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

richard@richardspens.com

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VACUUM-FIL



by SHEAFFER'S

Was there ever a pen company named VACUUM-FIL? Not really. Back in the day, many pen companies sold pens under sub-brands as well as their own name brands. L. E. Waterman had Penalink and Remex. Parker had Writefine. Sheaffer had Craig, Univer, WASP, and VACUUM-FIL, and it turns out that pens branded VACUUM-FIL didn't even always have Sheaffer's Vacuum-Fil plunger filling system. This VACUUM-FIL pen has a twist filler similar to the one invented by A. A. Waterman:



Like WASP, VACUUM-FIL was sometimes used as a test platform for new technology, the best known example being the Vacuum-Fil system itself, which appeared in 1934.

But Sheaffer wasn't the only company with a plunger-filler. Conklin, Wahl-Eversharp, and Pilot also made plunger pens. And Sheaffer wasn't even the inventor of the system. That honor goes to a mechanical engineer, tinkerer, and sometime vaudeville performer named George Sweetser, who licensed his 1906 patent to Thomas De la Rue & Company, a London printing house dealing in banknotes and postage stamps that subsequently became the manufacturer of Onoto the Pen:



Curious about the plunger filling system? Read about the history of plungers in the newly revised **Filling System Histories: Take the Plunge**, and learn the intricacies of Sheaffer's version in **Anatomy of a Fountain Pen V: Sheaffer's Vacuum-Fil**. You can also learn how to repair the Sheaffer version in [How to Repair a Sheaffer Vacuum-Fil Plunger-Filler](#).



June is a great month for a pen show, and St. Louis is a great city to have one. That's why we'll be there for the **St. Louis Pen Show, June 24–26**. Catch a

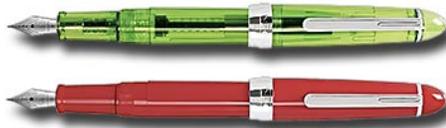
good time with friends and fellow collectors, and sign up for at least some of the great seminars and workshops!

And speaking of workshops, working directly with participants and with assistance from Linda Kennedy, resident nib technician at Indy-Pen-Dance, and Joshua Lax, owner and operator of the J. J. Lax Pen Company, **I will offer my hands-on workshop on nib smoothing.** In this intensive two-hour session, I will teach you how to smooth nibs and do some basic adjustments using the tools and methods I've developed during more than 20 years of experience. (I cannot guarantee that you will be an accomplished nibmeister at the end of the session, but you will have learned a lot and, I hope, had a good time.)

We will have space for 16 hands-on participants. Participants must register in advance. Your prepaid \$20.00 materials fee will cover the cost of the tools, supplies, and pens you will use. You'll also need to bring a good *unlighted* hand loupe. I recommend a high-quality 10× loupe such as the BelOMO triplet shown here. It's available from Amazon, eBay, and other dealers on the Internet. (With cheap loupes, you get what you pay for: shoddy construction and poor optics.)



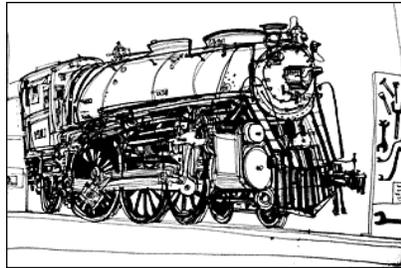
The materials kit includes two practice pens like the ones shown here. Please don't bring your own pens expecting to work on them during the workshop. After the session, you will keep your materials so that you can continue honing your skills at home.



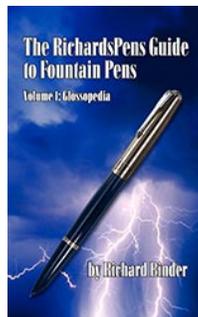
Registration for the workshop will open at 9:00 a.m. Eastern time on Friday, June 10, 2022. At that time, you can register through PayPal using your VISA, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express card, or your PayPal account if you have one.

BROAD STROKES

This month the well of ideas ran a little dry, so I approached award-winning children's author and illustrator Steve Light with a general question about drawing with fountain pens. You will find Steve's answer in **Drawing with Fountain Pens**. The sketch below is one Steve made of Southern Railway locomotive No. 1401 in the Smithsonian Institution.



My Books



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

October 2006: Holy Toledo!

It struck me, as I inspected a Conklin pen last week, that the company's home base of Toledo, Ohio, seems an unlikely epicenter of pendum. But it makes sense.



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.

Matador (*Siebert & Löwen*, also *Standard-Matador*) A pen manufacturer located in Wuppertal-Elberfeld, Germany (near Düsseldorf); founded in 1895 by Adolf Siebert and Ewald Löwen to manufacture office supplies. The company began making fountain pens c. 1911, when it received French Patent N^o 431,385 (issued on November 9, 1911), for a retracting safety pen that featured a novel modification of the twist mechanism for extending and retracting the nib. By the beginning of the 1920s, the company was focusing on developing high-quality pens at low cost. Later Matador pens were piston-fillers, ordinary in design but stylish and generally of very high quality (below, a Matador 811). The company's most significant innovation was the 1949 development of a reliable airtight snap cap. Because of the sound this cap made when closed, the first pen model to bear it was called the Matador Click. The company ceased operation in 1973.



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).

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.

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 beautiful Doric in Morocco, with a roller clip. The end of the cap appears to have crystallized, and a chunk of it has fallen out. I would either like to replace it or fill the defect in to stop further deterioration.

R: It's not possible to stop further deterioration, I'm afraid. Celluloid is nitrated cellulose that has been stabilized with camphor. It is inherently unstable, and it will all decompose over time. (Thicker parts go faster than thinner parts, and clear parts go faster than colored parts.) The only way to preserve the pen in usable condition is to replace the cap entirely with one that has not yet begun to decompose. Also, do not keep the pen in a tightly closed space, or in any space with other celluloid pens, because the nitric acid that the celluloid gives off as it decomposes will hasten the decomposition of any other celluloid objects that are exposed.



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