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

**PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS NEWSLETTER!**

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

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

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Don't send email directly to me; the list is handled by a remote server.**



We are halfway through the Dog Days of Summer, but you can bet your bottom dollar, pound, shekel, zloty, or whatever that we aren't done with being roasted by that ol' Sun up there. We can stay cool in air-conditioned homes, cars, theaters, etc., but 125 years ago that wasn't an option. Amusement parks and beaches were popular ways to spend time not thinking about how doggone hot it was. The photo above suggests that someone might have been at a beach, enjoying the sun and perhaps a little of the cool water, and occupied himself (or herself) writing a letter. The tickets are from the Pythian Opera House in Wharton, New Jersey; maybe our beachgoer was spending the day at Atlantic City before riding the train home to take in a nice Victorian melodrama like *Sweeney Todd, the Barber of Fleet Street: or the String of Pearls* (1865, Frederick Hazleton).

The pen shown in the photo above displays a design that was quite popular around the turn of the 20th century. It features rolled *repoussé* bands, a cap with a thin rolled *repoussé* overlay, and strips of mother-of-pearl inlaid between the bands. Widely sold by discount houses like Sears, Roebuck and Co. and Montgomery Ward & Co., inexpensive eyedropper-filling pens like this one were a way for the less wealthy to have a nice-looking pen at a price they could afford. (A Parker pen with a nice gold-filled overlay sold for about \$7.00.) The cheapest models featured brass nibs, but the better ones had 14K nibs. Shown below is a page from the 1909 Sears catalog, offering pens priced from 92¢ to \$4.62. (That's about \$30.00 to \$150.00 today.)



Although self-filling pens had appeared in the 1890s, some people elected to eschew those newfangled things and stick with “regular” fountain pens, by which was meant the old reliable eyedropper-filler. Not all eyedropper-fillers were equal, however; there were several **variations** that were intended to work around the almost-inevitable mess and inconvenience. The fact that eyedropper-fillers became the norm does not, however, mean that eyedropper-fillers were gone and forgotten. Several manufacturers continued making them, notably Macniven & Cameron, later known as Waverley Cameron Ltd, which until the 1950s made a good business selling its “Cameron” eyedropper-fillers in India, where there were (and still are) millions of people for whom a self-filling pen is beyond their means. Eyedropper-fillers have even made a comeback with the worldwide resurgence of interest in fountain pens, and in India brands like Wality and Ratnam are quite popular.

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# BROAD STROKES

The Pen Doctor is no more immune than most of us to temperatures north of 100° F (37.8° C). Realizing that given the enervating weather, I would be less than likely to come up with an article for this month's issue, he kindly provided a new **Pen Doctor page**, with three new prescriptions and a little discussion of what's in inks. Most of these prescriptions don't call for heavy-duty exertion from you, the reader, a kindness we can all appreciate.



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## The Nib Noise Archive

In the past few months, I've received a surprising number of queries asking if past issues of *Nib Noise* are available on line. The answer was always no — until now. I spent this past weekend creating and uploading all of the previous monthly issues, all the way back to the beginning, and the *Nib Noise Archive* is now on line.

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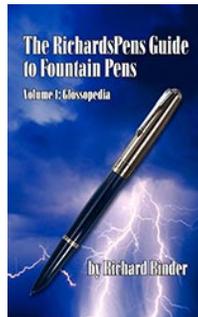
## PEN WORLD and Me

The August issue of *PEN WORLD* Magazine, due out this month, finishes up my four-part series, "World War II and the Fountain Pen," which started in the February issue. If you don't already subscribe to *PEN WORLD*, I recommend it as good reading and an excellent way to keep abreast with what's going on in the (pun intended) pen world. Print editions are available by subscription or on newsstands, and digital editions are available by subscription. Back issues are available.

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## My Books

I will be publishing the *Fifth Edition* of my *Glossopedia* very soon. I will post an announcement on my **Facebook Page** and on my **website** when the new edition is available from Apple, Amazon, and Barnes & Noble. If you have an earlier edition, you should receive the update automatically.



I invite you to visit my website's **Books page**. It has a complete listing of all my books, with direct links to the vendors' pages where you can buy them for your own library. To better show you what each book looks like, I've updated all the cover images on the page to the larger size you see above.

As an Amazon, Apple, and Barnes & Noble Associate, I earn a commission when you purchase one of my books by following a link from my Books page.



By Don Fluckinger

## September 2004: Dumb eBay Tricks for Smart Bidders

...take advantage of sellers' bad typing habits and complete ignorance of the fountain pen world. I'm going to list some common misspellings that force an auction to fall under the radar of people who search eBay for their favorites...



Schaeffer Snorkle Admiral Fountain Pen

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### From the *Glossopedia*

With more than 1,600 entries comprising (with subentries) more than 1,750 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.

**Zerollo** A fountain pen company located in Genoa, Italy; founded c. 1932 by Dante Davide Zerollo, who was also a cotton controller in partnership with his brother Mario Giovanni Zerollo. The company produced a surprising number of variants on what was essentially a single model called the Duo Color: a writing instrument housing within a single barrel two complete matchstick-filling pens separated by a metal plate (U.S. Patent N<sup>o</sup> 1,893,130, issued to Mirko Chelazzi and Dino Frulli on January 3, 1933). When the instrument was not in use, the two pens were both partially retracted. To use one of the pens, the user uncapped the instrument and turned a knob at the back end of the barrel; working through an ingenious screw mechanism, this action simultaneously extended one pen and retracted the other fully. For filling, the cap crown screwed off the cap; fixed to the underside of the crown piece was a short metal rod that served as the matchstick and would be inserted into two holes in the barrel, one after the other, to fill the respective pens. The system worked well, but the mechanism was delicate and hard to repair if it became damaged, and it is doubtful whether the Zerollo pen possessed any significant advantage over the simpler solution of carrying two separate pens. Initial production was in hard rubber, including rolled-gold overlay versions. Later, Zerollo introduced celluloid models in a broad range of attractive marbled colors, featuring an unusual faceted treatment with an extremely long-pitch spiral twist. It is not known whether Zerollo manufactured its own pens; based on the quality of the work, some authorities have suggested that the pens, or at least some of the parts, were made by Omas. In addition to selling in the Italian market, the company licensed its design to Dunhill in England and Unic in France. Unable or unwilling to produce other types of pens, Zerollo gradually fell out of favor, and it ceased operation after World War II. See also Colorado.

If you would like to suggest an entry for the *Glossopedia*, I invite you to send an email to me at 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 133 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. When I release the next edition, your ebook vendor will notify you (or make the update silently).

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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:** My mother-in-law owns a Waterman Philéas Fountain Pen. Not an expensive pen, but one she enjoys using. Her pen has a Medium nib and she would like a Fine nib. Where would I purchase a replacement nib that quite frankly wasn't more expensive than just buying a new pen? Are nibs standard sizes, or do you have to buy the specific nib for the model of pen you have?

**R:** Waterman discontinued the Philéas in 2008, and the supply of replacement Philéas nibs that Waterman's repair center used to have is gone. This means that the only way to find a nib for your mother-in-law's pen is probably to seek one on the secondary market, including auction sites such as eBay—and this could mean buying a complete NOS pen or a used one that might or might not have been reconditioned. If it's not necessary that the new nib have the same gold plating that the existing nib has; the Waterman Kultur, never sold in the U.S.A. but available in Europe, is a less expensive model that uses the same nib, minus the plating. Section assemblies, although not the same color, are interchangeable. Here are photos of a Philéas and a Kultur for comparison:



A more generalized answer is that nibs are not standard. Each pen manufacturer decides on the shapes and sizes of its nibs, and whether the manufacturer makes the nibs or buys them from a nib maker, they are still unique to some extent. That said, there are many cases in which nibs can interchange; for example, all Edison pens that use the larger of Edison's nib sizes can use each other's nibs because Edison is a small company and buys nibs in quantity for use in several pen models. This also applies to Visconti, Stipula, and nearly all small makers that buy from Bock JoWo, or Schmidt, the three big German nib makers. Larger companies like Aurora, Parker, Pelikan, Sheaffer, and Waterman, however, make their own nibs, and each pen model uses a nib that is unique to that model.



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