

## Wee One no. 2

Fountain Pen Comeback

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IT HAS come to my attention that my handwriting has deteriorated to the point that I can't read a line that I have written after five minutes has passed. This is a shock to my ego. I lay the blame partly on the devilish ballpoint pen, invented by one Ladislao Biro in Argentina. The only grade school teacher whose face I can still vision (though not the name) was my irascible penmanship teacher. We did either Palmer Method or the Zaner Method in the different schools, and I don't remember how methods differed. Both required us to do endless "push pulls" and "O's" and the teacher walked the aisles saying "With the wrist, not the fingers." But I always wrote with my fingers – couldn't see what the wrist had to do with it. In Highschool the boys took Manual Training (which included Drafting) and the girls took Home Economics. Nobody told us about horrible "gender insensitivity". In College, as an engineering student, General Engineering required more Drafting, for which we made lines with a ruling pen, and did "single stroke" lettering with a "tank pen" (ordinary nib with a little flipper to retain ink). Once a skill at lettering was attained, it had no affect on my penmanship. The two arts were separate. My Sheaffer "Life-time" fountain pen, with its platinum point, was treasured, and I never loaned it because that would change the nib and "destroy my touch." I re-member when Sheaffer marketed "SKRIP" and the fountain pen that used little cartridges. When ball points proliferated, the fountain pen was abandoned – I see now that it was hopeless at making carbon copies, but I guess carbons weren't important in those days. Surprise! The Sheaffer pen and its ink cartridges are now available at Ace Hardware. Brought back for Calligraphers, but perhaps its new availability will influence me to become a legible penman once more.

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Parker Snapp for the AAPA

## Wee one no. 3

Word Processors

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BACK of the envelope sum-mary of the origin of word processors goes like this: In the beginning was IBM, which missed the niche because text production was only a necessary and irritating addition to book keeping. IBM's belated input was a magnetic recorder for the "flying ball" typewriter, and a plastic belt looking something like an arm band that could hold and play back correspondence, and could be folded and mailed in a letter. Dr. Hao Wang saw the inadequacy of the IBM approach, filled it, and was for a time the King of Word Processing soft-ware. Producers of the first personal computers made the same mistake as IBM, thinking that computers were only for manipulating numbers, and "text" is anything that makes readable listings of programs. It was left to an amateur pro-grammer, Michael Shroyer, to produce "Electric Pencil," the first word processor for hobby computers. Marketers were late in recognizing the commercial value of word pro-cessors, so for a time, the production of Shareware word processors became a cottage industry. Success was delayed by the slow development of "formed character" printers, as the seven pin "needle" printers, while good enough for program listings, were horrendous when compared with the "flying ball" for "camera ready" publications.

With the success of the PC formed on IBM's template, word processing and "WYSIWYG" became big business for Microsoft, Word Perfect, Corel, and others, and the ink jet printer makes it all work.

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Parker Snapp for the AAPA

## Wee one no. 4

Small Town Libraries

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I LOVE a small town library. My favorite, where I grew up, was in a small town in the Northwest, where the library was a single fairly large room above the fire station, and the librarian was a widow who lived three houses up the street from my family. My mother and I and perhaps an older sister, would occasionally go the librarian's house in the evening to mend books. She would have a pile of worn books laid out along with gummed tape and other mending materials, and we would do whatever needed to get them back into lending condition.

In the library, the librarian sat at a desk in a far corner. Inside the door, on the left, was the "Junior" section, and on the right, the unmarked major fiction section. The librarian's desk was the dividing line. After school, I usually stopped for a long poring over the two volume Appleton's Encyclopedia of Applied Mechanics (1880). On my first visit to Shorey's in Seattle, in 1938, I found Appleton used, a dollar for the pair. What a treasure! I have been poring over them now for over 75 years.

Non Fiction must have been just beyond the "Z" shelf for juveniles, as my memory puts Jules Verne, my next most favorite, very near. I long mourned over the fact that the incomplete set of Verne got Michel Ardan up in the promised "Trip to the Sun", but "Around the Sun" was promised for the next volume, which was missing from the set.

I must have cruised through the Juvenile Section and across the room, looking for more Sherlock Holmes. When I found Conan Doyle, and finished Sherlock and Dr. Watson, I wanted to take out "Raymond," being titillated by the promise of something on the supernatural. Mrs. Ross, the librarian, said "I really think you don't want to read this." But she let me take it anyway. She was right. I remember that my sleep was disturbed many times in that period by belief that such things as the supernatural and voodoo might just possibly be real.

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Parker Snapp for the AAPA

## Wee one no. 5

The Trouble With E-Journals

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FROM childhood, I have always evaded what I should be doing (homework, chores, or a project half completed) to waste time on something irrelevant, feeling guilty all the while True to form, I found myself dabbling with a poor substitute for J. Hill Hamon's pdf-formatted productions, instead of settling to work on the next monthly issue of Ad Interim. After producing 19 issues of Ad Interim, I have the formatting process down pat, and the job of trimming, folding, stapling process is no longer a novelty These Wee Ones promise a place in which to write short 200-word essay, and get them to potential readers with the magic carpet of e-mail.

### Time Out

Things are happening too fast. J. Hill keeps surprising me with more experiments, and I've forgotten "Who's on First?"

QuickView Plus can open "dot doc" files made with Word 2000, and J. Hill's e-wc11, written with WORD 2000, looks and acts exactly like his WORD files converted to pdf.