



March, 15 2024 Vol. XLI, No.2

# ON THE LIGHTER SIDE



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**FOUNDED IN 1984 - THE LONGEST RUNNING  
LIGHTER COLLECTING COMMUNITY IN THE WORLD!**

# And Now A Word From Your President



To all our esteemed members, apparently I have been demoted to President of OTLS. As such I can feel the weight of OTLS on my shoulders. With the help of our wonderful board, we hope to bring interest and knowledge to this very interesting collectible. Actually, what is the difference between collectible and collectable. According to Webster's Dictionary, collectible is an object that is collected by fanciers not only including such items as traditionally collectible as art, stamps, coins, and antiques compared to collectable which is an object that is collected by fanciers not only including such items as traditionally collectible as art, stamps, coins, and antiques. So now we should all be in agreement that there is no difference at all between collectible and collectable, so from here on in we can now use these terms interchangeably.

Now that we are clear on this subject, it is encouraging to note that we have been increasing our membership lately. I believe this is due to a new resurgence in the interest in lighter collecting. I have noticed lately that many auction houses have increased their interest in lighters as a potential profitable collectible since their main interest is in the increased profit margin they provide. It is still in its infancy as it appears they think any lighter has value, but time will take care of that. They are even auctioning plain Zippo lighters that are only 1-2 years old which can still be found in many tobacco stores. It is not our job here of advising people what lighters to collect but to enlighten them as to the extent of what there is and let them decide what area they are most interested in or they are just pyromaniacs like me.

On a very sad note, one of our oldest and most cherished member's who have brought Ronson to the forefront of lighter collecting has passed. Urban Cummings has passed away leaving a legacy unequalled to many as to his contributions to lighter collecting. There will be more on this inside this issue. We truly will miss this great man who gave us such great joy and knowledge in his remarkable book "Ronson, the world's great lighter".

*Richard Weinstein*

**Richard Weinstein**



## Urban K. Cummings

Urban K. Cummings, 95, died after a few years of declining health but resisting death as long as he could. He had no regrets and still had joy in his heart when he left his earthly body. And when asked how he was doing he always replied, like a million bucks. He was born in Oakland, CA in 1928, one of 7 children and first son to Jim and Marie Cummings. After his birth, his father sought out a Catholic priest to help him decide on an Irish name for his son. The priest said, "Kevin, Brian, Urban." So his parents picked Urban (which is not an Irish name).

During WWII, Urban was having difficulty in high school and his father found out about an apprentice program at Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. Urban loved being an apprentice there and attended high school classes at the Shipyard (taught by teachers from SF Mission High). After graduating from Mission High in 1946, he enlisted in the Army, became a paratrooper and served in Occupied Japan.

After the Army, he enrolled and graduated from City College in SF. There he met, fell in love with and married Shirlee Mosher. They had 5 children.

Urban's career started at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory and in the 1950's he went to the South Pacific and witnessed several atom bombs being detonated.

In 1962 he was excited to be hired at the newly opened Stanford Linear Accelerator Center as a mechanical engineer. The family moved from Livermore to Palo Alto. He retired in 1984 from SLAC but went back as a consultant and then as a part-time employee.

After he and Shirlee divorced in the early 1970's, Urban began an exploration of his personal life and took many self-improvement classes. He also started a business, Furry Feet, making sheepskin shoes in 1978. It was at an art & wine festival in San Anselmo in 1985 that he met his 2nd wife, Christine Clark, who had stopped at his booth to admire the sheepskin shoes. They married in 1989. Together they continued their Furry Feet business until 1998 when Urban decided that at 70 he was entitled to stop doing art & wine festivals. They continued to make Furry Feet but sold them through mail order and out of their house.

continued next page



## Urban K. Cummings

Continued from page 3

Urban was always a collector and so was Christine. In 1986 on their first trip to England, they decided to collect smoking memorabilia. That led to another love – collecting Ronson cigarette lighters. In 1988, Urban decided to write a book about that great American lighter, Ronson. He convinced the grandson and President (Louis V. Aronson II) of Ronson Corporation that he was serious about writing a book about Ronson lighters. Mr. Aronson finally agreed to provide Urban with information about the company. The book was published in 1993 and was well-received. Urban and Chris traveled to a lot of antique shows (well before eBay existed) and it was at the Brimfield, Mass. flea market that he met another Ronson collector who told him about a lighter collector's club, On The Lighter Side. That led to attending lighter conventions across the U.S. and then to Urban & Chris selling some of their lighters at antique, collectible shows and flea markets.

Urban was a man of many interests. He loved trees and became a volunteer at Canopy. He also volunteered as a handyman at Bay Area Cancer Connections after Chris was diagnosed with breast cancer.

His life was filled with love, curiosity, learning new things and sharing that knowledge with people, meeting new people, exploring new places. He loved his family but wasn't perfect as his children can tell you. He did the best he could.

He is survived by his wife of 35 years, Christine, his 5 children, Mary Hope, Susan (Bruce Howard), Liann, Karen, Michael (Maria). He also is survived by 4 grandsons, Vonn Sumner, Christopher Wells, Evan Wells and Tait Howard and 4 great-grandchildren. He leaves behind his remaining sister, Claire Cummings. He also is survived by many nieces, nephews and a great many good friends. And, lastly, he leaves behind his friend and nurse who cared for him in the last year of his life, Maria Moorehead. Without her loving care Urban would have been unable to stay in his home.

He was predeceased by his parents, 4 of his sisters, 1 brother and his grandson, Morgen Cummings Jacobs who was killed in Iraq in 2004.

**Contributed by Eldon Baldwin**  
**[WWW.ELDONBALDWIN.COM](http://WWW.ELDONBALDWIN.COM)**

Produced during the early 1950s, Golden Glow Liters are typically unbranded. The Golden Glow name only appears on the original box, these lighters are usually just marked "Made in U.S.A" on their base.

Golden Glow Liters are a design variation of the Girey lift arm sold by The Vernon Company, a specialty advertising company based in Newton, Iowa. Almost identically constructed, the Golden Glow snuffer arm features a riveted cap not present on Girey lift arms. Golden Glow Liters feature a metallic gold painted finish normally emblazoned with advertising.



continued next page



# Golden Glow

Articles

Contributed by Eldon Baldwin  
WWW.ELDONBALDWIN.COM

Continued from page 5



# WHAT YOU THINK YOU SEE IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT YOU GET PART 2



**Contributed by Richard Weinstein**

Keeping with my last article, I am always looking online for lighters as the flea markets in this area basically suck unless you want yard tools, expired drug items, or underwear, etc. So, while looking online I saw this sticking out from a bunch of other non-lighter stuff thrown on top of it. All I saw was the bottom but it clearly stuck out as I am well schooled in zoning in on lighters. Here is a photo of what I saw.



So I put a bid on this auction figuring who would want the rest of the crap and assumed no one would notice the hidden lighter. I got the auction cheap so I wasn't expecting much other than the lighter. I received the package but figured I would open it later since I already knew it was this Douglas so no biggie.

A few weeks went by and I remembered I hadn't looked at the lot yet so now I had to find the box somewhere in the mess of my office. Two days later I find the package and figured I better open it now since I will misplace it again. Much to my surprise, this is what I found.

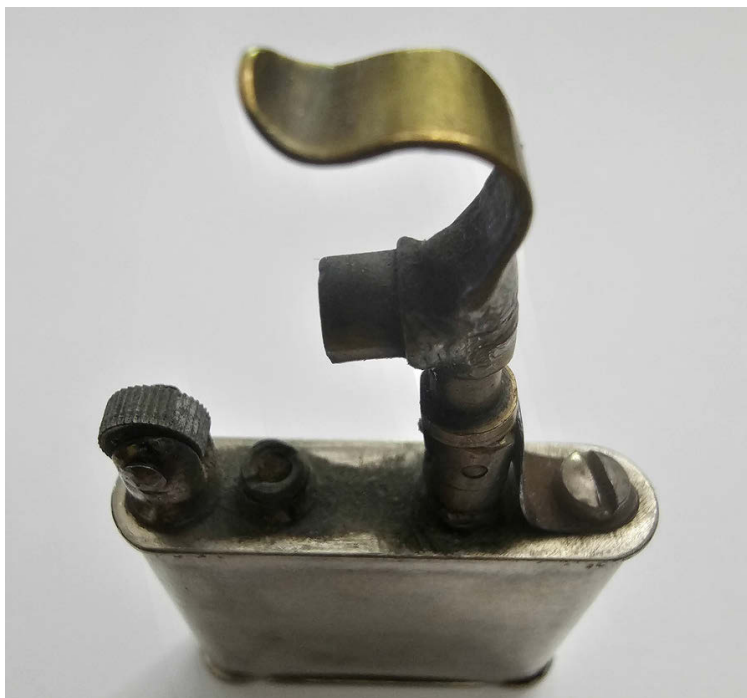


# WHAT YOU THINK YOU SEE IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT YOU GET PART 2



Contributed by Richard Weinstein

Continued from page 7



So I have my own ideas about this lighter but I leave it to your own imaginations to decide for yourself.

Very interesting.





# IMCO Cylindrical Tube-Shaped Lighters. An incomplete Timeline

Articles

Contributed by Guy Nishida

I'm sure many if not all lighter collectors have one or more "trench" looking tube lighters with the sliding outer sleeve. Most of the examples are likely made by Bowers. My timeline begins with the JMCO or Imco "Patent -a" model. Per Bisconcini, Imco began production of lighters shortly after the end of WWI and they utilized surplus bullet casings from the war. As can be seen in the photo of a full box, the Patent "a" model has no bailing wire attached to the snuffer cap and a set screw is used to maintain tension of the spring to the flint against the wheel. The German word for "patent" is the identical in German and English and the word "applied" is "angewende" thus I am surmising that "Patent - a" is an abbreviation for "Patent Applied". The second model is also a patent "a" but has now been assigned a patent number - - 89538 which appears on the box cover only - - not on the lighter. This patent number was granted to the Austrian Button & Metalware Factory I. Meister & Co. on September 25, 1922 although the application was submitted in 1920. The patent title roughly translates to: Burner cap for pocket lighters. Interestingly, the sketch displayed on the approved patent design is of the design without the bailing wire and with the set screw. Please note that the founder of IMCO was Julius Franz Meister and Co. JMCO was a portmanteau which later morphed into IMCO. My hunch is that the "J" was often mistaken for an "I" and to eliminate the need for constant correction, the "J" simply defaulted to an "I". Alternatively, there was no easy way to pronounce "JMCO" versus "IMCO".

The only noticeable difference in the second version is the fact that the flint tube assembly has been modified to incorporate a quick release pull down knob whereby the flint can be inserted into a side slot - - no screwdriver or other tool was needed to remove and insert the set screw. Notice the early use of a black man as the advertising image and the included package of Auermetall flints by TCW (Treibacher Chemische Werke), the company founded by Carl Auer von Welsbach, inventor of the cylindrical iron/cerium flints (patent applied Nov 27, 1903 and approved Nov. 27, 1906) used all all future lighters requiring a replaceable flint.



# IMCO Cylindrical Tube-Shaped Lighters. An incomplete Timeline

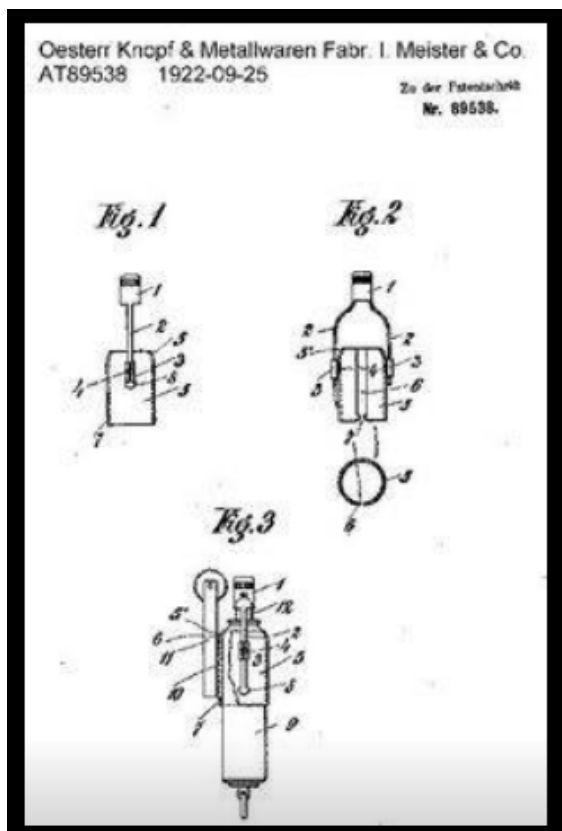
Articles

Contributed by Guy Nishida

Continued from page 9

The next iteration I can find is the model that retains the quick release but now has been stamped on the flint tube: "Made In Austria" on one side and "Austrian Patent No. 89538" on the other side. Like the previous models, there is no bailing wire and the lower base of the fluid tank still has the "JMCO" stamping.

The MEB imported version is stamped "JMCO" and the U. S. patent date as April 2, 1912. It is stamped on both the flint tube and the windscreen sleeve as "Made In Austria". This ubiquitous patent date refers to a lighter invented by Conrad Hubert with an application date filed August 17, 1909, nearly three years prior to the issue date. The design sketch shows a pull-apart cap that fully encloses both the flint assembly and a slow match rope (with rope wheel to raise and lower the rope) although the patent description mentions that "My invention relates generally to igniters of that kind in which sparks are produced by friction and transmitted to a combustible body, such as a slow-match OR A WICK (my emphasis) saturated with liquid fuel..." The relevant patent number is: 1,022,140.



From Tom O'Key post 4/8/19



# IMCO Cylindrical Tube-Shaped Lighters. An incomplete Timeline



**Contributed by Guy Nishida**

Continued from page 10

It is unknown to this author with certainty when the bailing wire feature was added to the design but the Bowers Mfg. Co. has a website with some history of their lighter. It notes that circa 1930 Ernest Bowers began making his tube lighter with a windscreen that mimicked those being produced in Austria but with a slight improvement. It refers to the windscreen being present but "The operation of the lighter was a bit clumsy". At first I speculated that Bowers disliked the fact that there were two motions required to fully operate the lighter. One had to slide the windscreen up and then manually pivot the snuffer cap away from the wick as was necessary in the early JMCO versions. One could speculate that perhaps his improvement was adding the bailing wire so the snuffer cap pivoted away from the wick as the sleeve was raised. This lighter was named the Kalamazoo Slide Sleeve Lighter.

However, in reviewing the JMCO IFA lighter (cylindrical and ovale) and the model with the thumb shield above the flint wheel, the Hurricane and the Neverfail (not to be confused with the Hungarian Neverfails) I saw that all had the patent 105107 stamped into the flint tube. All models I have seen with this patent number have the bailing wire. The patent application for this Austrian lighter was submitted July 9, 1925 and issued to Hans Silberknopf December 27, 1926 for his pyrophoric lighter with wind shield on a hinged cap (rough translation). The sketches for this patent illustrate both the moveable sleeve and the bailing wire. In this case the MEB models noted above and below with sleeve but without the bailing wire were manufactured post 1922 but prior to 1926.

It is worth noting that MEB (Max Bernhardt of New York, a prolific lighter importer) also imported the JMCO style lighter with the windscreen sleeve but still without the bailing wire. This model was stamped "Surelite". The fluid screw cap is threaded completely over the body rather than the threaded plug. The flint tube is flat like a Foxhole and it does not yet have the bailing wire feature to simplify removal of the snuffer cap. It is stamped "Austria" and has the actual U.S. Patent number 1,022,140 referred to above. MEB later copied the Bowers design and his cheaper overseas copies (per the Bowers website) dealt a devastating (although temporary) blow to Bowers. I could find no U.S. patent for this feature which may explain why MEB was able to easily import cheap imitations overseas. When WWII commenced, the flood of these imports ceased. What isn't clear is why MEB did not seek approval or could not obtain approval from the European patent holders to import their versions even before Bowers began his production fully 4 years later.

Keep in mind that MEB was also importing simple pull-apart wick lighters that were stamped MEB and Made in Germany with the Conrad Hubert patent stamped into them. I would speculate that these were knock-offs of the Hahway pull-apart lighters that were made in Bavaria, again stamped with Hubert's patent number. The Austrian Hurricane (with perforated windscreen surrounding the wick was also pull-apart lighter with the Hubert patent. I believe these lighters were also imported by MEB and presumably with its windscreen, this model was the legendary inspiration for the Zippo lighter. Oddly, while acknowledging the Hubert patent, all these pull-apart lighters incorporated the fully enclosed cap but were wick lighters and did not have the rope feature. Initially I thought that perhaps Hubert appropriated some general design ideas for his lighter from EveReady which



# IMCO Cylindrical Tube-Shaped Lighters. An incomplete Timeline

Articles

Contributed by Guy Nishida

Continued from page 11

references a patent date of Nov. 27, 1906 on its pull-apart. As designed, the EveReady was advanced since you could not fill the lighter by pulling the insert out of the bottom housing. The EveReady lighter had a fluid screw on the bottom of the lower housing. But curiously, the patent date on this lighter is the same date as the one issued to Carl Auer von Welsbach for his flint. I could find no patent issued for any lighter on that date. The lighter world is full of mysteries.

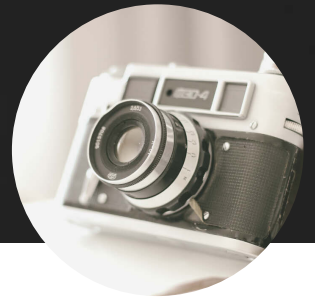
While a variety of improved JMCO versions made appearances as well as pretenders like NeverFail, Proctor Products, UNCO No. 4000 (Master Streamline), Bowers and even MIOJ copies, none will overshadow the original JMCO.



Non Imco & Bowers look-alikes:

Top L – R Rustic and Brise – Vent. Both French w/tax stamps and with a wick tank that can be raised and lowered by the side button. Next is a model with dog ear snuffer cap marked “Made In Hungary”. Very likely a Neverfail. Last in this top row L’Aquila Paris. 2nd row: another version of the L’Aquila Paris. Next is a French R-Splendid-Flam, next is a brass unmarked Made In Austria and lastly an unmarked model with a pull-out wick assembly. 3rd row: Kem model Detroit, Mich., next Hungarian Neverfail Improved Model & to its right is the circular Neverfail. Bottom row: Trenchlike model stamped on the fuel cap “KSC” with a sliding windguard and a hinged top that falls away from the lighter but only if you are left-handed. MIOJ version. Proctor’s Products W.Haven, Con (presumed to be a copy of a Bowers). Lastly an oddity that appears to be a marriage of a Proctor’s body with an Ifa sleeve. I’ve had this lighter for 30 years and based on the wear on both parts it was concocted a long time ago.

# Dispensers



**Contributed by John Elster**

I thought that I would share some of my cigarette dispenser collection. While not lighters, they are certainly closely associated with lighters and smoking. I hope that you enjoy them as much as I do.



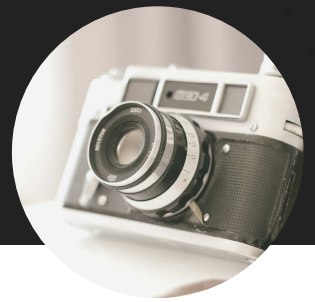
Fortune Teller



Winston Churchill



# Dispensers



Contributed by John Elster

Continued from page 13



Young Boy



Sailor (traded for this with Catherine Stoleman)



Railway Porter



Hollywood Camerette  
Movie Camera



Rowe Cigarette Machine  
with clock and striker  
lighter



# CARICATURE

Contributed by John Engleman



# Classified Ads

FREE

Always looking for unusual MIOJ Lighters. Greg Ryman email [gregryman872@msn.com](mailto:gregryman872@msn.com)

Interested in buying Mint in the Box Flat Advertising Lighters (that I do not currently have). Please send photos and prices to John Elster at [Jresce@aol.com](mailto:Jresce@aol.com)

## CLUB LIGHTERS NEEDED

I am looking for some OTLS Club Lighters to fill in my collection of Annual Convention lighters. If you have any of the following years for sale please contact me.

YEAR	CONVENTION
2003	17TH
2004	18TH
2008	22nd
2009	23rd
2010	24th
2011	25th
2012	26th
2013	27th
2014	28th
2015	29th
2016	30th
2017	31st

[Smstolar3@gmail.com](mailto:Smstolar3@gmail.com) or call 609/805-8386. Thanks Steve Stolar

Wanted Multi Color Enameled Ronson Atomizers, either table or pocket models. Also catalogues for Dupont Lighters. Contact Rich Weinstein at [repairs@lighterrepairs.com](mailto:repairs@lighterrepairs.com)

OTLS Convention Lighters for sale. Lot of 39 lighters. 1st thru 35 convention, 2 none-convention years, a second finish from 1998 convention and an OTLS Original 1932 Replication Zippo. Sell as one lot. Kenneth Burkklburk@att.net

ZIPPO insert repairs, cams and cam springs, flint tube replacement and a flint wheel replacement. Each repair/replacement is \$5 per item. Return postage also required. Send to Thomas Prylinksi, 2134 E 42 St, Erie, PA 16510 or email [pyrotjp@twc.com](mailto:pyrotjp@twc.com)

Looking for European Pocket Lighters. Also looking for pocket lighters with pictures of cartoon characters. Please call or email Judith Sanders 505/433-5303 or [JudithLQ@comcast.net](mailto:JudithLQ@comcast.net)

## The Thorens Lighter Book is Here

This book is a Hard Cover, full size Coffee Table book with over 200 high gloss color pages containing over 400 pictures and illustrations, weighing a hefty 3.8lb . This is a must have for all lighter collectors, Art Deco lovers and all those who appreciate history.

Priced at \$175 per copy plus \$15 s/h in the USA.S/H costs to other countries will be quoted upon request. To order your copy please email [ramzi@etp-inc.com](mailto:ramzi@etp-inc.com) or call/text (909)407-0248

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On The LIGHTER Side

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