

# ON THE LIGHTER Side

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ETC., Etc., etc.

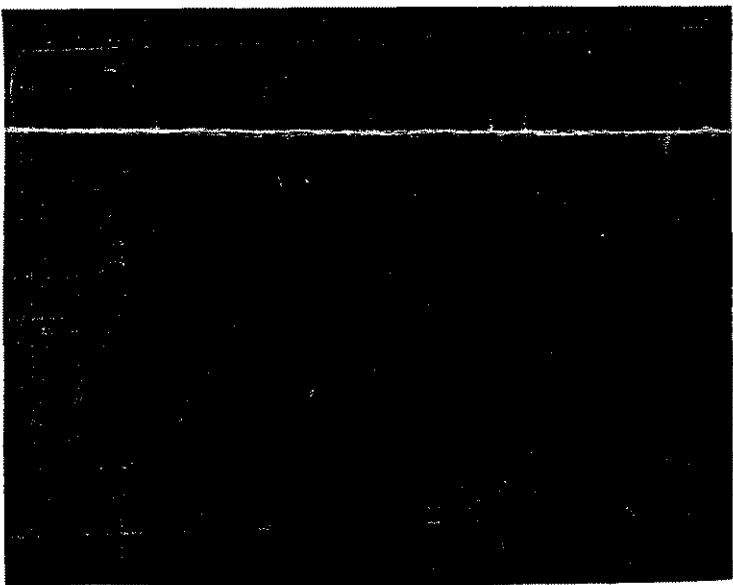
Here I am in East Texas looking out the windows in my living room at the lake and listening to the birds - - it is so peaceful and I love it!!

The unpacking is even almost finished, although my computer isn't here yet. And I have a whole new group of neighbors to show my lighters to!

A special THANK YOU to Duana Collins (Dee's wife) for the beautiful scrapbook she sent me. She "quilted" the covers of a scrapbook (in blue - my favorite color) and sent it to me to keep my "lighter" pictures in. See photo below.

The "spotlight" section has been left out this month as Warren Gerber has written a great "How To" article. This article should be helpful to all of you in repairing any of your broken lighters.

Warren also requested, since we have some newer members, that I re-run some of his "Wanted" ads. He also suggested that maybe others of you would like to run your older ads also. If so, please send a postcard or letter advising your Editor.



More later.....

*Judith*

## COLLECTORS' CORNER

### It Works For Me

HOW-TO PRIMER,  
CLEAN AND REPAIR

by Warren W. Gerber,  
Past President, OTLS

SKIPPING most disclaimers and mea culpas, but admitting some pet stupid tricks and scattershot ideas, here's what works for me when it comes time to clean and repair most lighters.

Hereafter, "Zippo" means all Zippo types. "Ronson" means all Ronson liquid-fueled (including Adonis and Premier) types. I'm dead if butane valves are in trouble although, after prayer, I stick tiny pins into valves when possible and brush lightly with a liberated electric shaver brush.

TOOLS, in addition to packs of 20-25 drill bits, files, screwdrivers and other common household tools, I use two pairs of needlenose pliers, a large pair with cutting section, mostly to snip off at least a quarter of an inch of old wick (a fresh wick end upgrades a lighter's appearance), a good, small pair to pull a wick out, hold parts for cleaning and to put more bend/tension on clutch spring ends.

With the large pair, I grab each flat side of a plunger's (thumb piece) teeth and slip the pliers off to straighten the teeth, maybe gain a fraction of an inch in length, enough for a good plunger teeth-gears mesh. Either pair can be used to flatten a bulge in the snuffer cap gear cute out area, after removing gears of course.

It ain't all bad if gears fall out of a snuffer cap. Repositioning may give a better bite anyway. Sometimes, just dismantling parts and reassembly may coax a stubborn lighter to work.

TWO OFF-BEAT most-used tools are round, smooth, pointed-at-both-ends toothpicks and T-shaped pins intended, I believe, to hold wigs on dummy heads. Both tools have many uses and they're disposable/cheap (Swiss Thrift Reigns).

Toothpicks are great to push the fulcrum (female axle) out of a Ronson and to hold

## COLLECTORS' CORNER (Continued)

the flint wheel, clutch spring, etc., in position and guide a fulcrum into place for reassembly after parts are cleaned. Because of a toothpick's varying diameter, the snuffer, spring-loaded plunger, et al, can be lined up correctly and easily.

TOOTHPICKS, used to scrape off carbon and other residue around the working mechanism will not scratch the finish. I run them in and out of the windshield holes on Zippos. Flash thought: A Zippo official once urged me simply to turn the inside lighter mechanism upside-down and tap the windshield chimney to knock out considerable residue.

The same gent warned us, stating that many case hinges are ruined only because users do not turn the flint tube screw in all of the way. Agreed, new flints make a wheel work hard. It's worth it, the first few times, to pull the interior case out, back the flint tube screw out a couple of turns, light lighter, tighten the screw and replace in outer case. Zippo fit-up people use a board to run new flint wheels back and forth a few times to knock off new flint corners.

DON'T USE heroic measures to get maximum flint spring pressure in old lighters. Worn flint wheels spark best under minimum functioning tension. For Ronson lighters, use your second thumb to lift the snuffer several times as you break in a new flint.

T-pins are handy to dig out old flint, if not frozen badly. With care, T-pins can be used to scrape, clean mechanisms, clean screw slots and line up parts.

I go to something stronger, smooth end of a perfectly fitting drill bit and put it in a Ronson plunger hole to bend the plunger tube ever so slightly if, after cleaning, plunger teeth tend to clip past gear teeth inset in the snuffer. If you overdo, or underdo,

take it apart and use the drill bit to adjust the angle of the plunger-spring tube. It's better than trying to bend a plunger post. It breaks off easily which means hunting for a new plunger or a semi-difficult soldering job.

DON'T FIGHT IT if you have a half-dozen or so lighters to clean/repair, get the electric drill and post-mounted wire brush wheel. Mine range from 2" in dia. to 4" in dia. You can hold the disassembled flint wheel, clutch spring, snuffer and plunger with pliers and knock off the carbon gunk fast. I use the wire brush on exterior cases that are in big, big trouble. Admittedly, the wire brush knocks off the metal's patina, but rust and discoloration are worse. And, if half of the paint is chipped on an old goodie, all paint might as well be knocked off. It'll probably shine, take polish. Set the drill in Reverse to throw debris down into a container, rather than up into the room, especially important if you work in your living room, as I do.

An electric drill and small bits make it easy to dislodge frozen flint. Mostly because of the iron content of ferro cerium flint, in four, five, six years or so, flint powders or turns to stone? The jury is still out about whether to keep flint in your display lighters. I have 13 big, deep, framed Theme displays, i.e. 40" x 48" map of America with mounted souvenir state and provincial lighters. Flints are in here. For newer framed displays, I have removed all flints.

A QUICK WAY to clean Ronson Flint tubes is to insert a long flint tube spring from the top. Run it in-out a dozen times. Also, wrap a flint tube spring around the inside surface of a wick-fitting and short plunger tube extension, run back/forth to clean.

To clean Evans, A.S.R. and others with hard-to-remove flint wheels, I either cover the wick (two-three times) with tape, hold the plunger down with rubber bands and use an electric drill-wire brush, moving the wheel with a

COLLECTORS' CORNER (Continued)

screwdriver or by coaxing the normal advance, or I use a needle and handheld brush. Leave flints in so the flint wheel won't spin too easily.

FLASH, RE-SCREWDRIVERS: I have two small ones with wing handle extensions. I put one of them between my (bare is better) knees to hold a fulcrum screw while I hold the lighter and another screwdriver to turn the male screw in a frozen Ronson axle. It works quicker, cleaner, eliminates looking for a new axle, compared with filing and drilling out old, frozen axles.

If a lighter is beyond repair, ready for "junk" classification, rather than dismantle it, put parts into separate boxes, I've found it better to put entire lighter in boxes (I have four shirtboxes jammed with several hundred lighters waiting to be cannibalized). It's faster to match complete lighters than trial and error methods of trying dozens of screws, etc. I try to group all of one model together, hoping at least one good part remains in each.

NOTE - Some Ronson parts of different generations are interchangeable even though they don't look alike. Sometimes gears match although plunger tops got large and gears and snuffers changed appearances. (But I'm looking for the smallest snuffer cap for a Ronson "Fan.")

Although it's easier to replace wicks with new ones with wire extensions (as advertised in OTLS by one member), I work with what I have by cutting a new wick at an angle, spitting one, twisting the point and working it into a wick hole with a T-pin. My do-it-yourself wrapping with wire, scotch tape, etc. got poor results. Suggestions? Maybe needle and thread with a big knot for Zippo wicks, but they are easy anyway?

JUMPING AROUND, if you, too, tried to save, repair pot metal/white metal figural oldies (many Japanese,

MIOJ and more recent), lost your religion because solder wouldn't hold or when the pot metal/white metal melted first, I believe I found a flux that helps greatly - - TIX FLUX in a small brown bottle. I forget (sorry) if I then used silver solder or low temperature solder to solve some problems. Anyone found a handyman's complete answer to soldering/repairing pot-white metal?

Another jump in thought, a fellow lighter collector once showed how to adjust, tighten a Zippo top section. He used the side of a rather large screwdriver to bend the "U-shaped" section inside caps so that the cam will just clear when the lighter is closed. Sometimes, somehow a cam is flipped into an up position when a lighter is open. As the top is closed the misplaced cam screws up things.

BACK TO BUTANES, "though there are better uses for lips, if you want to check to see if butane valves work, hold a filled, unlit lighter close to your lips (very sensitive). And, a warning, don't ever, ever, do as I did once, attempt to put more butane into a battery-powered lighter with batteries in place. The gas spilled over, the lighter shorted, flashed, friend Gerber got singed hair and a scare but, otherwise, no damage. Remember, butane gas is heavier than ambient air and seeks the lowest level.

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FOR MORE ACTION - USE YOUR  
CLASSIFIED ADS!!!

EDITOR'S NOTE: If anyone needs "junk" lighters for extra parts, your Editor has plenty, which she would be happy to send to any OTLS member free of charge.

For Sale or Trade

Lamp - Occupied Japan (Bright) Activator is button on base. \$18 - postage included. Leo Turini

Lot of 9 Lighters:

- 1 - Adv. Brown Sheet Metal Nashva. N.H. (Direct)
  - 1 - Adv. Shows a castle (Symbol)
  - 2 - Winston (Zenith)
  - 1 - Camel (Coronet)
  - 1 - Salem (Zenith)
  - 1 - Bowling Pin (Kem)
  - 1 - Bottle Shape - 4 aces (Kem)
  - 1 - Adv. Dodge
- Above Lot - \$40 postage included. Leo Turini

NOTE: Leo & Dot Turini also frequently run across Occupied Japan lighters, which seem to have high prices. They aren't interested in these for their own collection and said if they had a price range to consider, would be happy to purchase and only be reimbursed for the lighter and their postage. If anyone is interested please write them direct.

Miniature Coke Bottle lighter - - one of the originals, not a reproduction. \$10. Judith Sanders

Dallas Dealer would like to sell a Ronson "Banjo" lighter in original box. He wants \$200 for it. If interested contact OTLS Office for more information

For Sale or Trade

To the knowledge of the Editor, Herman Keith's collection is still for sale - in its entirety.

Wanted to Buy or Trade

Authentic flint & steel flintlock tinderboxes & other pre-lighter fire-making devices. Warren Gerber

14K gold lighter - must be in good working order and in good shape. Eddie Dektor

1910-1930's round, brass/copper, similar in size/shape to man's hunter case pocket watch, French, German, English, flint post pulls out, hole-fitting for wick, WWI scene or leaders or coins. NOT Japanese made "Belgium or French" coins. Warren Gerber

Wanted: Any ceramic lighter that is marked "Made In Occupied Japan". Will buy or trade. Bob Gee

Musical lighters. Warren Gerber

Interested in Ronson's from the 20's. Eddie Dektor

Wanted to Buy or Trade

Want Dunhill Lighters with watches in them. John Cuevas

Lighters advertising the Olympic Games for any year. Judith Sanders

Want to buy lighters for a reasonable price. Send picture & price and I'll respond soon after. Joe Fink

Will trade cigarette lighters for old fountain pens. John Cuevas

Ronson "Bartender" lighter - - will pay good price!! Judith Sanders

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Printed Once A Month  
For Lighter Collectors

|                |            |
|----------------|------------|
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