

THE TORCH

Newsletter Of The Blow Torch Collectors Association

- Issue #19 -

- March 2001 -



Fergus Falls In The News! (See story page 3)



Mill City Man Makes The Headlines!
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To Polish! Page 11**

NEW MEMBERS

Bob Bartheld, Rogers, Minnesota, was sponsored for his first year membership by **Lloyd Weber**, BTCA member. Bob is a relatively new torch collector with many of his torches polished and displayed, and he owns a second impressive collection of 450 soldering irons. Perhaps his goal will be to match each soldering iron up with a blow torch!

Peter Gold, Bristol, North Somerset, England, is a 4-year blow lamp collector, and he starting collecting lamps at the suggestion of his brother-in-law, **John Tingle**, who is also a BTCA member. Peter has over 300 lamps from 13 different countries, and he does refinish some of his favorites for display at home and at rallies. Peter also collects vintage Parker fountain pens.

Ken Hartman, Montgomery, Illinois, is another member that found BTCA membership through BTCA member **Jeff Glass**, and the internet. See Ken's complete story on blow torch collecting later in this issue.

Rod Kendall, Fayetteville, Georgia, is a 3-year collector with a modest and growing collection. In his earlier days, Rod used blow torches and became attached to them over the years. He seems to enjoy brass things since he also collects steam whistles, fire extinguishers, gauges, valves, and horns. On the larger side, he collects antique Mustangs (the car, not the horse) and engines.

Bob Sievert, Bonita, California, is a 10-year collector that remembers his electrician dad using torches in his business. As a kid in the late thirties/early forties, Bob remembers following his dad around with a flashlight while he installed electrical service in most of their relative's farm homes. Bob renewed his torch collecting interests when he found a genuine Sievert torch in an antique store and was unaware that there was a manufacturer named Sievert.

Yvonne Wall, Oriskany, New York, has been collecting torches for less than one year and was "hooked" after acquiring her first torch. She is working on perfecting her polishing technique so that her torches will also look as good as the torches pictured in the new Blow Torch collectible book that is now available in bookstores. Yvonne has her torches displayed in her kitchen.

WELCOME ABOARD NEW MEMBERS!

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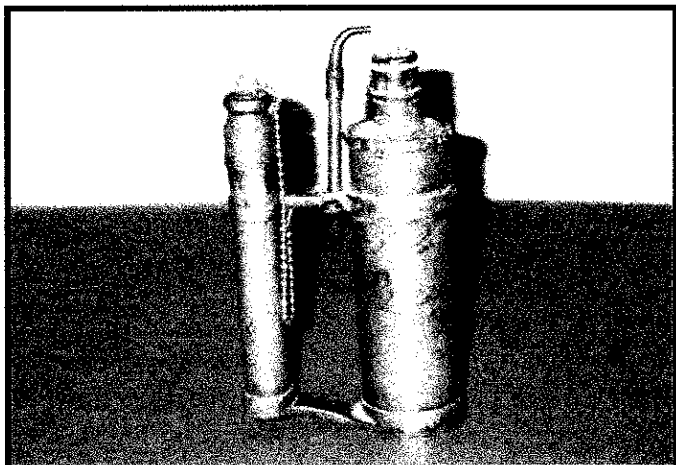
Chase McKnight, AKA Blow Torch Boy

BLOW TORCH BOY

Chase McKnight, AKA BLOW TORCH BOY, is not only a member of BTCA, but at 12 years old...is our youngest member. In a short period of time he has added over 200 torches to his collection, and is probably the youngest blow torch collector in the world.

Chase started collecting blow torches as soon as he saw his uncle's torch collection. His uncle has a small and unusual collection of varied torches, and is also an antique dealer. Chase purchased a torch from his uncle, an ordinary Turner Brass Works torch in fairly good condition. He took the torch home and decided to clean it up by first using some steel wool. That wasn't working very well, so he next borrowed his dad's ½ HP buffer and buffed it with some very old buffing compound, with some success. Some time later his parents took him antique shopping and he came home with another torch, and he keep repeating the cycle until he was hooked on blow torches and had amassed a sizable collection.

Each year the McKnight family vacations in an area of Tennessee that is adjacent to a large number of antique malls. Every year Chase returns home with numerous torch treasures and has added some rare torches that any collector would be proud to have in their collection. Chase has a part time job with a local auctioneer that provides spending money for his torch purchases, as well as purchases for barn and railroad lanterns...another collection that he maintains.



Willson Alcohol Torch
Submitted by Chase McKnight

Chase now boasts a 2 HP buffer and he has adopted easier cleaning and buffing methods. Of his 200 torches, approximately 55 are rare or unusual, such as his C&L Baby #8, a Z&W Machine Works aluminum torch, the only known Turner Brass Works #79 Willson alcohol Blow Pipe, (see inset above) and a Best Street Light Co., just to name a few.

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FERGUS FALLS IN THE NEWS

Mel Olson, a former Mayor of Fergus Falls, Minnesota, made the front page of the Fergus Falls *DAILY JOURNAL*, February 24, 2001. He was featured amidst his 400+ torch collection, along with another Fergus Falls collector of WWII German munitions.

From the photo, it appears that Mel has polished every one of his 429 torches! Mel is one of our more avid collectors and has provided numerous bits of important torch information over the past few years (see the article in this issue, C&L #1...REVISITED)

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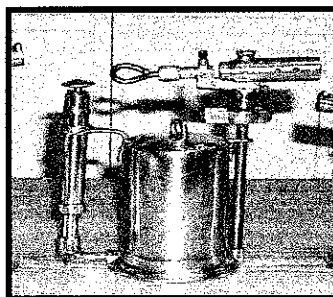
Jerry Kelly suggested that perhaps individuals that utilized blow torches years ago might want to share with our members, any amusing or horror story relating to blow torch use. As an example, stories from the different trades people on how they used torches, or what they may have experienced or observed in those "days gone past". As always....we enjoy hearing from our members regarding experiences with operating a torch or with their collection.

And along the same lines, **Jon Suta** suggested member profiles. Numerous members have also requested information on how others got started in blow torch collecting, how they display their collection, what polishing processes they use, etc.

Dennis Galaway sent in a photo of another style of Quick Meal torch that is very different from the conventional tapered fuel tank style, (see inset below). The torch is stamped with the following information into the bottom of the fuel tank: Quick Meal Stove Div., St Louis, MO. The fuel tank appears to be made from copper, and according to Dennis, "if the tank is brass, then they didn't put much zinc into their alloy!"

Lloyd Weber sent in a brief note regarding his recent experience using Nikolas lacquer #2105 as a finish coat on refinished blow torches. The Nikolas Company has been in business for over 100 years and produces some of the finest finish coatings for items such as musical instruments, door knobs, statues, faucets, and basically anything made from brass, copper or bronze, and requiring a hard durable finish. Lloyd indicated he would provide more details on his experience with Nikolas #2105.

Michel Duval provided copies of recent catalogs from the GUILBERT EXPRESS COMPANY in Paris, France. Formerly known as Express, they were an early producer of blow lamps, and continue today producing butane, and propane blowlamps and electrical soldering irons. Members interested in additional information on Express can contact Michel directly, or write to Guilbert Express, 169, rue de la Roquette, F 75 011 Paris, France.



Quick Meal Div Blow Torch
Submitted by Dennis Galaway

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MILL CITY MAN MAKES THE NEWS

Mark Petersen and his 600+ blow torch collection were recently featured in an article for a local Mill City, Oregon newspaper. With that many torches, Mark and Arlene have them stacked on shelves in the garage, a few hundred more on shelves lining the wall of their sun room, and a pair of stained-glass lamps Mark fashioned from two blow torches that adorn their bedroom nightstands.

It appears that Arlene encouraged Mark to start some sort of collection over 20 years ago, and he selected blow torches for one simple reason, "***No one would be foolish enough to collect blow torches***", the same sentiments that many of today's torch collectors had when they started! Mark boasts some very rare and unusual torches that include Quick Meal, Gravity Feed, Acme Paint Burner, and a most rare Brookins torch. Mark is also one of the founding members of BTCA and continues to be a strong supporter of our group.

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FIRST BLOWTORCH BOOK PUBLISHED

The first ever blow torch book, authored by Dick Sarpolus, has been published by Schiffer Publishing Ltd. and released for distribution in the US and England. We were fortunate enough to receive an advanced signed copy of the book for review and comment, thanks to the generosity of Dick Sarpolus.

It doesn't take long to realize how much effort went into the detail that is presented in the publication...from the beautiful clear photographs, the descriptive captions, down to the step-by-step details on torch refinishing. It is truly a great publication for the first time collector, or for the more experienced collector looking for reference material. Most people may not realize it, but Dick took all of the photographs in his home studio, except for the front and back covers, and from what you'll see, he did a very professional job! In addition, you'll notice the exceptional quality of all the

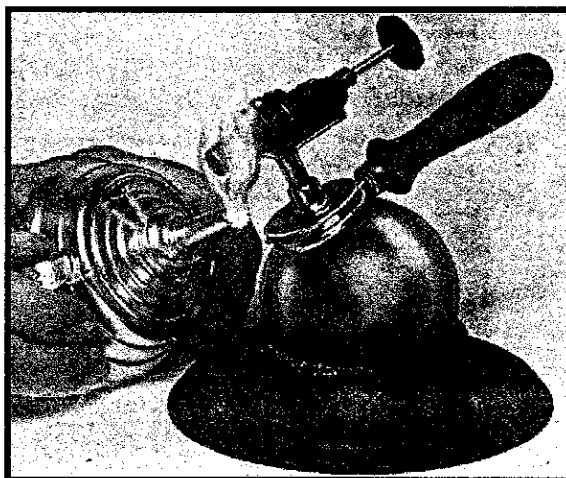
torches that were refinished, including those that were painted. Dick is an avid model airplane designer and builder, and utilized his airplane painting techniques and skills on the torches.

The book has 144 pages categorized into 13 chapters, illustrated with 296 color photographs, and covers a variety of topics that any blow torch collector will find invaluable. It retails for \$29.95 and can be found in, or ordered from, most bookstores in the US. The title is COLLECTIBLE BLOWTORCHES, and the ISBN identification number is 0-7643-1298-7. Alternatively, one can order directly from the publisher: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 4880 Lower Valley Road, Atglen, PA 19310. Phone 610-593-1777, fax 610-593-2002, or email at Schifferbk@aol.com. For those collectors in Europe, contact: Bushwood Books, 6 Marksbury Avenue, Kew Gardens, Surrey TW9 4JF England. Phone 44 0 20 8392-8585, fax 44 0 20 8392 9876, or email at Bushwd@aol.com.

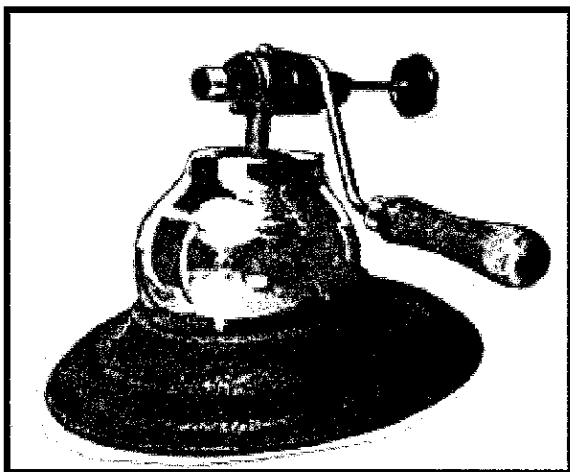
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NEW MANUFACTURED ☺

Some time ago Graham Stubbs, submitted information on a newly discovered torch manufacturer, PAKO SUPPLY CO., Chicago, Illinois. Graham actually submitted two different documents, both depicting similar torches (**see insets**). One is shown as a Pako Supply Co. pumpless blow torch, and the other is by an unknown manufacturer but similar to the Pako torch. Ironically, both are listed in the same December 1940 issue of *SCIENCE AND MECHANICS*, so one version cannot be an earlier or later version of the other. The logical possibility is that it could be the same manufacturer with two different models...a likely scenario.



Unknown Manufacturer
Similar to Pako Supply Co. Torch
Submitted by Graham Stubbs



Pako Supply Co. Torch
Submitted by Graham Stubbs

The unknown model, seen on the previous page, includes an alcohol lamp for starting the torch, three soldering tips, and a soldering container for melting solder. The Pako torch only lists one soldering copper tip, an electrician's dip pot that attaches to the end of the burner head that was used to melt solder. The Pako torch had a spherical fuel tank that could withstand 700 pounds of pressure per square inch, could hold 6 ounces of gasoline, burn for 4 hours, and achieve temperatures up to 2200 degrees. The cast iron base was shaped to allow the torch body to tilt in any position with the help of rubber friction plugs. No known Pako torch has surfaced...yet!

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Clayton & Lambert Model #1
Submitted by Mel Olson

C&L Model #1...REVISITED

Mel Olson submitted a photograph (see inset) of a Clayton & Lambert No. 1 blow torch, with a patent

date of January 15, 1889. The early Clayton & Lambert 1889 patent provides details for a vapor-burner (burner head assembly), and while the patent has been known for some time, there was never a complete blow torch to relate it to...until now. Mel helped to solve two mysteries; the first is confirming that a similar torch recently acquired by Ron Carr is a valid blow torch, complete with a steel fuel tank. The second mystery is not so much a mystery as it is providing a reason to revisit the patent information in detail.

There is a model #1 listed in the Clayton & Lambert Index, attachment to issue # 15, December 1999, *THE TORCH*, and while it bears no resemblance to Olson's model #1, it does seem to have the same paint burner style assembly.

One look at Mel's C&L model #1 with it's tapered steel fuel, and any torch collector would quickly realize that it has to be one of the earliest torches ever produced by the Clayton and Lambert Company. The gauge of galvanized sheet metal utilized is somewhat thin, including the sheet metal handle, and with the uneven solder lines it would lead one to believe that it was manually vs. mechanically soldered. Looking at it would remind one of a school project that was made in a sheet metal shop, in high school. A typical rubber squeeze bulb that was connected to an air shut-off valve shown in the photo would have provided the air supply. There is a separate brass fuel filler plug, also located on top of the fuel tank.

The burner assembly as described in the patent, was designed for plumbers, with sufficient temperature to heat soldering irons and melt lead, yet difficult to blow out...even in an outdoor environment. The interior design of the burner head includes a brass fuel tube in line with the flame path, a design most probably adopted from European designs. (Included is an integral cast iron drip cup located to the rear and below the burner assembly.) The entire burner assembly is connected to the fuel tank with a swivel joint that allows the user to direct the flame in numerous vertical directions.

The second part of the mystery is the names associated with the original patent. John E., Charles R., and Bert Lambert were the original three brothers that founded the original company in Ypsilanti, Michigan in 1882. In 1887, the three Lambert brothers added John N. Clayton to the partnership, and in 1891, the Clayton & Lambert Company filed Articles of Association with the State of Michigan. Two years after bringing John N. Clayton into the company, he filed his invention for the Vapor-Burner (burner assembly) and assigned the patent to Joshua Lambert, John E. Lambert, Charles R. Lambert, and Bert Lambert (it is unknown who Joshua Lambert was, and how he factored into the business since only the three brothers are mentioned in all company history). In 1925, with John N. Clayton and

Charles R. Lambert deceased, the two remaining brothers, Bert and John, sold their stockholdings to their nephew, Charles F. Lambert (youngest son of their brother Charles R. Lambert), and Charles F. became President of the Clayton & Lambert Manufacturing Company.

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P. Wall Manufacturing Supply Co.

Keith Hawkins recently submitted a photograph of a P. Wall Manufacturing Supply Co. blow torch, and wondered if he had a **Very Rare** torch. (see inset below) The current BTCA manufacturer listing that was attached to *THE TORCH*, issue #18, has the Wall Manufacturing Supply Co. listed as a **VR** rating, and the P. Wall Manufacturing Co. listed as a **Numerous** rating. Taking Keith's suggestion, we looked into the matter to determine the rarity of Keith's blow torch, and what we found was quite surprising!



P. Wall Manufacturing Supply Co. Blow Torch
Submitted by Keith Hawkins

There is not a lot of information on the P. Wall Company, but what we do know is that they were initially established in 1864, and were located at 3100 Preble Avenue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. During the early 1900's they registered the name **DREADNAUGHT** as a trademark for all of their torches and furnaces or fire pots, a name they may have taken from the British battleship, *Dreadnought*, which was launched in 1906.

They also adopted, but did not trademark, the following marketing statement:

"The superiorities of this torch stick out like a sore thumb".



It is known that P. Wall produced other lines of products that included bench and pump oilers, steel buckets, tallow pots, waste cans, pipe straps, tote boxes, and oil tanks. They appeared to have mastered the early art of brazing steel to brass as many of the early torches have burner assemblies with the two dissimilar metals brazed together. You will most likely only find P. Wall torches with steel fuel tanks, and many earlier Wall torches had the signature steel hand at a 45-degree angle just below the pump housing. They also utilized a spring clip that locked the pump plunger in place when not in use...another unique Wall feature.

With the available information, we can determine that sometime just after 1942, The P. Wall Manufacturing Supply Co. relocated to Erie Street in Grove City, a suburb of Pittsburgh. During this transition they dropped the letter "P." and the word "**Supply**" from their name, and became the Wall Manufacturing Co. So, bottom line Keith, you unfortunately do not have a **Very Rare** blow torch...but thank you for bringing this to our attention and helping us to solve this mystery. We will correct the manufacturer list for the next printing in December. The new listing will show the Wall Manufacturing Company, Grove City, PA, with a notation that the original company was listed as the P. Wall Manufacturing Supply Co., Pittsburgh, PA.

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WEB SURFERS

As of this printing there are 186 BTCA members and 103 have email and surf the web.

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THE OTHER SIDE OF TURNER

We continue to be amazed at what new torch information continually surfaces from our members. **Graham Stubbs** sent in information on the Turner Brass Works Company that, up till now, was unknown. Graham acquired an 83-page catalog of *Turner Dental Goods*, identified as Catalogue Number Four and dated May 1, 1903, a period of time when Turner was still located in Chicago. The catalog is one of the most complete catalogs seen to date, and includes a multitude of dental goods from blow pipes to tooth dies. The principal dental products included Gasoline Porcelain Furnaces, Gasoline Blow Pipes, Gasoline Bunsen Burners, and Porcelain and Gold Crown and Bridge Systems, just to name a few.

The catalog introduction talks about Turner Brass Works just entering the dental porcelain field, recognizing the unlimited opportunities for the company, and progressing toward greater achievements in the field. An article describes "**The Porcelain Problem**"; a situation where porcelain fixtures were requested by patients, but the technology was in its infancy and quality seemed to be an issue. The Turner Company produced a Porcelain Furnace and a Porcelain Crown and Bridge System that was described as practical and convenient and could solve the most difficult cases, while creating perfect contours with absolute occlusion secured.

Turner advertised their line of Gasoline Furnaces as very efficient and, in some cases, superior to their competitors electric and gas furnaces. The Turner Furnaces were certainly a must when operated in environments where electricity or gas were not available, and that may have been numerous considering the time period.

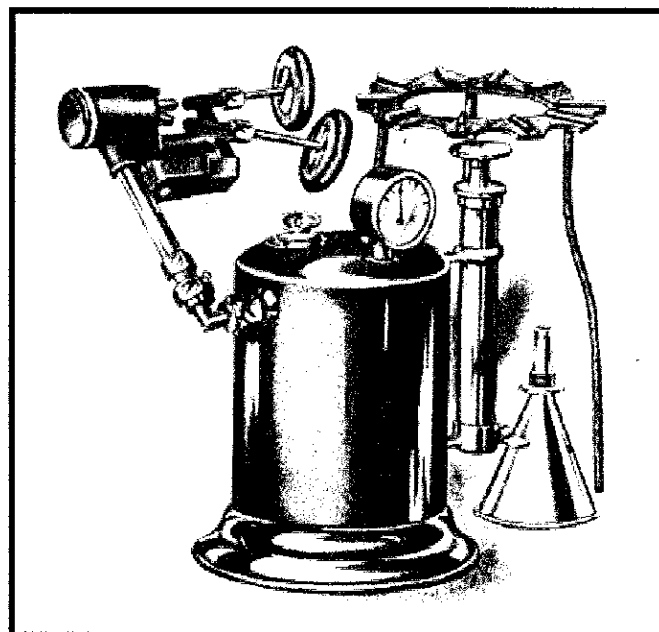
Porcelain crowns, bridges, and inlays could be safely baked in a Turner Furnace in two to five minutes, where competitor's furnaces could take from 17 to 40 minutes. The Turner Furnace could achieve temperatures of 3000 – 3500 degrees F, and was available in 5 sizes. Of particular interest are the 5 Gasoline Blow Pipes, or what we would describe as blow torches or blow lamps, and are identified as models **60D**, **4D**, **50D**, **3D**, and **40D**.

Turner 60D Gasoline Blow Pipe

Described with a fuel tank of 6 inches high, 4 inches in diameter, one-quart capacity (actually listed at three-quarters of a quart), every part was nickel-plated on brass, and weighed 7½ pounds. The blow pipe

included a pressure gauge and a compound swiveled dual-valve burner assembly to allow the operator to position the flame in any position. The pressure gauge was most useful and aided the operator in gauging the correct air pressure to achieve the most heat.

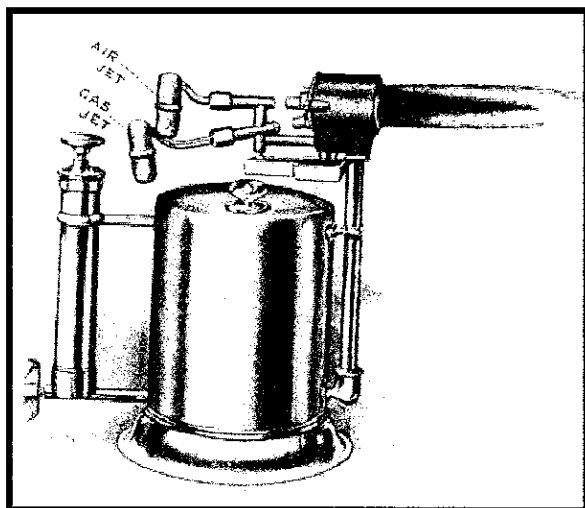
Model 60D was primarily designed for use with the No. 160 Gasoline Porcelain Furnace, but could also be utilized as a Bunsen burner, for simple soldering, or for any process requiring high heat-producing power. Fuel was added through the top stopper with a funnel, and air pressure was achieved with the handle air pump. The Blow Pipe could burn for 4-5 hours continuously, achieve temperatures up to 3500 degrees F, and could easily flow (melt) 25% platinum solder. List price, circa 1903, was \$15.00.



Turner Model 60D

Turner 4D Gasoline Blow Pipe

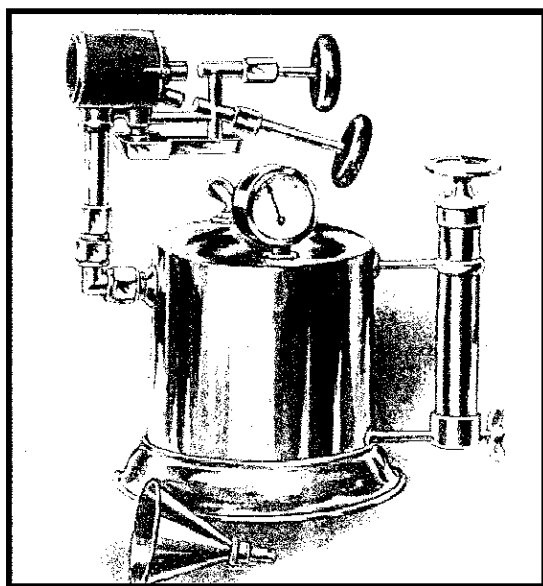
Described with a fuel tank of 6 inches high, 4 inches in diameter, one-quart capacity, every part was nickel-plated on brass, and weighed in at 4½ pounds. The dual-valve burner assembly was not swiveled and the fuel tank did not include a pressure gauge. The Blow Pipe could also achieve temperatures up to 3500 degrees F. List price, circa 1903, was \$6.00. (Note: model 4D is very similar, if not identical, to model 4A that is listed in the Turner Index, *THE TORCH*, issue #16, March 2000.) (see inset page 8)



Turner Model 4D

Turner 50D Gasoline Blow Pipe

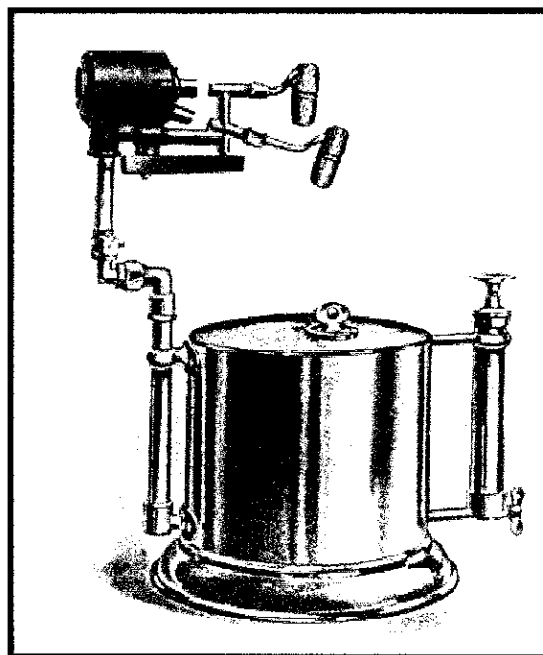
Described with a fuel tank of 6 inches high, 5½ inches in diameter, two-quart capacity, every part was nickel-plated, and weighed an impressive 11 pounds. The model 50D was similar to the model 60D, except for the larger capacity fuel tank, heavier weight, a larger burner assembly, and an automatic fuel funnel. The automatic funnel was a simple design that allowed the operator to see into the funnel and determine when the fuel reached the top of the tank. Blow pipe features included a pressure gauge and a compound swiveled dual-valve burner assembly. The model 50D was rather heavy for use as a hand blow pipe, and was primarily designed for heavy work on a bench. List price, circa 1903, was \$18.00.



Turner Model 50D

Turner 3D Gasoline Blow Pipe

Described with a fuel tank of 6 inches high, 5½ inches in diameter, two-quart capacity, every part was nickel-plated on brass, and weighed 5½ pounds. Model 3D was similar to model 50D except the 3D did not include a pressure gauge or the automatic fuel funnel. The 3D was designed for more general use on a bench, in addition to providing heat for Turner Porcelain Furnaces and Turner Crucible Furnaces. List price, circa 1903, was \$10.00.



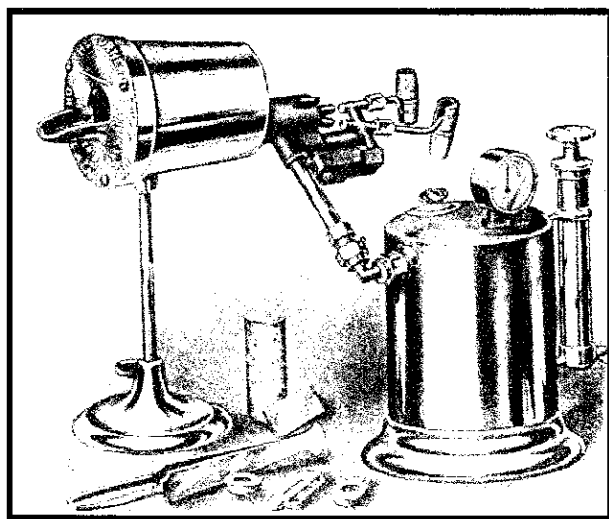
Turner Model 3D

Turner 40D Gasoline Blow Pipe

Very little information was made available for model 40D, however from its appearance and brief description, it is identical to model 60D, except only the fuel tank was nickel-plated on the model 40D, and it appears to be the lower priced version for cost conscience buyers. The two valve handles also appear to be of a different design, however many handles were frequently substituted. List price, circa 1903, estimated at \$13.00. (see inset page 9.)

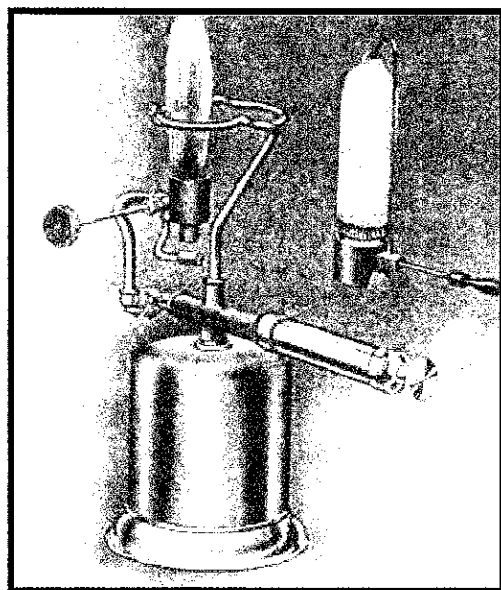
Another Turner product never seen before was the **Gasoline Bunsen Light** and the **Manyscope** attachment. The Bunsen Light was an attachment for a Turner #80 Blow Torch, a pint size torch with a horizontal pump handle and a Bunsen style burner

assembly. Model #80 seems to be identical to model #65 as seen in the Turner Index, issue #16, March 2000, *THE TORCH*. List price for a model #80, circa 1903, was \$4.00. List price for a model #65, circa 1916, was \$9.35.

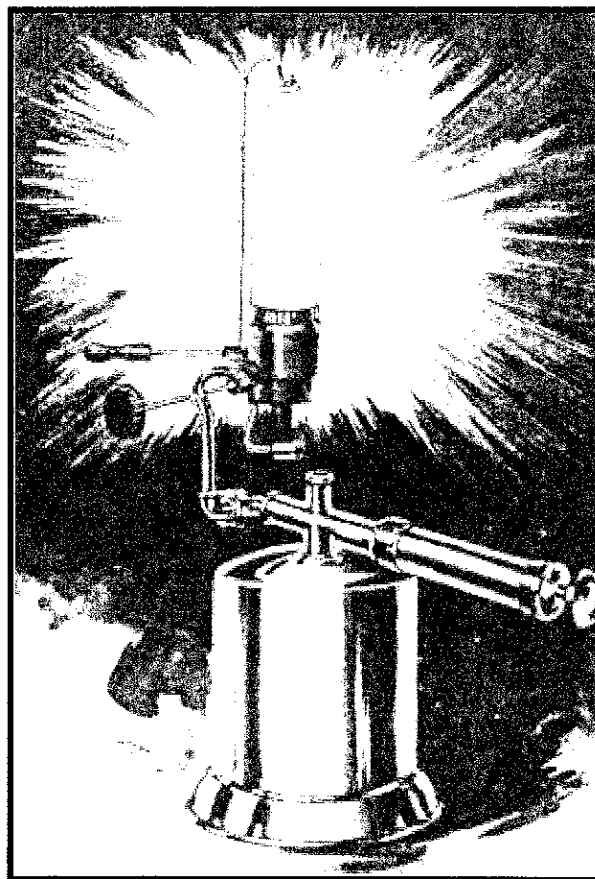


Turner Model 40D
Shown with a #140 Gasoline Porcelain Furnace

The Bunsen light fixture included a mantle, and is the type commonly seen today in Coleman gasoline or propane lanterns. The mantle assembly included a mantle and a wire frame, and was simply placed onto the Bunsen burner and ignited as directed. (see below) The Turner literature lists the Bunsen Light as *"an entirely new and novel appliance, manufactured solely by Turner and now offered for the first time"*.



Turner Bunsen Light
Installed on Turner Model #80



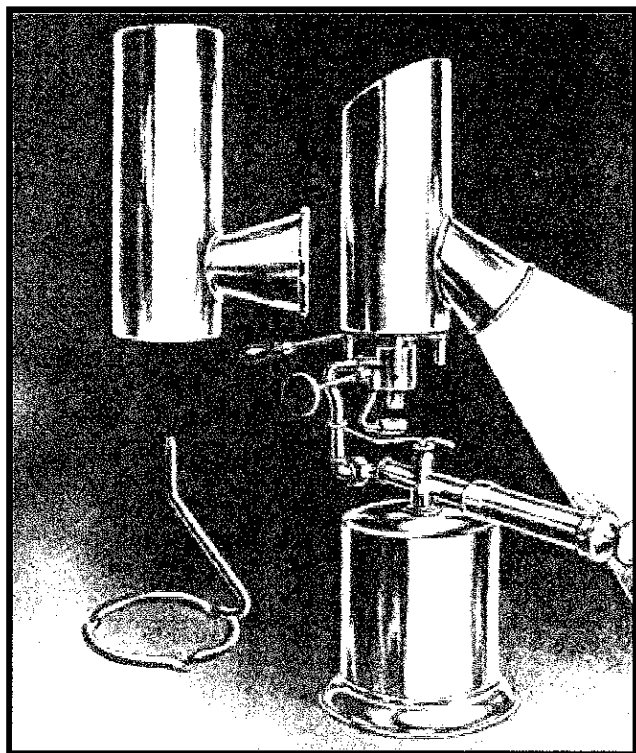
Turner Bunsen Light in Operation

The Turner Manyscope was available as a 45-degree and a 90-degree device, with and without lenses. (see inset page 10) The Manyscope was a specially constructed aluminum chimney or hood for use in connection with the No. 90 Bunsen Light and, as its name implies, its function was *"to assist the operator in seeing many things by bright light"*. With the combination of the two degrees of direction and the lenses available, an operator could adjust and direct the amount of light required for the operation or process at hand.

The Manyscope was used by the Oculist for seeing into the eye, the Aurist for looking into the ear, the throat specialist for the throat, and the scientist for aiding research with the microscope.

The Turner Catalog also included a multitude of dental products such as: Porcelain Crown and Bridge Systems, Tooth Dies, Seamless Gold Crown Systems, forming dies, as well as detailed directions for making crowns and bridges. Overall...the catalog provided unusual insight into the *"The Other Side of Turner"*.

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Turner Manyscope
In 45 Degree Operation

In The Beginning....

By Ken Hartman

I started collecting blow torches when I was in high school, about seventeen years ago. I remember, when I was a kid, seeing an animated skit on TV that was shown with the standard Saturday morning cartoons. As best as I can recall, it featured a bunch of real hand tools moving around. I seem to remember them getting into some sort of combat, and the gasoline torch, which was lit, was defeated by a nail in the fuel tank. The fuel leaked out, and snuffed the torch. Never mind that this would be a bad thing to do with gasoline, and with an open flame! I also noticed gasoline torches in movies, (*Duck Soup*), and in television programs, (*The Three Stooges* and *I Love Lucy*), when I was a kid.

When I first started collecting torches, I picked them up at flea markets, because I thought that they were neat, and an item from the past that was not made anymore. A couple of relatives gave me torches when they found out that I was collecting them. I didn't have much information on torches until I found an article in a 1955 volume of the *"Popular Mechanics Do-It-Yourself Encyclopedia"*. Armed with a copy of the article, I took most of my torches apart, carefully, and scraped the wick, cleaned the generating veins, and oiled the pump

leather. I've never had a problem or accident with a torch, and either I was very lucky or really careful!

While in college, I fell out of torch collecting and picked up other interests. Then I secured a real job at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, where I work today as an Accelerator Operator. I spent about ten years living in apartments, before buying my first house, about two years ago. After getting some stuff that was stored at my parent's house, I discovered that my small torch collection had been accidentally re-located to a shelf, next to the pool chemicals. Needless to say, the muriatic acid fumes caused some corrosion to the torches, especially the steel parts. The brass fared a bit better, and luckily these all were fairly common torches. They were not totally ruined, but will need cleaning. Unfortunately, what was left of the decals on each torch was very damaged.

I recently stumbled across **Jeff Glass'** great website address, and the torch collecting interest was sparked again! I sent Jeff an email message thanking him for posting so much information on blow torches on the web. Especially safety information! I have a torch with a failing check valve, (the air pump handle floats up), and I never realized the hazards involved in this. I told him that hopefully someone reading his website would be spared an accident due to ignorance. Maybe even a high school kid who's just starting out collecting torches. Jeff and I exchanged email messages, and along with some technical tips, he mentioned the BTCA group, and the rest is history. I also noticed **Dick Sarpolus'** book, *"Collectible Blowtorches"* on the web, and immediately ordered a copy. I had always figured that there was a torch collector's market out there, but never imagined that this variety of torches existed!

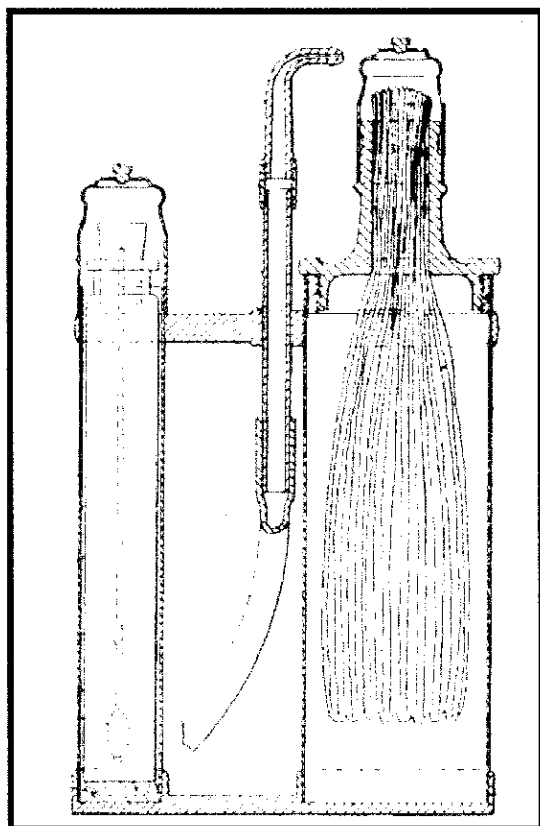
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THE WILLSON TORCH

Back in early 1895, Russell A. Willson came upon an idea to combine a soldering torch, an acid bottle (contained an acid based soldering flux), and a blowpipe into one unique package that was most convenient and easy to use. One can only guess that Mr. Willson had experienced the disappointment of not having soldering acid available when needed for a soldering task, and that experience may have spurred him on to his invention. According to the inventor, **"by placing the acid bottle in the handle of the lamp, it does away with the necessity of carrying an extra bottle, to spill or break. When you have this torch you always have the acid bottle."** While the idea was unique, the

items assembled were not. The soldering torch and the blow pipe were certainly not new to the industry, and neither was the soldering acid. But the combination was new and certainly a useful arrangement...and as the inventor described it, "*also ornamental*".

The brass acid bottle compartment included a small glass vial, and a small piece of cotton was placed in the bottom of the brass cylinder to prevent the bottle from being smashed against the brass bottom. The glass vial was capped with a simple cork, and inserted into the inside center of the cork was a small rod that had a swab at its end. When in use, the cork was removed and a small amount of soldering acid was applied to the area being soldered. The brass cylinder that contained the acid bottle included a screw-on protective cover and a chain to prevent loss.

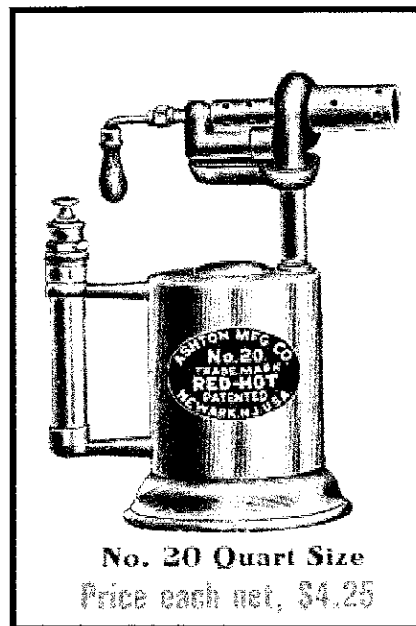


The Willson Torch
Russell A. Willson, Inventor
Patented June 18, 1895

Willson was awarded his patent on June 18, 1895, and while it is known that the Willson torch was manufactured, it is unknown who manufactured it. There is only one known reference to the Willson torch and that is in a Turner Brass Works blow torch catalog dated 1910, (see Turner Index, issue #16, March, 2000, *THE TORCH*). Because the Turner catalog lists the torch as a Turner # 79, Willson Alcohol Blow Pipe and Soldering

Torch, it can be assumed that Turner never purchased the patent, but Turner could be the manufacturer that produced it on behalf of Willson. Another torch mystery yet to be solved!

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Ashton Manufacturing Co.
Circa 1905

TO POLISH OR NOT TO POLISH... THAT IS THE QUESTION.

It is, without a doubt, the most frequently asked question, and there is no easy answer! Other frequently asked questions are: "*will it change the value if I refinish a torch?*", "*should I dismantle the entire torch to refinish?*", "*what's the easiest method in refinishing a blow torch?*", or "*should I use a lacquer finish?*". If you asked ten torch collectors, you would likely get a number of different answers because...it all gets down to personal preference.

One only has to visit any one of the Internet auction websites, such as ebay, to realize that in most cases, the value is dependent on three factors; age, rarity and condition. There appears to be no connection to whether a torch is refinished or not, or even the quality of the refinishing...only one or all three of the factors; age, rarity, and condition. So, to answer the first question regarding torch value fluctuations from refinishing...most likely no effect.

If you are on to the second question, dismantle or not to dismantle, then you have most likely decided to refinish the torch that is before you. Since that is the case, then why not do a professional job and take the torch down to the smallest part possible, short of unsoldering or destroying anything. Anyone that has refinished a torch can attest to the fact that you can achieve a more complete professional refinish by disassembling, and the results are decidedly improved.

And that takes us to the third question, the easiest refinishing method. There is none! (Unless you send it out to be refinished by a professional, who can be very costly.) You'll find that the disassembly process can be a difficult and dirty job, especially when parts refuse to move regardless of all the heating, the use of Lock-ease, brute force, and the inevitable cursing. The actual polishing can also be very dirty, not only on you, but also everywhere in close range...unless you've arranged for an enclosure or ventilation system. (Don't forget to always wear eye protection and a respirator, as a bare minimum.)

The final question, lacquer finishing, is also a tough one. There is good news/bad news, should you decide to lacquer finish. Some of the finishes available today, such as the previously mentioned Nikolas Lacquer #2105, are excellent and provide an incredibly strong and durable finish. But...some finishes may not stand up to sunlight and could cloud over time, and if you scratch or nick it, then oxidation will set in quickly. In either case, the lacquer removal process is not easy and may require dipping it into an acetone bath. There are waxes that have proven successful, provided one does not handle the brass with bare hands and the torch is not exposed to sunlight. Brass torches coated with clear BRIWAX have survived up to 8 years, and still look almost as good as the day they were refinished.

Bottom line, refinishing blow torches is a personal preference that satisfies many of us, especially when one can bring back to life a 50 -100 plus year-old tool that has seen the test of time, abuse, and many years of built-up dirt and grime. It's like rewarding a tool for surviving and a job well done!

References to past articles in THE TORCH on refinishing suggestions, methods, buffing supplies, and enclosures are:

- Buffing Techniques & Supply Sources by **Ron Carr**, issue #3, December 1995.
- Cleaning & Restoring Torches by **Dave Kolb**, issue #4, January 1996.
- Making Replacement Parts by **Dick Sarpolus**, issue #4, January 1996.
- Cleaning Hard-To-Get at Spots by **Mark Pedersen**, issue #6, December 1996.
- Pre-Cleaning Torches by **Harry Goff**, issue #6, December 1996.

- Cleaning a Blowlamp by **Bob Bispham (Les Adams)**, issue #9, December 1997.
- Brass Storage/Handling Suggestions by **Ron Carr**, issue #11, March 1998.
- Excess Solder Removal by **Ron Carr**, issue #12, December 1998.
- Cleaning, Sandblasting by **Phil Roach**, issue #13, January 1999.
- Mother's Polish for Aluminum by **Vicky Teeters**, issue #15, December 1999.
- Replacement Parts by **Mark Pedersen**, issue #15, December 1999
- Replacement Decals by **Dave Kolb**, issue #15, December 1999
- Buffing Enclosures by **Jim Janke**, issue #18, December 2000.

(Don't forget the new and recently released Blow Torch book by **Dick Sarpolus** that features articles on refinishing suggestions and techniques.)

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THE TORCH

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THE PURPOSE of BTCA is to preserve the history of blow torches and related equipment, to encourage the identification, classification, and exhibiting of such equipment, also to promote the study and better understanding of operation, purpose, and application.

MEMBERSHIP in BTCA is open to any person sharing its interests and purposes. For membership information, write to: Ron Carr, 3328 258th Avenue SE, Sammamish, WA 98075-9173, email to: roncarr@prodigy.net, or by phone: (425) 557-0634.

THE TORCH welcomes contributions from anyone interested in our purpose. Articles can be submitted in any format and should include supportive literature whenever possible. All submittals should be sent to the Contributing Editor, Graham Stubbs, 17715 St. Andrews Drive, Poway, CA 92064, email to: gstubbs222@aol.com, or by phone at: (619) 487-3025.

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CLASSIFIED ADS

For Sale: A French lamp, marked VESTA, FJ, PARIS. Appears to be in excellent condition with no missing parts or damage. Contact Deborah Boxer Goldberg, 25-27 rue Arthur Rozier, 75019 Paris, France, or phone 01 42 39 96 19.

For Sale: A total of 12 torches sold individually or one lot. Two Turner Brass Works torches, model 206AA, both quart-size, brass with red wood handle. Three Clayton & Lambert quart size, brass fuel tank, one is a model #158. One Detroit Torch, model #36, quart size, brass tank, One Ashton Mfg. Co., model #136, quart size with brass tank. One Montgomery Wards torch, Lakeside model, quart size with brass tank. Two unknown quart size torches, one steel, one brass. All torches are in very good or excellent condition. Interested individuals should contact Ed Butta, 3803 Glenmore Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21206-1717, or phone 410-426-1178.

For Sale: A highly chrome-plated Clayton & Lambert quart size, with red painted wood handle. C&L shield stamped into front of fuel tank with patent dated 1921. The air pump is in the fuel tank and has a "T" shaped pump handle. Soldering iron hook included. Has been in the family since the early 1930's, and overall in very good condition. Best offer. Contact Trudy Miel, 909 Rivard Blvd., Grosse Pointe, Michigan 48230, or call 313-885-5717.

For Sale: A total of 90 torches and lamps that include the following manufacturers: Darlton, Primus, Buflam, Radius, Sievert, Optimus, Monitor, Diamantin, SH&S, Companion, Butler, Anglo Swedish, Bladon, Barthell, Hauck, Clayton & Lambert, Otto Bernz, Express, Vesta, Rega, and Pyrene. Torches are in sizes from one-quarter pint to 2 gallons, and while a few are damaged or incomplete, the majority are in very good condition. Will sell individually or as one lot, with purchaser responsible for freight. For complete details, contact: Harry Goff, 11 Pearson Cres, Bullcreek, Western Australia 6149, or phone/fax to 61 8 9332 0022, or email to colyton@iinet.net.au

For Sale: A must item for all torch collectors! One of our members, **Mark Pedersen**, is selling replacement wooden handles with a brass collar for the older Turner, O. Bernz, and Clayton & Lambert torches. It is the small wooden handle with a small brass collar that slips onto the steel shaft for the fuel control valve. A majority of the original wooden handles are usually broken or missing which detracts from the beauty and value of the torch. You'll need to specify either a 1/4 or 3/16th-hole size, and either black or natural finish. Price is \$2.50 each plus postage. Contact Mark Pedersen, 6112 SW High, Mill City, Oregon 97360, or call 503-897-3101.

For Sale: Member Clayton George had a sand mold made for the hard-to-find early decorative style soldering iron hook that screws into the top of the burner head. Clayton worked with a foundry that makes molds for boat parts, and the company made the mold and cast the part for him. Clayton has available, two machined thread sizes, small and large...the two sizes most commonly used by many of the torch manufacturers. They are \$9.00 each and include postage, (\$8.00 each for 10 or more). Be sure you specify small or large thread. Contact Clayton George at 1003 E. Toledo St., Bellingham, WA 98226-2109, call 360-734-7776, or email at: Cge3182016@aol.com

For Sale: Mr. Decal, **Dave Kolb**, has produced a perfect reproduction of an Otto Bernz decal, complete with accurate coloring, shading, and font type that was widely used by the O. Bernz Company. For those that refinish torches, this is a must for a complete job. Price is \$5.00 each and includes postage to most locations. Contact Dave Kolb, 709 8th Ave. NW, Austin, Minnesota 55912, or call 507-437-3839. Remember that Dave also has a Turner Brass Works Co. decal available, same price.