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Battle Creek Neighbors (Fisher and Walters)

Invent Opener With Lip By Don Thornton

This is the story of how two neighbors in Battle Creek, Michigan, got together to invent a nifty kitchen device. They applied for and were awarded a patent in 1952 for their "can opening and spout forming device." The two men then took a working model of their device to an officer of the local Chamber of Commerce who was so impressed he promoted it to the local newspaper.

The newspaper did a story on the inventors and the fact they hoped to find a local manufacturer to produce their device. The same day the story appeared, an official of a local company that manufactured dog license tags got in touch with the inventors and the "Spouto" was on its way to the market.

Battle Creek Men Develop Opener for Canned Liquids

One of the most lucrative fields for gadget inventors for years has been designing the things that help the housewife open food tins, cans, bottles and packages.

Two Battle Creek inventors have thought out, designed and are about ready to start manufacturing a gadget which with a light punch and a squeeze makes a neat hole and pouring lip on the top edge of the can containing fluids.

Ted Fisher, an Oliver Corp. engineer, and Frank Walters, former Duplex foreman and inspector, developed their "spout opener" after months of experimenting and re-designing.

Mr. Fisher got the idea for a spout opener while living in Florida where milk comes mostly in cans and where fruit juices abound. He moved back to Battle Creek late last winter and began working with Mr. Walters, a neighbor, on the opener.

The new opener is about five inches long, has two lever handles, and only one moving part. Its cutting blade is hardened steel, and is easily changed for a new one.

The two inventors are now having dies made to manufacture the new gadget, and hope to find a local

steel-working industry to make them.

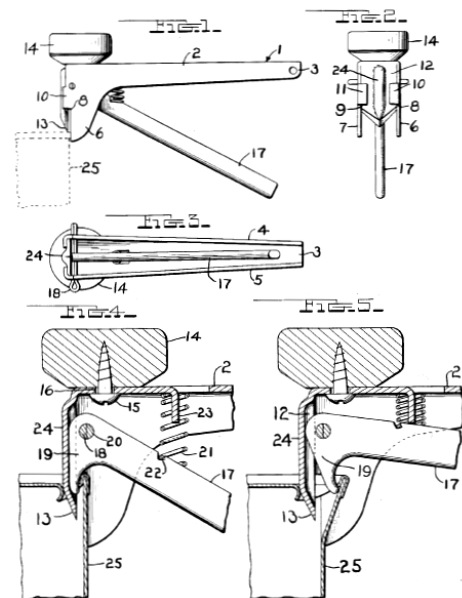
Mr. Walters lives at 28 Cliff, and Mr. Fisher at 18 Cliff.



Two years later in a follow up story, the *Battle Creek Enquirer* on August 15, 1954 reported: "How to get canned milk, consommé, fruit juices or other liquids into the container is the canner's problem. How to get them out is the housewife's. A new an opener, called 'Spouto,' locally invented and locally manufactured to help out with the problem is scheduled for marketing soon."

Edward C. Fisher and John F. Walters, Battle Creek neighbors who lived at, respectively, 28 Cliff and 18 Cliff, were awarded Patent

Dec. 9, 1952. J. F. Walters ET AL 2,620,557
CAN OPENING AND SPOUT FORMING DEVICE
Filed Nov. 13, 1951



J.F. Walters & E.C. Fisher
INVENTORS
BY Roy A. Plant
att'y

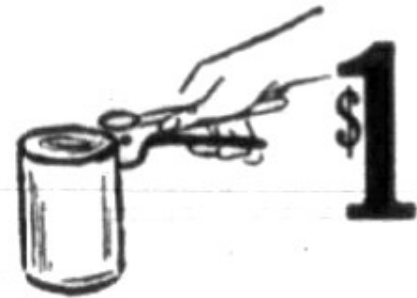
No. 2,620,557 on December 9, 1952 for a device designed to open different sizes of cans and at the same time form a spout with a pointed lip for pouring.

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Manufactured by the Keyes-Davis Company the 5 1/2-inch pliers-like punch and squeeze tool is marked on one side: **THE KEYS-DAVIS CO. BATTLE CREEK, MICH. MADE IN U.S.A.** and the other: **SPOUTO PATENT NO. 2620557**. Newspaper advertisements in the early 1950s listed the retail price at \$1.



Can Opener

Spouto can opener . . just insert in can, it cuts top to form pouring spout. No waste, spillage!

The *Enquirer* said the device "is unique in that it forms a pouring spout on the lip of the can with no jagged edges, raising, as it does so, the top of the can to prevent flow-back on the lid. It works with a light punch and a squeeze." This is the story, as told by the *Enquirer*:

Walker, a former Duplex Printing Press Company foreman and inspector, and Fisher, an Oliver Corporation engineer, developed their spout opener after months of experimenting and redesigning, Fisher got the idea for the opener while living in Florida where milk came mostly in cans and where fruit juices were plentiful. After securing a patent, the inventors took a model to Rudolph Habermann, executive secretary of the Battle Creek Chamber of Commerce, who contacted the *Enquirer*. After Keyes-Davis stepped in and an agreement was reached on manufacturing and sales rights, there was a redesign to improve construction. "After many hand-made models were tried and discarded, the final product now ready for distribution was evolved," the newspaper reported.

The Spouto was made for the kitchen but current Internet auction sites would lead you to believe it was made for the gas station. A recent Internet survey showed all the ads said it was for opening oil cans. One even said the Spouto advertised was found in an abandoned gas station. One conclusion: Sellers think a gas station background is more appealing to buyers/collectors than a kitchen.

