

Just For Openers January-December 2025 1

Lev-A-Lift, World's Smallest Patented Can Opener By Don Thornton

It was only a brief item in his hometown newspaper, otherwise there was hardly any recognition. The item in a column by Ed Reardon in the December 16, 1935 edition of the *Herald-News* of Passaic, New Jersey was in the jargon of the day.

"... Phillip Morris ciggie execs are now packing the fags in cans equipped with the friction top opening gadget devised by Nick Courtney, the localite!"... That's right, cigarettes in a tin can. A 1936 newspaper advertisement for Phillip Morris touted the can, saying in part: "The new Lev-A-Lift vacuum tin of 50 is easy to open, keeps cigarettes fresh, even after opening, and reseals hermetically after each time."



**\$1.50 Phillip Morris
Cigarettes**

4 tins
of 50 **\$1.29**

33c Tin, 2 for 65c

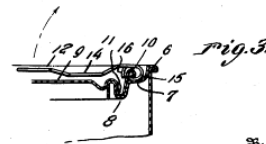
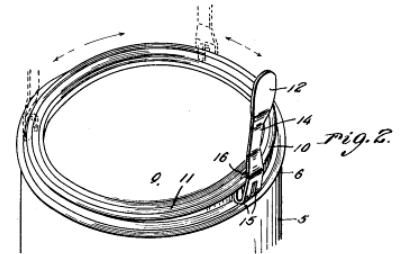
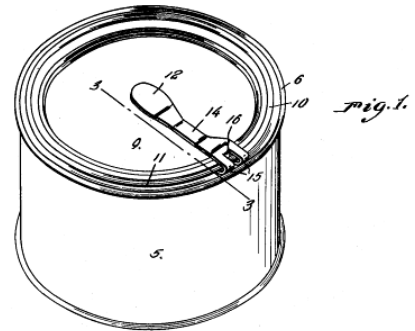
The new Lev-A-Lift vacuum tin of 50 is easy to open, keeps cigarettes fresh, even after opening, and reseals hermetically after each time. Handy for outings, convenient for home or office. Keeps cigarettes in perfect condition.

Friction top cans were already in use and becoming popular when the Lev-A-Lift came on the market. What made Courtney's containers different was, according to his patents, the opener. "The prime object of the invention resides in the provision of a receptacle opener for removal of lids of friction plugs which usually must be removed by some sort of prying implement and in my device it is attached to the top of the receptacle..." he said.

The Lev-A-Lift friction vacuum can and opener was based on six patents dating from 1931 to 1937 granted to Nicholas P. Courtney of Passaic. The first patent, No. 1,826,740 dated October 13, 1931, and its reissue, RE 18,447 set it all in motion.

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Oct. 13, 1931. Nicholas P. Courtney
RECEPTACLE OPENER
Filed June 27, 1930 1,826,740



Inventor

N.P. Courtney

By James F. Splain
Attorney



The detachable, and reusable, key is 1¼-inches long and just under 1/2-inch at its widest point. It is marked SLIDE with an arrow on the top and on one side THE LEVALIFT NEW YORK CITY and on the other PATENTED RE. 18447 OTHER PATS. PEND. It is arguably the world's smallest patented can opener.




Just For Openers January-December 2025 2

Lev-A-Lift, World's Smallest

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Tobacco advertisements featuring the Lev-A-Lift ran in newspapers from 1935 through the 1940s. Other products, including a "sanitary bowl flush," featured the Lev-A-Lift, but it was mainly used for pipe tobacco products.

14-Ounce Keg TOBACCO
47c Lev-a lift tin
 Sir Walter Raleigh Tobacco **69c**
 16 oz. tin.

PHILIP MORRIS CIGARETTES
 English Blend
 New Round Lev-A-Lift
 Tin of 50 for **35c** Ctn. **\$1.38**
 (10 packs or 4 tins)



10c Values Coaster
Ash Tray 3c
 With Each Purchase of
Philip Morris'
 Tin of 50 32c; 2 tins 63c
 2 pkgs. 25c; \$1.25 carton
 The new vacuum Lev-a-Lift tin of 50 keeps them airtight and fresh. Limit 4 purchases with ash trays.