



# BTA's First Publication Debuted 85 Years Ago

As you can imagine, in my nearly 37 years at what is now the Business Technology Association (BTA) I've grown fond of anything having to do with the association's rich history. I have a few historical archives



(treasures, really) in my office. I am grateful that my predecessors managed to hang on to these archives through the decades. In our nearly 98 years — with various office locations — there have been plenty of opportunities for the archives to be lost to history.

One of the best-preserved archives in my office is a leather-bound ledger for the association from 1938 with handwritten listings of the "receipts" and "disbursements." Looking at the member dues payments for November of that year, I see payments from Cleveland Typewriter Company (Cleveland, Ohio), Highland Typewriter Company (Detroit, Michigan), and Reliable Typewriter and Adding Machine Company (Chicago, Illinois). The company names tell us plenty about the focus of our members at the time. Dealers paid \$10 in annual dues that year.

In the spirit of honoring our rich history, in September 2020 we launched a small tribute to our past appearing in each issue of Office Technology magazine. Have you noticed it? It's on this page in the bottom right. We call it Flashback. We simply share an image of the cover of a past issue of our monthly magazine. As you can see, this month we have an image of the cover of the November 1938 issue of "Dealers Topics," the magazine of the National Typewriter & Office Machine Dealers Association, our name at the time. This was the inaugural issue of the association's first publication — 85 years ago this month.

The national president of the association

at the time was Lamont H. Wood. He was the association's sixth (1931-32) and 10th (1936-39) president. In a column titled "It's Your Baby" appearing in that first issue, he begins: "It has long been the ambition of the National T. & O.M.D. Assn. officers to erect a suitable clearing house for the exchange of ideas pertinent to the industry. With this new magazine, that ambition has been realized. Its sole purpose is to inform, to instruct, perhaps to entertain." Four paragraphs later, he concludes: "We present for your approval Volume 1, Number 1 of Dealers Topics, dedicated to the proposition that you members of the Association deserve the best we can give you. And we mean You!!!"

Three comments here. One: If you are wondering why this issue is not Volume 86, Number 1, it's because there have been several magazines through the years. The numbers were last "reset" to Volume 1, Number 1 when BTA launched Business Technology Solutions magazine. Two: Yes, the name of the first publication was Dealers Topics. And, yes, the grammar seems off. Dealers' Topics seems more appropriate. Three: Of course, the most important thing here is to read the words of one of the association's early presidents, reminding us that BTA's magazine is for you, the members of the association who "deserve the best."

I believe that President Wood would be pleased with the long legacy of the magazine that he launched all those years ago. I have had the privilege of being a part of that legacy since the January 1987 issue when my first article appeared. I've been the editor since December 1988, nearly 35 years and 418 issues ago (I remember skipping only one issue along the way). What has BTA's magazine meant to you? I'd love to know. Email me at [brent@bta.org](mailto:brent@bta.org). ■

— Brent Hoskins

## Office Technology

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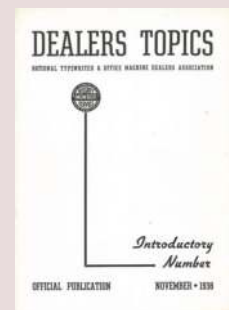
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## FLASHBACK



The association's magazine cover 85 years ago this month — Dealers Topics, November 1938. Would you like to see all of the pages of this inaugural issue? If so, visit [www.bta.org/FirstIssue](http://www.bta.org/FirstIssue).