1998 SCI Convention News

A Grand Old Time!

Boston, MA June 30 - July 5, 1998



SCI's 32nd Annual Convention was held from June 30 to July 5 at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, MA. Hosted by the Student Prince Chapter, the fun-filled week was capped by an evening of fireworks and the Boston Pops Orchestra on the 4th of July.

This convention was dedicated to the memory of Jim Stevenson, long time member of the Student Prince Chapter, author of "Antique Steins, A Collector 's Guide", and one of the organizing voices in bringing SCI back to Boston. What more appropriate way to start the convention than with an "early-bird" trip on June 30 to Jim's home in Derry, New Hampshire to view his collection and enjoy some New England hospitality.



Steve Steigerwald

Following a traditional church supper, about 80 SCI members were greeted by Jim's wife, Marie, who went all out to welcome her friends. The Stevensons live in a historic Yankee farmhouse which provides a wonderful setting for their collections. The stein collection, like Jim's book, is highly varied and selective, and left most of the visitors wondering how Jim had beaten them to so many treasures. The day was warm, the beer was served under a tent in the backyard, and an accordionist provided music. His friends missed him, but Jim was certainly present in spirit.

On Wednesday, July 1, Gary Kirsner conducted the official convention auction of beer steins and related items. With auctioneer Glenn Beckendorff in top shape, 494 items were auctioned in about 4 hours. With some 200 bidders in attendance and vigorous competition provided by mail bids, the auction included Mettlach, glass,



Andre Ammelounx
named Master Steinologist
- awarded by Glenna Scheer

regimentals, characters, occupationals, and specialty items, and gross sales were in excess of $460 thousand.

Courtesy buses operated by the hotel took convention attendees to Harvard Square or central Boston to enjoy the sights or sample some of Boston's famous restaurants.

The convention program officially started on Thursday with buffet breakfast followed by the general membership meeting. Following the meeting, we boarded buses to go to Odione Point State Park, Rye Beach, New Hampshire for a Foster's Down East Clambake! The day was beautiful, but the food was spectacular. Hearty New England clam chowder gave way to steamed clams which in turn were followed by whole Maine lobster, barbecued chicken, corn on the cob and salad, with cake for dessert. After returning to the hotel, members were pleased to find the Hospitality Room open and steins for sale in the Stein Room.

On Friday morning, convention-goers enjoyed talks from Ralph Agostini and David Harr. Dressed in full student uniform and carrying a dueling sword, Ralph introduced himself as "the Heidelberg Student Prince".

Attendees were entertained by slides of Ralph's collection as well as photographs of many of his friends wearing student caps and sharing "Gemutlichkeit". David Harr had taken on the challenge to complete the presentation that had been planned by Mike Wald before his recent death. David spoke on detecting the "fingerprints" of the manufacturing process, and how to determine who made a stein even when no trademarks are present. Both talks were informative and entertaining.



Marie Stevenson
Miss Beer Stein, 1998



Irene McGregor and Rich Walter awarded "Best German Costume" at the Harvard Club on German Night!

The morning was completed by a series of roundtable discussions on topics including regimentals, art nouveau, contemporary steins, glass and other topics.

Friday afternoon gave members another chance to prowl the Stein Room for bargains, before heading to the Harvard Club for German Night! Many SCI members wore their best lederhosen or dirndls, and we were even treated to a yodeling competition after a fine German meal.

On Saturday, Master Steinlogist, Ron Fox spoke about steins manufactured by August Saeltzer. Ron had many slides and examples of this largely neglected factory to share with the audience. This talk epitomized the goals of the SCI, to perform research in the hobby and to share information freely. Thanks, Ron.



August Saeltzer examples

Following the member's auction, we enjoyed a Fourth of July barbecue at the hotel, before preparing for the finale - the fireworks viewed down the Charles River from the 14th floor of the hotel, accompanied by the Boston Pops Orchestra! What a rousing completion to a wonderful week.

Sunday is always get-away day. Members have flights scheduled between daybreak and dusk, although many depart in their own cars at their own schedule.

Until next year, then. See you in Denver!

Photos courtesy of John Mertz

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