

On The LIGHTER Side

February 15, 1985

Vol. II, No. 2

ETC., Etc., etc.

There was a majority vote in favor of our two Motions. I am, therefore, pleased to announce the new Officers of OTLS are as follows:

Warren W. Gerber	President
Robt. W. Gee, Sr.	Vice Pres.
Judith Sanders	Sec/Treas.
Judith Sanders	Editor

These Officers will serve for a one year term at which time an election will be held to elect new Officers. I would like to further state that each of the above named Officers will be responsible only for his or her own actions and not to be held responsible for the actions of any other Officers. Congratulations to our new Officers!

There is a club in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area called "Ft. Worth Collectors Study Club." This club is a group of collectors of various items. Each month they invite a different collector to speak at a meeting and tell about their collection. Your Editor was asked to speak at the Feb. meeting. I gathered up a couple of boxes of my favorite lighters and tried to tell the group all I knew about lighter collecting (well, almost all!). This was a most enjoyable evening and was a good experience for me. During the questions and answer period, I found that I have learned a lot about lighters from all of you and was able to answer questions more intelligently as a result.

The President of this club is an expert on Patent information and has promised to write an article on Patents for our March issue. Study of this information will allow you to ascertain the age, inventor, etc. of many of your lighters.

More later.....

Judith

IN THE SPOTLIGHT.....

STAPERT IS MATCHLESS
BUT LIGHT(ER) HEARTED

Charles Stapert, Tunkhannock, PA member of OTLS, probably would back a national Brother-in-Law Day because this relation launched him on an interesting and fun-filled hobby of collecting lighters at an amusement park, gave them to Chas and said "Start a collection." Chas did and now has more than 2,000 lighters and three decades of enjoyable experiences.

For about half of his collecting career, Chas lived in the Fair Lawn, NJ area and claimed, "I never bought one" for his growing collection. When it reached about 800, Chas had his first exhibition at a YMCA hobby show. Several newspaper photographs and articles have been published on Chas' collection, one headlined "Never Ask Him For a Match."

In recent years, in addition to lighter gifts from relatives and friends Chas has purchased some of his lighters at the usual lighter-freak sources. His growing family - he and wife, Eleanor, have four children - shared his enthusiasm and watched as his displays grew. Chas has almost lined the walls of his basement with shallow shelves on which subject groupings of lighters are exhibited. He notes that he keeps the cabinets locked because "10 grandchildren can be very inquisitive, if you know what I mean."

He counts as his most unusual lighter the typewriter which lights when the space bar is pressed. His visitors are entranced by a musical world globe which plays "Around the World in 80 Days." The globe, with imbedded "jewels," rides on a post which rotates off center as it plays and visitors worry that it will fall off the base. It doesn't. As reported in one newspaper article, other favorites include a gas pump, walking lighter with mobile feet, a TV set which lights when you press the antenna and a windmill from Holland.

Although Chas has corresponded with

he is not active in trading, buying or selling with collectors. He has been generous to at least one other collector (this reporter) and is believed to list as his MOST WANTED a working Statue of Liberty figural lighter.

He has stated that his basement is starting to look like a museum because he more-or-less also collects cigar boxes, ashtrays, coins, stamps and keychains. A mechanic and metal fabricator by trade, Chas also has built dollhouses for family and has helped family members to install cabinets and other home remodeling and painting projects, all of this between several sessions in the hospital and conquering eastern Pennsylvania's infamous winter snows. Chas' home is at the top of a small mountain at the end of a 1600-foot drive. At times, he had to walk four miles to work when driving became almost impossible. But, thoughts of Spring and intriguing new/old lighters help keep Chas (and the rest of us On The Lighter Siders) looking for brighter days and new experiences.
By Warren Gerber

COLLECTORS' CORNER

Charles Vitek was born in Valenice, in what is now Czechoslovakia in 1891. Charles began his colorful career in 1908 by inventing the first flint lighter. He was 17 years old and worked in a Prague industrial plant. He was intrigued by the sparks caused by rubbing a piece of flint with a file. Phosphorus matches were expensive, so he began to work with his flint and file and used sparks to replace matches. His novice model was rather cumbersome, with an attached ash tray. A small tank of benzine was mounted on a tube which contained a wick. When the tank and tube were pulled from the stand, it sparked the wick. One problem was that someone was always taking the tank and tube.

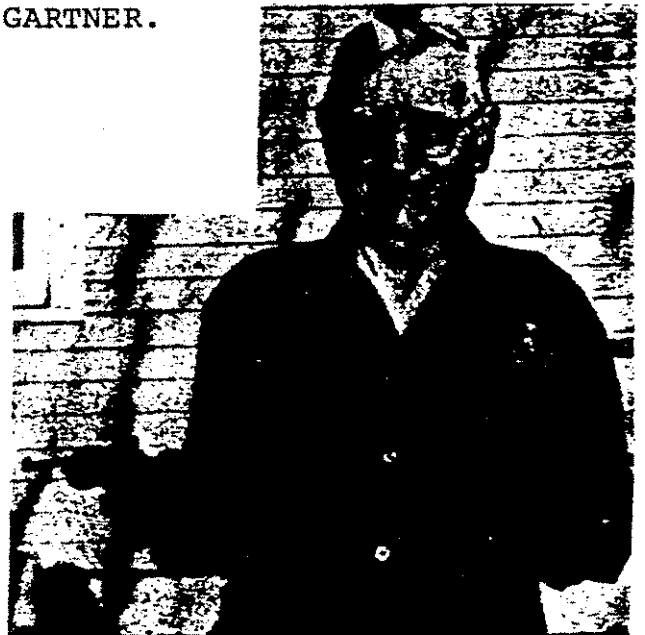
Vitek solved this by attaching a ring on the lighter, so it could be carried on a chain, much the same as a watch is carried.

The clumsy, over-sized lighter put Vitek's mind to work on how to scale down his model. The result was his invention of the world's first pocket lighter, all hand-made and smaller than many of today's lighters. Charles also invented the "pistol" combination cigarette case and lighter. The "pistol" had a compartment in the handle for storing cigarettes. When the trigger was pulled on this novel lighter, fire came out of the muzzle. Vitek often told this tale in relation to his pistol lighter - "It was a Prague picnic. Some rough-looking gangsters approached the party. I took the pistol lighter from my pocket, and the man, believing it was a real gun, quickly fled the scene."

Charles held a Czechoslovakian patent on his flint lighters but he sold his patent to a Berlin firm for 48,000 marks, about \$12,000. The Berlin firm took him to the Leipzig Industrial Fair to demonstrate his lighters. A Vienna firm bought the patent from the Berlin firm for 600,000 marks. Charles was now 18 when the Vienna firm took him into the firm as supervisor of the production of some five million lighters. Most of these were bought by United States' firms.

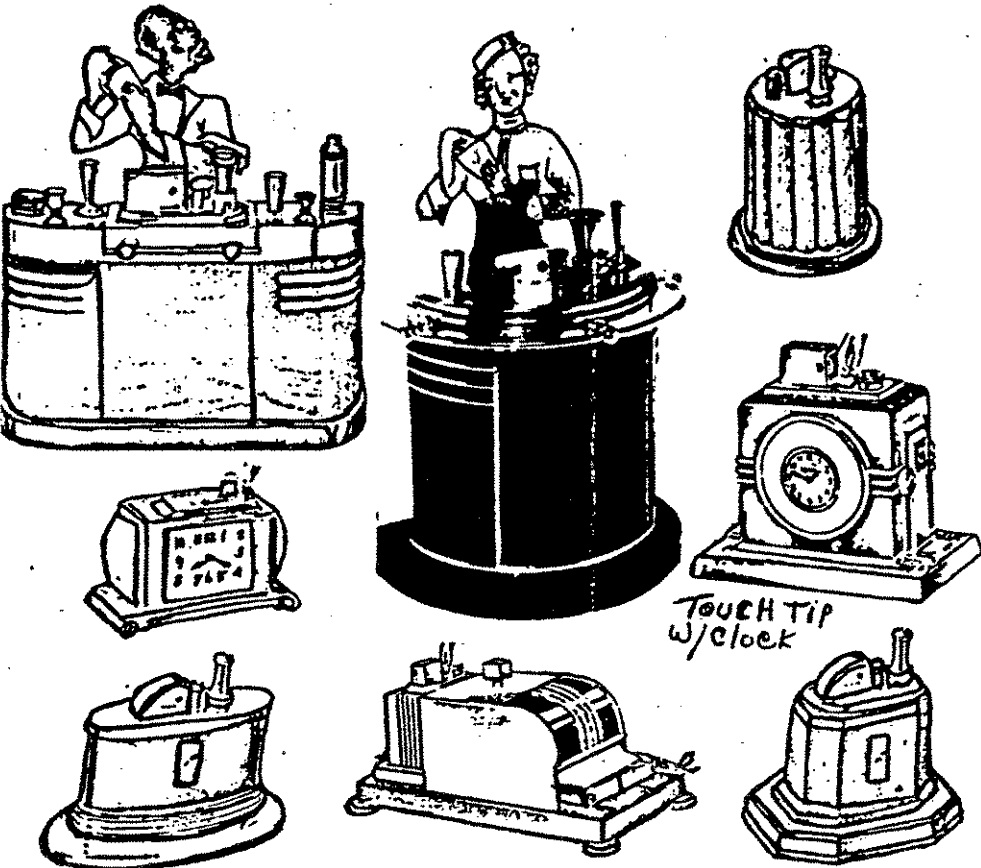
In 1912, Vitek worked in a shipyard and from there made his way to the United States, where his first home was in New York.

THIS ARTICLE WAS CONTRIBUTED BY
JIM GARTNER.



"WANTED" RONSON "TOUCH-TIP" TABLE LIGHTERS

NEW MEMBERS CAN
ORDER BACK ISSUES
OF NEWSLETTERS FOR
60 CENTS PER ISSUE.



TOUCH TIP
w/clock

THE ABOVE CIGARETTE LIGHTERS
ARE EXAMPLES OF THE RONSON TOUCH-TIP.
FOR FURTHER IDENTIFICATION, THE
BOTTOM OF THE LIGHTERS ARE
INSCRIBED ART METAL WORKS,
NEWARK, N.J.

John CUEVAS

(MEMBER)

PLEASE - PRICE - CONDITION -
+ DESCRIPTION IN LETTER.
Will ANSWER ALL LETTERS

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Printed Once A Month
For Lighter Collectors

Warren Gerber President
Robt. W. Gee, Sr. Vice Pres.
Judith Sanders Sec/Treas.
Judith Sanders Editor

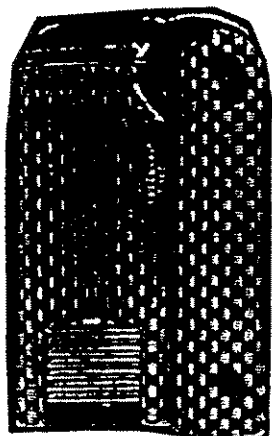
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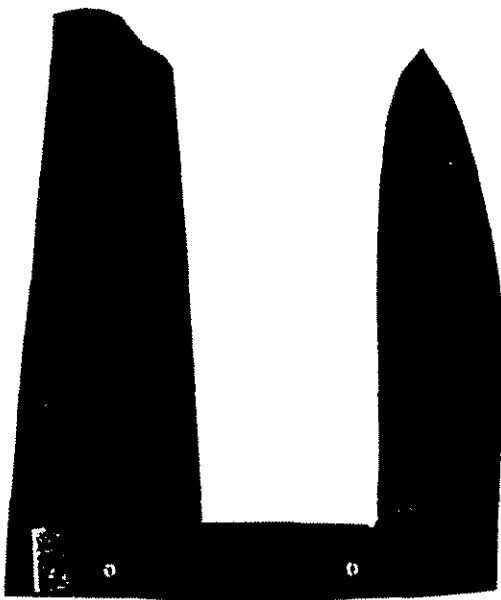
For Sale or Trade

Regens pocket lighter. 5 at \$3 ea. Dee Collins (Member)



Miniature brown glass bottle (5" tall) w/Paul Jones Blended Whiskey label w/lighter in top of bottle. 3 bottles at \$6.25 ea. (Including postage). Bill & Tiger's Antiques & 5811 Grassmere #1, Dallas, Tx. 75205 (Dealer)

Unusual novelty lighter. Says "EDRO Lighter" Holds pack of cigarettes w/lighter on side, push lighter out from bottom. Pat. No. 1970158. \$5 or trade. Judith Sanders (Member)



For Sale or Trade

Art Deco "Silent Flame Table Lighter by Parker of London". 5" tall with silver colored lady at top & pull out lighter in base (the pull out on this one has been replaced w/different insert. \$25 or trade. Judith Sanders (Member)



Wanted to Buy or Trade

Will pay \$25 and up for "Ceramic Occupied Japan Cigarette Lighters". Also will buy other O.J. lighters. Send complete description w/prices. Bob Gee (Member)

Ronson Pencil Lighters. Andrew Morgan (Member)

Need Ronson Touch Tip parts: Wands & Wicks. Also want to buy complete touch tip lighters, have some duplicates to trade. Also interested in WWII airplane lighters. Pete & Barb Bocciarelli (Members)

Wanted to Buy or Trade

Bowers round or flat oblong brass lighters. Andrew Morgan (Member)

Advertising Zippos. Will pay \$2 ea. in any legible condition. Send list & particulars. Richard Rotman (Member)

Any lighters having to do with billiards. Also Zippos with logo's & old alcohol burning lighters. Dee Collins (Member)

Musical lighters. Warren Gerber (Member)

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

Lighters advertising Olympic Games for any year. Judith Sanders (Member)

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