
The Agricultural and Mechanical Gazette

The News Of The Great North Woods

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LOCAL PIPE CLUB PLANNED

A local Tobacconist, P. J. Howard's Station, has announced intentions to begin a club for local area pipe smokers and collectors. Store manager, Greg Varner, stated that one of the goals of this club will be to help pipe smokers learn more about the art and history of pipes and tobacco. Contact Greg for information on the meeting location and date.

A pipe club also provides a social atmosphere, pipe smoke filled of course, for people with common interests.

Although there has not been a organization of this type in the twin cities in recent years, many well established clubs have flourished throughout the rest of the country. The *Tri-city Smokers Pipe Club* of Saginaw Michigan, The *Conclave Of Richmond Pipe Smokers*, and the *Bayou Briar Pipe Club* in Louisiana are excellent examples of successful clubs which have met regularly for many years.

Future Event

December Meerschaum Show

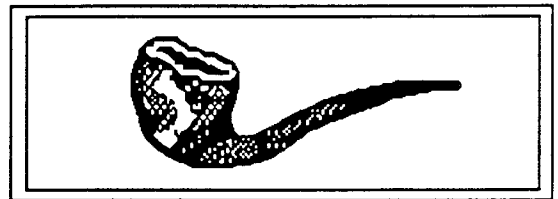
A & M



Gazette

DUNHILL PIPE SHOW

Mark Martin, a representative of Lane Ltd., distributor for Dunhill Pipes, will sponsor a Dunhill pipe and cigar showing at P. J. Howard's Station. The showing will begin Thursday, November 17 and continue through Wednesday, November 23. Three dozen of these magnificent



pipes will be on display for sale.

Mark will be in the shop Saturday, November 19 from 11:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. to answer your questions.

P. J. Howard's is the only Minnesota tobacconist at which the new Dunhill Dominican Republic cigars are available for purchase.

Stop by and experience eighty-plus years of Dunhill excellence.

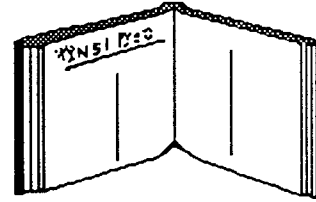
Pipe Smoking Contest

One of the first social activities planned for the new pipe club is a pipe smoking contest which is planned for January of 1989.

The objective of this contest is to determine the one person among the contestants who has the finesse and determination necessary to keep their pipe lit the longest. See **CLUB NEWS** for rules and lore.



Insides



The noted Hungarian refugee and occasional editor, Laszlo McKay, has joined the staff of the Gazette. During a life filled with adventure, he has either fled from or been expelled from many different nations. Unexpectedly relocated as a result of certain recent events, he has agreed to take the reins of this fine vehicle. It is hoped that he will accomplish something here before the Minnesota Clean Air Police catch wind of his latest activities.

Little is known of his background, except for a few, probably unfounded, rumours which will not be repeated in these pages. It is appropriate, however, to reassure concerned readers that all funds have been secured under lock and key. And Mr. McKay is to be compensated in cash on a daily basis.

In return, he will provide five issues each year for our loyal readers.

N. Murray, Publisher

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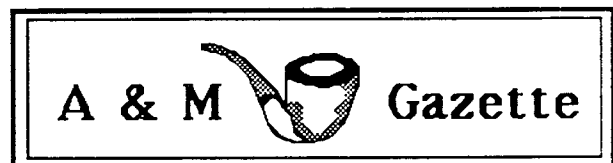
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Submitted Materials

Authors and artists are invited to submit their work to AMG for publication. However, please note that current publishing economics preclude monetary compensation. Only those submissions which include a return envelope and adequate postage will be returned.





Agriculture Mechanics



So, where does it all come from? And then for good measure, where does it all go?

The answers to these two significantly profound questions will provide the basis for this discourse on pipes and tobacco for the next several issues. Several well written books are also available on this subject and they will be reviewed in future articles. For this introductory column a general overview will be presented.

The raw material for the majority of pipes manufactured throughout the world today is briar. Pipes are also fabricated from other materials such as clay, ceramic, aluminum, cherry wood, olive wood, and meerschaum. But this production represents only a minute percentage of the total.

Briar is a variety of uncultivated heath plant which grows primarily in Mediterranean basin countries such as Greece, Algeria, and Italy. The root of the briar is harvested and then stored for curing and drying. It is this material which is carved and machined into the pipes with which we are familiar. Briar root is the common ingredient from the least expensive mass produced drugstore pipe to the exquisite perfection of a hand carved masterpiece. The value of the raw root material is based on the area in which it was grown, the

density of the briar, the grain, and inclusion flaws. In this respect a briar nodule and a diamond have something in common. A single unfortunately located flaw which is not apparent to the craftsman during the initial stages of carving may either reduce the quality and value of a briar block or result in it being discarded. With each cut of his knife, or turn of his lathe, the craftsman faces the risk of revealing one of these concealed inclusions; resulting in a less appreciated pipe.

Erica Arborea

Pipe carving and manufacture is craft common to only a few countries. Artisans in two of these countries in particular, Italy and Denmark, have developed nationally identifiable design characteristics. One can easily recognize a Danish pipe by the free-flowing form while the surface finish and detail work of an Italian pipe announces its origin. This is not to say that pipes manufactured in other countries are mere knock-off copies. It is just that pipes manufactured in Great Briton, France, Canada, and the United States have a more typically diverse variety of design characteristics.

Certain companies have established internationally recognized reputations for quality and design creativity.

Dunhill, Radici and Ser Jacopo lead the short list of these companies. It is important to recognize that they also produce a sufficient volume of product so that they are participants in the international market. Other companies such as Peterson from England, Denmark's Stanwell, and Savinelli of Italy produce a large quantity of above average quality pipes priced for the average consumer.

The level of mechanization used to manufacture pipes tends to be quite high with turning lathes, borers, and buffing machines in use. Machining patterns and jigs are used to ensure an efficient production rate and uniform product appearance. This results in a variety of standard pipe shapes.

Beyond these two classes of producers are the many independent pipe carvers such as Wiley of Tampa, and Lewis of Minneapolis, who tend to be less mechanized in their production techniques and who each provide a very low percentage of the world pipe production. While these carvers produce many different pipe profiles, they still rely on lathes and boring devices for mass material removal. No one is using a scout knife to carve pipes by hand.

The next step in the sequence of events from the acquisition of raw material to the pipe sale to the consumer involves the transfer of product from the factory to the retail store. Each year the Retail Tobacco Dealers Association sponsors a

convention. This RTDA gathering in August of each year provides an opportunity for pipe and tobacco producers to meet with individual tobacconists. Pipe shop owners examine the many different products presented and make appropriate purchase and delivery arrangements. In this way, each tobacconist determines a marketing strategy which will appeal to the unique preferences of the shop's clientele. One shop owner may want to focus the pipe merchandise in the \$25 to \$55 price range while another may be interested in selling only Dunhills, while still another may have a market for Italian pipes. The end result of the RTDA show is that new merchandise is available as required at each retail location.

The management of each pipe shop has the problem of determining who their customers are, and where they are hiding. Management's success in this analysis is measured in the number of satisfied customers who return, time and time again, for that perfect pipe.

You for example, the pipe buying aficionado, are struck as if from out of the blue by a wild impulse to purchase that perfect pipe. Or perhaps a rationalized program of careful planning and financial resource accrual has reached fruition. While we have reviewed in rather general terms how that briar traveled from under an Algerian heath bush to you, future articles will explore each stage of the process in detail.

Holmes and Hobbits

In each issue of the Gazette we will be digging into that body of literature and art which has been described in latin as, corpus literatus et artus ad hic pipa. (sic hujus)

Probably everyone has already noticed that the Christmas season is upon us once again. With any luck, snow blankets the view from your window like a print from Currier and Ives and maybe visions of sugarplums are even dancing in your head. Note however, that this sugarplum thing may be due to that powerful English blend that you have been smoking recently and not to the season.

Anyway, this is a good time to fill that favorite Larsen or Radice with an appropriate blend and consider possible hints that you might casually mention to friends and family about that Dunhill down at the pipe shop. You know, the third one from the right on that second display shelf.

But wait a minute, have you given any thought to other possibilities? What? You haven't? You haven't mentioned that video? You know, the one by Richard Hacker, author of *The Ultimate Pipe Book* and *The Christmas Pipe Book*. The video, *The Ultimate Pipe Video* is just as informative and twice as entertaining as his books. Actually it is fully three times as entertaining and this has been verified through scientific analysis using Taguchi experimental methods. (Forget Box and Hunter)

Richard Hacker is a delightfully impish fellow. His quick wit, ready charm, and enviable knowledge make this video a pleasure to enjoy. From the comfort of his den, Mr. Hacker takes us

around the world in a search for pipe knowledge. He begins by providing basic information on the history of pipes and pipe smoking. Along the way, the viewer learns various methods for pipe care.

<p>The Ultimate Pipe Video Richard Hacker AutumnGold Publishing \$29.95-60 min, \$59.95-100 min</p>
<p>Available from pipe shops or: AutumnGold Publishing P.O. Box 634 Beverly Hills, Ca. 90213</p>

Various pipe making materials are reviewed. Examples of pipes by a variety of pipe makers are presented.

Once the basics have been presented, the viewer is taken on a tour of a pipe

tobacco manufacturer in Denmark. It is impressive to observe masses of tobacco being sliced, diced, boiled, mixed, and packaged.

There is a particular reason why a pipe tobacco manufacturer from Denmark was selected for this presentation. Although the bulk of the world's quality tobacco is grown in the U.S., most of the pipe tobacco is processed in Denmark and then marketed around the world.

Every pipe smoker and collector has probably at one time or another coveted a Dunhill pipe. This video takes the viewer on a tour of the Dunhill factory. There really is nowhere else on earth more fitting to tour than the Dunhill factory. Each step in the manufacture of a pipe is presented.

The last feature aspect of the video is what Richard Hacker wryly refers to as, "The Ultimate Pipe Music Video." While this bit of whimsey may represent an intellectual nadir of sorts, it does have amusing aspects.

The video is available in two versions, a sixty minute feature version and a longer collectors version which includes additional touring and extended conversations with various pipe makers.

We heartily recommend either version to even the most knowledgeable pipe collector.

Club News



Pipe Smoking Contests

Since one of the first planned activities of the new pipe club is a pipe smoking contest, this is a good time and place to review the historical precedents and appropriate etiquette.

The objective of this type of contest is to determine who among the assembled group is able to keep their pipe going the longest without relighting. This seems simple enough. Some contestants have been known to continue slowly puffing for hours, not a contest for speed.

We really don't know when the first contest was held. But it probably wasn't too long after the invention of the pipe. And it was probably some time before the invention of printed language since there is no known written record of the first contest.

Who participates in this type of contest? Men and women of all ages. People just like your pipe smoking friends and neighbors, in fact they quite possibly are your friends and neighbors.

Pipe smokers in many of the European countries gather each year for these competitions.

Pipe clubs and contests have always been extremely popular in countries such as Italy, France, Denmark, and England. This is appropriate since these countries are largely responsible for civilization, certainly as we know it. Prizes are awarded both to individuals and to clubs for their endurance.

The International Association Of Pipe Smoking

Clubs sponsors an annual contest for club members in the U.S. and Canada. The IAPSC provides contest tobacco packages, each weighing three and one-third grams, both for this major league contest and for local preliminary contests. It is interesting to consider that this tobacco blend has a particularly foul taste and aroma. Paul Spaniola, one of the "Elders" of the IAPSC, blends this mixture himself at his shop in Flint Michigan. He takes great pride, and some particular amusement, in this odoriferous accomplishment.

Whether one uses the official contest blend or some other equally acceptable mixture, the goal remains the same.

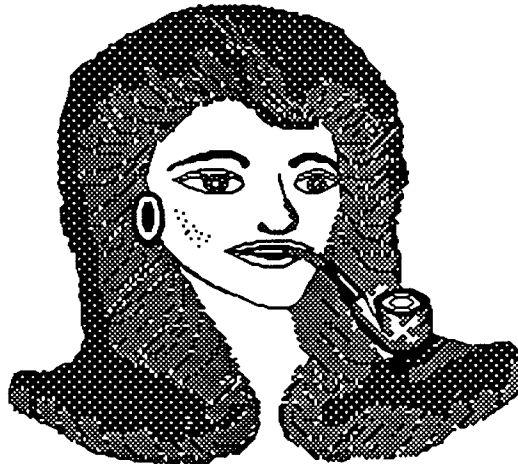
A tobacco packet and two matches are issued to each contestant. The

contest judge ensures that all pipes are initially empty, no cheating please, and then instructs participants to proceed. The contestants are allowed sufficient time to pack the blend into their pipes.

Once everyone is ready, the judge provides a signal to begin. The two matches must be used within one minute of his signal. Upon expiration of the one minute, the contestants are on their own for as long as their tobacco lasts. Relighting is definitely not allowed.

The room soon fills with the aroma of the specially concocted blend as the contestants tend to their pipes. Witty slanders are appropriate at this point.

Observing attentively as pipes expire, the judge and his assistants record the time and



name of the contestant. Early flame-outs have been known to offer false identification in order to protect their reputations. But an alias is equally useless among both friends and former friends. One may even consider exile.

The average pipe smoker does well if he or she lasts for half of an hour.

Of course, those who continue beyond an hour are obviously quite serious about their contest

and pipe smoking skills. The accepted world record for example, for an official pipe contest is 126 minutes and is held by W. Vargo of Flint, Mi.

Pipe smoking contests are great fun for everyone. Bring your favorite pipe and we'll see you there!

Stories 2917012



The Dirigible Pirates Chapter One

Somewhere East of Saginaw

The old revolutionary bides his time, planted in a white wood rocker on the farmhouse porch. He smokes his pipe while surveying his neighbor's wheat field. Billowing waves of bright gold, chased by a gentle breeze, evoke a momentary trance.

He drums a pencil on the cover of his journal. Opening the brittle leather cover of the book, he searches the dog-eared pages for one in particular, probes memory for a singular word, pushes the wire-rimmed glasses which have slid down his long nose back into place, and then jots in a quick notation. The aged fir floor boards flex and creak as he slowly rocks the chair. He is satisfied with the chosen word. Satisfied puffs of aromatic smoke waft away on the currents of a gentle summer breeze.

As the time passes, a silvery mirage floats gently into view on the

horizon. A throbbing hum mingles with the buzz from the bees seeking blossoms among the rose bushes. The old brown dog, lying at the old man's feet, rolls his eyes and then snores back into his nap with typical disinterest. Retired, the dog no longer chases passing dirigibles.

Grandma steps abruptly out onto the porch and follows the old man's gaze.

Attempting to sound as if she is scolding him, but unable to hide her smile, she says, "Now Georgie, I still think that it looks like a giant baked potato. You do remember the baked potatoes that we had with dinner last night, don't you? Remember what they looked like? Some days I wonder about your memory. Other days I wonder what you all were thinking when you built that thing out of army surplus tin foil."

Without reply, he turns off his hearing aid [in the interest of preserving the batteries].

He smiles to himself as he evaluates the concept of foil wrapped baked potatoes, past and present, and returns his attention to the receding grey ghost image, to the increasingly random wheat, and the time when he lived a pirate's life.

Somewhere Else

It was at the end of the conflict, and over a subsequent period of several years, that tired veterans of the war and of the social culture, miscreants, and those who refused to use a then popular toothpaste, gathered at the home of Captain Fred in the Great North Woods.

A hero of mythical proportions and of unknown origin, Captain Fred drew those few remaining dreamers like a lodestone over the trails through that dark protective wood. A northern pole star by which they set their nightly course. Individuals and silent bands trudging the way under the sylvan canopy toward that final resolution.

For George, getting out of the service, graduating from college, and falling off the back of a hitch-hiked stake-rack truck doing thirty miles an hour down a bad gravel road all had certain factors in common. In general, you are broke, out of work, and hurt all over. The advantage to falling off of a truck is that it does not take four years.

Geord rarely sought attention. He appeared intelligent or perhaps merely confused, although appearances are frequently deceiving. He was never without his briar pipe and his shirt pocket was frequently filled with

pens. George liked his pipes and his pens and his pens and pipes liked him. Looking as though he had just fallen off the potato truck, the case with other pirates, he was usually lost.

40th World Pipe Smoking Contest

The World Pipe Smoking Contest which is sponsored by the International Association of Pipe Smoking Clubs, IAPSC, was held in Saginaw Michigan on October 22. Competing against 41 other pipe smokers, Gordon Vogel of Jefferson Town Kentucky placed first with a time of 103 minutes.... Details in the next issue.



Dottles

This concludes the first issue of this publication. It has been fun and material is already being prepared for the next issue which will be available the second week in January.

Future issues will include the continuing story of the Dirigible Pirates and the other features concerning pipes and pipe smoking. Once photography is perfected we may even begin to use some pictures, but of course, not to an excess.

If you have any comments concerning this publication or pipes in general, please write and share them with us.

Until January,

Laszlo, et al.

