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Welcome to *Nib Noise*. I hope you'll enjoy reading this month's issue.

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The robot that sends it out refuses to learn to read. If you have comments or questions, send email to:

richard@richardspens.com

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December has arrived, and with it the winter holiday season. Once we get the shopping, and the baking, and the decorating, and the gift wrapping, and the parties, and myriad other tasks out of the way, we can sit back and breathe easy for a while. For Christians, the Christmas season marks the anniversary of the birth of Jesus; for Jews, Chanukah, the Festival of Lights, celebrates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem in the second century BCE. Whether you are Christian, Jewish, of some other faith, or not religious, I wish for you and yours a joyous season of reflection, remembrance, and peace.

Oopsie!

I cleverly managed to misnumber the October and November issues of *Nib Noise* as Volume 18 Numbers 8 and 9 instead of Numbers 7 and 8. I hope seeing the correct Number 9 on this month's issue hasn't caused undue confusion.

Next Year on the Show Circuit

Barbara and I get to stay at home until late February, when we begin our annual show circuit anew with the Baltimore-Washington International Pen Show, followed only a week later by the Long Island Pen Show.

Broad Strokes



About 15 years ago, I wrote an article about Sheaffer's flat-top pens. A friend who is an expert on Sheaffer remarked that there were a few errors in it, and I took it down from my site. I've never had an opportunity to do the research to straighten out those errors (which were never detailed). This month, as a Christmas present to myself (and to people who read my articles), I've put the article back up in hopes of receiving dozens of emails full of information that will help me to correct the errors it contains. If you can contribute to this effort, please don't hold back. I have a thick skin, and no offense will be taken so long as we keep things civil. 😊

http://www.richardspens.com/?prof=flat_tops

The Glossopedia

With more than 1,475 entries comprising (with subentries) more than 1,625 individual terms, more than 950 illustrations, more than 190 patent citations linked to their respective patent documents at various archives, and extensive cross-references, the RichardsPens Glossopedia is the most comprehensive resource of its kind anywhere. Each month, *Nib Noise* includes a randomly chosen Glossopedia entry

military clip A clip that is affixed very close to the end of the cap and also is usually shorter than a standard clip, made so that the pen can be clipped into a pocket whose flap can then be buttoned over the pen to conceal it in compliance with United States military regulations. Some clips, notably those by Parker and Esterbrook, are inherently "military" in design, while others, such as those on Sheaffer's Balance pens (except for the special 1940s military-clip version, shown here), do not comply with military regulations. See also clip, Tuckaway.



If you would like to suggest an entry for the Glossopedia, you are most welcome to do so. Send an email to me at this address:

richard@richardspens.com

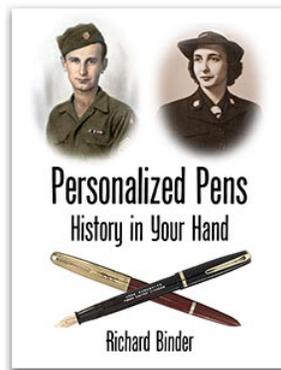
To help you find reference articles on my site that have been edited recently, there is a handy heading right at the top of the reference index, listing the five most recently added or edited reference pages. For edited pages, there are brief descriptions of what was changed.

Gift Suggestions for Readers on Your List

I've been busy for the past year developing and writing an article on Japanese pocket pens for *PEN WORLD* Magazine. Starting in last February's issue, it will end in the upcoming February issue. Because of that article, I haven't had much time to produce any new books. But the books I have written are all available from Amazon, Apple, and Barnes & Noble, and someone you know might like to find one in a stocking or under the Christmas tree or Chanukah bush. Here's a link to a page on my site that will point you to all of my books:

<http://www.richardspens.com/?bks=richard>

In this season of family and friends, I'd like to suggest a look at *Personalized Pens: History in Your Hand*. It features pens with histories that I've discovered through researching the personalized engravings on them.



The Pen Doctor

The Pen Doctor is a regular visitor to the Nashua Pen Spa, and every so often he puts a few prescriptions up on my site. Each month (except when I forget), I'll be reprinting one of his prescriptions here. This being gift-giving season, I think the prescription below might mer applicable to some of the new pens that will be put into use before the month is out.

I have several pens that are not as smooth as I'd like them to be. After I receive a new pen like that should I immediately send it off to an expert such as yourself for smoothing or should I allow some "break in" time first? If I should wait, about how many pages should I write with one before I send it off?



Whether you should send your pen off to an expert or smooth it yourself is up to you.

The implication of that bald statement is that smoothing is needed. Tipping material is very hard. Contrary to what some pen companies (the original Esterbrook among them) told their customers, a pen will not wear in during a few days or weeks of use. Even when used all day every day, a modern high-ruthenium alloy takes several months, or even years, to show perceptible wear. So "breaking it in" is not going to work.

Compounding the problem is the fact that a surprising number of nibs, especially on higher-end pens that are finished by hand instead of by machine, are scratchy because they're misaligned. I know of one manufacturer whose italic nibs may all be misaligned in the same exact way. At least I've never seen an italic from this maker that wasn't misaligned, and I've worked on a nontrivial number of them.

The inescapable conclusion is that if you're not comfortable aligning and smoothing your own nibs, then you should send them off to a nib technician. I have several clients who figure the cost of nib adjustment into the purchase price of a pen, and many of these people actually have their dealers ship the pens directly to me. I'm quite sure other nib people have similar situations with some of their clients.



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