

TURN OUT



**Milwaukee
Convention Wrap-Up**

60th Anniversary IFBA Convention Report

By Ed McMichael

Photos contributed by Chuck Liedtke, Jim Ley and Ed McMichael

IFBA's 60th Anniversary Convention was held in the city of IFBA's birthplace – Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Conventioneers were treated to Milwaukee hospitality and extremely nice weather during the July 9 – 13 gathering.

Tuesday, July 9 was check-in day, followed by the IFBA's Executive Board Meeting that evening. Presided over by current IFBA President Carolyn Wignall, the board approved minutes and the treasurer's report, received reports for the Executive Vice President, Regional Vice Presidents, and committee chairs.

Registration continued on Wednesday, July 10. Two events took place in the morning: the opening ceremony and a preview of future conventions.

The opening ceremony featured bagpipers and a presentation of the American and Canadian flags by members of the Milwaukee Fire Departments. Welcoming remarks were given by Retired Milwaukee Deputy Chief Warren Skonieczny, Cudahy Fire Chief Dan Mayer, Local 215 Representative Al Jansen, and Milwaukee Fire Chief Mark Rohlffing. A reading of the names of departed buffs since our last convention was included in the opening ceremonies.



Retired Milwaukee Deputy Chief Warren Skonieczny, Cudahy Fire Chief Dan Mayer, Local 215 Representative Al Jansen, and Milwaukee Fire Chief Mark Rohlffing at the Opening Ceremony.

Lunch at the hotel followed, and then seminars concerning 10 years of operating under MABAS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System) and a report from the TEMS Team concerning the Sikh Temple shooting in Oak Creek, Wisc. on October 5, 2012. The Oak Creek Fire Rescue responded to

that incident. Both seminars were informative and well received.

Thursday was touring day, and the weather, nice



during our entire stay, was exceptionally nice that day. We bussed up the state to Appleton, Wisc, and the home of the Pierce Manufacturing Company. Conventioneers were split into

Cheyenne Ladder 1 on the "blue floor" at the Pierce plant being examined by Cheyenne representatives prior to being delivered for use.



Orders for Pierce products come from all over the world.

groups of about 10 people for tours of the plant, where we saw all types of fire apparatus in various stages of manufacture, from chassis to completed rigs in the “blue room,” where they were being delivered to departments across the world. Our tour group saw rigs for U.S. departments, including several engines destined for Hawaii, as well as rigs for Panama and Mexico.

All areas of the plant were open for our inspection, including assembly, design, painting, graphics, and sales. Many buffs had to check out the gift store where sales were brisk!

Having worked up an appetite, the group moved down the road to Pierce Park for a lunch catered by the Milwaukee Fire Bells. Had we mentioned the weather was perfect for a picnic-type lunch



Lunch at Pierce Park, sponsored by the Milwaukee Fire Bells was a “yummy” hit!

that day? Food was plentiful and included ice cream!

Our next tour was to the town of Slinger, Wisc, where the doors of the Venerable Fire Collections, aka Fire Bell Farm, were opened for our

inspection. Buffs, whether they were interested in the nostalgic or historic aspects of fire suppression/apparatus or not, all had a momentary lapse of breath when they saw the magnitude of the collection. Most of the collection is the work of Keith and Mary Franz, who were on hand to answer questions and talk with fellow fire buffs.



One of the many exhibits at the Venerable Fire Collection, Slinger, Wisc. (See also the picture on the front cover.)

Rumbling stomachs finally made everyone re-board the busses for a short ride to the Slinger Fire Department, where all the apparatus is lime-green, except for one recently re-acquired antique, which is the traditional firehouse red.

The Slinger Fire Department is an all-volunteer company, where the firefighters are shareholders in the corporation. They operate from one station and serve a population of 13,000 in three townships or about an area of 27 square miles. They average about 50 fire calls a year. EMS services are contacted to an ambulance service in Slinger, so all the runs made by the fire department are fire related.

After touring their extremely modern and well-designed station, fire buffs were treated to dinner. And right in the middle of dinner, tones went off, and so did the Slinger Fire Department! Considering that their runs average about one a week, we were very fortunate to be able to see the members at the station suit up and respond, followed shortly by another engine manned by arriving



Slinger Fire Department apparatus on display prior to dinner being served ... and Slinger FD's fire response.

have some clout! I've been doing this for years ... and I've never seen that!"

After returning to the dock, the group gathered for a wonderfully prepared and served buffet at Mader's Restaurant in downtown Milwaukee. Those of you familiar with IFBA history will know that Mader's was the birthplace

volunteers. Quick work was made of the fire ... they returned in time for dessert!

Tired buffs returned to the hotel for evening buffet and fellowship.

The general business meeting, one of the main reasons for an annual convention, started at 9 a. m. on Friday, July 12. As a part of the meeting, Wally Banks from Dallas, Tex., was elected to be President of the IFBA for 2013-14, succeeding current President Carolyn Wignall. Gerry Mahoney and Paul Schaetzle were re-elected as secretary and treasurer, respectively. Mr. Phil Reid announced his retirement from his position as chair of the Fire Buff of the Year award committee. His place will be taken by Stuart Nathan.

After an on-your-own lunch, busses took the group to downtown Milwaukee for an afternoon harbor cruise. A history of the city's waterfront and river system was told during the boat ride. The Milwaukee fire boat buzzed our tour boat and gave us an all turret water salute. Our tour boat captain remarked, "Wow! You guys must

of the IFBA 60 years' ago.

Saturday, July 13, the last day of the 2013 convention, started with the Milwaukee Muster. Later that day was a social hour, then the closing banquet and closing ceremony.

Milwaukee Fire Chief Mark Rohlfing was the keynote speaker and addressed attendees with the new reality of firefighting, which he said began in 2008. "Lost resources are not going to be replaced," he stated, "But we still need to have boots on the ground firefighters."

Newly elected and officers that had been re-elected were sworn into their various offices by Executive Vice President William Mokros, who also presented the out-going IFBA President with a certificate and past-president's pin. The Henry N. Wilwers Fire Buff of the Year award was presented to Jim Williamson from the Indianapolis Fire Buffs.

The website of the year virtual award was presented to The Signal "51" Group, Shreveport,



Conventioners line the railing at dockside prior to Milwaukee harbor cruise.



The Milwaukee fire boat gives an all-turret salute to the Fire Buff conventioners, greatly impressing our tour boat captain.

LA.

Door prizes followed, and Table 10 was the place to be. Every member at the table won at least one the multitude of door prizes awarded that night.



Dan Jasina (blue shirt on right) and companions wait for their turn at the Mader's buffet.

Looking forward to future conventions, Dallas will be the host city for 2014 (spring meeting April 11-13, 2014) and convention September 3-6, 2014), with Hartford, CT stepping up for 2015.

Sites for 2016

and forward are open. With the reluctance of cities/clubs to commit to hosting a convention, this will be one of the "hot" topics for the Dallas general business meeting.

Milwaukee hosted a tremendous 60th Anniversary Convention, and they should be commended for the hours of preparation and execution. Well done, ladies and gentlemen!

It's on to Dallas. Bring your sunscreen and cowboy boots! See you there!



Rev. Michael Kuk, Senior Fire Chief for the Department of Defense gives the invocation at the 60th Anniversary Convention Banquet.



Newly elected Regional Vice Presidents are sworn in by Executive Vice President William Mokros.



Gerry Mahoney examines his check-in documents at the 60th Anniversary Convention.



Convention chair Chuck Liedtke welcomes guests.



IFBA President Carolyn Wignall presides at the Executive Board meeting on Tuesday, July 9.



Carolyn Wignall is honored for her year of service as IFBA President with the presentation of a certificate and her Past-President's pin. Making the presentation is William Mokros, IFBA Executive Vice President.



(Left) Jim Williamson affiliated with the Indianapolis Fire Buffs accepts the Henry N. Wilwers Fire Buff of the Year award from FBOY Committee Chair Phil Reid.



(Right) Phil Reid shows off *his* award, honoring many years' of dedicated work as the chair of the Fire Buff of the Year committee.

(Right) Wally Banks, Box 4 Dallas, repeats the oath of office to become the 2013-14 IFBA President, as rendered by William Mokros, IFBA Executive Vice President.



(Below) Guess who dropped in for dinner? Crash rig 5 from the General Mitchell Airport journeyed across the street to the Best Western Milwaukee Plus Hotel for a conventioners' photo op during the 60th Anniversary Convention.





Meet your new President: Wally Banks

By Ed McMichael

Ladies and gentlemen of the IFBA, it's time to meet your new President:

the most rooting-tooting, cliché-spouting, and lover of barbeque that you'll ever meet this side of the Mississippi. And, the other side of the Mississippi, for that matter!

Drum roll...introducing Mr. Wally Banks.

For those who attended the future conventions show-and-tell, you are aware that Banks favors keeping an annual IFBA convention. There have been discussions of going to an odd/even convention vs simple annual meeting cycle. Under Wisconsin law, corporations are required to hold an annual meeting once a year. The meeting is a part of the full convention.

Banks stated that the IFBA is all about relationships and friendships, plus the sharing of information and ideas, and these objectives cannot be done adequately every other year. He said it a bit differently...something about pulling something from a mule's ear?

As you might have guessed, Banks hails from Dallas, Texas.

Texas, for those who aren't aware, is where *everything* is bigger, according to the locals. Texas, where the IFBA will be holding their next annual meeting, Sept. 3-6, 2014. Texas, where the pumpers can throw water a Texas mile and the aerials are 200 feet tall!

Wally Banks is a past president of Box 4 Dallas. He has also served that club as its vice president and secretary. He is a retired IRS tax lawyer, where he spent the last 20 years of his working world as an Appeals Officer. He is married, has two boys now grown. The older son is 36 and is an Asst. Professor at LSU. The younger son, age 32, is a CPA.

In his spare time, Banks is involved not only with Box 4, but also the Citizens' Fire Academy, where he is the current President, and with assisting the Irving (TX) Fire Department canteen crew. The Texas Citizens' Fire Academy Association is a 300 member strong volunteer organization. Members are required to train for 10 weeks, assist the fire department with fund-raisers supporting needy residents' assistance, and providing canteen and clean-up services at major incidents. The CFA also provides a chainsaw crew to help clear trees after disasters. *(Editor's note: more information on CFA can be found at www.icfaaa.org).*

Through all his work with the various organizations, Banks says he puts in 60-80 hours. He says, "It's a good thing I'm retired. I have no clue when I would have time to work!"

Banks is turning some of the energy hours towards the IFBA as he assumes the Presidency. He stated after taking the oath of office that he has ideas to "adjust the course, trim the sails" to energize the IFBA. He said he will conduct a conference call every two months with the IFBA officers and regional vice presidents, and people "should be ready to do things."

Banks is encouraging everyone to send him an email detailing your view of the IFBA: its strengths and weaknesses, and where you perceive its opportunities and threats. "I want the IFBA to keep going," he stated. "Major changes aren't necessary," he continued, "Just a little tweak here and there." Being President is "not an honorary title. I want to take an active role in [the IFBA's] future."

Coming from a Texan, you better believe those are not small words.

Please email your ideas and comments to Wally Banks, 424-896wgb@verizon.net.

"Henry N. Wilwers Fire Buff of the Year" Award

Year presented	Recipient	Convention
1967	Henry N. Wilwers	St. Louis, MO
1968	William H. Perkins	Chicago, IL
1969	Edward R. Damaschke	Annapolis, MD
1970	William A. Brennan	Indianapolis, IN
1971	Albert J. Burch	Philadelphia, PA
1972	Charles C. Price	New York, NY
1973	Keith F. Franz	Milwaukee, WI
1974	John I. Hruska	Boston, MA
1975	Arthur D. Devlin, M.D.	Columbus, OH
1976	James H. Blomley	Baltimore County, MD
1977	Henry G. Nathan	St. Louis, MO
1978	Roman A. Kaminski	Toronto, Ontario, Canada
1979	Walter M. P. McCall	New Orleans, LA
1980	Edward A. Massmann	San Francisco, CA
1981	William "Pop" Porter, Sr.	Indianapolis, IN
1982	Duane W. Troxel (posthumously)	Detroit, MI
1983	Denis E. Williams	Milwaukee, WI
1984	G. Grant Miller	Boston, MA
1985	Donald H. Cheu, M.D.	Columbus, OH
1986	Harold L. Holtzman	Seattle, WA
1987	William F. Noonan	St. Louis, MO
1988	Harry W. Knodel	Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
1989	Jan C. Faulstich	Secaucus, NJ
1990	Malcolm S. "Bill" Ketchum	St. Paul, MN
1991	Gerald J. Hourigan	San Jose, CA
1992	Frederick M. Hill	Westlake, OH
1993	L. Murray Young	Milwaukee, WI
1994	George "Smokey" Bass	Universal City, CA
1995	William M. Mokros	Baltimore, MD
1996	George B. Ottley	Nashville, TN
1997	Stuart M. Nathan	Chicago, IL
1998	Herb Pearlstein	Columbus, OH
1999	Owen P. "Phil" Reid, Jr.	Tacoma, WA
2000	Ralph Decker	St. Louis, MO
2001	William "Bill" C. Celentano, Jr.	Houston, TX
2002	Paul Schaetzle	Moline, IL
2003	Steven C. Hansen	Milwaukee, WI
2004	Leonard W. Williams	Quebec City, Canada
2005	Gary M. Heathcote	Indianapolis, IN
2006	James Rasmussen (posthumously)	Seattle, WA
2007	Jerry Traub	Cambridge, MA.
2008	Bob Deibler	Racine, WI
2009	Hal Bruno	Washington DC
2010	No Award Presented	
2011	Rick Cutts	Hasbrouck Heights, NJ
2012	Charles Liedtke	Toronto, Canada
2013	James "Jim" Williamson	Milwaukee, WI