

The Stained Finger

T H E S O C I E T Y O F I N K W E L L C O L L E C T O R S

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Short articles
- Pictures included
- Modern Website capabilities
- Where are we going?
- Can we find new members
- How do you like this Newsletter format

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LOOKING TO GO ELECTRONIC

A big challenge facing the SOIC is the cost of producing and distributing our wonderful quarterly member publication. The tough economic times has seen our membership levels fall and with it our revenues have also declined. It is time that we look for alternative methods that will work in this modern world and also allow us to service those members that may not be fully engaged in this increasingly electronic world.

One of the suggestions has been to produce an electronic version of The Stained Finger. The PDF file format would probably be best since it is read using the ubiquitous free Adobe Reader application.

Using a Microsoft application such as Publisher allows the creator to select from a variety of templates. This particular template is named Vintage



Loetz type inkwell

and somewhat resembles the current style of our quarterly publication. Microsoft Word could also be used but most likely would not have all the bells and whistles that are included in Publisher.

One other advantage that has been mentioned is the ability to distribute more frequently. Shorter publications issued on a bi-monthly basis could provide more focused articles and timely communication.

Quarterly or more frequently still leaves the issue of assembling sufficient content for each newsletter. Finding contributors that can forward their input to the editor in a timely manner to maintain a more frequent schedule may resolve itself with increased interest.

We can still mail copies to those that cannot receive the publication electronically. Sending out fewer newsletters would greatly decrease costs.

ONLINE MEMBERSHIP MANAGEMENT

Membership management is currently labor intensive due to our manual processes. How can we ease the burden of volunteers and at the same time increase the satisfaction of our members? Electronic membership management may be the answer.

There is a cost to the SOIC associated with using modern online member management software. The current cost is \$50 per month for the test site found at soicmember.com, but the features may be well worth the investment.

Features include automated payment and registration, a members only section with a private directory, forums both public and private, news blogs both public and private, and photo albums where we could have pictures of inkwells and events. Visit the site now

PARIS CITY OF LIGHT

I really could not resist the urge to pen a few words about Paris when I saw the picture at the right of the Eiffel Tower. My wife and I have been to Paris twice now and the one thing we know is that it has not been enough!

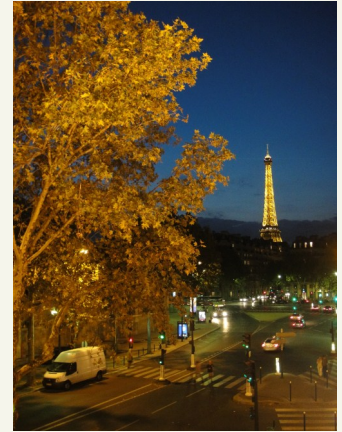
Paris is a city where you can really relax and enjoy life. A flâneur is a "gentleman stroller of city ... "saunterer", "loafer" Itself comes from the French verb *flâner* .

The parks and museums are wonderful. The boulevards are wide and inviting. The architecture is entrancing . We love to visit the shops manned by the individual vendors. They do have big department stores, but the individual shops and the open air markets give you a taste of the people.

The cafes are a treat. When you sit in a café you enjoy life. The table is yours for the

duration (a hard thing for most Americans to comprehend). Management is not interested in turning over their tables, you are there to enjoy the experience.

There is only one thing that beats the cafes of Paris and that is a picnic. Pick a spot on the bank of the Seine or find a bench in one of the lovely parks. Relax, take in the ambience of the city and be Parisian for a moment.



Did you know the tower twinkles at night?

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

"This is one of the most unique gifts that I have ever received!"

Want to possibly create a new collector? Christmas just might be the perfect opportunity to share your passion with a loved one or close friend.

Maybe you find that perfect inkwell while shopping or maybe when you peek within your own collection you will find a special inkwell that you know will spark that twinkle in

the recipient's eye and set them on the path to collecting inkwells or desk sets.

It is strange how we each get started. My wife and I went antiquing with my sister and husband in search of farm tools and such to decorate our log home. My wife found a perfume bottle that touched her and she was off on a new passion.

Helping my wife look for perfume bottles got me looking at glass items and more importantly at all sorts of other collectibles. Wham! There it was. A cute little metal inkwell . It was a mottled brown color with a pen rest and flip lid over the glass inkwell. The cutest little bird that resembles a sparrow was sitting next to the ink pot.

TO MERGE OR NOT TO MERGE ?

Should we merge with the Pen Collectors Club? What even drives the question?

Membership challenges and the availability of volunteers to keep us organized and moving forward have placed the question on the table. We, and the Pen Collectors

both need to examine how the relationship would work.

In my mind we would become a sub-group, if they have such a thing. I do believe that we would find additional people interested in inkwells and that many of our current members would

find pens an interesting addition to their realm of collecting. The alternative is to stay a small, tight-knit organization and continue to look for ways to grow our membership. One thing for sure is if we do not hang together then we will surely fold.



Pen Collectors of America Logo

WHERE ARE THE YOUNG PEOPLE?



Are they happy for inkwells?

The future belongs to the young!

Just what is the secret to capturing ones imagination? Are inkwells, ink, pens, and handwriting going the way of the horse? It may seem that way with all the talk of using modern technology but how many young people wouldn't like to spend some quality one on one time on a horse?

The one thing to keep in mind is if they are younger than we are then they are young people. That is just the way that math works. How do we catch them up in this collecting craze?

Perhaps we can present the puzzle of how one communicates without the aid of electricity. We could show how far back in history the art of writing has existed and that only the most educated could exercise the skill. Maybe we should appeal to some from the engineering perspective how we have tried to build a better mousetrap to preserve the precious ink. I like the art aspect. The decorative whimsical nature certainly catches my attention and lightens my wallet.



"Spending time with others of a like mind build's life long bonds of friendship"

CONVENTIONS OR GET-TOGETHERS?

Certainly one of the goals of an organization is to try to come together from time to time. It builds camaraderie and allows the exchange of experiences and information in a very meaningful way.

The scale most certainly is the deciding factor. The larger the number of people the greater the formality required. With a

smaller group the informality naturally allows more give and take. Adequate planning is required both to ensure that things run smoothly and that everyone has a good time. It is the level of detail required and the expense incurred with each format.

Until our numbers grow we would probably be best served

to concentrate on a more informal style get-together. If we could organize regional groups or chapters it would facilitate having face to face encounters and start a bonding process.

Group outings to large antique shows could be organized or even attendance at a Pen Collectors Show. (it appears that membership is not required)

A FEW WORDS ON FORUM PAGES

Forum pages should give us the ability to select a particular topic and then let each member comment with all comments visible to all viewers. This should be a much cleaner method of discussion than forwarding or replying to emails. Each comment should be listed only once and time stamped and maintained in

chronological order. Forums can be made public on the main page or can run in the members only section. Until everyone has their IDs and passwords for SOICmember website a public forum topic will be posted so anyone can add a comment. If it looks to be a problem then the public forum topic can be removed.





Organization

THE SOCIETY OF INKWELL COLLECTORS

Primary Business Address
Address Line 2
Address Line 3
Address Line 4

Phone: 555-555-5555
Fax: 555-555-5555
E-mail: someone@example.com

Business Tagline or Motto

This would be a good place to insert a short paragraph about your organization. It might include the purpose of the organization, its mission, founding date, and a brief history. You could also include a brief list of the types of products, services, or programs your organization offers, the geographic area covered (for example, western U.S. or European markets), and a profile of the types of customers or members served.

It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.

PHOTO ALBUM ORGANIZATION

One of the many things we will need to do if we adopt a new member only site is learn how to organize and identify inkwell photos. I am sure there will be almost as many opinions as we have members.

Several approaches can be taken. A volunteer could step forward. A new committee could be formed. We could use the forum tools to start a discussion and solicit ideas that could then be voted upon.

Procedures will need to be developed to control what is posted and identify the source of submissions. All of it will be a fun and exciting. It might even start a discussion of the best way to

photograph our inkwells and other collectibles. While I have taken a few pictures, I look forward to the day when I have recorded every one.

Our current website has pictures of inkwells under the resource section. In the "Members Picks" section you will find Jane's, Jack's, and Ed's picks. The new format might allow each member to add their own special picks so we can get an idea of the particular taste of each member.

We should start thinking now about how this particular web site feature is best used. To have both a public and member only picture areas gives us expanded options.



Pallme-König Inkwell