

# The Doorknob Collector

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## A WINNER IN WINNIPEG

By Win Applegate and Rich Kennedy

I didn't check, but the Lombard Hotel in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada appeared to be a "five star" hotel. With a fine hotel, good weather and a large amount of detailed planning, Valerie Friesen and Bob Wilson produced a convention that was well received by all. A number of the 'seasoned' convention attendees remarked at the adequate space in the convention hall and the high level of service and attention offered by the hotel staff.

The Winnipeg Board of Tourism, from the beginning, supported our hosts that, in addition, led to a visit by a member of the Royal Mounted Police and a "photo op" of which many members took advantage.

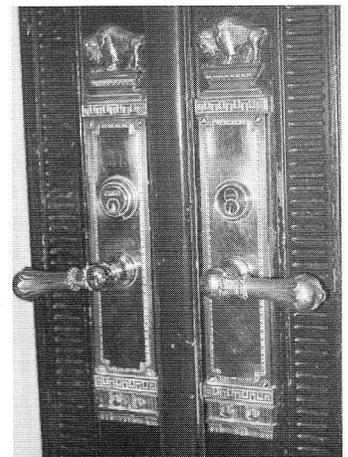
Wednesday was our day as we began with a visit to the **St. Boniface Museum** which was founded in 1846 as a Gray Nun Convent. At 151 years, it is the oldest structure in Winnipeg. The type of construction is 'squared log tongue and groove' ... no nails, a very impressive example of the durability of this type of early construction. The museum is a monument to the early struggles for recognition of the Metis, people of mixed blood of both native and whites. Louis Riel, founding Father of Manitoba who is buried on the grounds led this struggle for statehood.



**Dalnavert Museum**, (photo) built in 1895 is a finely restored Victorian home in the Queen Ann Revival Style, popular in 1880-1914 period. Built by Hugh Macdonald, the son of Canada's first Prime Minister, it was the first house in Manitoba with electricity and running water. Cost? \$10,500, more than ten times the cost for a home in those days. Dalnavert, like many other examples of fine Victorian architecture, had a shaky history as it was transformed into a boarding house, eventually faced demolition but in this case, it

was saved and restored at a cost of over half a million dollars.

The **Manitoba Legislative Building** is a very impressive marble structure that in its day exceeded, by a wide margin, all estimated costs. Full of references to the past history of its people, the building carries the Union Jack in the supports of its railings, faces of Greek Gods in its arches and bison all over the place. Two life size cast bronze bison guard the main staircase leading to the Legislative chambers. The bison in the lobby arrived on site after the marble floors were in place. The weather came to the rescue. It gets *cold* in Manitoba in the winter so they used it to their advantage. The floor was flooded, the windows and doors were opened until everything froze solid, and the bison were slid across the ice to their present positions with no harm coming to the marble floors.



This was really a place to remember. If you are very superstitious, you might want to avoid this building. The builder believed that 13 is a lucky number and built the edifice with that in mind. Designs were 13-fold from the mosaics on the floor to the stone work. The building offered up some beautiful hardware. (Continued on pg. 8)

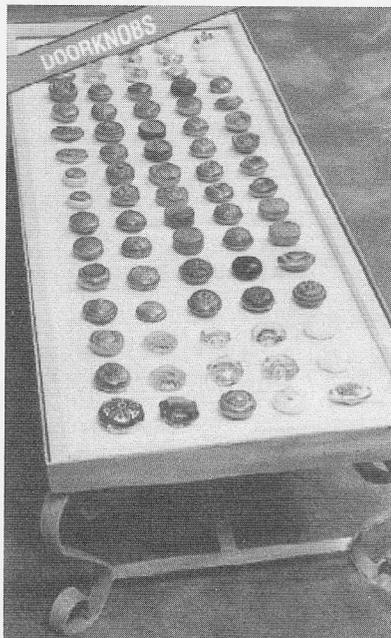
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# SHOWING OFF

How do you show off your doorknobs. People are always asking how many we have and the second question is always, "Where do you put them all?"

Well here are some ideas on how some of our members display their knobs at home.

The beautifully lined coffee table below belongs to Dean and Edith Campbell #11 of Newberg, Oregon. A table like this is sure to



keep the conversation lively as they entertain their guests. They display their very best knobs in this case, but they also pile them up in baskets, perch them atop pedestals, and make them into miniature vases.

This picture was printed in January 1986 in Woman's Day magazine in an article about collections, hence the doorknob banner at the top of the photo.

We were also sent an article cut from a newspaper (unidentified) dated April 19, 1998 which show knobs mounted on a board and used as a clothes hanger or a great place for umbrellas, canes, and even hats

although they might cover the beauty of the knobs.

Do you have china plates that you would like to display? How about mounting small knobs or drawer pulls on a board and setting the plates upright behind them. You would then have two hobbies displayed together and you would not have to put a groove in the board to hold the plates.

Rich Kennedy #238 has constructed display cases, one of which hangs at the bottom landing of the stairs. This case is 11 knobs wide and displays 110 knobs. The top row was made with wider spacing to allow escutcheon plates to be mounted with the knobs.

The construction is fairly simple. You do need a wall strong enough to support the weight of the knobs, however. The size can certainly be altered to compliment the space you have and the size of your collection. Rich has also made self-supporting stands which are portable (see photo, pg. 3).

There are baskets full of glittering glass knobs, sets of knobs with their escutcheon plates sitting on the radiator covers, and the turning display of emblematic knobs.



This is an old three-tier rubber stamp holder that holds the knobs very nicely in an upright position so that the face of the knob is prominent. It is also a very nice display rack because each tier rotates to reveal the knobs at the rear of the display.

Another display is an antique cobbler's bench with a very deep brass-lined well. Again, a piece of plate glass makes the bench usable as a coffee table similar to the



Campbell's. Our dry sink is lined with black cloth so show off the knobs and has a plate glass cover so it is usable as a table as well.

Win Applegate #110 has mounted some of his prize knobs as plaques, mounting the knob and escutcheon plate and/or rose together. He also has several mounted in picture frames. Very nice.

## The Doorknob Collector®



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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.

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## Era of Ornamental Hardware

By Bob Swisher

*Bob Swisher is an antiques and collectibles columnist for the The News-Gazette in Urbana, Illinois. We thank him for sending this article to us and giving us permission to reprint.*

In 1870, a patent was granted to Metallic Compression Casting Co. (MCCC) that began the use of the compression casting method and created a new concept and market for ornamental hardware. This new casting method removed the obstacles that kept artists and designers from mass-producing their creations and brought a widened variety of goods to the marketplace.

To illustrate the power of sales, a very small company that saw the potential of a MCCC innovation acquired exclusive distribution rights for all of the company's products, and by 1875 this company, Russell and Erwin

(R&E), owned the whole foundry operation lock, stock and barrel.

R&E, P. F. Corbin, Sargent and Yale & Towne -- all based in Connecticut -- along with some smaller companies were responsible for an era of decorative hardware that is unmatched to this day.

The most prolific designer of this era was Ludwig Kreuzinger, whose numerous creations were the backbone of these early products, including doorknobs. One of his doorknob designs, the "Doggie" has sold for as much as \$8000 a pair. While this price is probably not reflective for most of the doorknobs created from 1870 to 1910, the over 2,000 different doorknob designs of that period are still very valuable. The "Doggie" doorknob is now being reproduced in solid brass for \$250.

While doorknobs were front and center, the whole hardware industry, which included bolts, hinges, handles, latches, plates and escutcheons, locks, catches, window locks, sash fasteners, drawer pulls, lifts and hooks of all kinds, featured new and elaborate designs. Prior to this revolution of production and design, most knobs were blown glass, wooden, brass, wrought iron or porcelain. Glass knobs have been around since the mid-1820s, and true all-glass knobs are still popular today.

The most common porcelain ones are pure white, the jet or ebony black or clay mineral knobs that are mostly brown swirl effect sometimes called tiger eye. The white knobs also come in the crackle effect, very small to real large.

While most glass knobs are clear, numerous ones are colored and opaque such as milk glass. Solid colors seem to bring more value than transparent. A pair of mustard-colored knobs sold for \$60 at the Victorian House in Mohomet

just last year. Hand-painted knobs are also very collectible, but like everything else, the real old ones are hard to come by.

Animals, such as lions, birds, owls, eagles and the aforementioned dogs, were popular and now valuable items which were displayed on doorknobs, drawer pulls and handles (see pg. 4). Special designs for fraternal organizations were major customers as were states, counties and major U.S. cities. Schools, boards of education and universities including the University of Illinois (UI) all had special door-knobs with their trademark or logo.

Commercial firms such as hotels, large retail stores like Marshall Fields and a number of banks had their own personalized doorknobs. Locally the old First National Bank doorknob of Champaign is very rare and hard to find, as is the UI's.

Jim Leach, the now retired head of the former UI foundry which was located where the new Engineering Library is, was asked to reproduce a limited number of the UI knobs for presentation to prominent officials and alumni, and I understand those are now gone.

## From the Archives

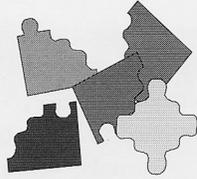
By Steve and Barbara Menchhofer

Well, we are back from the convention in Winnipeg, and let us tell you, it was wonderful! Everyone had such a good time.

We took samples of the catalog copies from the Archives for members to browse through. Many availed themselves of the opportunity. The response to the new addition of the R&E 1887 catalog was great. In fact, the response to catalog orders was terrific. It seem like many members are wanting to educate themselves about their hardware and our Archives are a very good tool to use.

# Bits and Pieces

By Win Applegate



Did you notice anything 'different' about the last newsletter?

Well, if you put a magnifying glass to the photos you might have. The newsletter has gone to a completely computerized process; making the photos digitized rather than the method most easily seen in newspaper pictures.

In the past, the editors would prepare the text and then compose the page, leaving spaces for the photos. The pasted pages would be given to the printer along with a pile of photos. The photos would be converted by the printer to halftones (heard that word before?) prior to completing the printing process.

Halftone conversions cost extra. Now we own a scanner that converts photos electronically and will easily pay for itself within a year. This allows the editors to give the printer a 'floppy' computer disk. This can now be saved as it is all that is required to print that newsletter issue in later years.

I spent most of my professional career in the computer field and we had a phrase that said that it was to our advantage to be on the "leading edge" of technology, not the "bleeding edge". With this in mind, the coeditors are planning some more new "firsts" for your newsletter; hopefully on the Leading Edge of technology.



## New Member Policy

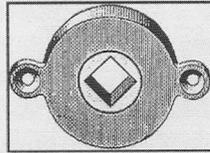
Membership in ADCA follows the current calendar year. Anyone joining between January and September is enrolled for the current year and receives all the issues of **The Doorknob Collector** for the current year.

New members after September 30th will be enrolled as members for the following year. They will begin receiving **The Doorknob Collector** with the Jan-Feb issue of the next year.

## 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.

**Wanted:** Cast iron (brass) embossed screen door hinges (painted OK), full coil spring down the barrel, not the "V" spring. Also lever handle helper spring with housing (pictured) Made by Sergeant circa 1910 (for restoration project).



Ken Kelly #515  
e-mail: vhp@earthlink.net  
Phone: 408-366-0209

**Trade:** MCCC doggie doorknob triangle backplates in mint condition for figural backplates or one MCCC largest or near backplate  
Ken Kelly #515  
e-mail: vhp@earthlink.net  
Phone: 408-366-0209



**Free Service:** Hardware matching service. Will match your hardware.  
Robinson's Antiques #460  
170 Kent St  
Portland, MI 48875

## Wrong Patent!

Have you ever looked at a knob and noticed the patent number? Just what is that patent all about. Curiosity got the best of us when Rich found two plastic looking knobs and the patent (# 524,914) indicated that they were from 1894. Then we began to wonder just what the material was and if that was what the patent was for.

We called the library and found that they would get a copy of the patent for us from a larger library in Newark, NJ. It only cost 15¢ per page so we went with it. We even told them it was a doorknob.

A few days later we received a call that our requested patent was in and could be picked up at our local library.

Hurriedly Rich went and retrieved the copy. Upon opening the envelope we found a patent for a stump extractor. Interesting piece of machinery, but not what we expected. Same patent number! In consultation with Maude Eastwood, the number rang a bell with her. Sure enough she sent us copies of the *British Patent* that referred to the set of knobs. She had remembered seeing similar knobs on the "Queen Mary" ocean liner. The patent was for the attachment so that the knobs would not come loose and turn on their shank.

The material now appears to be Bakelite. They are a cream color and mauve. Not very interesting knobs, actually. But the experience of trying to find out something about them was certainly interesting. I can picture them on a ship, but in a home they would look very out of place.

Check out those patent numbers. Remember the U.S. patent number will indicate the approximate year of the patent as they are issued sequentially.

Check out Florence Jarvis #24 on the Van Andel Museum Center web page: <http://www.grmuseum.org> See her display at the museum in Grand Rapids, MI Sept 19 through Jan 3

## Having Fun in Winnipeg



Kudos to Valerie Friesen and Bob Wilson for hosting the 1998 convention in Winnipeg. As natives, they certainly picked places of interest for the members to enjoy and they did an outstanding job. They are shown below all smiles. Now they can go back to their real work. Thanks so much!

### Winners All

The winners of the display contest are shown above with their plaques and ribbons.

From left to right:

Steve Rowe	HONORABLE MENTION (Best Metallic Display)
Carol K. Meermans	BEST METALLIC DISPLAY and HONORABLE MENTION (Most Creative Display)
Gene and Miriam De Lange	BEST OF SHOW and BEST DISPLAY SARGENT
Gerald & Ardythe Leaders	MOST CREATIVE DISPLAY BEST NON-METALLIC DISPLAY HONORABLE MENTION (Best of Show)



Steve Rowe presenting a plaque to the hosts of the Winnipeg convention, Valerie Friesen and Bob Wilson.



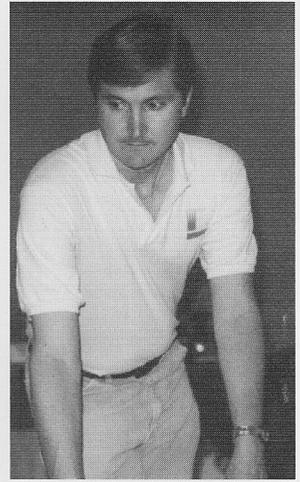
Hail, hail the gang's all here! Fun was had by all on the bus tour of Winnipeg on Wednesday. Here they are posing on the steps of the Legislative Building after a great tour.



Florence Jarvis  
and Hillary Applegate



Maude Eastwood and  
Dorothy Ann Miller



Rich Perris



Phil and Lois Warrey



Steve Menchhofer and Steve Rowe



Sally Hyslop



Barbara Liesman



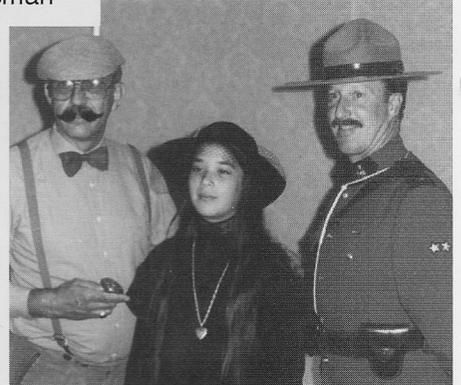
Carolyn and Dick Hubbard



Liz Gordon



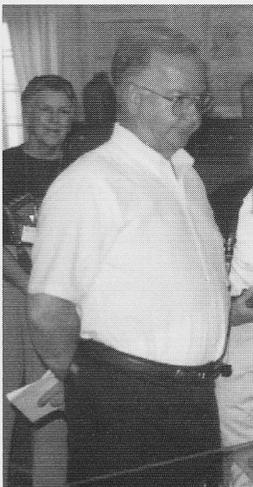
Bob Rodder



Rich Kennedy, Cynthia Kelly  
with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police



Vickie and Marshall Berol



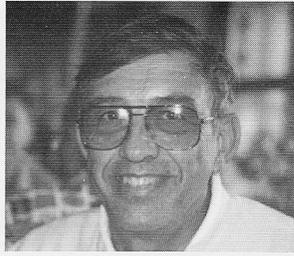
Carol and Win Applegate



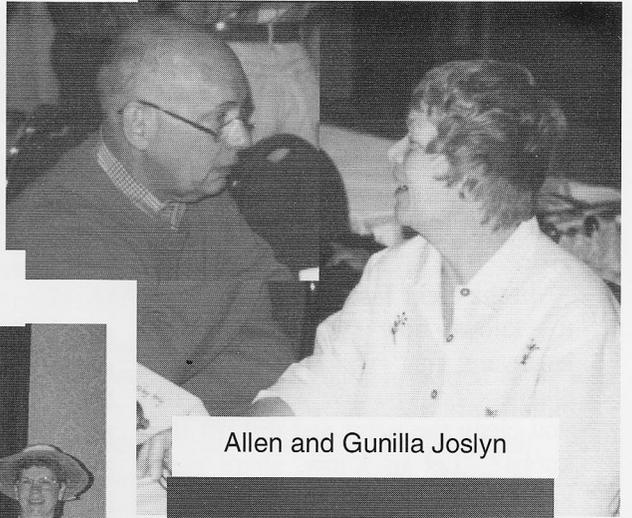
Maude Eastwood, Dorothy Ann Miller and  
Len Blumin



Vickie Berol and  
Florence Jarvis



Rich Kennedy  
(sans mustache)



Allen and Gunilla Joslyn



Jackie Rodé



Steve and Barbara Menchofer  
with RCMP



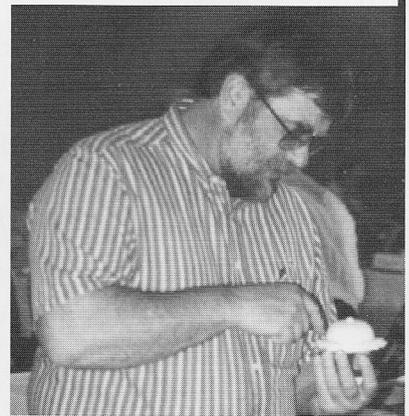
Hillary Applegate



Loretta and Ray Nemec



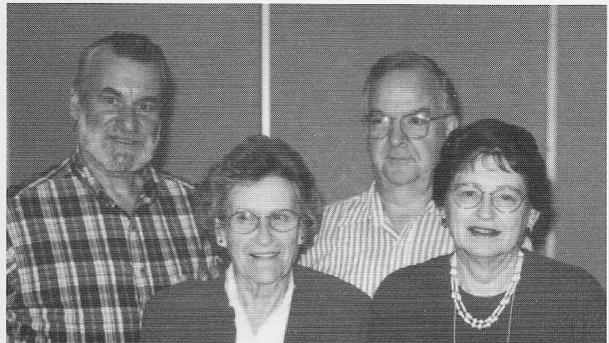
Cathy Galbriath



Ken Kelly



Jennifer Lanphier, Steve Rowe and the Berols



Len Blumin, Maude Eastwood, Win Applegate,  
and Betty Ann Miller who have all served as  
presidents of ADCA

## From the Editors

How about YOU sending us some interesting information, quips, comments, stories. Spelling and punctuation is optional. We will put it together here at the office.

In the **Next Issue** we would like to know how you clean the hardware that you find. What cleaners do you use and how do you clean the paint and dirt off the knobs? Let us know, share your knowledge with others. Thanks.

## ADCA Business Meeting

By Win Applegate

Your Board of Directors met and reluctantly accepted the resignation of Board member Don Warming. Don will be retaining his membership, but will be unable to serve on the Board.

To allow members to support your organization better, a scale of Membership Donations has been defined and will be published in the next newsletter. The Board also established a life time membership level of \$2,500. A report on the publication of the Victorian Decorative Art will also be published in the next issue.

At the business meeting the membership accepted the offer by Cathy Galbraith, representing the Bosco-Milligan Foundation, to host the 1999 Convention in Portland, Oregon. Cathy's planning for the next convention is well under way with a team of ADCA members from the Portland area.

## New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our newest members of the ADCA:

Joe Souza	Le Grand, CA
Teri Jan Overton	Kansas City, MO
Patricia Ramey	Olivette, MO
Cynthia Kelly	San Jose, CA

**Correction:** Please correct your roster, [PGMNS@VMCMC.ORG](mailto:PGMNS@VMCMC.ORG) is the correct e-mail for Nancy Sandwick.

## A WINNER IN WINNIPEG

The door hardware is probably a testament to political maneuvering favoring neither of two hardware manufacturers: Sargent and Yale. Each set of double doors in the building uses identical Bison styled hardware; the only difference being, seen upon closer inspection, is that one tumbler lock is Sargent and the opposite lock is Yale.

We can't forget our wonderful lunch at The Forks Market. Branigans Restaurant presented us with an excellent Canadian cuisine (that Canadian bacon was sooo good). The market was a myriad of indoor and outdoor vendors offering shoppers everything from custom-crafted jewelry to antiques; a feast for the eyes.

The Convention itself was well appreciated by the 50 plus attendees. The usual buying, selling and trading went on endlessly until the last two departed on Sunday. During the convention itself, we heard from a guest speaker, Peter Priess who described the trials and tribulations of the art of gathering information and researching the history of locks and door hardware. His earliest sources go back to French publications in the early 1600's. Peter favored us by bringing examples of locks from the early 1700's through 1868.

Our Friday night banquet was blessed with another fine slide presentation by Maude Eastwood entitled "ADCA, Snail Mail to E-Mail - ADCA's first 17 Years."

Our 1998 Convention was capped by the buffet breakfast and the concluding auction. This year our new auction software was in place and the event was settled much more quickly than in the past.

To Valerie and Bob, another 'thank you' for a fine, fine 1998 Convention. To those who did not attend, sorry.

There were three past presidents in attendance, Len Blumin, Dorothy Ann Miller, and Maude Eastwood with the current president, Win Applegate. (see pg. 7)

The ADCA convention was featured in the local newspaper, The Winnipeg Sun and a local TV station filmed us doing our thing and we were all celebrities, at least for 4 1/2 minutes, on the 6 p.m. news. Having been on the news, when we were leaving Winnipeg, the customs inspectors opened our bags and said, "Doorknobs, oh yes, we saw you on the evening news."

*See you in Portland  
Next Year!*

## Keep in Touch



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