

BIRÓ, László József, Argentina  
a golyóstoll  
feltalálója

The ballpoint pens made their first mark on the United States scene Oct. 29, 1945, when Gimbels, at \$12.50 each, unloaded a barrelfull of what it termed a "fantastic...miraculous fountain pen...guaranteed to write for two years without refilling."

These were the creations of Milton Reynolds, who beat the Eberhard Faber Company and the Eversharp Pen Company in marketing a ballpoint pen patented by a Hungarian refugee named László József Biro who was living in Argentina. Actually, patents had been obtained as far back as 1888 on a ballpoint pen that then, as now, had a freely revolving ball, set in a socket, that wiped a gelatinous ink onto a writing surface.

Mr. Reynolds, who has been reported in residence in Mexico, has long since left the United States ballpoint pen arena. It's still possible to pay as much as \$12.50 for a ballpoint pen. However, the going rate these days seems to be 19 cents.

The 19-cent line, in fact, represents at the moment the coast-to-coast battleground for two of the scrappiest contenders for the No. 1 spot in the ballpoint-pen market. There are other price lines, of course, and each represents other battlegrounds where the 14-karat, heavy-weapon companies vie with one another.

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