



Magazine Launched With 'It's Your Baby'

In recent issues of Office Technology magazine, I have written about various aspects of the Business Technology Association's (BTA's) history as we celebrate its 100th anniversary. In the April issue, I shared some memories from the first NOMDA Convention I attended back in 1987. This month, we'll take a quick look at a few of BTA's historical items we have in our archives.



Shortly after being named executive director of the association back in 2006, I came across a large envelope of very old photographs taken at various association events through the years. I had them framed for both preservation and protection. I have since come across similar photos that need to be framed. Written on one of the framed group photos in my office: "18th Annual Meeting, National Typewriter and Office Machine Dealers Association War Conference, June 21-22, 1943, Kansas City, Mo." How cool is that? You can see this photo and others like it via the "Photos Archive" tab at www.bta.org/about-us.

Another treasure is a large leather-bound ledger for the association's handwritten bookkeeping at the time. Written across the top of the first page: "Receipts and Disbursements, August-December 1938." The page lists the members paying their \$10 annual dues at the time. Among them: General Typewriter Company of Kansas City; Cleveland Typewriter Company; Highland Typewriter Company, Detroit; and Reliable Typewriter and Adding Machine Company, Chicago. I'm seeing a very distinct similarity here in the company names. Clearly, the now lowly typewriter was center stage at the time.

Moving on, we have a copy of a document titled: "National Office Machine Dealers

Association, National Convention at Springfield, Missouri, February 22, 23 and 24, 1948, MINUTES." Tucked inside is a Western Union telegram to the NOMDA national president at the time, Irving R. Ritchie. It is dated "1948 Feb. 21 p.m. 6:25." It begins with an apology: "To occupy a position of honor and respect in this association and fail to fulfill the duties attached thereto is tantamount to being a pretender unless reason can be given for absence from this important meeting. I therefore present my apologies to you for not being present." It is signed (using a title long since discontinued by the association), "Leon I. Walling, regional governor, State of Michigan." I would say Mr. Walling had a way with words, but I suspect his style was common parlance at the time.

We also have the first edition of the association's monthly publication titled: "Dealers Topics, National Typewriter & Office Machine Dealers Association, November 1938." The first page features a column titled "It's Your Baby," written by the association's president at the time, Lamont H. Wood, introducing the new publication. The entire publication is 12 pages in length. (It says the editorial office is at 800 Grand Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri. I Googled the address; there is a boarded-up building visible that is about to be demolished, but it doesn't appear to be of the 1938 variety.) You can flip through the pages of the first issue of Dealers Topics on the BTA website via the History tab (scroll to the bottom of the page) at www.bta.org/about-us.

Plan to attend BTA at 100: A Celebration, set for Sept. 2 at Union Station Kansas City. We will have some of these archives on display during the reception that evening. Register for the BTA IGNITE Kansas City event, scheduled for Sept. 1-3, at www.bta.org/IGNITEKC. IGNITE registration includes the celebratory event. ■

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FLASHBACK



The association's magazine cover 43 years ago this month
— the NOMDA Spokesman, May 1983.