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

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## Fast and Facile

The image above shows two famous Falcons, merged into a single blueprint. The elegantly streamlined fountain pen, splashed across the page and diagrammed at the upper left, is a Parker Model 50 (Falcon), which Parker advertised as the world's second pen to have an integral nib, the first being the quill. The airplane at the lower right is of course the Lockheed Martin F-16, otherwise known as the Fighting Falcon.

In advertising the Falcon 50 as the world's second pen to have an integral nib, Parker conveniently forgot its own T-1, an embarrassingly short-lived model made of titanium, introduced in 1970 to honor America's Apollo space program and withdrawn in 1971.



They also ignored the Pilot MYU, which appeared in 1971 and was still in production in 1980, two years after the Falcon 50's introduction. Read the whole story in my article on **pens with integral nibs**. (It's also available as Chapter 29 in my book *Learning about Pens*.)

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## BROAD STROKES

Everybody knows that the piston pen began with Pelikan, right?

That's a symptom of short memory. Just last May I featured piston pens sold by the Richter-Leblang company in 1915. But that wasn't the start, either. The beginning of the modern piston pen happened in 1888, in Zurich, Switzerland. It was called the **Meteor Fountain Pen**, and it was invented by Adolf Hommel.

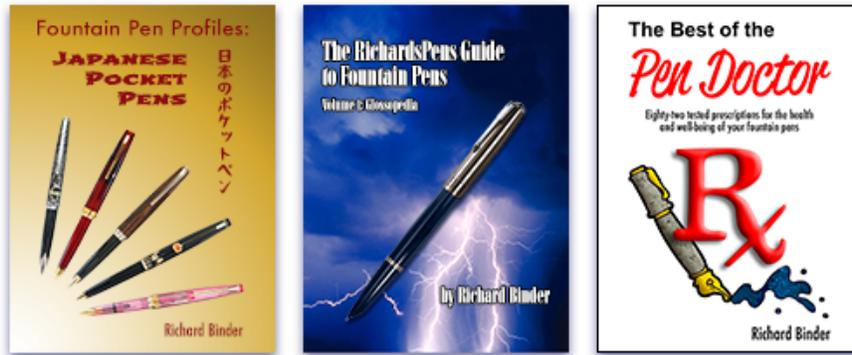


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### The RichardsPens Bookstore

I don't actually have a bookstore, but I have written a few books, and I let other people do all the work of selling them. Right now, I'm working on the second edition of *Japanese Pocket Pens* and the fifth edition of the *Glossopedia*, and there are new books in the planning stage. **My latest book, *The Best of the Pen Doctor*, arrived in Amazon, Apple, and Barnes & Noble ebook stores last May. It's selling well, and it's also available as a**

deluxe full-color paperback.



There's a complete listing of my books on my site, with direct links to pages on Amazon, Apple, Barnes & Noble, and Lulu where you can buy them for your own library.



*By Don Fluckinger  
September 2005*

*Every once in a while, I get in an "ideas" mode. To you, dear readers, I serve up another 10 ideas for limited edition pens that ought to be.*



Could this have been Steve Jobs' next project, the iPen?

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## From the *Glossopedia*

With more than 1,550 entries comprising (with subentries) more than 1,700 individual terms, more than 1,000 illustrations, more than 200 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.

**88** A piston-filling pen model introduced by Aurora in 1948. Designed by with a semi-hooded nib by architect Marcello Nizzoli in an effort to compete with the Parker “51”, the 88 and its successors the 88K and 88P (produced into the 1970s) established their own place in history and have become highly collectible in their own right. The 88 name was revived in about 2007 for an open-nibbed pen mechanically identical to the Optima but styled more roundly to harken back to the original 88. Shown here are original Nizzoli 88s with gold-filled and Nikargenta caps and a modern 88 with a gold-plated cap. See also Aurora, Nikargenta.



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 129 years (note how this number keeps growing as new entries are added) to see the whole *Glossopedia* here, one entry at a time (if I don't slip up and repeat an entry or three), 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.

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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 a very nice Wahl Personal-Point Gold Seal pen in chased black hard rubber. This pen is a fine point and is an excellent writer. The problem with it is that after a few minutes of writing a blob of ink forms at the end of the feed. I have determined, with crude experiments, that the heating of the pen by my hand causes this. If I pre-warm the pen for a few minutes by holding it vertically in my palm with the nib up so that the heated air can safely expand out through the feed I can safely write without blobbing. This is quaint but not convenient. So I think that there are two other options for correction. Shorten the sac so there is less air to warm or use a narrower sac to provide an air space between the barrel and the sac. Which is the better solution or should I do both? Is there another fix or possibly another cause for this problem?

**Rx:** You have analyzed the problem correctly, and you have also proposed

the correct solution. Note that I use the singular form here; there is indeed only one solution, which is to combine your “shorter” and ”narrower” options. The sac should not touch the back end of the barrel, nor should it be in intimate contact with the barrel wall. If the sac is in intimate contact with the barrel, it absorbs body heat and transfers it to the air within, which responds obediently to Boyle’s Law and expands as it is warmed. Air space insulates things to prevent the problem.

Most pen manufacturers and repairers in the old days, back before Noah came over on the Mayflower, had three criteria for determining the size of the sac for a given pen: ink capacity, ink capacity, and ink capacity. Over and over again I see pens whose sacs are almost molded to the inner contour of the barrel and pressure bar; they fill all of the space available. Bad idea, for the reason you have discovered.

These days, some pen repairers measure the diameter of the section nipple to determine the size of the sac that they should use. But this is, unfortunately, a bogus way to do things. For a twist filler, you want one size of sac, for a button filler a different size, and for a lever filler, a different size yet — in fact, any of several different sizes, depending on how bulky the pressure bar is. There has to be a better way.

There is. Instead of measuring the nipple, measure the available space in the barrel. With the pressure bar in place, find the largest sac that will drop freely into the barrel. Measure how far in it goes without stopping. Remove it and cut it so that there will be about 1/8" (3 mm) of absolutely clear space before it stops. This ensures that the back end will be clear of the barrel and the pressure bar. This sac will take some stretching to make it fit over the section nipple; that’s okay, and if necessary, you can hold it in place with cellophane tape while the shellac dries. This will give you time to clean your fingers of the shellac that got on them while you were struggling to make the sac stay on before you thought of using the tape.

One other thing. Some pens supposedly require specialty sacs. You often hear, for example, that you should use a necked sac in a Duofold. The purpose of using a necked sac in a Duofold is to fill up the entire barrel

volume, and you now know why you shouldn't do that. I keep no necked sacs except for Snorkels and PFMs/fat Touchdowns. But I do keep tapered (or tapered/necked) sacs for the few pens, such as the Eversharp Skyline, that can really benefit from the little squidge of extra ink capacity that you can gain without using a too-large straight sac that will get intimate with the back end of that tapered barrel.

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