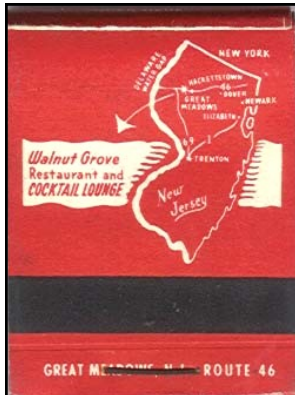


# The Origin

[I received this e-mail April 8th: "Hi. My name is Jaime Russo and my father invented the click bookmatch. Patent #2470523 was his. His name was Giuseppe R. Russo, but everyone knew him as Pippo. He was born in Catania, Sicily in 1894 and died in Stamford, Ct. in 1955 two months before my sixth birthday and several years after getting his patent. My mother received a check for \$200 every month until the patent expired. That check saved our small family. I would love to get some of these matchbooks to pass on to my daughter and grandchildren. I haven't seen any since I was a teenager. Please advise. I can be reached at 386-437-3925 or e-mail reply (twx1000@hotmail.com). Thank you for your attention. Regards, Jaime" Would someone help him out, please?]



From the article below, in case it's not readable... "Mr. Russo and his wife were visiting in New Jersey, one spring day, and playing cards on their hosts' lawn. Mr. Russo lit a match just as a gust of wind blew up. The flame shot out,



**GIUSEPPE RUSSO**, of Stamford, with his "click" matches . . . he has been motorcycle racer, New York cafe society favorite, Bridgeport factory worker.

Sunday Post photo—Schulze

## 'Pippo' a Lovable 'Man

By BOB STOCK

Giuseppe Russo has a way about him that makes people perk up.

As he strides along the paths of Woodside Village, in Stamford, doffing his black Homburg, swinging his briefcase, the mothers and children stop to smile and wave. He leaves an element of excitement behind him.

Neighbors in the development call him "Pippo". With his white mane, charming smile and pleasant accent, he is a creature from another world.

In his day, Mr. Russo has been a champion motorcycle racer in his native Italy, the darling of Cafe Society in New York, a factory laborer in Bridgeport. Now, it's match books.

### Accident Brings Invention

Mr. Russo and his wife were visiting in New Jersey, one spring day, and playing cards on their hosts' lawn. Mr. Russo lit a match just as a gust of wind blew up. The flame shot out, burning his face and hand.

"I started thinking about it," he recalls. The result of his thoughts, "Click" match books are now being used at such places as Neiman-Marcus department store in Dallas, Tex.; City National Bank in Baton Rouge, La.; Bethlehem Steel company club in Pennsylvania; Hotel Ambassador in Chicago; St. Regis hotel in New York.

Mr. Russo's invention looks just like the usual cardboard version. But the matches themselves are

made of wood, and the cardboard jacket closes at the top over the match heads instead of at the bottom on the striker strip. The book closes, adds Mr. Russo, with a "click".

The benefit of the new-type books is two-fold: first, as a safety measure, since it is nearly impossible to accidentally ignite all the matches; second, as an advertising "gimmick", since there are now four sides upon which to advertise, as opposed to the common match book where inside advertisements are hidden by the matches themselves.

Mr. Russo came to America in 1929, after having won nation-wide fame in Italy for his motorcycle and auto racing feats. At the age of 24, he was knighted for his road race victory on a Harley Davidson—the youngest knight at the time in the country. He had made contact with various auto producers through his racing, particularly Isotta Fraschini and Lancia companies, makers of Italy's foremost custom cars. In New York, Mr. Russo sold the "Click" matches to the big names of the era:



# Of Clicks

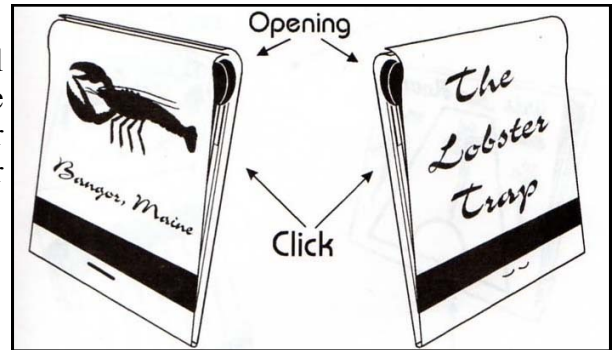
burning his face and hand.

"I started thinking about it," he recalls. The result of his thoughts, "Click" match books, are now being used at such places as Neiman-Marcus department store in Dallas, Tex.; City National Bank in Baton Rouge, La....

Mr. Russo's invention looks just like the usual cardboard version. But the matches themselves are made of wood, and the cardboard jacket closes at the top over the match heads instead of at the bottom on the striker strip. The book closes, adds Mr. Russo, with a "click".

...And now you know...the rest of the story!

Drawings courtesy of Long Beach MC



...first maddening, then heartrending. She knew these people know the...  
ies, felt they would...  
It's debated

## From Another World' to Neighbors in Stamford

in the morning and catch my bus like everybody."

But Mr. Russo was a salesman, and he had an idea of what he'd like to sell—helicopters. He applied to Sikorsky's, only to be turned down. He was confused and upset, worried that his loyalty to America was in question. So Mr. Russo went to Boston to talk with the FBI.

"They were wonderful, so gentle and courteous. They brought back my faith in myself. Pretty soon I got a telegram to go to Sikorsky. I saw it was possible for everybody in America."

Mr. Russo had applied for the work so that he might intimately know the product he hoped one day to be selling. "They were very nice. But it was little hard working for other people, a little temperament."

He returned to New York and did work in airplane and investment fields. The New Jersey accident set him to developing his matches.

Mr. Russo and his wife have two young sons, Gary, who loves to draw Indians, and Jamie. The match-maker has a warmth about him that communicates itself to his family and to all whom he meets. "Why talk about your troubles to people?" he asks. "They have their own."

And he kisses his wife good-bye and swings off down the path, a tip of the Homburg and courtly half-bow to the neighbors, a chuck of the chin for the toddlers, and a genial smile for the world-at-large.

**THE STAMFORD MAN'S INVENTION;** combining safety factors with greater advertising space, came about as the result of a gust of wind and a burn.

Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., Lily Pons, Joe Penner, Ezio Pinza. He lived on Park avenue, frequented the Stork Club, hob-nobbed with the great and near-great. His handsome profile and exuberant smile appeared in all the tabloids, and he was a steady visitor in the society columns.

Between his sales chores and night-clubbing, Mr. Russo managed to do some experimental work on autos, and evolved a patent-able device. But he had a "set-back" as he calls it, an involved legal battle over the patent rights which Mr. Russo lost.

**Happy in Bridgeport**

"I was disheartened," Mr. Russo recalls. "I wanted to get away, I was mad at myself. I went to the employment service and they told me of work in Bridgeport, so in 1943, to Bridgeport."

"Never have I been so happy as in that city," he says. "I worked at Bridgeport Rolling Mills, as a laborer, and lived with a wonderful family in Devon. I'd get up at 6:30