



Jan. 15 2024 Vol. XLI, No.1

# ON THE LIGHTER SIDE



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FOUNDED IN 1983 - THE LONGEST RUNNING  
LIGHTER COLLECTING COMMUNITY IN THE WORLD!

# EDITOR NOTES



## *Editorial Comments from Judith Sanders*

Since Greg Ryman decided to resign as Editor, the Board of OTLS had a meeting to discuss this. We decided each Board Member will do one newsletter a year. So I agreed to start the year off.

First I would like to remind you if you haven't paid your dues, please do that ASAP! If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at [JudithLQ@comcast.net](mailto:JudithLQ@comcast.net).

As some of you already know, our Convention will be June 6 - 9, 2024 in Las Vegas. We will send out the Convention Letter with your March newsletter.

Thanks to the members, and non-members, who sent articles for our newsletter. We have recently had some great response to requests for articles and I think this will be a great year! I want to thank all the members who contributed to this issue!

### Reminder:

Please inform us if you want your article or pictures to be considered for Member Rewards.

**Judith Sanders**

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### **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

Neil Costabile  
Darien Thomas

### **ON THE COVER**

3 Frenchman from Judith Sanders' collection

### **WELCOME BACK**

Bruce Dorn  
Jim Lauby



**Contributed by Ton Naber**

Poppell is a Dutch lighter brand that made a unique type of lighter from late 1958 until 1981. The main concept was to, instead of refilling the lighters with gas or petrol, simply replace the entire gas tank altogether. This system was already in use by lighters such as "Imco" and "Karat". These lighters also had a removable tank, but made of metal which could be refilled when empty. The difference with the



Poppell lighters; however, was that the Poppell plastic tanks were designed for single use. Once empty a new tank could be purchased for 1 guilder. Relatively cheap since they were designed to last for about 3 months per tank. The new tank could then be put back into the lighter, saving the owner the hassle of refilling the tank. The empty tank was then simply thrown away. Historically speaking this makes the Poppell lighters a big contributor to the disposable lighters commonly used today. The tanks, being only made by the Poppell Company were, of course, a big contributor to the company's financial success.

Over the years different brands of Poppell lighters came on the market, starting in 1958 with the introduction of the "standard". This was the very first Poppell design and came on the market in 5 different colours: Black, red, white, green and blue. The Poppell Company signed a contract with the firm Leefsma B.V. a wholesale company that dealt in smokers accessories. That firm had almost completed talks with the lighter brand "Silver-match". But when shown the Poppell lighter they were impressed and decided to go with the Poppell lighters. Not long after that they received their first order for 100,000 lighters. Not bad for the creator of the lighter Albert van Poppell - a cigar shop owner who serviced lighters as a hobby in his spare time, before coming up with the concept of the Poppell lighter only one year before.

In 1961 the Poppell table lighter was introduced. It had the same mechanism as the pocket lighter and resembled a drum barrel in its shape. The lighter consisted of a top and bottom part. A fun aspect of the lighter was that you could switch the top and bottom to make different colour combinations.



Contributed by Ton Naber

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Within a few years the Poppell lighters began to conquer the market of Western Europe. A part of the success besides its design was a rather unique marketing strategy for its time. The lighter's all came with a lifelong guarantee, even though the purchasing cost was rather low. At first the guarantee included loss of the lighter. The company however quickly faced the problem that a lot of consumers simply threw away their lighter as soon as the gas tank was empty and then requested a new one. Due to this issue the guarantee was quickly changed so that it only was in effect when the lighter had a technical issue and the consumer sent the lighter back to the company. They would then repair the same lighter free of charge and send it back to the costumer.

In 1964 the company introduced a new model: the "Junior" and elaborated on their standard models by coming out with the "standard – Marble". These new additions did not change anything in the

mechanism of the lighter but only concentrated on the exterior. The Junior had a more streamlined shape with 2 corners on the bottom. This differed from the standard which shape was a complete oval. The Marble still had the same shape as the standard but added new colours to the lighters resembling marble. The marble first came with the original chromed top, but in later years the top was replaced by a gold plated one.

For the UK market the company had changed the standard model by introducing a transparent groove in the side of the lighter. By looking at the groove one could see how much gas was left in the tank. A useful improvement! This updated model was called the Senior.

In 1965 as a marketing stunt they came out with a decorative pin for father's day. The pin was only available for 9 days and is quite a rare collector's item nowadays.

In 1966 Another model designed especially for the UK market was introduced, the "Seven". It also featured the transparent groove and had an even more streamlined decorative exterior. The lighter was also available outside the UK but in limited quantity.





Contributed by Ton Naber

Article

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In 1966 Cricket, a French company came out with the first completely disposable lighter. For the very first time in history a lighter had come onto the market designed to be thrown out after the tank went empty. This went a step further than the Poppell lighters with their throw away tanks. Though the initial reaction of the Poppell company wasn't that troubled, it would prove to be fierce and eventually disastrous competition for the company. The thought was that people in general and especially the Dutch, would choose to preserve their items as long as possible, and be reticent to throw away a lighter that worked fine apart from its lack of fuel. In later years Poppell would come out with their own completely disposable lighters in order to compete. In 1971 they introduced the first of the disposable models; the "Ten". Later in 1977 they came out with another disposable model; the "Club".

In 1969 Poppell enters the American market and does so with the introduction of a new model; The Duet! The Duet first came out in 1968 and can be distinguished by the white friction cap on the top. There are 3 versions of this type of lighter. The first version was only produced between 1968 and 1971. After 1971 the Duet was produced with a flame regulator, either with a chrome top or a black top. There were 8 different colours available: White, black, green, blue, purple, yellow, orange and red. To gain a foothold on the American market the company advertised heavily with the Poppell marketing strategy of a free replacement lighter should the old one fail.

At first entering the American market proved to be a huge success with record sales. But by 1978 the American government ruled that some of the Poppell models were too unsafe for use, especially the

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Contributed by Ton Naber

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disposable models. Mainly because of an incident involving a container full of the "Ten" models and an explosion! This resulted in the issue of a ban on imports of all Poppell lighters. This was absolutely disastrous for the Poppell Company since they had not anticipated the loss of the entire American market. They suddenly found themselves on the edge of bankruptcy!



The following year did not give them any breathing room as they found it harder and harder to compete with the cheaper disposable lighters. Poppell lighters had been mainly produced by hand since the start of production in 1958 right up to the end in 1980. Dutch families would assemble and pack the lighter at home after work hours for extra income. At peak weeks these home workers would produce a combined total of 70,000 lighters. Though this was of great social and economic importance to the local populations it did not prove to be a very cost effective method in a market with ever increasing competition. This, combined with the start of ad-campaigns on the hazard of smoking and reports of accidents with the disposable lighter models forced the company to open talks on the sale of the company.

In 1981 the sale of the company was complete. The Swedish company "Swedish match" (Feudor) took over and bought all of the company's factories. From then on Poppell lighters were no longer available in stores. It was the end of an era and the beginning of an era where cheap disposable lighters would rule the market.

# 5 WAYS TO GET NEW COLLECTORS HOOKED ON VINTAGE LIGHTERS (and 5 Ways to Drive them Away)



By Bill Calkins, 2nd Generation OTLS Member

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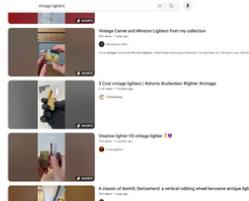
Let me start by thanking this group for welcoming me “into the fold.” I’m a second-generation OTLS member (more on that in “How I Started Collecting”) and my earliest memory of a vintage lighter is a Negbaur Knight—the one with the semi-automatic mechanism in the helmet. As a little kid, maybe 5 years old, it was just about the coolest thing in the world. I vividly remember it. Now, 40+ years later, I’m still mesmerized by artistic and functional fire makers.

I write that brief story because I feel it directly relates to what comes next ... ways to engage with new collectors and share the passion you all have for cigarette lighters and vintage tobacciana. Beginning with the assumption that we want to grow the collector base and inspire new generations of lighter enthusiasts, let’s look at some ways to accomplish the task. At the end of this list, I’ll include some ways to drive folks away from the hobby—sort of a cautionary tale.

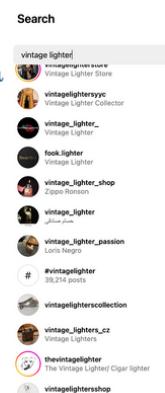
**1. Answer questions.** Chances are a person stumbling across the world of vintage collectible lighters will do so by finding one at a flea market, vintage shop or in the home of a relative. Perhaps the lighter has some significance (grandpa’s old Navy Zippo), shows local advertising or has an interesting design. Thanks to Google, they will probably search it up and find either a bunch of eBay/Etsy/Worthpoint listings or nothing at all. Neither result is helpful. If they’re still inquisitive, they might search on Facebook for groups with knowledge of vintage lighters. That’s where you come in—because hopefully OTLS comes up early in the search. I see a lot of questions posted in Facebook Groups asking for information and value. If you know the answer, comment back and offer your knowledge. Obviously, value can be difficult but even a range will help. If we want to attract new collectors, we might as well let the world know that vintage lighters hold value.

**2. Share resources.** I was lucky, my dad had lighter books. Reading about the history of manufacturers and seeing how lighters evolved is fascinating. The popularity of TV shows like Modern Marvels and How It’s Made proves that folks like to peek “behind the curtain.” There are quite in-depth online resources—I’m sure you’ve all poked through The Lighter Library ([lighterlibrary.com](http://lighterlibrary.com))—that can help a new collector go down the

## SOCIAL MEDIA



VINTAGE LIGHTER CONTENT GENERATES TENS OF THOUSANDS OF VIEWS!



Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube are great places to engage with new collectors. Answer questions, share photos from your collection and welcome new folks to the hobby.

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proverbial rabbit hole. This is a great way to encourage new enthusiasts. You don't want to inundate them and force your passion on them, but pointing someone in the right direction to learn more is a good tactic.

### 3. Show off your collection (but be cool about it ...).

A powerful way to demonstrate the breadth and diversity of vintage lighters is by sharing photos of collections. Every collection is different and reflects the unique taste of the collector. I often see new collectors ask how to pick a theme and the answers tend to be "pick something that interests you." This isn't always helpful, because it can be too narrow, too wide or impossible to find. But, looking at images of someone else's collection can trigger ideas and open possibilities a new collector never could have imagined. Someone picking up a Ronson Mastercase because they thought it was cool or because grandma had one in a box in her closet might become fascinated by trench lighters or Zippo's with horses on them, but they might never know such a thing exists unless they see photos of collections while they're looking up the Mastercase. I hope that makes sense ... But, please, please, please don't only show off your collection of sterling Thorens single claws or late-30s MIB Zippo's. Turn your camera to the affordable ones every now and then.

**4. Instagram.** OK, maybe you're not on Instagram, but do you know who is? Literally, more than a billion and a half people around the world AND almost half are between the ages of 25 and 44. You also might not know that there are HUNDREDS of photos and videos of lighters (probably way more) posted every day. I'll admit, I'm not great with Instagram, but I do post photos of lighters and can waste plenty of time watching videos shared by collectors around the world. This is where potential future lighter enthusiasts just might find our hobby and get hooked. Even if you don't want to post photos, make an account just to check out videos by French collector @histoireduneflamme — trust me, you will love them, and you can join his more than 280,000 followers. (If 3% of those followers joined OTLS, the membership would jump by 8,400, just saying ...) I'm not on TikTok but people have sent me lighter videos posted there, too, and it's most likely a valuable place to engage with new collectors, as well.



Sharing books about vintage lighters and online resources will help new collectors deepen their knowledge and get excited about the history of vintage tobacciana.

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# 5 WAYS TO GET NEW COLLECTORS HOOKED ON VINTAGE LIGHTERS (and 5 Ways to Drive them Away)

Articles

By Bill Calkins, 2nd Generation OTLS Member

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**5. Zippo.** Full disclosure: My collection is 50% Ronson, 25% Zippo and 25% Other. I consider myself a Ronson collector—shout out to The World's Greatest Lighter! That said, Zippo is probably the most accessible point of entry to the world of collectible lighters. Zippo collectors also skew younger and “newer” than any other specific type or vintage lighter collectors, as a whole. There are many reasons for this and perhaps I will dig into them in a future newsletter article (if the OTLS powers that be allow me to do so). Nonetheless, clicking “Like” and telling the person who posts a photo of five Joe Camel Zippos that their collection is a great start could be just the encouragement they need to stick with the hobby. Zippos are easy to come by, iconic and offer plenty of diversity in terms of age and subject matter. I firmly believe that Zippo can be the gateway to a lifetime of collecting.



Be sure to share photos and stories of lighters covering a range of values and styles. This will help make the hobby accessible to more people.

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Here are 5 ways to drive potential collectors away from our hobby and make sure we take this passion to the grave with our favorite lighters sold for \$1 each from cigar boxes at the neighborhood garage sale.

**1. Be a jerk to new collectors.** We all roll our eyes at the Made in China butane lighter shaped like a motorcycle when it pops up on Facebook with the question, "What's this worth?" Instead of commenting back that it's junk, perhaps tell the person it's cool and might be the start of a collection. Then casually share a photo of \$10 vintage petrol lighter available on eBay and suggest they collector vintage as the start of another collection.

**2. Only talk in collector jargon.** Seriously, one in a million people know what a 3-barrel is. Even fewer can properly identify a "trench" lighter. When posting photos of your beauties, share some details to help new collectors understand what makes them special.

**3. Be silent in the group.** No matter what the topic, I truly believe we can all learn from experts. One of my goals in life is to ask questions of folks older and more experienced than I am. I know for a fact that there are a ton of highly knowledgeable lighter collectors who've been in the game a long time. The information you hold is worth its weight in gold as it pertains to educating and inspiring new collectors. If you have time, post some stories or favorite lighters on the OTLS Facebook page! Someday, I hope to get to an OTLS convention (the last few have conflicted with my sales meeting or family vacation), and you'd better believe I'll annoy you with endless questions.

**4. Stop collecting.** Although your displays may be full and your quest to find every example of a lighter type may be complete, staying engaged with the hobby is important. As the hobby and market evolves, staying active in a group like OTLS and even specific collector groups online and in social media will open new relationships and opportunities to share your passion. We all know what happens to an old flint that sits in a lighter for a decade ... I think you get my metaphor.

**5 .Assume your family thinks lighters are boring.** Like I mentioned earlier, my dad collected lighters and had them displayed when I was a kid. Back then (and up until my own kids were older and I had some time to engage in a hobby), I didn't think about those lighters. But it only took a spark (pun intended) to get me interested and passionate about a hobby that my dad and I can now talk about. Choose the right time (and the right family member) and show off your collection and share a bit about why you collect. Lighters are fascinating, as we all know, and chances are someone you know and love could just be the new collector you're looking for.

# AND THEN YOU REALIZE... You're a Collector



articles

by Stephen Clegg

My penchant for collecting things started as a young boy with Matchbox and Hot Wheels toy cars. On Saturday mornings after all chores were completed; my Father would give us kids an allowance and then drive us to K-Mart so we could spend recklessly on whatever it is our heart desired (as long as we had enough money of course). So there I was in the mid – 1970's buying toy cars. Sometimes I'd race them, sometimes I'd trade them and sometimes I'd lose them. I never really thought of them as a collection but there they were displayed in my room neatly arranged.

Flash forward to 1986, I found my first vintage cigarette lighter in an antique shop in downtown Kansas City, Missouri. It was truly a eureka moment at first touch. I had found a chromium plated Golden Wheel Lift arm lighter in full working condition. I showed it off with pride offering a light to anyone in need and told the story of how I found it. Not long after that, I found an 18K gold plated Clark Lift arm lighter and I was hooked. I searched high and low and once in a while I would find a nice Ronson or Evans automatic lighter but the lift arms are where I found a passion for the chase of collecting lighters. In 1996, I joined eBay and wow did that change everything. I found out there were so many makers and types and materials and the various mechanisms and I was hooked. At that moment I realized I was a lighter collector. I started to do research and bought a few books to see what was missing from my collection.

Trench art lighters became one of my favorite types as I would try to envision the story behind the lighter. Some were manufactured and some were made by a soldier who was possibly infirmed or just had busy hands. I play out this scenario with most all of the lighters I acquire, whether they are trench art, casual, figural, or even the rare exquisites made of precious materials, hard glass enamels or hand painted beauties. Who were the original owners and what part did they play in society?

The two trench lighters below (next page) have been in my collection for quite some time and I find it interesting they both have button faces soldered to them from the English army GI's winter coats. The small one on the right also has an old silver coin from the German Reich dating to late 1800's. The heart shaped lighter has English button faces although you can see there are a couple of exceptions. This lighter has a piece of shrapnel soldered to it and the button face below is from a French Nurse's coat as it is inscribed "Infirmiers Militaires." So many scenarios play out in my mind of which all these button faces' belong to. Perhaps the wounded soldier's friends made this for him as a get well gift? I'm sure I'll never know who the true original owner was but this is one of the best in my trench art collection.

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# AND THEN YOU REALIZE... You're a Collector



by Stephen Clegg

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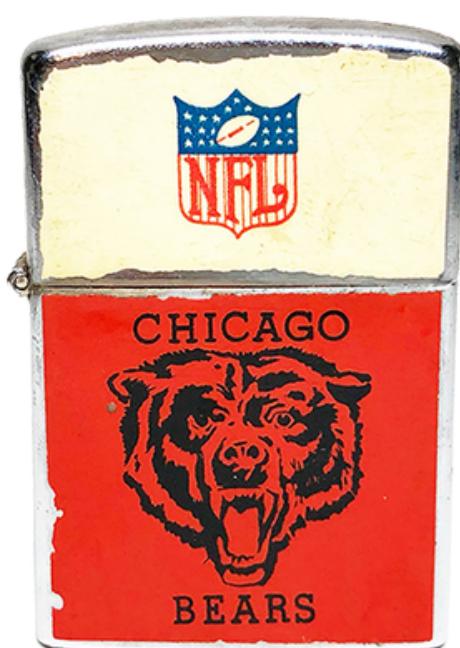


# FOOTBALL!



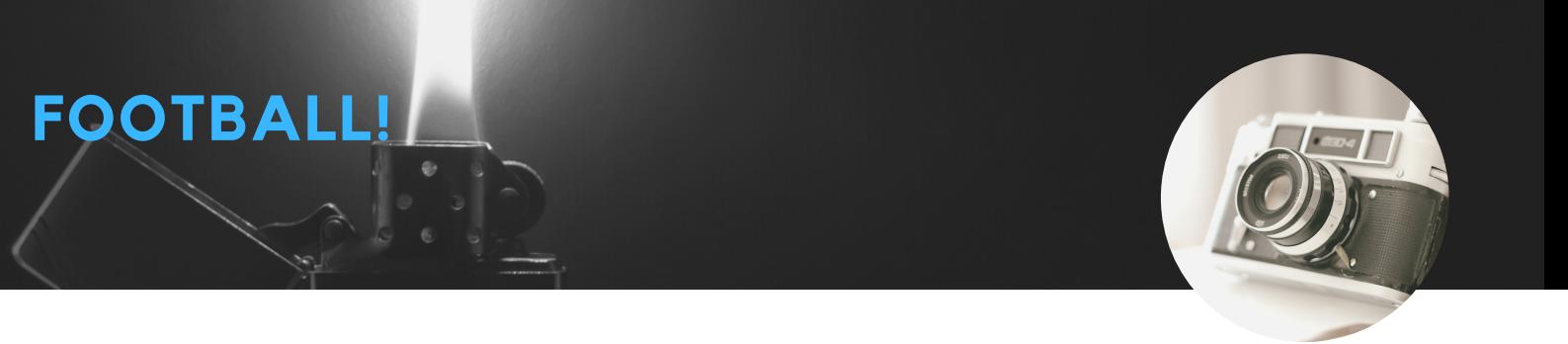
Contributed by Ryan Seagrist

With Super Bowl coming soon, this seemed timely. 1960s football lighters including Bowers Storm Masters, Storm Kings, and Japanese-made flip-tops branded as '1963 NFL Properties' on the bottom.



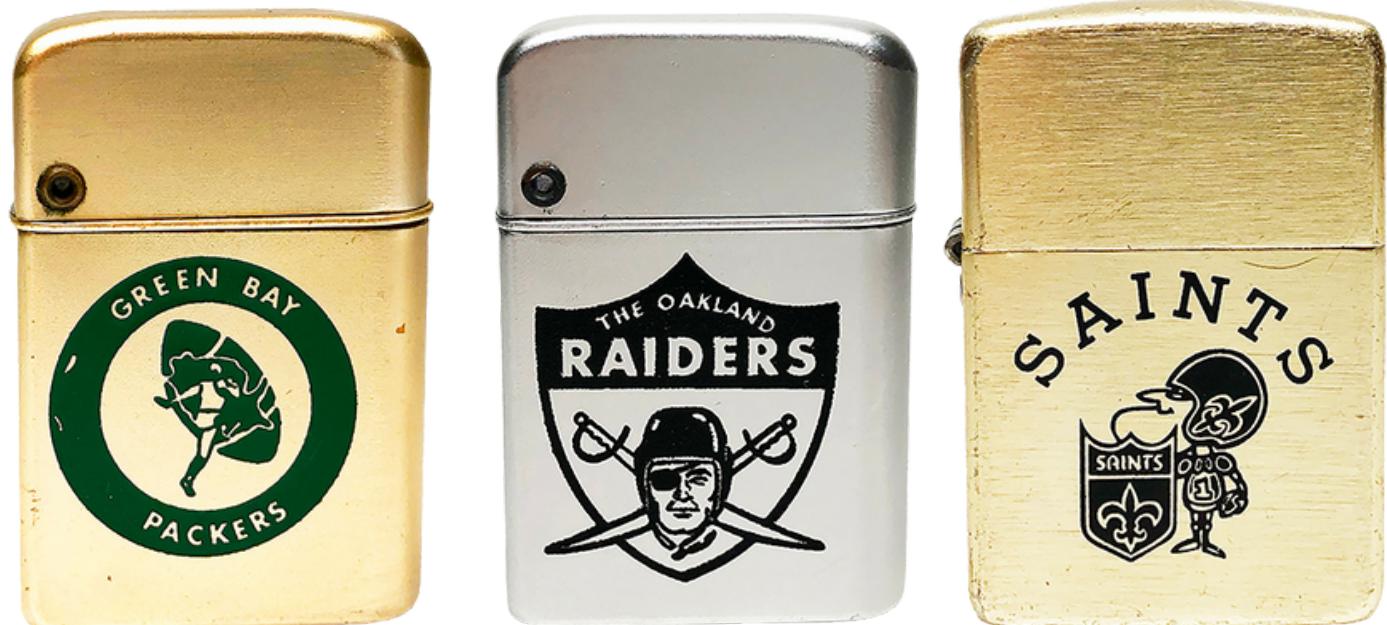
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# FOOTBALL!



Contributed by Ryan Seagrist

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## IN MEMORY OF A FRIEND

**Contributed by Judith Sanders**

When Nancy Lloyd first joined our clubs her late husband, Andrew, was the main collector. Last week, Nancy's daughter Pam called to tell me Nancy had passed away after a brief illness.

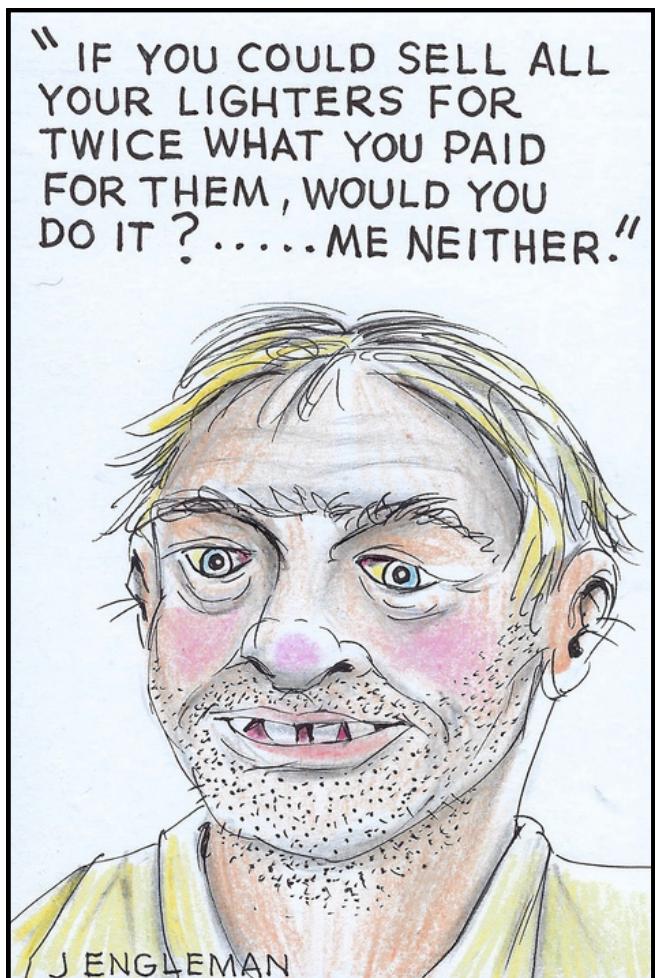
After Andrew passed away Nancy kept collecting a specific category of Zippo. She loved Zippos with any kind of heart on them.

Not only was she a member of OTLS, she and I were good friends. One of our best trips together was when I flew to Winston Salem where she lived, and we went on a great road trip. We first went to Hendersonville and stayed a few days with Rich and Dani Weinstein. They took us to Asheville to explore - I had never been there! We went to a lot more places while I was there and had a great time.

So not only will OTLS miss Nancy, I will miss her a lot. Rest in Peace my Friend.

## 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 Burkblurb@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 16410 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

**NEXT ISSUE: March 15, 2024**

**SEND ADS BY: Feb 20, 2024**

**OTLSNEWS101@GMAIL.COM**



On The LIGHTER Side

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