



Collector's Corner



In Like Flint: Celebrating Lighters

(NAPSA)—Some people save stamps, others collect baseball cards, yet others hoard the new U.S. quarters as soon as they go into circulation. Perhaps the most passionate collectors, however, are the ones who get “fired” up about a certain kind of lighter.

It's estimated that there are some four million Zippo collectors in the United States and millions more around the world. While fans and admirers have no doubt collected for years, the past 15 years have seen a dramatic rise in interest.

“The most intriguing thing about collecting Zippo lighters is that no one, and that includes the company, really knows the extent of all the Zippos out there in terms of artwork, logos and styles,” says Robin Baumgartner, a collector from Hendersonville, N.C. “With most collectibles you know what exists; it's just a matter of finding it. The fun and excitement of collecting Zippo lighters is that you never know what you might come across.”

A continued fervor for collecting the lighters and related items—including money clips, belt buckles, key rings, tape measures, pocket knives and more—led, in 1995, to the creation of the Zippo/Case International Swap Meet. Since then, the swap meet has become a national and international phenomenon featuring exciting exhibits, rare collections and an opportunity for enthusiasts the world over to add to their valued collections.

Members of the two U.S. lighter collecting clubs—On the



Joan Crawford's lighter was a gift from her husband, the CEO of Pepsi-Cola.

Lighter Side and the Pocket Lighter Preservation Guild—play an active role in the two-day event. Meanwhile, the 2002 swap meet brought more than 5,000 collectors—some from as far away as Australia and Japan—to Zippo headquarters in Bradford, Pa.

“It's really quite remarkable when you sit down and think about it,” says George Duke, company owner and grandson of its founder, George Blaisdell. “I know my grandfather wanted to make a timeless, lasting product, but I'm sure he never imagined the fervor and dedication of those who collect Zippo lighters.”

To learn more about the company, its products or the biennial swap meet, visit the Web site at www.zippo.com.