

SMALL BUSINESS

Say goodbye to holding flashlights in your teeth

Gadget lights the end of the tunnel or anything requiring two free hands

By ANDREA DECKERT

On cold winter mornings before the sun came up, Steve LaBuzetta used to wish for a flashlight that he could attach directly to the spout of his gas can. He thought that would be much easier than trying to hold a flashlight in his teeth while he poured gasoline into his snow blower.

PROFILE
TipSee
Light Co.

LaBuzetta, who has always had a natural inclination when it came to building and fixing things, finally decided to make one.

He and his wife, Tricia LaBuzetta, capitalized on the creation and founded TipSee Light Co. LLC in 2010. Located on South Clinton Avenue, the business manufactures and sells grip-on attachable flashlights.

The patented, light-emitting diode flashlights have specially designed flexible grips that can be worn on a finger or clipped onto other objects so the user can angle a bright light on almost any task.

Tricia LaBuzetta, president of the certified woman-owned business, says the firm's slogan is, "We make light work for you," and notes there are hundreds of uses for the product.

"I call it the handiest, toughest, grip-on, clip-on, hang-on, get it wet, go anywhere, LED flashlight on the planet," she says.

The LaBuzettas both have backgrounds in lighting.

Steve LaBuzetta is a professional photographer and Tricia LaBuzetta assists in that business. Previously she worked in the stage lighting design industry.

The flexible flashlight fits snugly on round handles and poles, grips onto tools and fabric and allows the user to have both hands free, she says. It can illuminate late-night barbecuing and wine pouring as well as two-handed household tasks such as



Photo by Kimberly Simpson

Tricia and Steve LaBuzetta say their creation can even be attached to canes, walkers, strollers and umbrellas.

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The flashlights retail for \$8.99 or less and come in four colors. They are waterproof, and the polyethylene body is corrosion and spark-proof. The flashlights are available online through TipSee and other sites, including Amazon.

One of the reasons for the company's success is the way the product is marketed, Tricia LaBuzetta says. Different websites focus on one of the many uses for the flashlight, she explains.

For example, at ticksee.com, customers can purchase a tick removal kit for pets, which includes a tick removal device, the flashlight and antiseptic pads. At griponlights.com, customers can see a range of uses for the tool.

They are also available at several local outlets, including Eleventh Hour Gift Shop, Mayer Hardware Inc., Mise En Place Market LLC, Parkleigh, Simply New York Marketplace & Gifts, Park Ave. Pets and Stuart's Spices.

National retailers carry the product, as well, including AutoZone and Ace Hardware Corp.

The couple have no employees, but they use sales representatives across the country. The LaBuzettas often travel to trade shows; Steve LaBuzetta has even been a guest on the QVC network.

The flashlights are made, assembled, packaged and shipped in the United States, with many of the suppliers from the Rochester area. Two of those suppliers are Custom Molding Solutions in Churchville and ARM Rochester Inc. in the city.

The LaBuzettas live in Rochester and are committed to the area.

"There is a wealth of resources we can draw from in the region," Tricia LaBuzetta says.

adeckert@rbj.net / 585-546-8303

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