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

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[richard@richardspens.com](mailto:richard@richardspens.com)

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You might have noticed that there was no *Nib Noise* last month. I apologize for the omission, but the end of August was a perfect storm of things that had to be done and could not wait, and *Nib Noise* was a casualty. It's back, and this month I have what I think is a great "Broad Strokes" article for you along with the usual suspects.

The photo above is, of course, all about early October, when here in New England Mother Nature puts on the Show of Shows every year. With leaves so bright and red, the pen had to fit in, and so it does. This isn't a pen you would find at your local stationer's store or pen shop unless you took your Sheaffer pen in for repair. Made in the late 1930s, it's a service pen, otherwise known as a loaner, and it's a pen that the repair person would have lent you until your pen was ready to be picked up and returned to your pocket or purse. Sheaffer dealers bought service pens and had them stamped with their own dealer names as a very good form of advertising and also as a sure-fire way to get them back when repairs were finished. After all, who would want to try to pass off a pen stamped with **SERVICE PEN LOANED BY PHILLIPS BOOK STORE** as his or her own pen?

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## **The Next Pen Show — and Meeting Without Meeting**

The announcement came out in September that the 2020 Ohio Pen Show has finally been cancelled. It's a shame, just as all the other show cancellations have been a shame, but COVID-19 is too dangerous to fool with, and Terry Mawhorter cancelled his show when so many people, both exhibitors and attendees, said they couldn't come. It is ardently to be hoped that this thing will let go soon enough that we can all have a good show year in 2021. Right now, though, it's pretty clear that every time someone, somewhere, tries to return to a semblance of normalcy, the case numbers shoot upward, and that's just not good for anybody.

Back in August I wrote about having a "meetingless" meeting on Zoom or Apple's FaceTime. Barbara and I have been sharing virtual dinner parties with a few pen collector friends all the way from here to California, and

we've been doing it courtesy of Zoom. Two members of the group have paid Zoom accounts, and they alternate hosting. But you can do it for free, too. With a free Zoom account, you can have up to 100 users, but your meeting can be only 40 minutes long. (Close it down after 40 minutes, wait five minutes, and then restart.) FaceTime is for Apple users only, and it allows only 32 users in a chat, but it doesn't limit your time.

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## BROAD STROKES



The pen above is a Sheaffer Balance Craftsman in Carmine, made sometime around 1940. It's a Vacuum-Fil plunger-filler, and when it arrived at the Nashua Pen Spa it was grungy and inoperable; the filler had died, as so many others like it have done since the 1940s. I took it under my wing and used it as the subject of an extensive new article titled "How to Repair a Sheaffer Vacuum-Fil Plunger-Filler." It's time to get out all those Vacuum-Fil pens you've been afraid to touch. Oh, and in case you have any WASP plunger-fillers, the article discusses those, too.

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## Some Light Reading to Entertain You



your curiosity bone, I have more about stripers.

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## From the *Glossopedia*

With more than 1,500 entries comprising (with subentries) more than 1,650 individual terms, more than 975 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.

**blotter** Absorbent material, such as unglazed ceramic or (more usually) a special highly absorbent paper, used as shown here to remove excess ink from paper in order to avoid smearing when insufficient time is available to allow the ink to dry naturally. Blotters are made in several forms for use in differing situations; see also advertising blotter, desk blotter, rocker blotter.



If you would like to suggest an entry for the *Glossopedia*, I invite you to send an email to me at [richard@richardspens.com](mailto:richard@richardspens.com) with your proposed entry. If you don't have a definition for your entry, I'll do my best to find one.

And if you don't think you can wait more than 125 years to see the whole *Glossopedia* here, one entry at a time, you can easily jump the gun by

purchasing your own copy in ebook form for Amazon's Kindle and Kindle app, Apple's Books app, or Barnes & Noble's NOOK and NOOK app. I just released the Fourth Edition in July, and I'm hard at work on the Fifth Edition.

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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.

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## **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 past prescriptions here.

**Q:** I have recently acquired an Eversharp bulb filler stenographer's pen. The pen fills OK and writes what I would call a dry fine line. Sometimes, however, ink accumulates at the underside of the nib, between the nib and feed, and so eventually there is a blob of ink on the writing paper. Can I adjust the flow myself? I was told not to mess with the section of such pens...

**Rx:** The problem with a pen like this is almost never related to the flow. It's far more likely that there's a leak somewhere, usually a pinhole in the bulb (a truncated sac). These pinholes are so small that ink can't pass through them, but air can. The first thing to do, therefore, is to replace the bulb, being careful to use enough shellac on the nipple to ensure a good seal.

If replacing the bulb didn't solve the problem, there could be a leak between the section and the barrel. Remove the section, clean the parts, and reinstall the section, using plenty of the authentic sheaffer thread sealant sold on request by Ron Zorn (Main Street Pens). You can use

shellac in a pinch, but non-hardening sealant is better for this application.

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