



## FLLS Monthly Member Profile



This Month's (January 2016) profile is about our President, Mark A. Mitchell.

Mark was a disturbed youth....had a knack for theatre, music and all around silliness. He grew up in Chicago and was heavily influenced by the television programming of WGN. Therefore, some of his childhood heroes are: Ray Rayner, Bozo The Clown and Frazier Thomas. Given that this profile is being posted in the month of December, treat yourself to a YouTube viewing of his favorite childhood holiday animations: Hardrock, Coco and Joe.

Mark comes from a very artistic and musical family. His uncle was a virtuoso concert pianist and was on tour in the late 50's as his manager was none other than Tom O'Horgan.....the director of the famous Broadway shows: Hair, Jesus Christ Superstar, Lenny, Futz, and many other productions. Mark's father played the violin his whole life long, his mother has an incredible eye for artistic composition, his sister had an opera caliber voice, his brother was a starving artist, and his other siblings are students of various instruments. All of the Mitchell's sang in school, church and community choirs throughout their lifetimes.

At age 52, while living and working for the Alaska Railroad, Mark realized that he would never live up to his family's musical heritage if he did not start in on learning to master an instrument. He had been dragging around a 1975 Gibson folk guitar ever since 1975 and never really mastered the instrument. Therefore in 2009, Mark began taking music lessons and still continues to do so. Mark studies classical guitar under the direction of Jacksonville's Kent Smedley, and is making very good progress on his playing abilities. Sure, there are 9-year olds that make him sound like a 3-year old attempting to play classical guitar, but the point is that Mark thoroughly enjoys the pursuit of mastery. Mark travels a tremendous amount for his current job and takes his guitar everywhere he goes. He figures that if he can fit in at least 2 hours of practice on a business trip, that it is worth the effort to take the guitar with him. Mark cannot wait to retire so that he can turn all of his attention to further guitar study and immerse himself in a robust guitar community such as that found in Minneapolis-St. Paul where he and his wife still own a home.

Mark is a graduate of Michigan Technological University. He taught high school science and math for 5 years in Wisconsin. He then transitioned into applied science by way of being a UPS driver during one holiday season. Since then, he has become Certified as an IH, Registered in Canada

(ROH) as an Occupational Hygienist (or as his colleague refers to his CRBROH registration as the Royal Order of Hygienists - ROH) and is Certified as a Safety Professional.

Mark has worked as a consultant to or been directly employed by a railroad company since 1992. While employed with a Class 1 railroad, he was asked to find a solution to getting train crews safely out of long railroad tunnels (6 to 8 miles long) where hazardous materials could potentially be released. This led to his design of the Sperian Survivair Puma SCBA to which patents were drawn up for his design. Patent rights were also drawn up for his design of a vending machine that dispensed said SCBAs. Mark has been invited by 3M to give a presentation at the 2016 AIHCe on the tunnel respirator program that he put in place for north American railroads. He has worked on the northern most and coldest railroads in North America and has even characterized employee exposures to lead-laden smoke exuded by 101 millimeter Korean War era Howitzer cannons used during avalanche control in remote Alaskan back-country.

Mark's wife Gigi is a retired leukemia research scientist and their one son, Alex Hu-Kuebelbeck, is an attorney for Stats, LLC, a sports statistics, technology, data, and content company.