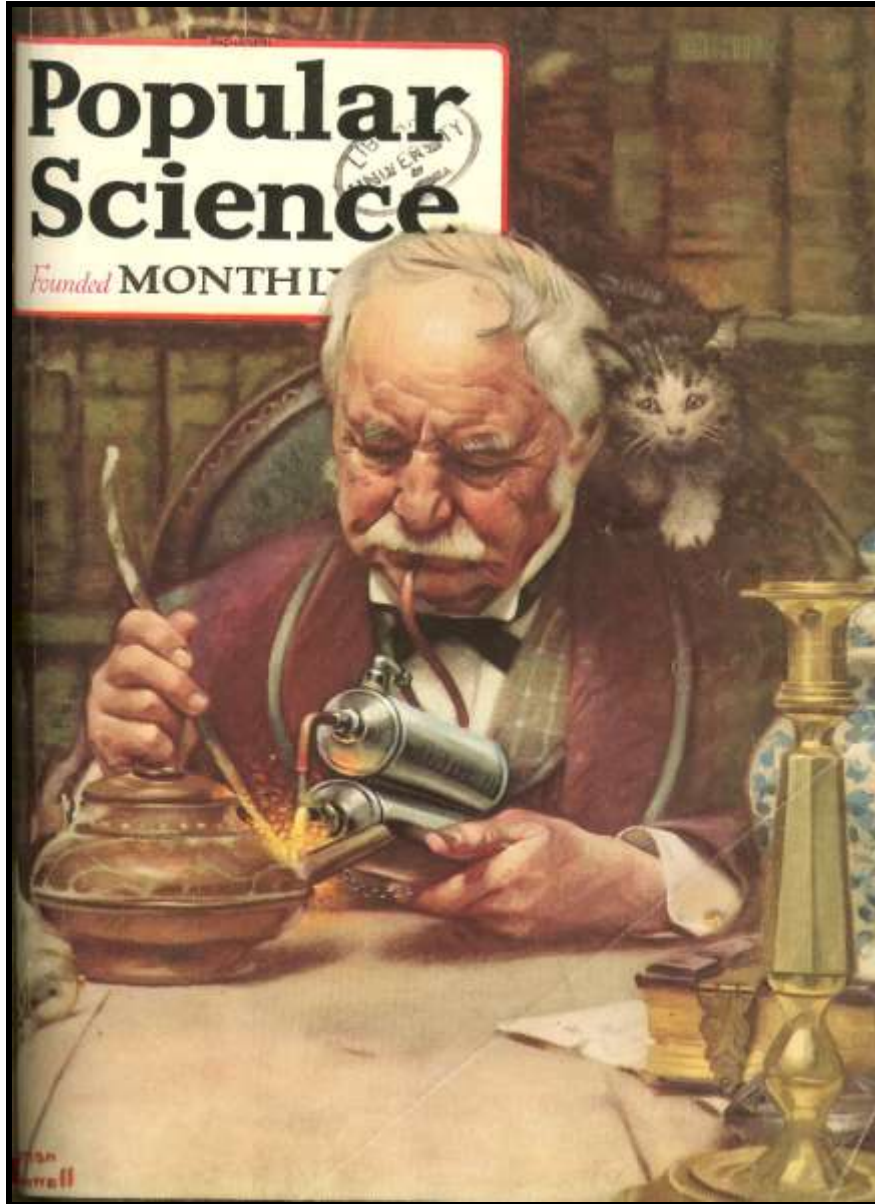


THE TORCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLOW TORCH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION
Issue #37 March 2007



No, we've not changed the name of this newsletter to Popular Science...see page 6 for complete story.

WE HAVE DECALS! SEE PAGE 12.

THE BOOK IS FINISHED! SEE PAGE 9.

10TH ANNUAL BTCA CONVENTION IS PLANNED! SEE PAGE 12.

NEW MEMBERS

Jerry Godin of East Windsor, Connecticut rejoins after a brief absence.

George Husen of Bonifay, Florida has been collecting for just over one year and has accumulated a sizable torch collection in a short time. He and his wife Sandra were at an antique tractor and engine show in Tallahassee, FL and saw the torch display of BTCA member **Leroy Goodwin**...the display is in a transportable trailer and was featured on the cover of the June 2001 newsletter. George & Sandra display their torches & irons in a fifty-foot area at numerous gas engine & tractor shows throughout the southwest. They also collect and display Maytag engines, Wheel Horse & Cub Cadet garden tractors, and other brand-named tractors.

William Palmer of New South Wales, Australia rejoins after a brief absence.

Bob Valich is a new member from Santa Rosa, California.

WELCOME ABOARD NEW
AND RETURNING MEMBERS!



☰ NOTES FROM ALL OVER ☰

Most husbands buy their wives flower bouquets for birthdays and other occasions...not **Vicky Wood-Teeters'** husband, **Doug!** He recently purchased a "bouquet" of four blow torches for Vicky at a junk store in Brooks, Oregon. What a husband! Take note wives of blow torch collector husbands...remember, it works both ways!

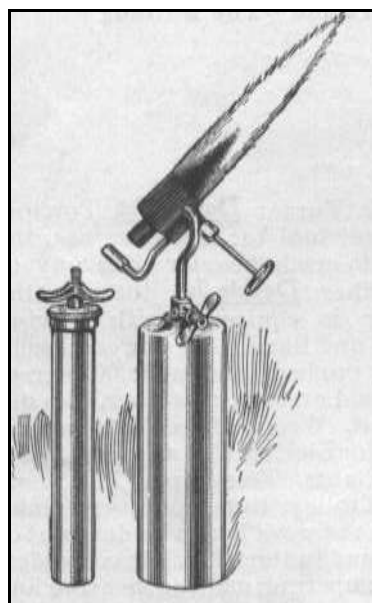
Mark Pedersen sent in an unusual photo of a "portable soup kitchen" utilizing a blow torch. He took the photo during a vacation in Shanghai, and thought it was such an unusual blow torch application. The blow torch fuel tank is strapped to the bike frame under the seat, and a long copper tube extends the burner assembly (hidden from view) to under the large aluminum pot mounted on the back above the rear wheel. Chop sticks and condiments are in the basket on the handlebars.



"Soup Kitchen" bicycle from Shanghai.
Photo by Mark Pedersen

It was suggested by **Fritz Ordelman** we remind everyone...including Fritz, when BTCA annual dues are requested and the amount. We send out dues notices in early October for the following year. We would appreciate if you made your dues payment within thirty days of receipt of the dues letter. Suggested dues are \$10USD for the US and Canada and \$15USD for all other locations. Mark your calendar Fritz!

Lloyd Weber would like to know (and we would like to know as well) if any member owns the separate air pump that was part of the Turner Gasoline Pocket Torch? The torch, circa 1902-1903 was also known as model no. 60 or 81. We are not aware of any known air pump in existence, so if you have one, it is very rare.



Turner Gasoline
Pocket Torch

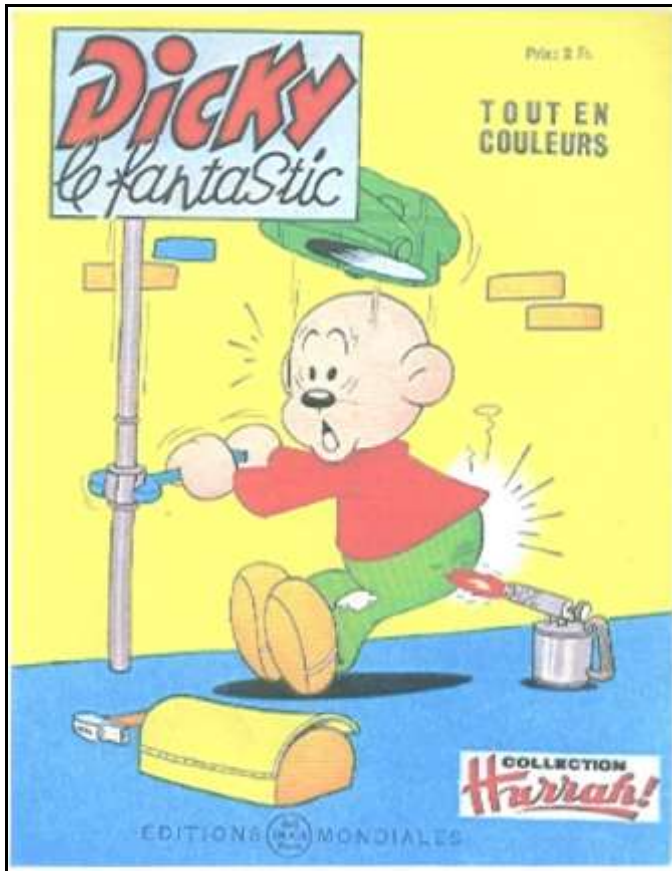
Also known as
model no. 60
or
model no. 81.

The air pump is
on the left side.

Do you have one?

NOTES CONT.

We featured the artwork of BTCA member **Dick Bernard** on the front cover of newsletter #24, December 2002. We then received a New Year's card from **Michel Duval** in December 2006 with a very similar theme. According to Michel, the cartoon is from the cover of a French comic book with the title "Dicky le Fantastic".



Cartoon provided by Michel Duval

We heard from **John Tingle** regarding an Otto Bernz no. 13 Self-Blowing Alcohol Torch. We believe that John has the only no. 13 with the original wood handle. Since the handle was easily removable, most were lost. Unfortunately John's no. 13 is missing the small protective cap over the nozzle that, when in place, prevented fuel from evaporating.

Please let us know if you have a no. 13...with or without the handle and with or without the protective cap.



Otto Bernz model no. 13
Self-Blowing Alcohol Torch
Wooden handle missing...burner cap in place.
Photo by Ron Carr

John also sent in a photo of an unknown torch. From its appearance, the torch has American and European characteristics, but no parts or marks that clearly identify it. If anyone has an idea of its origin, please contact us or John Tingle.



Unknown torch
Photo by John Tingle

NOTES CONT.

Dave Olson sent in a photo of an unusual looking torch device, and would like it identified. Please contact BTCA if you have any information on its identity. It is approximately ten inches long.



Unknown torch
Photo by Dave Olson

Glenn Harrison sent in some great photos of two items of interest. The first is a Turner no. MW-1 Motor Washer, circa 1915, with an intact brass label. The Motor Washer could utilize gasoline or kerosene, and by adjusting the nozzle, the user could select from a fine spray up to an intense needle stream. When the fuel tank was emptied, the tank could be pumped full of air and used for air-drying or blowing dust off machinery.



Turner MW-1 Motor Washer
Photo by Dave Olson



Nameplate from Turner Motor Washer.
Photo from Dave Olson

The second item is an Otto Bernz no. 81 2-quart kerosene or gasoline blow torch. The fuel valve has an unusual location under the burner assembly, and does not appear to be in a very convenient place. The torch was supplied with two fuel nozzles to accommodate either gasoline or kerosene. The second nozzle was stored under the fuel stopper, and was easily exchanged on the burner. Some models also featured a storage place as part of the lower handle support for torch tools and cleaning needles. Model no. 82 was identical but included a soldering iron hook. A photo of Glenn's no. 81 torch is featured in *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES*, a book recently published by BTCA.



Otto Bernz no. 81
Photo by Dave Olson

NOTES CONT.

The torch team of **Chuck & JoAnn Tobin** were successful at a recent auction and purchased a veterinarian's cauterizing set, complete with the original wood case. From the photo, it appears that all of the accessories are included. We believe that the item was manufactured by Hassmann & Dunn in Chicago, IL and distributed by Sharp and Smith.



Hassmann & Dunn Veterinarian's Cauterizing Set
Photo by Chuck & JoAnn Tobin

In issue no. 35 on page 10 of *THE TORCH*, we asked if any BTCA member owned a torch with "BUJI" embossed on the burner assembly. We heard back from **Maurice Jernstedt** with not one, but three versions of the same torch. One in particular is a much older version that has a steel fuel valve handle and a brass top on the air pump. Both items are typically made from a Bakelite type material.



Photo by Maurice Jernstedt



A regular contributor to *THE TORCH* is **Marnik Van Insberghe**, and he sent in a short note indicating that he is selling off some of his collection, but still buying more. Sounds like a conflict of interest! He recently purchased a Barthel blow lamp to add to his collection, and he is going to keep some of his older and rare lamps.

ZEIDLER LAMP & BRASS CO.



Barthel Blow Lamp
Photo by Marnik Van Insberghe

We listed a new torch manufacturer in the no. 18, December 2000 issue of *THE TORCH*, the Zeidler Lamp & Brass Co. of Lomira, WI. We have since been able to locate the US patent associated with Zeidler. On January 6, 1903, US patent no. 717,795 was assigned to Paul J. Zeidler of Lomira, WI, and the patent illustration somewhat resembles a Zeidler torch.

According to the patent description, the inventor designed a very complex burner assembly with telescopic mixing tubes that were controlled by a connected finger rod. Apparently, the mixing tube idea did not make the grade since the final product ended up as a basic fuel nozzle and burner tube assembly.

ZEIDLER CONT.

A photo from **Graham Stubbs** reflects, what we consider to be, a standard Zeidler torch. Graham's torch is marked Zeidler Lamp & Brass Co., Lomira, Wis. and references a patent date of January 6, 1903.



Zeidler Torch
Photo by
Graham Stubbs



Zeidler Torch, top view of fuel tank.
Photo by Charles Smith

Charles Smith has acquired another version of a Zeidler torch. You will see from the photos received from Charles that the torch is somewhat different with an unusual "bulb" design at the base of the fuel tube. We have no idea of its function or purpose.



Zeidler Torch
Photo by Charles Smith

You will also note the tapered burner tube end. Charles' torch also has stamped "BABY TORCH". A similar marking, "BABY", is seen on Crescent Co. torches that look very similar to Zeidler torches.

It is interesting that Crescent torches also reflect the same patent date as Zeidler. We would like to hear from any member that has a Zeidler torch, especially what information is stamped on the torch and construction details.



THE TINKERER

Popular Science, a monthly US magazine, featured a blow torch in an April 1921 issue that the most inexperienced person could use. It did not require a soldering iron, and the torch could easily repair just about any household item. This was an era when people did not readily dispose of damaged items, but actually repaired things...what a concept!

The magazine illustration depicted a man repairing a metal box with the featured torch. The flame heated the repair area to a temperature that allowed the user to apply the solder directly without using a soldering copper. The torch consisted of two separate compartments; one contained fuel topped with a wick arrangement, and the other also contained fuel topped with a small nozzle.

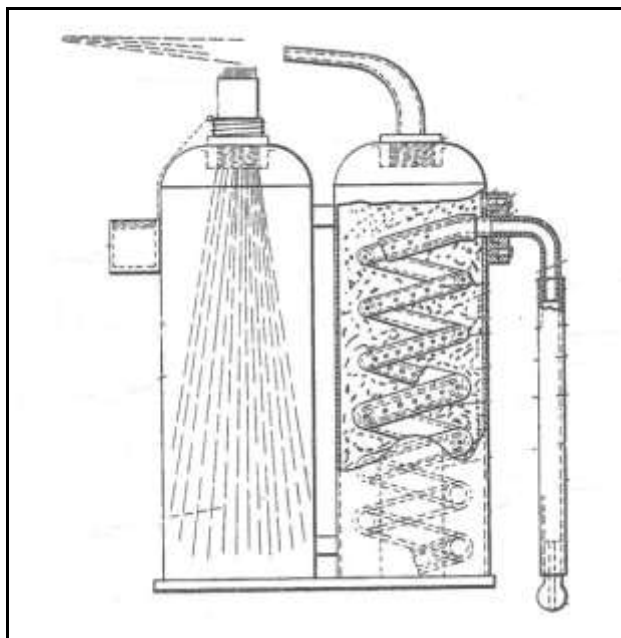
TINKERER CONT.

The user blew through a small rubber hose that directed flammable vapors across the burning wick. A very hot flame was produced that brought most surfaces to a red-hot temperature.



Illustration from an April 1921 Popular Science article.

On August 9, 1921, Charles H. Howell of Columbus, Ohio was granted US patent no. 1,386,871 for a blowtorch...the same blow torch featured in the Popular Science article.



Charles H. Howell Patent

It is interesting that the Popular Science magazine featured the torch four months before the patent was issued, an indication that the manufacturer was producing the torch during the application period. There is no mention of the manufacturer in the article, nor does the patent have a company assignment. Perhaps one of our members has a torch that looks like The Tinkerer's torch?

Norman Rockwell, America's brilliant storyteller artist, painted The Tinkerer in 1921 as one of the many cover pictures for the Saturday Evening Post magazine. (He actually did 323 paintings for as many Post magazine covers.) You will note from The Tinkerer illustration that Rockwell duplicated the same blow torch in his painting as is featured in the article. What is ironic is the Rockwell painting, The Tinkerer, was also featured on the magazine cover in the same issue as the above-mentioned article, yet there is no apparent connection to the cover illustration and article...just a coincidence? The man in the painting, smartly dressed in his smoking jacket and with his kitten looking on.... is repairing a copper teapot.



The Tinkerer, by Norman Rockwell

This entire story came about thanks to a Christmas present that **Ron Carr** received from **Charles Smith**. However, there is more to the story than a Christmas present. Graham Stubbs had mentioned to Charles that he remembered seeing an article regarding a Downey Gravity Feed blow torch in a Popular Science magazine,

Charles decided to research the article. Charles visited his local library and began looking through Popular Science magazines starting in 1922. He made it through the 1924's...and after finding nothing, decided to go backward from 1922. He found the April 19, 1921 issue, volume 98, #4, and discovered the Rockwell illustration of The Tinkerer on the front cover.

Unfortunately, Charles did not find the Downey Gravity Feed article, but was pleased to discover the Rockwell illustration and article. Charles then visited the Rockwell website and discovered that many of Rockwell's paintings were reproduced in various formats including collectible plates. The Fairmont Perfect Porcelain Co. produced many Rockwell collectibles in the 1980's; however, they are no longer in business. Many of Fairmont's creations are available from the Rockwell website as well as other websites dealing in collectibles. Anyone interested in purchasing The Tinkerer collector plate can, at times, find it available at the Rockwell website, or other related websites if you do a general search for Norman Rockwell, The Tinkerer.



Finding inventive solutions to little defects often made the inventor popular with trades people because of the time and convenience the improvements meant to the operator. That is exactly what happened in 1911 when the Sherwood Mfg. Co. introduced their Jacket Improvement for Clayton & Lambert air pumps that were used on many of C&L's torches and other related products.

Apparently, C&L were experiencing problems with their air pump design, and under certain conditions, the air pump check valve would fail and the air pump would ingest gasoline on the up stroke. (Included in a Sherwood advertisement for the Jacket Improvement was the tag line: **DOES YOUR PUMP SUCK WIND OR GASOLINE?**)

In addition, since the check valve mechanism at the bottom of the air pump was lubricated and submersed in the fuel tank gasoline, the lubricating grease or oils were dissolved in the gasoline, and over time the dissolved lubricants would create residue issues with the burner orifice.

Sherwood invented a simple nickel-plated brass sleeve jacket that was screwed over the bottom of the C&L air pump, and along with the operator replacing the gaskets, washers, and pump leathers that were supplied in the kit, the air pump was in better than new condition. The jacket was supplied with a small hole drilled at the top of the brass sleeve just below the threaded area. While numerous articles and advertisements indicate that the Jacket Improvement was PATENT PENDING, we've yet to locate the patent or any reference to a patent date or number.

Does Your Pump Suck Wind or Gasoline?
 The man who uses the Firepot or Torch, knows. We had the same trouble before inventing the JACKET IMPROVEMENT.

FIG 1
GIVE EXACT LENGTH

FIG 2
PAT. APPLIED FOR

FIG 3
AIR

The JACKET IMPROVEMENT protects the check valve and leather from the gasoline.
 Prevents the gasoline from entering and flowing out through the pump.
 Prevents lubricating oil from mixing with the gasoline.
 Don't throw away the old fire pot. Simply substitute Sherwood's Improved Jacketed Pump for the Bulb and the old fire pot will be as good as new.
 Write for our circulars with more detailed explanation.

Jacket Improvement Complete 50c.
 Complete New C. L. Pump With Jacket Improvement \$1.00.

SHERWOOD MFG. CO.
 2127 N. Senate Ave.
 Indianapolis, Indiana

Sherwood Mfg. Co. ad for Jacket Improvement October 1911, the American Artisan

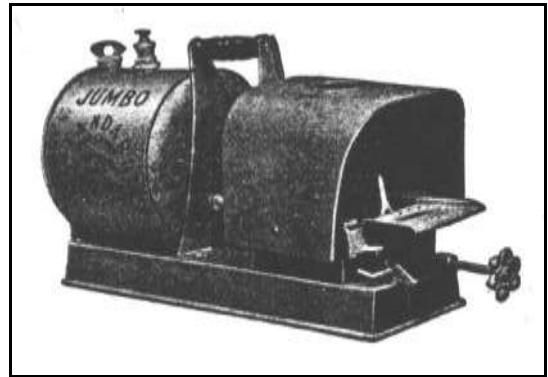
SHERWOOD CONT.

The entire C&L air pump was disassembled and all of the leather and cork washers were replaced with the new material supplied in the Sherwood kit. The brass sleeve was then screwed onto the bottom of the air pump and then the entire assembly was re-inserted into the fuel tank. When the refurbished air pump was operated, the air would now exit from the small hole near the top of the brass sleeve instead from out of the bottom of the original configuration. The Sherwood Co. was so confident with their product that they offered the kit free of charge to anyone. They even included postage for the return of the kit if dissatisfied. The user, if satisfied with the kit, was then asked to make payment.

It is assumed that C&L never produced such a sleeve arrangement, so, the next opportunity you have to inspect your C&L torches and firepots...look to see if you have a Sherwood Jacket Improvement sleeve on your Clayton & Lambert air pump. We believe that the Sherwood Jackets are somewhat rare...so please let us know if you have one!

Charles Smith uncovered all of the details on the Sherwood Mfg. Co. Jacket Improvement in the American Artisan publication, and upon further investigation discovered that Sherwood also produced a line of firepots. Their first model, introduced in mid 1911, was called the STANDARD and utilized a Clayton & Lambert air pump with the improved Sherwood Jacket Improvement. The STANDARD firepot was designed for use for any tradesperson, and featured a double-blast burner assembly. The firepot was also found to be useful in heating rural mail wagons and hucksters wagons during colder weather.... and was more economical than most portable oil stoves.

Late in 1911, Sherwood introduced two additional firepots to supplement the STANDARD model... the JUMBO STANDARD and the SPECIAL STANDARD. The JUMBO was specifically designed for canners and the SPECIAL was adapted for use in heating rural mail wagons and other similar delivery vehicles. One specific advertisement indicated that the JUMBO could... *"heat two three-inch capping steels and a tipping iron red-hot ten hours for ten cents."* There was a special hole in the top of the burner hood to accommodate the tipping iron.



Sherwood Mfg. Co.
JUMBO STANDARD FIREPOT

The last known information on the Sherwood Co. was a small article in a late December 1912 American Artisan publication stating that the Carter Paint Co absorbed the Sherwood Co. The Carter Co. indicated that they would continue to produce the STANDARD line of firepots and Jacket Improvement kits, and Mr. L. B. Sherwood would have full charge of the manufacturing process.



THE BOOK

DONE - FINALLY! The final version of The Book was delivered to The Campbell Printing Co. in Las Vegas, Nevada on March 15. Proof copies of the text and cover material were reviewed and given the green light to print. As of this writing, the printed covers are being shipped between Charles, Graham, and Ron for their signatures prior to the final book assembly and binding process. If you remember, all first subscribers would not only have their names printed in the book, but would also receive their copy with original author signatures. We estimate that we will be shipping out completed books by late April or early May.

The Book title went through a series of changes and the winning title is **VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES, An Identification and Rarity Guide**. We think you will appreciate the cover design and layout that was done by **Michael Hill**, Ron's son. Michael came up with a background design that gives the appearance of flames and fire... an appropriate design for a blow torch book!

To give you an idea of the size and scope of The Book project, it has 506 pages with over 1500

BOOK CONT.

illustrations and photographs, and lists over 350 US and Canadian manufacturers, distributors, and other related company and individual names.

The eighteen-page index lists nearly 2900 references and cross references for torch related names and catalog numbers. The index also includes a five-star rarity rating system and the three authors rated most of the items listed. The authors felt that a rarity system would outlast a monetary values listing since torch values increase rapidly.

Wherever possible we included detailed company historical information, and there is even an interesting history of blow torches that dates back to 1797. You are going to be enlightened and impressed with the history that has been captured thanks to **Charles Smith's** research work and **Graham Stubbs'** writing abilities. We would like to thank the many BTCA members who contributed photographs that are utilized in the book wherever possible. In many cases, their photos were the only known record of a particular manufacturer.

The offer we made for subscribers to the first edition was very successful with 184 individuals subscribing with orders totaling 213 books! There were a number of members that ordered more than one book. We would like to give honorable mention to **Suezy Proctor** since she ordered four books, with three that she designated to be donated to museums or libraries. One selection already made is a book donation to the Spruance Library located in the Mercer Museum in Doylestown, PA...just outside Philadelphia. The museum is a non-profit educational institution that collects, preserves, and interprets historical artifacts that illuminate the history of pre-industrial America.

An interesting short story about the building that houses the museum...Henry C. Mercer started construction in 1913 and completed the building in 1916 with only eight day laborers and "Lucy" the horse. It is a unique building since the entire six-story structure was built of iron reinforced concrete...a construction method not readily adopted by the construction industry until much later. The museum has over 50,000 artifacts, with some of the oldest Native American implements dating to 6,000 – 8,000 BC. If you are ever in the Philadelphia area, it would be worth your time to visit the museum.

You can visit their website for more information at www.mercermuseum.org.

We trust that you will not only enjoy the information contained in the book, but also will find it a useful reference guide in your torch collecting endeavors.

If you have not already ordered a copy of *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES*, and have misplaced the order form sent to you in January, simply send \$49 to BTCA for all US locations, \$62USD for Canada, \$73USD for most of Europe, and \$75USD for Australia. Price includes shipping & handling. Please make your checks or money orders payable to BTCA. You can also order and pay through the Internet at www.PayPal.com. You will have to add \$4 to cover the PayPal fees, and you can access BTCA's account name of BTCA@cox.net. Call BTCA at 702-395-3114 or email to BTCA@cox.net if you have any questions.



BUFFALO

No, it's not home on the range and a buffalo roaming...it's the Buffalo Co., actually the Buffalo Dental Mfg. Co. of Syosset, NY. **Charles Smith** acquired, what he thought was a vintage, alcohol torch, only to find out that the company stills exists and still sells the exact same torch. You can go to the companies' website, www.buffalodental.com and look at their latest no. 116 Product Catalog. The torch is listed on page 44 as item no. 82440...no prices are shown.



Buffalo Torch
Photo by Charles Smith

BUFFALO CONT.

It is advertised as an economical torch that produces a needle-point flame with only a gentle squeeze of the plastic bottle. It is five inches tall, utilizes denatured alcohol, and interestingly enough, since it is so light the base of the fuel bottle is weighted with marbles to prevent tipping. The Kerr Mfg. Co. of Detroit, MI produced a similar torch that was patented in 1952. It operated on the same principle...squeezing the plastic canister provided the air for flame control. There are no known Kerr plastic alcohol torches, nor do we know if the company ever produced the torch.



HESS & SON

We have seen the TINOL torch, manufactured by Hess & Son of Philadelphia, PA, from a few of our members. Hess & Son was one of the earliest companies in the US to market Tinol, a German soldering paste and associated small alcohol torch. Trade literature records from 1910 describe Tinol soldering paste as a finely granulated solder made of tin and lead with each grain coated with a fatty organic material, the mixture having a paste-like consistency. One of the advantages of this compound was that very little heat was required because each grain of solder melted rapidly under low temperature.



TINOL Alcohol Torch
Photo by Charles Smith

A small alcohol torch, also carrying the name Tinol, was furnished in conjunction with the sale of the soldering paste. This small Tinol torch was self-acting, produced a flame about 3½ inches long, and with its handles folded, could easily be carried in a small pocket.

Very little attention has been paid to the small alcohol torch or its material...up until recently when **Charles Smith** acquired two different types. One is highly magnetic and appears to be constructed of tin, or nickel-plated tin. The second torch is totally non-magnetic and appears to be made of thin sheet brass. Even the handles are brass. We would like to hear what our members have regarding brass or tin.



Dobbins mfg. co.

Little is known about the Dobbins Mfg. Co., however, recent discoveries by **Charles Smith** revealed details regarding a self-heating soldering iron that was, up until now, unknown to have been manufactured. We were aware of the Dobbins Co. from patent assignment information, but had no confirmation that they ever produced the patented self-heating iron.

An article in a March 1912 issue of the American Artisan publication described a "Selfheat" tool being produced by the Dobbins Mfg. Co. The article stated, *"the Selfheat soldering tool is an original invention that uses gasoline in a specially designed generator that produces a flame capable of withstanding the most trying weather conditions and throws the heat to the copper point, thereby attaining the highest fuel efficiency."* The removable copper soldering point was hollow by design and weighed less than ordinary soldering points. Because of the hollow copper point design, replacement cost was minimal. As with most self-heating soldering irons, the copper point could be removed and the device could be used as a blow torch. The "Selfheat" device weighed in at only four pounds.

Subsequent ads in late March and April 1912 had an illustration of the "Selfheat" iron that nearly duplicates the patent illustration... a somewhat unusual occurrence since most production models differed greatly from the patent illustrations and descriptions.



Dobbins Mfg. Co. "SELFHEAT"

The US Patent Office issued patent no. 1,024,170 to the Dobbins Co. on April 23, 1912, and in early May 1912, the American Artisan announced the patent issuance in a follow up article. The last known "Selfheat" iron ads occurred in late 1912, and it is unknown how long Dobbins continued to manufacture their only known product. We are not aware of any known Dobbins "Selfheat" irons...if you have one, please let us know.



DECALS DECALS DECALS

We now have a supply of decals for blow torches and firepots. We located a local source of the old style "water" decals...the type that is soaked in water, and then slid off the backing paper and onto another surface. It is the same type of decal used on the original torch with the same application method. We have a limited selection of decals and all are in their near original colors. See the enclosed sheet with actual size black & white versions along with ordering numbers.

Each decal is \$2.95 and includes postage within the US. All other locations, add an additional 80 cents, or a total of \$3.75USD. All decals come with easy to follow application instructions. Please make your checks or money orders payable to BTCA. You can also pay via PayPal; however, you will have to add \$1.00 to cover the PayPal costs. Please be sure that you indicate the specific decals by number and quantity. We are not sure how long the decals will be available since the printer was a bit reluctant to deal with such small quantities, so if you are in need of decals, we suggest you not delay in ordering them.



10TH ANNUAL BTCA CONVENTION

Plans are underway for the 10th Annual BTCA event to be held in Mt. Vernon, Washington during September 2007, and... **Jon** and **Judy Suta** have agreed to host the event. For those of you that remember and attended, Jon and Judy actually hosted the first two events at their home in Mt. Vernon in 1998 and 1999.

Final details have not been completed, however we have selected **Saturday, September 15, 2007**. Mark you calendars and plan a vacation...it's a beautiful area to see and lots of things to do. If you have never visited the Pacific Northwest...now is your chance. Details will be mailed out in the June newsletter



THE TORCH

Official publication of the Blow Torch Collectors Association and is published three times per year; March, June, & December.

Editor
Contributing Editor
Contributing Editor

Ronald M. Carr
Graham Stubbs
Dr. Charles Smith

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: Blow Torch Collectors Association, 6908 April Wind Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89131-0119, email to: BTCA@cox.net, or by phone: (702) 395-3114.

THE TORCH encourages 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 Ron Carr at the above address.

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