

Writing the Next Chapter:

BY DONNA L. BATCHELOR

Ensuring that the fountain pen world thrives.

Pen World's December 2024 issue, while beautiful as always, included a somber tone among the pages. Three pieces shared sad news of the passing of three pen community stalwarts: Julian Kreeger, Greg Hardy, and Terry Wiederlight. I didn't know them but appreciate the history and passion they represented.

Reading about these gentlemen made me ponder some things. How much pen history and knowledge left with them? How many people owe their love of writing and pens to them? And, in an increasingly digital world, how can we ensure that love continues? I can't answer the first two but have thoughts on the third.

Start With Where They Are

I was introduced to the world of pens several years ago when my sister met her now-husband, Robert Zenzel. Robert—a wealth of pen knowledge himself—can be seen at pen shows helping “Crazy” Alan Cohen work his tables.

Robert was clever. While I didn't jump headfirst into an ink bottle, he did notice what I loved: a good gel rollerball. That's where he started: a blue Sheaffer Pop rollerball with gel ink for my birthday. I could not believe how beautifully that thing wrote. Then Robert dropped the proverbial banana peel next to the pen world rabbit hole: “Ya know, there's a *Star Wars* set of those.” Within a week I had several Sheaffers in my favorite *Star Wars* characters.



Go At Their Speed

I still wasn't sure about nibs yet. How do you take care of them? How do you fill pens with ink? Do they make a huge mess? So Robert shared something he thought I'd like: the Kaweco Sport iridescent pearl fountain pen and—aha!—the ink cartridge that came with it.

Clever, again. This helped acquaint me with nibs but without “the ink part.” He shared pen care tips and Kaweco's fun cartridge colors. When I later fell in love with the Kaweco Toyoma Teal, it ended up under the Christmas tree.

Be There For the First Fountain Pen, and Beyond

My first big fountain pen purchase came at the Orlando Pen Show. I knew it when I saw it: nearly six inches of never-ending glittery, diamond dust sparkles called “Disco Ball” on the Divine Pens Plus table. I was so over the moon that Robert had to remind me to buy ink! He showed me how to load, clean, and travel with it, and he offered stationery advice.

The Call to Action: Pass It On

Not everyone will fall in love with fountain pens immediately. Passion, however, is contagious. Be seen writing with them. Answer questions people have. Encourage newbies to begin with a pen close to where they are now. Keeping the fountain pen world alive depends on us sharing: how we got into it, our first pen, our favorite pens, inks, and so much more.

This year—for Julian, Greg, and Terry—what would happen if each of us introduced at least one person a month to the world of pens?

Donna L. Batchelor is a content marketing writer with an unhealthy addiction to BENU and other sparkly fountain pens. She runs social media for The Write Stuff, LLC, and can be found at belladonnamediaservices.com and several pen shows.

Share your pen experience, insight or memory with PW readers in approximately 500 words and mail to Pen World Editor, P.O. Box 2276, Cypress, TX 77410, or email to editor@penworld.com.