

THE Automatic Knife Resource Guide and Newsletter

Vol. 10 No. 4



DEVOTED TO SPRING STEEL SINCE 1992

And now a word from your editor:

Hi Folks,

Now this is indeed a milestone where THE NEWSLETTER is concerned—With this issue THE NEWSLETTER has completed our first decade. Gad zooks! Ten years. An early contributor to THE NEWSLETTER, Bubba Kahn was our effervescent show correspondent for many years—I know I’ve mentioned it before, but a conversation he and I had about nine and a half years ago now bears repeating. At that time with just a couple issues of THE NEWSLETTER under my belt, its longevity was the subject of speculation—Bubba tossed off somewhere between a query and a statement, “how much can you write about switchblades?”. Jeeze...I sure as heck could not have imagined I’d have anywhere near a few years worth, let alone ten. Well the reality is, for a publication whose reason for coming into existence was the near total lack of anything in print about spring steel, THE NEWSLETTER has put plenty to print and paper. And my truth is, there’s much, much more.

I recently checked to see that I my own archives were replete with every issue of THE NEWSLETTER. Before I wound up depleting an issue or so without saving one for me, I took the time to go through them chronologically. By the time I got up to the third year or so, the wealth of information on such a rare subject gave me a huge sense of pride. Sure, THE NEWSLETTER is not a slick rag like Time, SOF, or Blade, etc. But nor has that ever been the goal. Each issue of THE NEWSLETTER is an individual presentation celebrating the spirit of the world of spring steel. Oh sure, some issues may appeal more than others, but that’s to be expected, and there’s nothing wrong with that. But from the very start, each issue is created with every effort to provide a very unique group of individuals with a very unique forum—A touchstone of sorts with other like-minded individuals who share an appreciation for these mechanical sculptures that go “click”.

Well, I may be blowin’ my own horn here—But I don’t care how it sounds. I am sure proud of this publication—Now I’m the first to admit this is not a singular effort—I couldn’t put an issue together with the generosity of some other folks who contribute their thoughts, time, and energy, as well as sharing their “finds” with me. Thank you Bubba, Brad, Myron, Jerry, Skip, Dan, Pete, Mr. Bill, Josh, Rendon, John, and to every one else I can’t recall at this moment, thank you so very, very much as well.

Indeed, THE NEWSLETTER is more than any other publication, a rare voice—One committed to keepin’ on keepin’ on. I tell ya Bubba...how much? Plenty! And now we’re heading into our SECOND decade, with lots more to say on the subject.

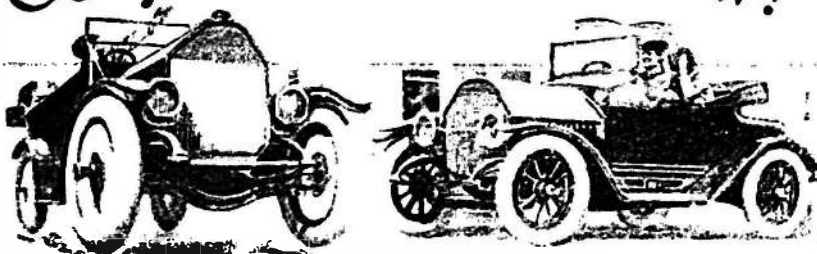
And now Dear Readers, about that subject—You’ve got Vol.10 No.4 in your hands with a cover feature on a fellow whose craft is influenced by the most well-known icon of spring steel, the traditional Italian switchblade—The picklock. Paul Panak is doing some cool work. • On to the highest of high-tech, from the left-coast the folks at Pro-Tech have also been bitten by that Italian influence—So much so that there’s an obvious flavor of the traditional Italian blade grind, a bayonet influenced design from these makers. They call it the “Godfather”. • Prof. Fuller checks in with a sad farewell to fellow switchblade fan, another’s profile, and the insight we’ve come to expect from him. • A new auto from Germany with a novel mechanism. Way, way cool. • Dr. McMickle as he is best at doing, presents an example of spring steel from a century long-gone. Yet another switchblade that has come through more than a hundred years and is still a gem. • A new Rumble is yours—And much, much more. You’ll see.

Enjoy the issue,

Sheldon

Get yourself to a SHOW!

Knife shows and *Knife & Gun* shows are among the best venues for discovering that "rare treasure". The possibilities are endless. Like anything else however, some shows are better than others. Those of you that frequent shows on the lookout for switchblades know that patience and perseverance can definitely pay off. If there is a



show coming up that you would like to share with your fellow readers—by including it in this calendar—you are most welcome to do so at no charge. Just let THE NEWSLETTER know the *who, what, and where*—along with any details you would like to add. And now...
it's SHOWTIME!

Showtime 2002

JANUARY 12-13 SALEM, OREGON. Great Northwest Knife Show. Reed Opera House. Info: Kim Vestal 800-661-8849.

JANUARY 25-27 CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE. NKCA Show. Hamilton County Convention & Trade Center. Info: 423-892-5007

JANUARY 25-27 NOVI, MICHIGAN. Wolverine Knife Collectors Club Show. Novi Expo Center. Info: Pat Donovan 810-247-5883

FEBRUARY 1-3 LAS VEGAS, NEVADA. 10th Annual Las Vegas Classic Knife Show. Riviera Hotel & Casino. Info: 702-553-2233

FEBRUARY 15-17 LAKE LAND, FLORIDA. 24th Annual Gator Cutlery Club Show. Lakeland Center. Info: Dan Piergallini 813-754-3908

FEBRUARY 15-17 LEWISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA. 14th Annual Keystone Blade Knife Show. Info: Marylyn Kepner 570-584-4835

FEBRUARY 16-17 LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS. Arkansas Knifemakers Association Custom Knife Show. Little Rock Hilton Inn. Info: Roger Massey 870-779-1018

FEBRUARY 22-24 BUENA PARK, CALIFORNIA. Knife Expo '02. Sequoia Athletic Club & Conference Center. Info: 818-368-7110.

FEBRUARY 23 OZARK CITY PARK, MISSOURI. 5th Annual Spring Cabin Fever Knife Show. Ozark City Park 4H Community Bldg. Info: Randy Long 888-584-8138

MARCH 14-15 DUNNELLON, FLORIDA. Riverland Knife Collectors Club Show. Info: Bob Ferring 352-489-5027

MARCH 15-17 CINCINNATI, OHIO. NKCA Show. Robertson

Convention Center. Info: NKCA 423-892-5007

MARCH 16-17 GODFREY, ILLINOIS. St. Louis Area Show. Rivr Bend Arena. Info: Dale Rice 18-377-8050

MARCH 16-17 SAN PEDRO, CALIFORNIA. 2002 ABS West Clinic. Ft. MacArthur Museum. Info: Bill Herndon 661-269-5860.

MARCH 22-24 JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN. 19th Annual Badger Knife Club Show. Holiday Inn Express. Info: Badger Knife Club 414-479-9765

APRIL 19-21 LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY. NKCA Louisville Show. Holiday Inn South Convention Center. Info: 423-892-5007

APRIL 20-21 EUGENE, OREGON. 27th Annual Oregon Knife Show. Lane County Convention Center. Info: OKCA 541-484-5564.

APRIL 27-28 LUGANO, SWITZERLAND. Espolama Knife Show. Palazzo Dei Congress. Info: Fabio Bianda 0041-91-7516421.

MAY 4-5 JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI. Mississippi Knife Collectors Association Gun & Knife Show. Mississippi Trade mart. Info: 601-362-0580

MAY 31-JUNE 2 MARIETTA, GEORGIA. 21st Annual Blade Show & International Cutlery Fair. Cobb Galleria Center. Info: 715-445-2214.

JUNE 6-8 PIGEON FORGE, TENNESSEE. Greatest Knife Show on Earth #23. Grand Hotel. Info: Parker's 423-892-0448

JUNE 7-9 FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA. 3rd South Florida International Knife Show. Embassy Suites Hotel. Info: Craig Bozorth 305-858-5635.

JUNE 28-30 SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI. NKCA Springfield Knife Show. Ozark Empire Fairgrounds. Info: 423-892-5007

Back-Issues

Well Folks, in honor of THE NEWSLETTER being in its tenth year, here is an offer for ALL READERS to purchase back-issues at a considerable discount. The single-issue price is still \$10. But don't stop there! Check out the pricing at the right. Back issues are in very limited supply. They are all from the original printing. No issues have ever been, nor will ever be reprinted.

(All prices here include first-class Airmail postage)

Vol.2 No.3

- Tour world class switchblade manufacturers HUBERTUS in Germany.
- Rarest Case switchblade—The ZIPPER!
- A cool spread of Boker switchblades.
- The 18th annual OKCA Show in review.

Vol.4 No.2

- Customized Hubertus
- 33cm Latama "how-to" restoration with spectacular "before & after" shots.
- Soviet handmade switchblades
- Microtech side and front-openers

Vol.4 No.3

- New Boker "Speed-Lock"
- Bubba Reviews 20th Annual OKCA Show
- Rare Chinese Govt. issue switchblade
- *The Switchblade Sisters* review by Prof. Fuller

Vol.4 No.4

- MicroTech Front-openers and their knock-offs compared.
- Dr. McMickle knocks your socks off with this gem of an antique switch!
- Bubba Shares a whale-of-a-tale from this years Blade Show in Atlanta.
- "Rockin' a Hard Place"—Spring Steel wizard Bill McHenry speaks out

Vol.6 No.3

- 19th Century switchblade knife pistol, a Reese Torrit "before & after" restoration.
- New "Pen Blade" release switchblade from Hubertus.
- Exotic antique spring steel from Prof. Pete McMickle.
- New production knife-pistol chambered for percussion.

Vol.7 No.3

- Spectacular humongous display switch from the 19th century graces the cover.
- Prof. Fuller waxes philosophically on favorite subject, switch-flicks and "The Cross and the Switchblade".
- "Interview with The Viper"—Bill McHenry does some Q&A with custom knifemaker Butch Vallotton.
- Spring Steel gems--flat-guard Latamas,
- mint Case lever and much, much MORE!

Vol.7 No.4

- "Jerry Rados-Master of the Forge". Wait'll you see this gem on the cover and more from this superb bladesmith!
- Spectacular 19th century Sheffield switchblade from Dr. McMickle.
- Bill McHenry reports on "Switchcon One" in his latest installment of "The

Rumble".

- Mini-switches--folding-guard Italians--high-tech coil-fired French switches--New GT, ProTech and much, more!!!

Vol.8 No.1

- Some cool new dazzlers from MicroTech.
- "California Legal"—High-Tech mini's from G-T and ProTech.
- The Bayou's "Wizard of Spring Steel", Charlie Dake—in THE RUMBLE.
- The VIPER's creator tickles your imagination—An outstanding front opener!

Vol.8 No.2

- A NEW switchblade from the illustrious PUMA. (For real, but a disappointment)
- Handcrafted custom switchblades from the other side of the planet—Lithuania
- Elegant oldies, but goodies. An assortment of rare vintage spring steel.
- Dr. Mickie's back with a pristine turn-of-the-century salesman's sample.

Vol.8 No.3

- Outstanding! Honest-to-goodness c.1920s Italian PICKLOCK.
- Finally—High-tech autos for Southpaws!
- Restoration wizard Reese Torrit works his magic on a 33cm Latama. Gorgeous!
- Rare vintage Spanish OTF from the World-Class WEST COLLECTION!

Vol.8 No.4

- We begin with a smorgasboard of spring steel on the cover! Great stuff....
- Professor Fuller presents a pretty cool auto of his own—Lookin' for its origins.
- W.J. McHenry goes Great Gonzo in this issue's latest & greatest, "The Rumble".
- 38cm picklock w/catalog shot from 1920s—as well as mini-vintage picklocks. All this, new high-tech, antique and more!

Vol.9 No.1

- Outstanding custom—Gold inlays intricately engraved—Kicks off the cover.
- Solingen's premiere switch maker shows off way cool prototype folding guard design.
- New high-tech spring-steel—in mini-size too. The illustrious firm of Al Mar weighs in with a winner.
- Along with great stuff from Prof. Fuller, Dr. McMickle and a rambling "Rumble".

Vol.9 No.2

- Superb vintage KABAR lever action graces the cover.
- Dr. McMickle shares a 19th century switch that has no equal. An

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Highlights—

extraordinary gem!

- Exotic customs for southpaws and the rest of us. Way cool ambidextrous release!
- New spring steel from ProTech and more Great Gonzo served up—THE RUMBLE

Vol.9 No.3

- A NEW CONTEST! Original Hardcover editions of the Myers' book to the winner!
- A variety of "tactical" cnc, coil-fired autos from Al Mar, MOD, Paragon, etc.
- An end of an era—Boker's stalwart #715 is to be no more.
- Way cool Damascus from bladesmith, John C. Richter. The latest RUMBLE and MORE!

Vol.9 No.4

- Dr. McMickle selects a couple of museum quality autos to amaze us again.
- A spread of cool new minis—including a cool front-opener from Pro-Tech.
- Prof. Fuller begins some long needed research for all—Picklock tang stamps.
- Oh yeah, ANOTHER new contest to win a rare original hardcover Myers book, and much, MUCH MORE!

Vol.10 No.1

- Lots of new High-Tech autos from US manufacturers.
- Start 'em young! Switch-like toys for kids. Portray as tool—Not weapon.
- Prof. Fuller's received some great feedback on his tang stamp project.
- Another 19th century gem from Dr. McMickle—An inside look at a different kickspring—A new Rumble and MORE!

Vol.10 No.2

- Very special "Automatic" on the cover—With a cool "message".
- Lots of great new high-tech models from Al Mar Cutlery, Pro-Tech, Dalton and others.
- A look inside at an unusual kickspring mechanism.
- Prof. Fuller, Dr. McMickle and a new Rumble round out this great issue!

Vol.10 No.3

- "Black Beauty", picklock extraordinaire! A very cool feature w/original 50's ads.
- Prof. Fuller takes you to the Blade Show in Atlanta.
- A very special 19th Century feature from Knife World's editor Mark Zalesky.
- New high-tech spring steel from Dalton, Pro-Tech and lots, lots, MORE!

It is with heavy heart that I take up my pen and report that the world of automatic knives has lost one of its most loyal and enthusiastic members. Regular readers of this column will remember Larry-Paul about whom I wrote a column in issue 8:2. He died on September 9, 2001 at the age of 53. Larry-Paul loved four things: Harley-Davidson, trucks, his six cats, and automatic knives. His family having preceded him in death, Larry left his possessions to friends and charities, particularly cat shelters. He left his two Harleys to his riding mates, his guns to his shooting friends, his truck memorabilia to his trucker buddies, and his cats, with an ample provision for their support to a cat-loving friend. His knives he left to me.

Although Larry had told me that he wanted me to have his knives if anything happened to him, I never expected that moment to arrive. Frankly, I hope no one will think me insincere, but I feel a bit uncomfortable. What may seem to some like a windfall, seems to me more of a responsibility. The first thing I thought was that I would keep Larry's knives separate, identified as his collection and not mine to dispose of. Then I wondered what I would do when my time comes. So I happened on an idea that appeals to my sense of tradition and community. Though I intend to keep the two knives that Larry told me he particularly wanted to have, there are many duplicates in our collections. What I propose to do—and I'd accept advice—is to each year sell one or two of Larry's knives to support an award—a plaque and a modest honorarium—in his name to be given to a collector, dealer, or manufacturer who has performed some meritorious service to the world of automatic knives. I don't want to bear that responsibility alone, so perhaps a small committee could help each year. The services for which such an award would be given might consist of an innovative design, an outstanding web site, a publication of some sort, outstanding repair work, legal services, or other contributions. I'd appreciate some feedback on this. I'd like to see the first Larry-Paul Millman Award ready to present at the Blade Show

in Atlanta in June. The switchblade crowd meets informally every night anyway, so a brief award session could be worked in easily enough. If you think I'm nuts, say so. If you like the concept, let me know. If you have a better idea, tell me.

...

The original focus of this issue's column was a sketch of one of the most interesting characters I've met at the Blade Show and subsequently spent time with on the phone and through e-mail. If Geff, AKA Knife

What happens is this: Ken and Vince and I the first year, and Ken and Vince and Mickey and Debbie and some folks whose names I have forgotten the second year, listen to Geff's narrative of the knives he has brought with him. Every knife has a story. And listening to that story you'll learn a great deal about manufacturers, dealers, knives, and the people in the knife game from coast-to-coast. Each year Geff brings a different group of knives, some of them blades we've seldom seen or heard about—and tang stamps? He has more "tang" stamps than the Kraft Corporation.

SPRING STEEL - The Writes Of **by Professor Dan Fuller**

Professor Fuller enlightens and inspires legions of university students with the infinite rules, regulations, uses, mis-uses, ups, downs, ins, outs, why and wherefore of the English language. (And your Editor to boot!) Professor Fuller has generously shared the fruits of his enthusiastic research with the readers of **THE NEWSLETTER**--From his search for the origins of the word "switchblade" to his monumental quest for examples of the visual portrayal of spring steel in the film entertainment industry. Professor Fuller's review of "The Switchblade Sisters" in a past issue of **THE NEWSLETTER** was a veritable tour de force of keen observation, destined to keep Joe Bob Briggs slappin' his knee 'til the cows come home! (And also have many of you rushing out for copies of the flick!) I feel honored to have Professor Fuller on board **THE NEWSLETTER** as a regular contributing columnist.-EDITOR

222, isn't quite an international man of mystery, he is at least a national man of mystery. He's a bail enforcement agent, (known in dramatic television shows as a skip-tracer or bounty hunter). He packs heat, but he loves knives, trucks, and his '67 GTO. He knows an immense amount about folding knives of all types, and he most certainly does not suffer fools easily. Disagree with Geff and you'd better be on firm ground; try to con him and your firm ground had better be solid concrete. Which is not to suggest that Geff isn't a gentleman and a scholar, which he most certainly is.

When many of us met Geff for the first time in Atlanta back in 2000, we weren't quite sure who he was. We just knew that he owned a lot of knives and knew a lot about them. Just how many he owned and how much he knew were to be determined at the show. After dinner on Saturday night, we arranged to meet Geff in his suite. What followed was a night so special that we did the same thing this past Blade Show, and I expect that we'll do it again this coming June.

It's on its way to becoming a tradition.

One of the reasons that Geff is not as well known as Brad West or Jerry Skelton is that he rarely sets up at a show. He describes himself as a collector, not a dealer, and remembers that one time he when he did have a table at the Oregon show: "I sold ten knives and bought 150." Which is not to say that Geff doesn't sell his knives. In fact, he has a data base of some 300 buyers, many of whom have never been seen at a knife show, who collect rare, high quality pieces. But, he emphasizes, "I sell to no one I don't know." And I should mention here that Geff does not collect only autos. He also has some four to five hundred folders and is conversant with Case, Buck, and other primo manufacturers.

So how does someone begin to amass a thousand knives? Well, Geff got an earlier start than most of us. He was fortunate to live on the east coast where a lot of knives had gone into hiding after 1958, and he has the energy, single-mindedness, and charm to ferret them out from under the counter or inside the safe or under the bed. But let's let him tell it. "I got my first switchblade in the early 1960s when I was 17. My brother brought me home from Germany a spear blade button release marked 'rostfrei.' I carried it for years until I thought it had been stolen at a party—and then found it three years later in the pocket of a coat I had worn. I still have it.

"By the time I shipped out for Viet Nam two years later, I had amassed about 30

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switchblades. Of course, working in close proximity to law enforcement was an advantage, but there is nothing like pushing a button and seeing a blade come out to keep you going.

While the rest of us who wanted to collect switchblades in the 1970s were gnashing our teeth and cursing Senator Kefauver, Geff was going to antique shops all over the east—"about 1975 or '76 I became obsessed"—and coaxing dealers to sell their knives to him. You may remember some issues back when I asked what happened to all the knives that were on dealers' shelves when the ban hit? Now I have the answer; Geff bought 'em: "you wouldn't believe how many of these guys had a roll of knives under the counter."

So does Geff actually own a thousand knives? Well, if you add the switchblades to the folders he has at least that many. Of course, he is always wheeling and dealing,

finding knives for those collectors who have more money than time (wouldn't that be nice), lending knives to photographers, and providing ever more tang stamps to yours truly. Somehow, though, he always ends up with more knives than he started with. On the first day of our telephone interview, he had just found several knives he had not seen before: a false stag back-lock coil-spring stiletto, a new tang stamp, and an unusual transitional Italian. But that's old news by now; another 50 knives will probably have passed through his hands by the time you read this—including the Raimondo family he mentioned on the Switchblade Forum (and the new stamp, "Raimondo Extra.")

Geff has been around knives enough to have formed some strong opinions about various aspects of the hobby. First, he says that he has never seen a truly "mint" old knife but has seen hundreds of "near-mint" old knives. Second, he is trying his hand at

customizing and has had some good luck so far, though he wonders about the wisdom of putting \$100 of work into a \$40 knife. Still, he has seen some beautiful knives result. He just hopes that it is always made clear that the knife is clearly identified as a "customized production knife" and not a custom knife. As to the question of restoration, he feels that a knife at most loses 10-15% of its value when restored and that with some knives it is simply necessary. His only problem is with guys "who don't own up to the fact" that a knife has been restored.

As a parting word, Geff says that he finds something new every week, and that whenever he thinks about abandoning his relentless search, he remembers his mantra: "There's always another knife." (We will feature Geff's collection itself in a future issue.)

Email: dfuller@tusc.kent.edu

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Of course, almost all of you picklock fans will recognize the "ROSCO" logo just above here. One of those tang stamps that graced vintage Italians from the 1950s. I reduced a couple old catalog pages for your edification and enjoyment. HOWEVER, no matter how obvious, every time I publish a vintage switchblade ad, there's always the rare few folks whose kicksprings just don't fire like they should. They'll complain to me that there's no address here. They want to order some of these switches—I mean jeeze, 28cm Rosco picklocks for \$2.75. Who wouldn't. Duhhh...

Pro-Tech Knives gives you the “GODFATHER”—Aptly named for the Italian influence which was the inspiration for the stylized bayonet ground blade on this otherwise high-tech, cnc produced handle. There’s a comfortable ergonomics to the symmetrical coffin-shaped handle, with an atypical release feature—Sure, the blade is coil fired, but unlike most autos of this genre, the release button is positioned in the center of the handle just below the blade’s pivot.



Pro-Tech knives are available from Pioneer Valley Knife and Tool. See their ad page 21 in this issue.



Pro-Tech
Godfather

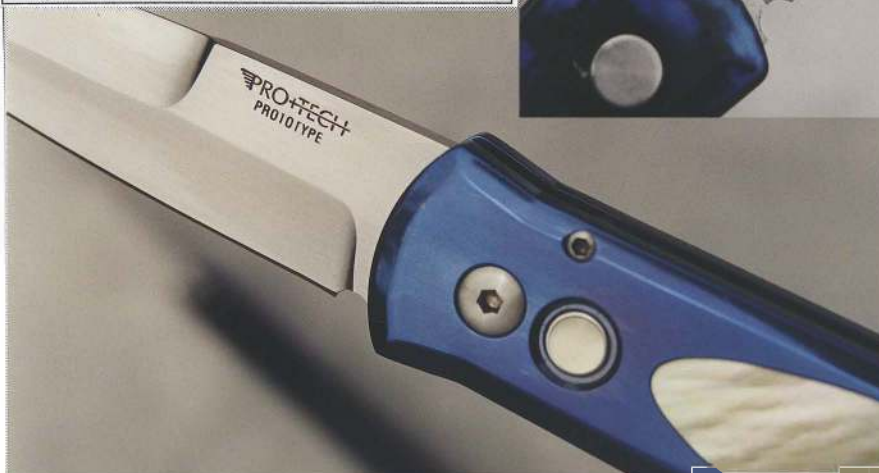
Pro-Tech Godfather



The four-inch hollow ground blades are available in a hand brushed satin finish or black TI coated. The design of the handles are interframes, milled in a variety of configurations to accommodate various inlays. They are also finished in colorful anodized coatings. The models shown here have non-slip composite and mother of pearl inlays.

Pro-Tech is also producing custom versions of the Godfather. Some of the features are solid titanium interframe handles embellished with various pearl and abalone inlays. There will also be individually handcrafted models with Wayne Clark and Walter Brend hand ground blades—satin finished or mirror polished. They will also be grinding Mike Norris Damascus blades.

Scheduled for production is a Mike Allen/Pro-Tech scale release auto—God willin’ an’ the creek don’t rise, you’ll see it here in THE NEWSLETTER soon.





No markings here, but an intriguing variety of design aspects are present. Well sure, the initial take has a traditional Italian flavor—Something vintage circa mid-20th century. However, that's a bit incongruous at the rear/pommel—A "fishtail" styled rear bolster. Definitely not what you'd expect from Italian origins. And the release button—Round, flat, with an inlay—Some kind of mineral. And how about that sliding safety. Substantial, somewhat rectangular in shape—It ends at the bolster/scale margin and has a presence that's more significant than the release button. The size, height, and even has a checkered milling on the surface; To avoid your finger slipping off? Okay.



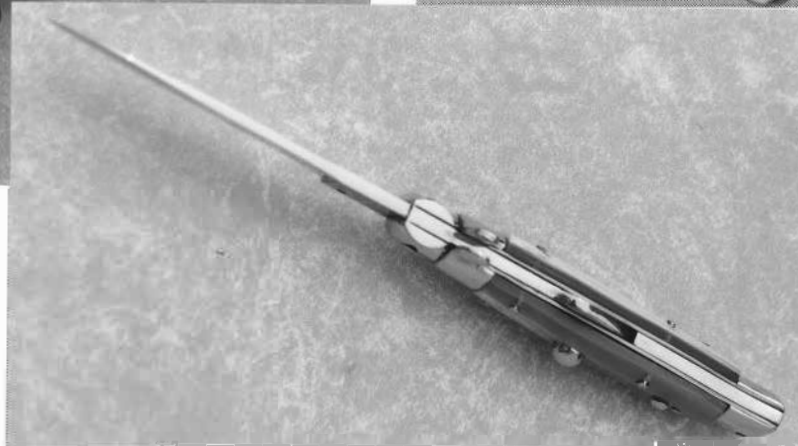
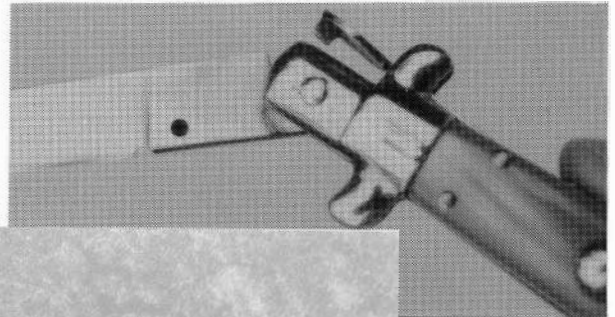
The owner who has generously shared this unusual switchblade with THE NEWSLETTER has proffered its origins as Thiers—An early center of cutlery manufacturing in France. As Frosolone is to Italy and Toledo to Spain. Thank you Mario, for your contribution.



Well, a few more details and we'll wrap this up—The guards off the front/top bolster are symmetrical/straight/"bow-tie" style. The bayonet ground blade is over 6 inches—Indeed, this is a large knife, 33cm. The take-down is picklock and while the backspring and horn scales are pinned, slotted screws secure the blade's pivot and rear. Bolsters, and safety are constructed of brass.



At 14cm, this is indeed a diminutive example from a very rare genre of Italian switchblades. Sure, it's a lockback and not a picklock. Jeeze, it has a flat ground blade to boot—So what's so rare? Well unlike just about every single Italian styled auto you ever run across, this example has the distinction of being fired by a coil kickspring. The tiny kickspring is seated in a milled out area of the tang and the inside of the top bolster at the pivot.



Of Italian origins, coil-fired autos in a variety of sizes with subtle design variations are known. A number have been seen with the Robert Klaas Kissing Crane logo etched on the tang—A European patent number is frequently found on the tang's reverse.

Core Values—or 1000 degrees of Hell

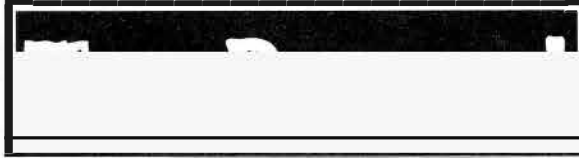
Switchblades ! In case you were wondering what happened to the last installment of "The Rumble", there just wasn't one. I had every intention of delivering the goods, but several acts of fate (including some very nice weather and some very old motorcycles), conspired to defeat my best efforts. We were going to review the illustrious Knifemakers Guild Show—Its triumphant return to the well chummed waters of Orlando, especially in light of the current interpretations of the (screwball, vague, perhaps even deliberately deceptive) Florida knife statutes, the ballistic BS (another story!), etc. I had anticipated some increased paranoia and perhaps a bit more caution on the parts of makers, dealers, and collectors. To some small extent I was correct in my surmise, but proud to say it was another case of "boys behaving badly". The damn springers were everywhere—except on the tables. Prices were up across the board, four figures being the norm in this room and rumors of five figure knives abounded. Sure there were a good supply of midrange pieces, high-grade tactical stuff fairly well made, but this is the *KG Show* by God and WE WANT THE GOLD!

And give it to 'em they did! Gold everywhere—14K, 18K, 24K. Solid, plated, dipped in, dripped on, anyway you could spread the yellow stuff. Layered on thick (and more frequently VERY thin). King Tut's got nothing on the KG I'll tell ya! It seems to me if you want to sell that knife, don't spare the Credit Suisse.

Now before some of you nimrods get your shorts in a bunch, I'd like to remind some of you that ol' McRumble cut his teeth in the jewelry trade and knows the difference between carrots and karats, (not to mention carats!) And if you bite down too hard on a carat your carrot munchin' days are over. Then you won't be able to check for karat. Think about it...what's all this got to do with switchblades you ask? Nothing. Except it seems to this lost pilgrim that GOLD has become the metal of choice for spring steel. Let's examine this phenomenon:

Once upon a time, for our purposes the late 80's, custom makers struggled to learn the dark arts of the Switchblade—Trying to overcome the multitude of problems faced

as one attempts to harness the arcane power of the spring in an attempt to develop a superior folding knife. A folding knife that when equipped with the desired button and kickspring that would not only open smartly, but reliably. A knife, a switchblade knife that could rival the fine handmade manual folders of the day in that elusive quality known as "Lock-Up", would indeed be a marvel. A marvel that would



potentially lure the collectors of the exquisite, but mechanically impotent (uh, lame ass comes to mind, here), interframes, linerlocks, et al, over to the enemy camp. This is certainly no new ground to our faithful readers, we are the contemporaries of this feat, this miracle of knifemaking, this veritable renaissance of spring steel. We are lucky to witness and some of us (Butch, Charlie, Jerry and myself among others to actually contribute to this great cleansing—this tremendous advance—this technological feat of legerdemain. Yes its true, we got rid of the wobble! And lo and behold, they came. The collectors and the dealers responded in droves. The modern high tech switchblades were born.

And true to form the stampede began. It was not possible to make enough to keep 'em happy. Our shops were backordered—Indeed, some of us are back ordered to this very day. Fools rushed in as the dealers waved money in the faces of innocent, often naïve makers, begging them to get on the gravy train. Build these new knives to supply the legion of new collectors who were drawn to these bright new kinematics wonder knives like moths to a flame—or in retrospect was it more like flies?

More demand means more product. More product means more competition. Soon we had collectors who never bought anything but switchblades. Guys who sadly never handled anything but! Sure enough, the rules began to change. They all have to have a little play, don't they? Who cares if the blade's a little loose? Just look at all that gold!

I know sometimes I sound like a broken record. There is certainly nothing wrong

with the use of the gleaming metal if used in a skillful and artistic manner, but it should be used to celebrate, not DEFINE the execution of a fine knife. But Mr. Collector, Mr. Dealer, please pay attention, a wobbling blade is just that. The bottom line is that it represents no technical advance over the early efforts to whore 'em up. You can carve 'em up, dip 'em in gold and pound diamonds all over 'em, but if the mechanism sucks, it's crap. OK?

I am not even going to comment on what passes for "carving" these days. Some of it would be better left to Emeril Lagasse—"Bam!"

Random notes dept.

I am desperately trying to contact any of you with old Sheffield spring dirks, or any other early rare stuff for a pet project of mine, new email at: wjmchenry@home.com You will be rewarded.

Yes it's true we have been busy experimenting with coil fired Axis Locks and I am pleased to say they are everything I had hoped they would be. Stay tuned. None of that "WACO" sand in them either. Don't get me started.

God Bless the good firemen and cops who were the real heroes down in NYC last September. You guys represent the best of American guts, balls, and core values.

God forgive the media for scaring the hell out of our women and kids. Anybody realize that you have a one in 75 million chance of perishing from anthrax? You'd have a better chance of finding an honest politician.

God damn the son of a bitches who did this. We WILL get you.

God help us protect what's left of our hard won American freedoms. We shudder in real horror at the compromises being made in the name of security. If you haven't already, make damn sure that each and everyone of your loved ones knows how to use and carries a knife whenever possible. Before "they" take those away from us, too!

If I've offended any of you out there good. Vacation's over.

Wild Bill



Some of us are old enough to remember when Latamas, Coricamas and all the rest were in cutlery store windows, just ripe for the pickin'. This is the kinda window shopping that sadly will never come our way again. I know it's difficult to see in this photo, but a window display full of spring steel from back in "The Day" is exactly what has captivated the attention of this fellow lookin' in—A reader sent it to me a few years ago—Unfortunately it was a photocopy about twice this size, and not a whole lot of contrast. I had the lab that does the half-tones for THE NEWSLETTER's reduce and clean it up a bit—Hopefully improve the image. I've had it in "reserves" all these years because I was concerned it just wouldn't publish well—It's got such large dark areas, that so much ink could obscure the photo. Well Folks, I just had to give it a try. It's such a great shot—One so many can appreciate. There's just no getting around the image—A store window with a great spread of switchblades offered for sale c.1950s. I just hope it came through the printing process so you could enjoy it. Doggoned! It's just so very, *very cool*...

From the Cover:



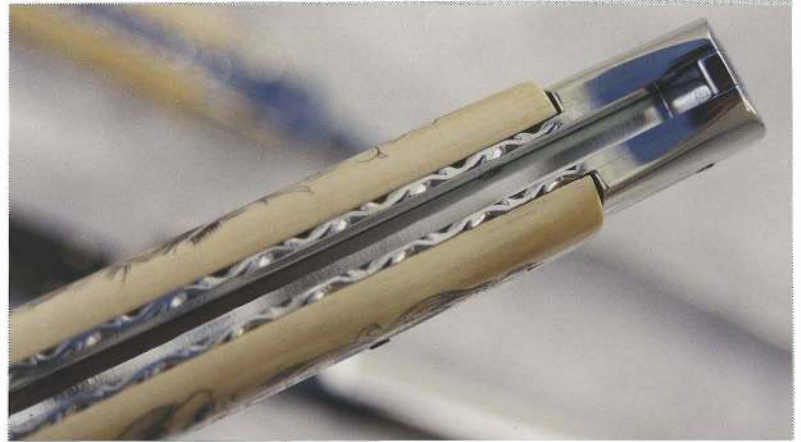
The fit and finish are just superb and no CNC milling here. These microscopic tolerances, disappearing margins and fine pin work are all hand crafted by the knifemaker.

Custom knives show up from time to time with a variety of design aspects inspired from vintage Italians. This knifemaker has breathed new life into the Italian picklock with this example—Beginning with its sleek proportions. Every quality is an outstanding refinement while retaining the traditional form. Post-war production filled the novelty niche—Indeed, the Latama, Coricama, etc. picklock was not a “using” tool beyond letter opener. Paul’s most salient feature, hollow grinding the bayonet blade elevates his work beyond novelty, complimented by its temper and Rockwell hardness.

If you are interested in Paul Panak’s work, you may contact him through THE NEWSLETTER or directly via email at 96vette@ilwllc.net.



The knife on the cover and on these pages has been skillfully crafted in the tradition of the noble picklock. Midwesterner Paul Panak developed his cutlery expertise with restorations and customizing factory Italians. His skill and creativity outgrew the limited palette of a factory production knife—So Paul began to build Italian-styled knives in the picklock tradition, from the ground up. In keeping with that tradition, Paul eschews any CNC milling or other “high-tech” assistance for good old elbow grease. These knives are built entirely by hand—That’s the heat treating, blade grinding, finishing, etc., along with some structural improvements. The locking pin on the back of the tang is traditionally ground to shape on the blade—Along with the kick and backspring of 1095 carbon steel, the picklock tab being hammer forged with torch and anvil, Paul drills out the tang and presses a pin in for a stronger and tighter lock-up.



Paul stamps his finished tangs with a four-letter nom-de-plume in a stylized upper-case font, "BURN". It's a bit difficult to make out in this shot, but BURN is stamped just below the locking hole on the blade of absolutely dazzling Devin Thomas "raindrop" Damascus pictured here just below.



The three examples of Paul's work presented here are styled on one of the most popular of picklock sizes, 28cm, (11 inches opened). The horn scaled model pictured on the cover and shown here has all the definition of a traditional Italian with some additional "Burn" qualities—Of course you'd expect a bayonet grind, which is here, but this bayonet was built for more than looks and as such the bayonet grind is hollow ground. The bolsters are solid nickel, the liners stainless steel. Inspired by vintage Coricama the 440c stainless blade and backspring is a beefy 3/16ths of an inch in width.



While inspired by vintage picklocks, the other two models here have a variety of custom design consideration and custom embellishments—A high-tech upgrade on one; Fine Allen head machine screws in place of traditional pin work. A front bolster sans guards on one; Straight guards on the other. Both scaled in fossilized mammoth ivory, intricately scrimshawed by Nick Wiggins. In addition there's filework, a dagger grind and no safety.

This is a new auto from Germany with a most ambitious mechanism. I will elaborate on the mechanism, but first, how this knife originated is interesting. The two names on the blade, "VÖRÖS & SCHÄTZ" are the makers—Robert Vörös and Joseph Schätz. Not a bit of knifemaking history between the two—This is their first effort; a superb feat of engineering and design. Well that figures, Vörös is an engineer working in the aircraft industry—He has also designed and developed the making of specialized shotguns for the military. His partner Joseph Schätz is also an engineer, overseeing the manufacturing processes at their facilities in Bavaria, (southern Germany). There's really no reason for any kind of safety here. The large release button, 5/8ths of an inch across is flush with the handle, save a slightly convex rise—The multi-function bar-spring on the underside of the handle inside providing substantial tension.



The two halves of the knife's handle pictured here at the left, are separated by the removal of two allen-head machine screws. The mechanism is detailed in the three close-up photos on the opposite page.

The release and locking mechanism is a most creative feat of engineering—A sophisticated simplicity of form and function. Lockup when opened and closed as well as the action of the release button is provided by a very simple design, the tension from a bar about an 1/8th of an inch square and the inner length of the handle. (The photos here detail the mechanism.) The backside of the large release button is slotted—An equal sized slot cuts across the blade's hub, corresponding in size to the width of the bar. The slot in the hub lines up with the slot in the button in the opened and closed blade position. The strength this bar-shaped spring provides is light-years ahead of the typical high-tech lock-up like you'd find in Microtech type knives.

At 7-3/4inches overall, this is not a large knife, but the handle, just under 4-1/2inches is robust. Nearly 3/4 of an inch in thickness. The ergonomics are excellent—A substantial knife to hold on to. Hefty as well—Not the typical T6 aluminum, but a European variety, solid AlMgCuF3 and checks in at a third of a pound. Two hard coat anodized finishes are available, black and champagne, shown here.

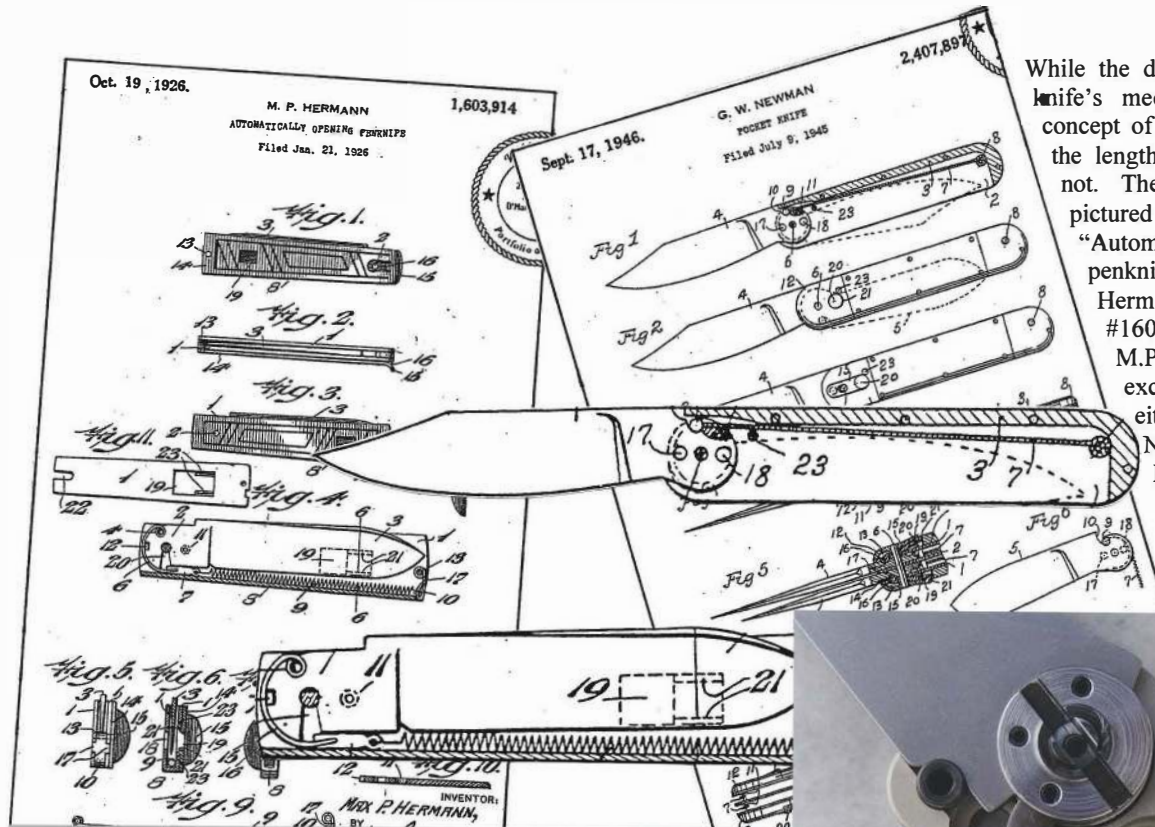
The mechanism is most intriguing. This kickspring is not novel in concept, there have been other switchblades with long coiled springs, but this design is unique—As is the entire mechanism. With one end of the spring secured to the rear of the knife, the other end attaches to an "L" shaped cam. In turn, the cam is attached a hub at the pivot of the blade. As the blade is closed, the hub turns, pulling the cam. As the cam wraps itself around the hub of the blade's pivot, the kickspring is stretched, providing the tension to open the blade.



There is a truly novel feel to this knife when opening it. I know it is going to be difficult to describe, but it can only be attributed to dynamics of this kickspring on the blade. First of all, the shape and heft of the handle provides for outstanding ergonomics—You've got a great grip on this knife and unlike the way the typical overpowered coil kickspring whips the wrist, this mechanism gets the blade out with considerable authority, minus the whiplash. Oh sure, you know you've exhausted the tension of a powerful spring with a loud "thunk", but there's a sense of forward recoil. Cool... Way, way cool.

At 7-3/4inches overall, this is not what you'd call a large knife. However, its 3/4ths of an inch thickness, combined with a robust ergonomic shape and considerable heft provide a handful.

While the design and action of this knife's mechanism is unique, the concept of a long coiled kickspring the length of the handle inside is not. The 1926 patent drawing pictured here for an "Automatically opening penknife" earned M.P. Hermann U.S. Patent #1603914. Well, M.P.Hermann didn't have an exclusive on the concept either—Pictured here, G.W. Newman earned U.S. Patent #2407897 in 1946 with his "Pocket Knife" design. The blades are fired by two fine coiled lengths of springs.



The three photos on this page detail the locking/release mechanism—The slotted hub of the blade and the slot at the center of the pivot which is the back of the release button. The slot in the button is always aligned by the spring-bar, (The other handle half pictured above.). The upper-left photo shows the two slots aligned when the blade is opened.



Pictured above here, the blade is fully opened and the kickspring relaxed. As the blade is being closed, (Pictured to the left), the cam wraps itself around the hub of the blade, putting tension on the kickspring.



THE CONTEST

There is something to be said for being an indulged only child: my grandmother bought me my first switchblade. On Saturdays my mother, grandmother and I would go out for a drive. This was in the good old days when gasoline was pennies a gallon. On the way home we would stop at the local Smoke Shop—My mother would give me a quarter and I would run in and pick up a copy of the Sunday paper. It was always a big treat going into that store. It smelled of rich tobaccos and there was a soda fountain at the back. Sometimes my mother would give me more than a quarter and I could buy myself an ice cream cone too. One day as I went to the counter to pay for the paper I noticed a cardboard display stand with a dozen or so, small pocketknives. On closer examination I discovered that these were no ordinary knives. No siree! These were "Snappy" push-button knives. The display went on to say that they "opened with a touch of the button" and had "lightning speed". I was immediately mesmerized. I was only vaguely aware of spring powered knives, having seen them in movies from time to time. But here they were, on display at the Smoke Shop of all places! The Smoke Shop, home of

comic books, chocolate sodas, jawbreakers, red licorice whips and now, lightning fast push button knives. I ran back to the car with the paper and told my mother and grandmother what I had seen. It was met with stony silence from my mother, but my grandmother seemed genuinely interested. I told her all about the little knives with the chrome button on the side and made sure to mention the "patented safety lock" feature. If memory serves, this technological marvel was a mere seventy-nine cents. At age 12 in 1957, that seemed like a lot of money. For the next several weeks I was the adolescent equivalent of the Chinese Water Torture. I spoke incessantly about those knives. I had to have one. None of my friends had one. Their parents wouldn't allow it. Mine wouldn't either come to think of it. But, that's where grandmothers come into the picture. With the correct prodding, whining and cajoling, grandmothers have been

known to provide all manner of goodies that parents have deemed verboten. And so it was that on a bright sunny day, I rode my bike to the Smoke Shop and plunked down the dollar my grandmother had slipped me, and purchased my first automatic knife. I studied the display card for what must have seemed like hours to the poor woman behind the counter. I had to select just the right color. It had to feel good in my hand. And, most importantly, it had to have just the right "snap". I finally settled on the white handled one, paid for it, got my

On a trip to a local sporting goods store some time later I walked past the knife display and there was a much larger version of my little "Snappy". I was in a pearl type finish and had a chrome blade. It was the Imperial toothpick in all its glory. This one was over a dollar and a bit out of my reach. I cut lawns, and saved my money, finally coming up with the necessary money for this monumental step up in the switchblade world. The only catch: the guy at the store wouldn't sell it to me without a parent being there. No notes, no phone calls, they had to



Here's the winning contest entry from a Northern California reader. Michael will be rewarded with a rare edition of the Myers book, *An Introduction to Switchblade Knives*. Out of print since 1982, the regular copies of this book are scarce enough—A beat up volume fetching \$225. on eBay last year. Even better though, Michael's submission has earned a limited edition copy of the Myers book—When first published there were only two-hundred hard cover copies produced—Each individually numbered and signed by the authors, Ben Myers and Lowell Myers.

This contest has been running the last several issues of THE NEWSLETTER. One of these rare editions awarded each issue. Well Folks, I only have one of these rare limited editions of the Myers book left to give away—So this is your last chance to win. The rules are simple—Actually, there's only one—Write something to celebrate the switchblade. I'm not interested in hearing about switchblades as weapons—God knows the mainstream press puts enough negative spin on these mechanical marvels, THE NEWSLETTER sure isn't gonna add to it. So go ahead, give it a shot, write something positive. Good luck Readers!

be in the store! More weeks of cajoling, whining, etc. and my mother finally gave in. What the heck she figured. I already had the small one and as far as she knew I hadn't harmed anyone or anything. So, off we went to the store on a Saturday afternoon. I walked in trembling with anticipation. It seemed to take forever to get to the knife case. Why had they put it so far from the front door? But when I got there, it was gone! The space my beautiful pearl handled knife had once occupied was empty. Oh no, they had sold the last one and I'd have to wait until they got more in. But it was worse than that. It seems that between the time I had become the proud owner of my little white "Snappy" and

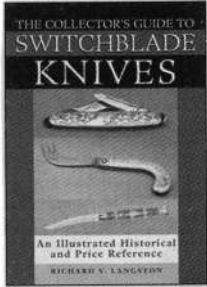
change and walked out of the store with a smile on my face and my new knife in my pocket.

My mother was horrified, my grandmother just chuckled, and my friends were dazzled. It doesn't get much better than that. The next morning I went across the street to get my best friend, Duane, for our morning walk to school. When he opened the door, I snapped open my pushbutton knife. His eyes grew wide. "Where did you get that?" he stammered. I just smiled knowingly and slowly closed it. He wanted to try it out, so I let him snap it open a couple of times before putting it back in my pocket and heading off to school. At my desk I sat wondering what the other kids in class would say if they knew they were sitting just a few feet from a heavily armed man. I loved that little knife. That is until I discovered that they came in a larger size.

now, someone had decided that these knives should be illegal. The man behind the counter apologized to me and my mother explaining that he had to get rid of all his stock and there wouldn't be any more.....ever. I was heartbroken. But I still had my trusty "Snappy". That is, until the fateful day that it lived up to its name, and with a resounding "snap", the spring broke. The "Snappy" snapped no more.

I still have my "Snappy". I take it out from time to time and relive that wonderful day at the Smoke Shop. I also wonder what my dear departed mother would say if she knew that I was still spending my hard earned money on these wonderful creations? She would, no doubt, be horrified. But, you know, I can just see my grandmother sitting in her rocking chair, giving me a conspiratorial smile and chuckling to herself.

IN THE LAND OF THE BLIND THE ONE-EYED MAN IS KING:



A Review of *The Collector's Guide to Switchblade Knives* by Publius

Let's be clear about this from the get go: Rich Langston published a book and we didn't. Some of us had the opportunity, and we didn't do it. He did. Get over it. Second. There has been a crying need for a new switchblade book for years. The Myers book, *An Introduction to Switchblade Knives* has been widely praised, but it isn't really all that terrific. Its appeal is

mostly that it is so far ahead of the competition. And if the competition is *Switchblade: the Ace of Blades*--proof that it is possible to fill a hundred pages and say nothing--there is no contest. The fact that I have seen the Myers book sell for \$150 and the fact *The Ace of Blades* has probably sold thousands of copies testify not to the quality of the works but the hunger of the auto world for a book, any book. I can name at least a half dozen members of the switchblade inner circle who have expressed an interest in writing a book on autos. But Rich did it, and I understand that the book is selling well.

With that said, let me talk about what we have. My first disappointment, and therefore first criticism of the book, is that the pictures are in black and white--and not even very good black and white. The photographs are sometimes grainy, out of focus, and often not well set up. I find it hard to believe that a book that sells for \$50 couldn't have quality paper and color photographs. For contrast, I suggest that you look at the new book on Theater Knives of World War II by Bill and Debbie Wright. It is about 275 slick pages, every page beautifully illustrated with quality color photographs. Yet I bought it for a dollar less than the switchblade book. Are we to believe that there are more collectors of "theater" knives than of switchblades? I don't believe that for a minute. Of course, I have never been impressed with Paladin Press' overpriced publications which promise much but deliver little.

Second, instead of a wide range of switchblades of all eras and types, we have

a book that is almost entirely American knives. There is only one picklock, certainly the hottest and most desirable collectible at this moment. There is exactly one custom knife, and I'm not sure that it is even a true custom. I did a breakdown. Of 40 pages in the informational and historical section, there are actually only 22 ½ pages of text. In fact, I have never seen a book with so much white space. I guess if you're going to charge \$50 for a book, it should be at least 200 pages. In fact, it is more like a 100-page introduction to American switchblades in black and white.

Of 165 pages illustrating knives, 35 are devoted to Schrade; 25 to Presto, 8 to Hammer, 7 to Fly-Lock, 6 to Shur-Snap, 5 to Edgemaster, 4 to Case, 4 to KaBar, 2 to Queen, 2 to Jaeger, 2 to Remington, 1 to Imperial, and 1 to Colonial. Also, three pages are devoted to the three paratrooper knives which look so much alike that one page would have been sufficient. Following that American binge, no fewer than 9 pages are devoted to Edge Company knives, 3 to NATOs, 3 to other cheap out-the-fronts, 1 to a transitional Italian, 1 a picklock, 1 to a Rizzuto clone identified as a Rizzuto, 1 to a Smith and Wesson, 4 to gravity knives, 3 to "spring assist" knives, 1 "flop," 1 page of push knives, 1 butterfly knife, 1 page of keychain mini picklocks, and an incredible waste of space are several pages devoted to those \$10 a dozen Hong Kong keychain throwaways shaped like guns, lighters, and so on. This is how many pages are devoted to Boker: 2; to Bonza (sic): 1; to Puma-0, to Microtech-0; to Dalton: 0; to the Navy Seal and other reflexes: 0; to the Spike: 0; to the AK-47: 0; to Mikov: 0; to Voss: 0; to Hubertus: 0; and to Latama-Coricama-Edwin Jay and all the other picklocks (save 1 Ackermanscher): 0.

Most disappointing of all, I think, is that we finally get a switchblade book and what does it consist of: a disquisition on Edge Company knives as investment items for the future. The Edge Company? How about a detailed discussion of "transitional" Italians? How about a model list of all the Microtechs? How about a sketch of Maniago and its cutlers. How about an analysis of custom automatics as investment items? How about a discussion of customized switchblades in all the various ways they are being transformed? What about an update on switchblades and the law? How about a comparative analysis of

German, French, and Italian switchblades? Or Spanish? Or Czech? How about a discussion of that triumph of the human spirit, the AK-47? The SINGLE most stunning sentence in this otherwise low-key book is this: "I believe that these kit knives will appreciate in value...." There's investment advice you won't get at Paine-Webber.

Finally there is the book as a price guide. Most advanced collectors have no desire for a price guide, but beginning collectors clearly want something to help them navigate the wide and puzzling vagaries of switchblade pricing. However, within about a day of the book's publication, I began hearing things like, "Well, dude, your collection just doubled in value," and when I looked, I saw knives listed at values significantly beyond what most of us have been paying. The justification for the unbalanced quality of the book is this: "Among the criteria for selecting knives for this book were that they must be (1) functional and (2) from my private collection." Well, that explains a lot, doesn't it (although I know one collector who states that some of the knives in the book are his, not Rich's). In any case, a price guide based entirely on one's own collection is disingenuous at best, suspect at worst. I think that there should be a universal rule for price guide writers: they should not own any of the items being (this is also a problem in the Theater Knives book.). Rare books are priced by Antiquarian Bookman by listing what prices have been paid at auction over the past few years. With Blade Auction and eBay, that might even be a possibility for the next price list. I recall Sheldon stating early on in THE NEWSLETTER that he respected the market seeking its own level, so refrained from including prices on featured knives.

So finally, what can I say? As an introduction to the history of American switchblades, the book is certainly competent (though the information is available elsewhere). The author's enthusiasm for switchblades is obvious. It is a better book than *The Ace of Blades*. I would buy the book because it's a book about switchblades, and I suspect many collectors will feel the same. It's just that it could have been so much more. It "coulda been a contendah!"

Reviewed by Publius.....

Antique Spring Steel

Brought to you by

Dr. Pete McMickle

Aside from his university professorship duties, one of the things that makes Dr. Pete McMickle tick is his overwhelming enthusiasm for automatic knives that came into this world prior to the coming of the 20th century. Specimens from this long-gone era are among the rarest and most scarce of switchblades one could collect and/or admire. Readers with possible pre-1900 switchblades wishing expert opinion or with questions of switchblades of the period, may contact Dr. McMickle via THE NEWSLETTER.



The front, rocking, releasing bolster is pictured below here. The rise at the scale/bolster margin is evident. The tang is stamped with what is likely a performance claim, "Criterion Quality". Pictured at the upper-left on this page is the reverse of the tang with "Korn's Patent" stamped. The back bolster is flat, it's margin flush with the pearl scale.



The history of the switchblade in America is marked by a watershed event going back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century—October 21, 1884 to be exact. That is the date of the first switchblade to be patented in the US. George W. Korn was granted patent no. 306,839 for his single bladed, bolster release automatic knife. The design was most remarkable in its aesthetics and quality.

There's an asymmetry to the top of the front bolster pictured here—Slightly concave at the left, the traverse pin through the tang is seated in this area when opened—Providing to this day, a tight lockup.



Mario is a longtime reader of THE NEWSLETTER whose generosity made the presentation of this rare vintage switchblade ad possible. Thank you Mario.

CATALOGUE AND PRICE LIST
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The broad clip point blade is gracefully saber ground. The release mechanism is built into the front, top bolster. There is a slight rise along the bottom margin where it meets the scale. When depressed it rocks back which lifts the locking pin out of the corresponding hole in the blade's tang. (In both opened and closed position). The locking pin is the end of the slotted screw, pictured here. There is no backspring, per se, just the integral kickspring—So lockup when opened is accomplished by a cross pin at the back of the tang which seats at the liners. (Similar in concept to the lockup found on the old Case, and similar vintage lever-action autos.)

The Korn pictured here is a rare example of vintage spring steel—Having come through more than a century in spectacular condition. While it has been cleaned a bit, the blade is full and the gorgeous mother of pearl scales have a glowing patina that only a hundred plus years can produce.



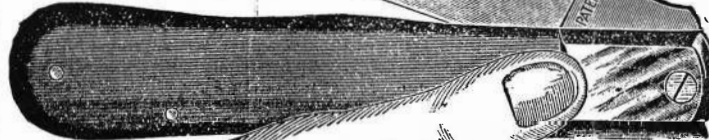
The photo below shows the release action as the front bolster being depressed enough to pivot the locking pin (Which you can just see a bit of at the top of the bolster), out of the hole in the blade's tang. A small leaf spring pinned to the liner at one end provides tension under the rocking bolster. (Of course the thumb is the more natural digit to fire the Korn—Using the index finger here is just to show the action.)

Fly-Back Jack Knives.

The Latest Invention and Greatest Improvement in Cutlery

Exact size of
No. 1.
Price post-paid

\$1.00



the forefinger on corresponding part on the other side. Keep left hand out of the way, for the blade will open suddenly. To close the blade, press the bolster in the same manner as when opening. Price of No. 2 with Stag Handle and Guard, \$2.25.

This Knife is the most useful ever invented for **Mechanics, Farmers, and Hunters**, as well as for **every one** who wants a knife which can be used quick and can be **opened with one hand** without breaking the nails; and when open the blade cannot shut on the hand. It is simple in construction, cannot get out of order easily, can be **opened with one hand** while the other may be otherwise employed. Is only made in the very best quality of **Razor Steel**, and every knife fully warranted. Made in two sizes, one for ordinary use and one with guard for hunters. It will be found very useful for cutting of any kind as it will hold an edge longer than other knives on account of its superior quality.

DIRECTIONS FOR USING THE FLY-BACK KNIFE.

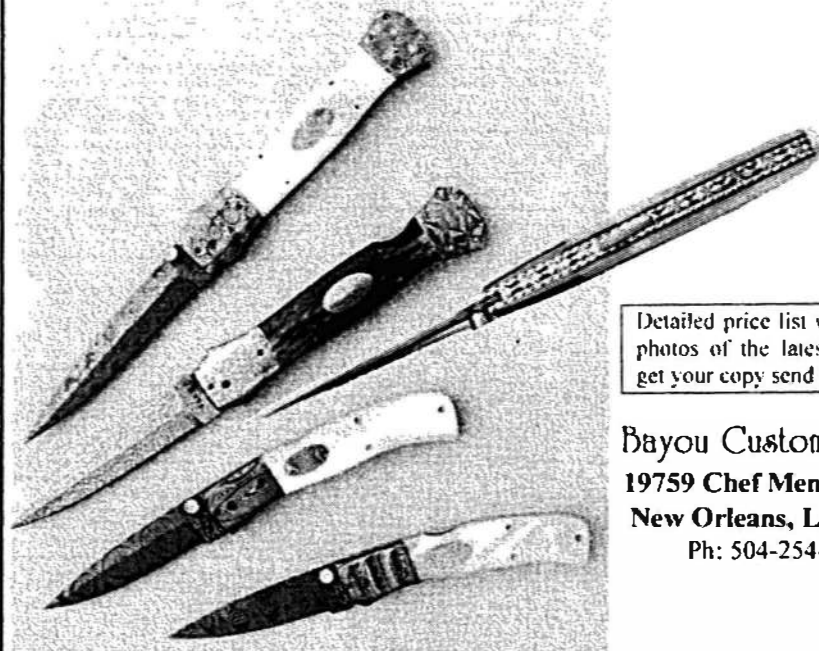
Take the knife in the right hand with the back towards the hollow of the hand; press the thumb on lower part of bolster and at the same time with the forefinger on corresponding part on the other side. Keep left hand out of the way, for the blade will open suddenly. To close the blade, press the bolster in the same manner as when opening.

G. W. CLAFLIN & CO., 54 & 56 Duane Street, New York.



Throughout the years, THE NEWSLETTER has had the pleasure of publishing some vintage switchblade ads. That genre of ephemera is a rare example of collectible in its own right. Vintage ads for switchblades are rare enough, but to run across one from the 19th century is a rare find indeed. The ad pictured here is from firearms and sporting goods dealer G.W. Claflin & Co. of New York City. The catalog is from 1886—Just two years after Mr. Korn's patent grant. No mistaking the knife in the ad for the "Fly-Back Jack Knife". There is one curious aspect to the knife portrayed in the ad—There's a design quality present on all the Korn switchblades I have seen, the fleur-de-lis front guards on the front bolsters. They are curiously absent from the graphic in the ad. It's possible this was just a simplification on the original artist's part—But then again, perhaps there are original Korns out there sans guards. Should any of you readers know of such an example, please contact me at THE NEWSLETTER.

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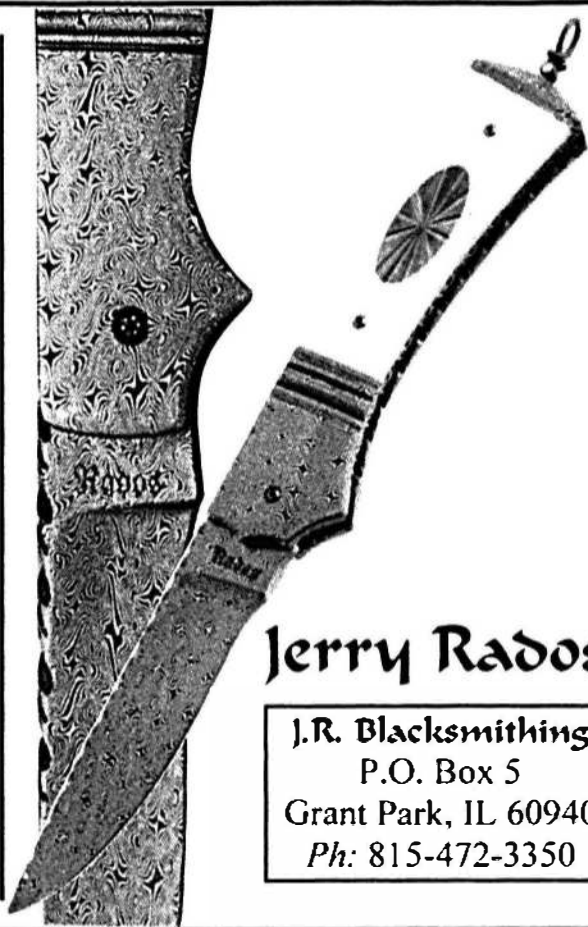
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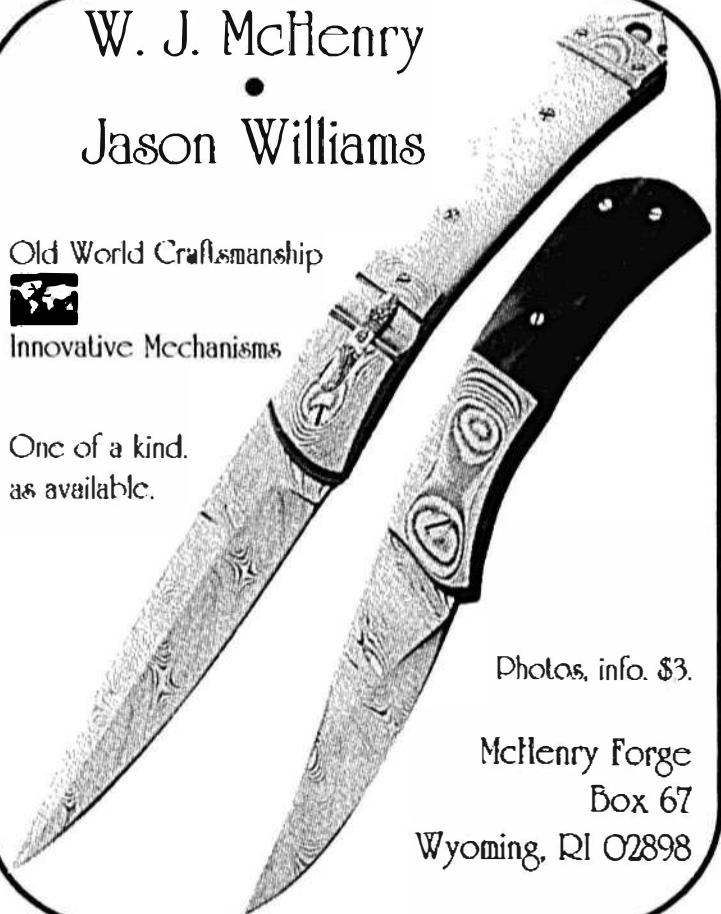
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Details....

Cutlery manufacturers and collectors alike measure folding knives differently depending on the genre of the knife as well as its country of origin. The measurements of most Italians refer to the overall length in the opened position. German manufacturers designate the measurement of the length of the blade only. Pre-'58 American autos are measured in the closed position—the handle length.

Centimeters—Inches

20cm.....	7-7/8 in.
23cm.....	9 in.
28cm.....	11 in.
33cm.....	13 in.
38cm.....	15 in.
45cm.....	17-3/4 in.

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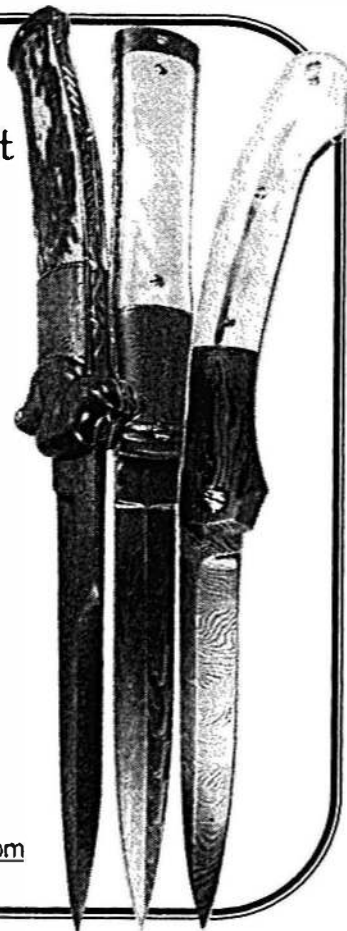
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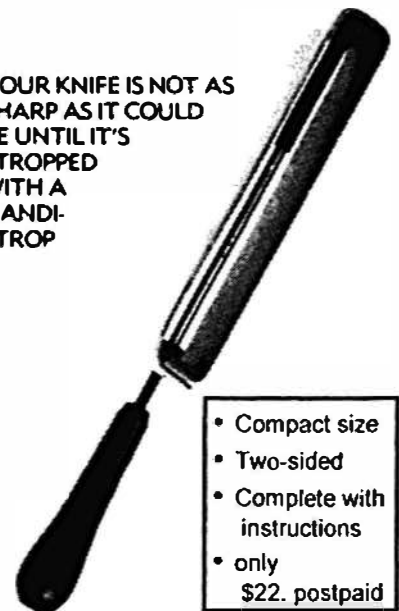
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LOCK PRESS BUTTON

Brass Lining; Nickel Silver Bolsters; Length, 4 inches; Large C. Blade; Half Polished and Etched.

FOR SALE: Lever-action Hubertus. 7 1/4 in. o/a. spear-point, rosewood scales. NEW. -\$110. Limited production Hubertus. Z2000, serial no. #004, coil-fired, bead blasted 3 1/2 in. sweeping clip point, black Zytel handle-\$175. NEW—Box #401

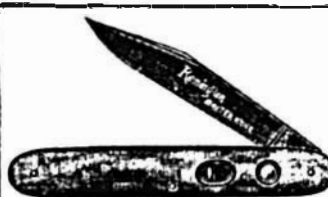
FOR SALE: Huge Italian. 37 inches. light rosewood scales, polished bayonet ground blade, stainless bolsters, mint condition. \$1600.—Box #403

FOR SALE: Rare Polish military "Demolition" knife. This special operations utility knife is genuine military issue, individually serial numbered for the elite Polish Special Forces. The 4 1/4 in. mirror finished blade with blood grooves is coil fired. The milled steel handles have a black Parkerized finish and encompass a variety of superbly ground compliment of tools—Self-drawing drill bit, marlin spike, can opener, various screw drives, bastard file, hacksaw, sheep's foot ground knife blade and a metric ruler that contains a "permanent match" inside. The heavy-duty pivoting handle halves are also intricately milled to perform crimping duty on demolition fuses. There are also a couple of replacement tools contained in the stitched, fitted, canvas button flap sheath. Also includes a khaki lanyard with aluminum spring clips on each end. This is a very cool, rare addition to any collection—especially for the military switchblade fan. This knife and extras are in new, mint condition—Box #404

FOR SALE: Original MicroTech mini-UDT. Bead blast finished blade etched. "Underwater Demolition Team" over logo and date. "8/95". Blade lightly scuffed from use but 100% full. Fires strong, lock-up tight. In original early gold foil MicroTech logo embossed factory box with original paperwork--\$225.—Box #405

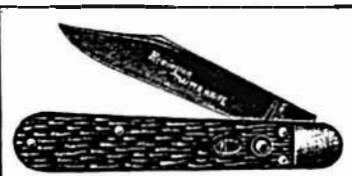
FOR SALE: Unusual lockback Italian featured in THE NEWSLETTER Vol. 10 No.1 pages 14 & 15, tang stamped "Ackermannchen. Rostfrei". Torsion lever style kickspring crisply fires a very tapered flat ground blade with slight swedge, a bit over 3 inches. The wraparound one-piece black composite handle is just under 4 inches. A one-piece wraparound brass liner is cleverly die-punched to accommodate mechanism. Release button and sliding safety are rectangular shaped. Cleaned, lightly used condition--\$150.—Box #406

FOR SALE: 33cm Italian picklock. RAIMONDO. Very meaty, heavy old knife in original condition. Bayonet ground blade sits deep in the closed position and is close to full buy show some staining. Backspring has minor pitting. Black plastic/acrylic scales are in unchipped good condition. Nickel silver bolsters, brass liners. Perfect action and kicks like a mule. "RAIMONDO" stamp is lengthwise on the spine of the blade. \$450. Or consider trade for other picklocks—Box #402



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The Automatic Knife Resource Guide and Newsletter

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