magnitude. It is not only interesting, but very informative to the general public. We continue to get positive comments about the display from people who have called us with questions.

Contributors to the St. Louis Exhibition

This exhibition would not have been possible without the generous support of our lenders. Their passion for collecting and vision for the preservation of Architectural Hardware make all of this possible. Their legacy allows us to tell the story, *Jewelry for Buildings, the Art of Antique Doorknobs in the City*. We are eternally grateful for their generous support for agreeing to lend their treasures, and also for their wisdom, encouragement, and support for this Exhibition

Win Applegate, Hamilton Square, NJ
Steve Arnold Sr. St. Louis, MO
Dave Becker, St. Louis, MO
Charles Bednar, Roseville, MN
Len & Patti Blumin, Mill Valley, CA
Maud Eastwood, Woodinville, WA
Dave Felling, St. Louis, MO
Don Friedman, Chicago, IL
Bosco Milligan Foundation, Portland, OR
Bruce Gerrie, St. Louis, MO
Liz's Antique Hardware, Liz Gordon, Los Angeles, CA
Steve Menchhofer, Speedway City, IN
Joe Mueller, St. Louis, MO
Patricia Ramey, St. Louis, MO
Bob Rodder, Oreland, Pa
Stephen Rowe, Clovis, CA
Charlie Struckoff, St. Louis, MO
Web Wilson, Portsmouth, RI
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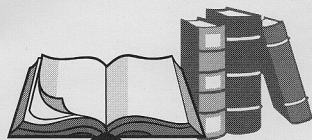
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Founded Sept 1981, the **Antique Doorknob Collectors of America** is a non-profit organization devoted to the study and preservation of ornamental hardware.

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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From the Archives



By Steve and Barbara Menchhofer

2001-it just doesn't seem possible that 2000 has come and gone. It was a good year for the Archives with so many members donating catalogs and catalog copies.

The catalog copies that we offered for sale in August were well received. We photocopied 17,375 sheets from our offerings in the Archives. What makes this task worthwhile is knowing our members will use these copies to learn more about their hardware. Other plusses are the nice members we encounter and the thank you notes and telephone calls we receive.

Let's make 2001 an even better year. If you have any catalogs (doorknob and related hardware manufacturer's catalogs), that you would be willing to donate or have copied and sent to the Archives us, please let us know. Email at smenchhofe@aol.com, call us at 317-291-6043, or write to us at 5538 W 25th St. Speedway, IN 46224.

We would like to explain our method of accepting catalogs before you send us yours.

Round Table Discussion

During this year's convention there will be a round table discussion. We would like the members to let us know some of the topics they would like discussed. One suggestion is how to tell the difference between an original knob and one of the excellent reproductions now on the market. Be thinking about other subjects. A form for your suggestions will be included in the next newsletter. You could also send your thoughts to us by email as well. Send to Knobnews@aol.com. Thanks.

New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our newest members who have joined the ADCA since our last newsletter.

Bobbie Meicenheimer	Richland, WA
Frank Pearson	Santa Fe, NM
Ed Breeze	Langley, WA
Joe Breads	New Braunfels, TX
Robert Litterst	Chesapeake, VA
Cynthia Rosenfeld	New York, NY
Gail Siptak	Houston, TX
John Volz	Austin, TX

Notes from the Arnie Fredrick Memorial Committee

The Arnie Fredrick Memorial Award was first given at the 2000 Minneapolis Convention. This award was designed to honor our founding member Arnie Fredrick and also those who most closely emulate his actions and accomplishments for the ADCA. Maud Eastwood was the awards' first recipient. Maud has been and continues to be a leader in the ADCA and we congratulate her on those accomplishments. In this issue of the newsletter you will find a nomination form. Please consider nominating a candidate for this prestigious award. Applications must be received by the Committee before May 30th.

Newest Arrivals

Your editors, Faye and Rich Kennedy, are proud to announce the arrival of their two grandchildren; Marissa Morgan on 1/10/01 to Jennifer and Charles Scaccia and Cameron Parker on 2/10/01 to Leslie and Randy Corey.

Faye had forgotten how much care the little ones take. The mummies needed a little help after surgery.

She feels lucky to have found time to get the newsletter out. But, newsletters no longer hold the priority in this house. We have two new rulers even though they live a ways away.

Mothers and fathers are doing fine. Sleep deprivation doesn't count.

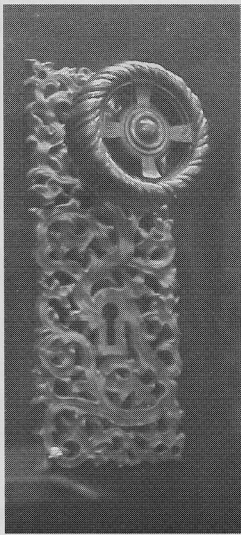
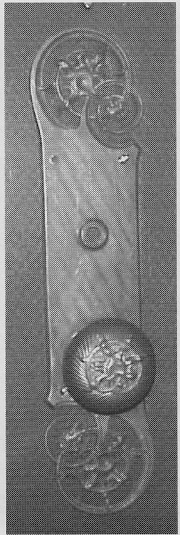
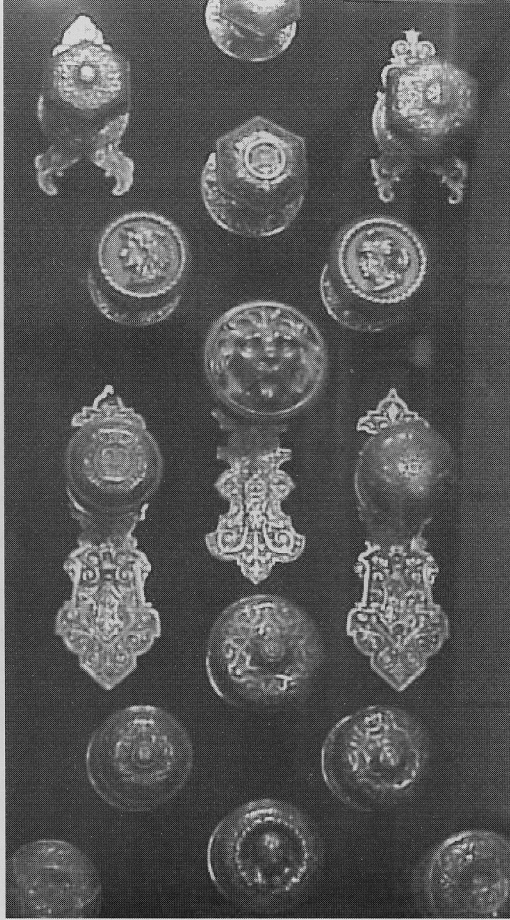
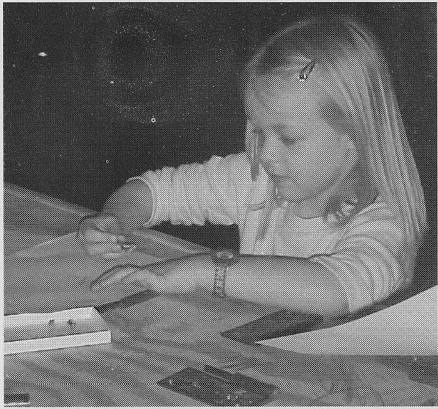
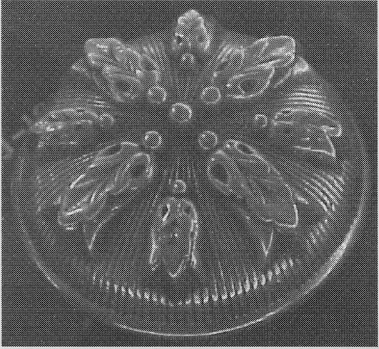
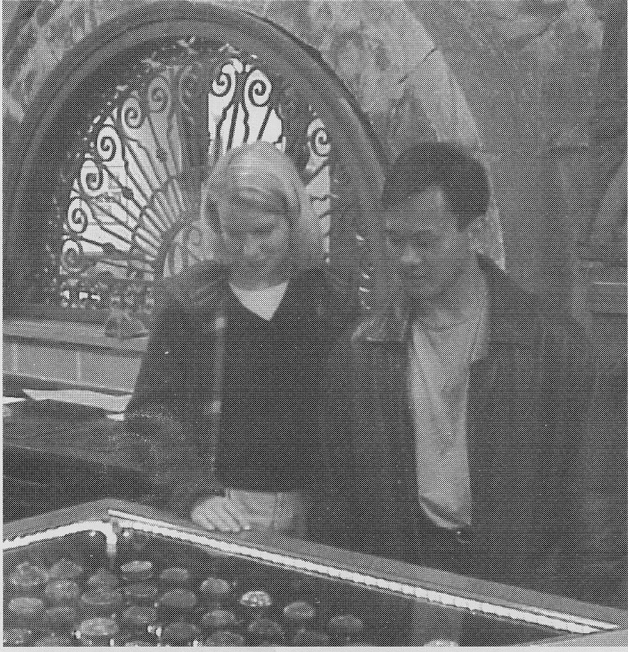
Marissa and Cameron

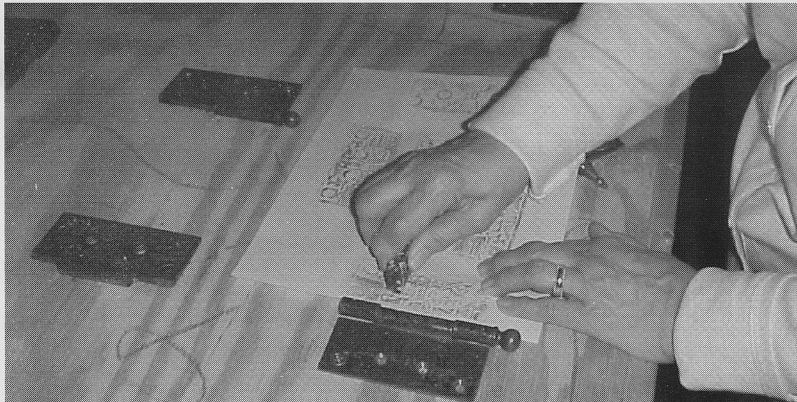
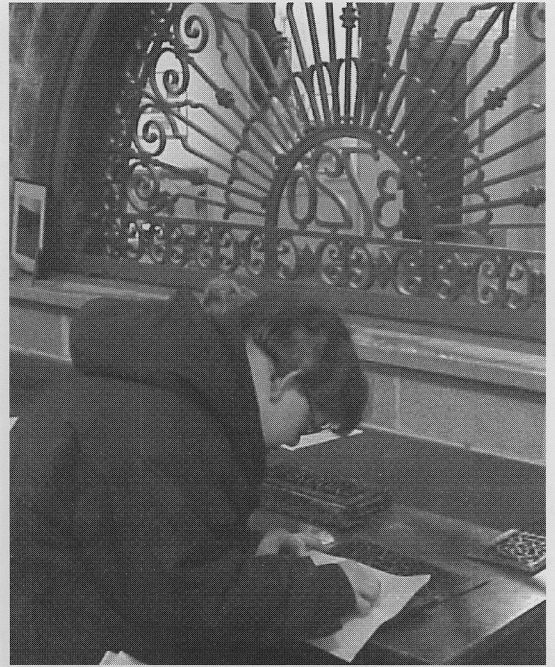
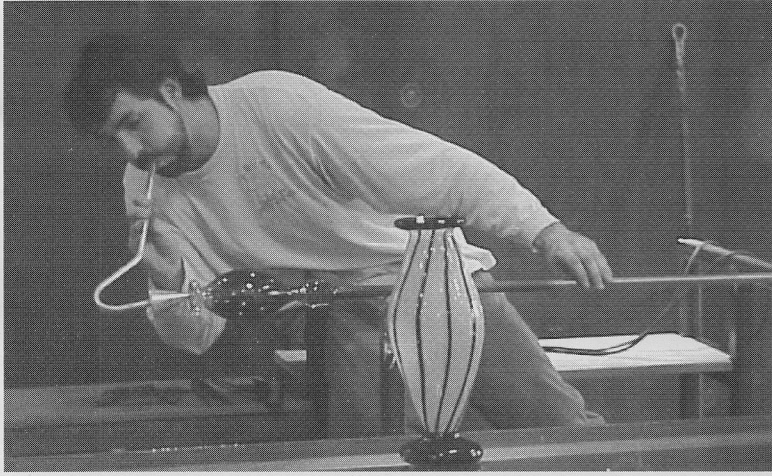


New Member Policy

Membership in ADCA runs for one year from your first issue of the newsletter. New members are enrolled beginning with the first issue of the newsletter after receipt of dues. Yearly membership includes six issues of **The Doorknob Collector**. Your membership renewal date is shown on your address label. Reminders will be sent when membership renewal is due.

DOOR KNOBS





Convention Preview

Photos by Roger Smith Studios



Asa Packer Mansion

One of the high points of any convention is the tour day, and we hope this year will be no exception. After a bus tour of Bethlehem, we will be heading to Jim Thorpe to visit the Asa Packer mansion, and to lunch at the Harry Packer mansion, just next door. Asa Packer was a superstar of his times. He helped create Carbon County, which became famous for supplying coal via canals to major metropolitan areas. When the leading canal company, of which he was a director, refused to diversify by building a railroad, Asa built the Lehigh Valley Railroad on the opposite side of the river from the canal. The canals disappeared and the Lehigh Valley became a major railroad. Later, he reorganized what became Bethlehem Steel, and founded Lehigh University. He missed becoming Governor of Pennsylvania by only 5,000 votes, but did serve in the House of Representatives.

Asa Packer's mansion was built in 1861, and remains virtually untouched through chance events that were fortunate for posterity, if sad for the Packers. Asa died in 1879. Of his four children, one predeceased him and his two sons (Harry, who built his mansion in 1874, and Robert) died within five years of Asa. His sole remaining daughter lived to 1912, leaving the mansion and furnishings to the town, then named Mauch Chunk. The mansion remained boarded up until 1956 when the Lions Club opened it to the public. It became a national landmark in 1985.

How Mauch Chunk became Jim Thorpe is another tale of chance. Jim Thorpe, of course, was the Indian athlete, born in Oklahoma, who became one of the best all-around athletes of his, or any other day. After excelling at football, he won gold

metals in the Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912. He was, however, stripped of the gold metals for violation of the amateur-athlete rule for playing semi-professional baseball several years earlier (even if he did not know that he thereby forfeited his amateur status). Jim Thorpe later played professional baseball and professional football, but gradually fell into obscurity and died in near poverty in 1954. And what, you may ask, did his life have to do with Mauch Chunk? The answer is – not a thing.

By the time of his death, the coal regions had gone into decline, and Mauch Chunk, interested in attracting tourism, started looking for a new name. Jim Thorpe's widow contacted the town with a deal – if the town would give her husband a proper burial and a monument, they could name the town after him. And so they did, erecting a red granite monument. After a long campaign his gold metals were restored in 1982 when a forgotten bylaw for the Stockholm Olympics was discovered which required that any objections to a contestant's status had to be filed within 30 days of the award of the metals, not the seven months it took in his case. (To some of us, the town will always be Mauch Chunk.)

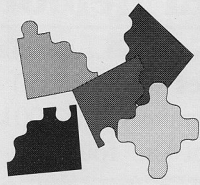
Visit their site is at: www.murdermansion.com

On Thursday, August 16th, Win Applegate will lead a panel discussion/Q & A session on various matters of interest to doorknobs, such as how to distinguish reproductions – which are getting better every day – from the real thing. In the next newsletter there will be a form for members to suggest subjects for inclusion in the program.



Harry Packer Mansion

Bits and Pieces



By Win Applegate

It all started out innocently enough. Rich Kennedy and I agreed that pictures of the St. Louis Museum exhibit should be taken early in the new year or the newsletter article would not reach the membership until the exhibit was about to close in May. One of the most difficult tasks was for Faye to convince Rich that the pending birth of their first grandchild could actually be carried out without his presence. Then Al Joslyn said, "You know, I think that I would like to go." Next Len said -- well, you can imagine how it went after that.

We began to arrive Friday January 12 and by the time we all got together, the membership list of attendees other than Rich and myself included: Carol and Hilary Applegate, Steve Arnold, Dave Becker, Len Blumin, Maude Eastwood, Debbie Fellenz, Bruce Gerrie, Allen Joslyn, Barb and Steve Menchhofer, Joe Mueller, Patti Ramey, and Carlos Ruiz. Throughout the weekend, many of the other St. Louis volunteers par-

ticipated in the celebration and Saturday evening's dinner was attended by twenty-five.

More than one person remarked that the get-together was like a mini convention. Certainly, a good time was had by all.

Questions have been asked that indicate that not everyone is familiar with the term "footed" knob. In a later newsletter when space permits, a photo of the footed "doggie" mentioned in the last newsletter will be included.

Historian buffs say that if you compare the Civil War history books in the North versus the South, you will see some astonishing differences. This probably has a lot to do with human nature and that old factor: time. As reiterated in the last newsletter regarding the manufacturing history of the "Doggie", we know of Metallic Compression Casting Company's introduction of its improved casting method and its place in ornamental hardware history. As stated in the last newsletter, MCCC was eventually absorbed by Russell and Erwin.

In the booklet "RUSSWIN, The First 125 Years" published in 1964, no mention of MCCC is made. Highly touted was the in-

roduction and success of compression casting (1871). An excerpt: "Russell and Erwin was the first to see the opportunities for better things in the (casting) field and hired an experienced designer (L. Kreuzinger?). An insert in the 1871 catalogue states "We are the pioneers and only manufacturers of this line of (ornate castings) ... by the patented process, which we own exclusively."

Airline Connections to Convention 2001

Our next convention will be held in Bethlehem, PA. The Lehigh Valley International Airport lists the following airlines in their brochure:

Air Canada	1-800-776-3000
Air Ontario	1-800-776-3000
Comair	1-800-354-9822
(The Delta Connection)	
Continental Exp	1-800-525-0280
Delta	1-800-221-1212
Delta Express	1-800-325-5205
Northwest	1-800-225-2525
Mesaba/	1-800-225-2525
Northwest Airlink	
United	1-800-241-6522
United Express	1-800-241-6522
US Airways/	1-800-428-4322
US Airways Express	

"People and Places" Theme for Convention 2001

Begin thinking about your displays for the 2001 Convention. What hardware do you have that could be classified under either People or Places?

Radisson Hotel Bethlehem
Bethlehem, PA
August 15 through August 18, 2001

WHO INVENTED THE DOORKNOB?

We received this email from a student at the University of Connecticut. "My group and I are doing a research project for our advanced graphic design class at UCONN and need to find the inventor of the doorknob. We haven't been able to find any historic information and we are hoping maybe you could help. What we have found is a bunch of dealers and collectors. We even found somewhat of a physical time line change of the knob through the eras but nothing pertaining to the inventor, designer, manufacturer, and/or origin of the knob. Thank you for your time."

We liked Maude Eastwood's answer.

My sympathy, I have been in doorknob research for over 40 years and still do not know it all.

Compare finding the inventor of the first doorknob to finding the inventor of the cup or plate. These objects evolved with man's need, over the ages. The Assyrians hung objects on huge knobs on their wall, not doors, their doors were too massive. On down to the various countries, notably Germany in the 5th and 6th centuries, whose artisans created masterpieces in metalwork or locks and knobs of incredible designs.

The British were, in the mid-1700s, producing designed doorknobs of metal and porcelain. In Colonial America, the "planters" opted for imported door hardware, certainly disdaining the forged handles of the log cabin strata.

The Smith Brothers of Compression Casting fame developed the first fine ornamental bronze hardware in the states by 1869. Prior to that the knobs used in the

states were small, plain brass, glass (blown or pressed), pottery and composition. The earliest patent that I have for a doorknob is dated 1837 and relates to the putting on of a metal shank to a class knob body.

Realize that an inventor (99% of the time) is going to put "improvement to" his invention, in order not to infringe, should someone else already have invented part of his supposed "first". One patent of my several hundred simply states that he knows the knob is not a new invention, but (and continues).

The British patent system started in the late 1600s. I understand, and the American one, as far as giving numbers, in 1790. So, who is to know what was invented and when prior to those dates? The Doylestown Museum in PA has an exhibit of locks that shows a small number of the earliest knobs of that area. Again, they are the small metal and glass. Ball & Ball of Exton, PA would be an excellent establishment to contact regarding the history. They produce hardware and are very knowledgeable.

So who invented the doorknob. My guess is someone who was tired of trying to open a door by curling fingers around the edge of the door with hands full of something else. Just a guess!

PLAN AHEAD FOR THIS YEAR'S CONVENTION

Mark your calendar. A great convention is coming up on **August 15-18**. Seeing old friends and meeting new collectors is one of the highlights of any convention. There will be buying, selling and trading as usual. Great trips, good food, and having fun round out the agenda. Plan to be in **Bethlehem, PA** and join in the fun.

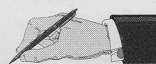
In Memorium

Alva L. Bednar, wife of Charles Bednar (#6) passed away on January 13, 2001. Charles is one of the founding members of the ADCA. We offer our condolences and warm thoughts to the family.

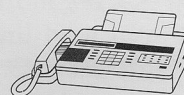
Betty Jean Wise (#269), 73, of Aurora, IL died Monday, February 19, 2001, at her home after a very courageous four-year battle with cancer.

She was born in Sioux City, IA, the daughter of the late Charles and Beatrice (Tulk) Lewis. Mrs. Wise was a member of Lutheran Church of The Redeemer in Aurora, IL. Survivors include: two daughters, Bonnie (Thomas) Otte (#484) of Aurora, and, Lisa (Lawrence) Rybicki of Oswego; three grandsons, two granddaughters, and a great grandson. She also leaves a brother two sisters and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband, Richard Wise.

Keep in Touch



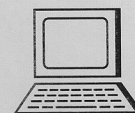
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