



# The MAIN SPRING

*A Monthly Publication from  
Southwestern Chapter 15 of the  
National Association of  
Watch and Clock Collectors*

Editor's Note: I recently received an unsigned letter implying that the participation in the Chapter would be better if there was a financial accounting of the Regional. As fate would have it, the sender of this letter probably had that accounting arrive in their mailbox the day they mailed their letter. But the accusation that money was not accounted for was made. The Chairman of the Regional replies below.

## **SHOW ME THE MONEY!**

The letter was unsigned, with no return address. It implied that the reason for a lack of participation in Chapter 15 activities was due to non-transparent handling of regional funds. It would be easy to dismiss such a letter, since the author did not allow a direct response. But I recently studied the demographics of our chapter membership, and noticed that a large number of our members are served by the Pedernales Electrical Cooperative. Another large group lives in the Houston area, home of Enron. The rest of us are bombarded day and night with stories of lavish compensation and expense accounts for the officers and directors of corporations and even "non-profit" organizations. It's easy to develop a healthy concern that your NAWCC chapter is handling funds in an ethical manner. It's not healthy to let any concerns fester or to throw out broad, anonymous questions to chapter officers and directors without allowing us to respond to your concerns and answer any specific questions.

Make no mistake: This chapter belongs to the members of Chapter 15. The officers and directors of the chapter are unpaid volunteers who are nominated and elected by the members, and we do our best to act on behalf of the membership. But it's hard to determine the wants and needs of the membership without a lot of input. We want questions; we need to know of your concerns. We would like to respond to you personally, not to accusations from anonymous letters. We want to be open and accessible. We take all of the input we do receive, balance the conflicting wishes of different members and other constraints (such as money), and act accordingly.

A large undertaking, the Great Southwest Regional is put together primarily through the efforts of a very small handful of people. Most have full time jobs and all are unpaid volunteers. Nobody has an expense account. Unlike some "non-profit" organizations, the volunteers, officers, and directors of your chapter and regional give much more than countless hours of their time to your chapter without compensation or reimbursement. For example, one officer donated the door prize for the 2007 regional, raising almost \$1500 in regional funds: equal to more than half of the initial regional seed money put up by the chapter several years ago.

NAWCC Chapter 15 is not the Pedernales Electrical Cooperative. All of our meetings are open and all members are strongly encouraged to attend and participate. Our finances are completely open. As the chairman of the Regional, I have access only to the regional bank account, so I can only make this offer for the regional account, but I'll be happy to share information on every statement and transaction that we've had since I took over. All anybody has to do is ask. I will appreciate a return address so I can respond.

Mike Williams, Vice President & Webmaster  
Chairman, Great Southwestern Regional

## **Save The Date**

- **Texas All Chapters Regional**  
**August 22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**JW Marriot**  
**Houston TX**
- **Wharton One Day Mart**  
**September 13<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m.**  
**1<sup>st</sup> United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall**  
**Wharton, Texas**

**Visit Your NAWCC Chapter 15 Website at [www.nawcc-chapter15.org/](http://www.nawcc-chapter15.org/) - new information updates!!**

## How I Was Drafted into Southwestern Chapter 15

~Elton Eugene Galbraith

Strangely enough I became a member of Chapter 15 because of a sequence of events which forced me to, "Join, or else." In other words, I was drafted, coerced, arm twisted, and threatened with dire consequences if I did not.

In February of 2006, I was approached by an industrious Chapter 15 member at one of our CAWCG (Capitol Area Watchmaker-Clockmaker Guild) meetings in Austin. **Susan Hansen** was Chairperson of the Exhibit Committee for the upcoming 2006 Regional in Kerrville. During the break, she cornered me in the hall as I was coming out of the men's room. If you know Susan, you know how she can turn on the charm with her electric personality, infectious smile, and soothing low seductive voice. "Hello, Gene," she whispered, as she cocked her cute little head in the "strike mode." I immediately fell into a trance and was powerless to resist her. "Is it true that you have a collection of old clocks?" she said in a musical sing song fashion. "Why, yes, I have a few," I stuttered in self defense; totally unaware of her intentions.

You've heard of the old saying, "Would you like to come to my place and see my etchings?" I fully expected such a follow-up from her, except, it might be, "May I come to your place and see your clock collection?" To my great surprise and relief, she said, "Do you have some American clocks made before 1850?" I blinked my eyes, came back from my mesmerized stupor and replied with exuberance, "I think some of them were made prior to the Civil War." Now really, I knew that I had some great clocks made before 1850, but my mind was so fuzzy over her squirmy solicitations that I would have failed a sobriety test.

She got down to business and let me know in no uncertain terms what she was after. The intrigue became reality as she almost tearfully implored, "Could you show me some pictures of your clocks?" She continued in this pitiful pleading whimper, "I need to put together an exhibit for the Regional, and **Ted Orbans**, Regional Chairman, wants to preview the clocks." Now everything was coming into focus and I could relax knowing that my wife would not feel threatened by the antics of this brazen beauty. Susan was desperate, but harmless.

I agreed to bring pictures to the March meeting of the Guild where Ted showed up to preview them. Susan was in a prayerful position on her knees as Ted and I discussed the possibilities of bringing my clocks to the Regional exhibit. It was settled; the

various wood movement shelf clocks, a few first generation brass movement clocks, including a couple of strapped brass roller pinion clocks, and the John Sawin 1810 banjo clock would be acceptable. You would have thought that Christmas had come in March as Susan profusely thanked me with a big hug of appreciation. I stood there, hands down to my side, feeling weak and flushed as everyone in the room gazed in amazement at the spectacle.

Susan regained her composure and interjected rather matter-of-factly, "By the way, you will be expected (required) to join Chapter 15 in order to be eligible to set up your exhibit in the Mart Room. I knew it! She had "set the hook!" I was totally blindsided by her! Trapped! No turning back! Or, as in the song, "The Point of No Return."

The truth is out! If you want to recruit new members, give them something to do. She certainly worked her magic on me. Actually, I was ready to join Chapter 15 anyway. But look what happens when you get swept off your feet by a sweet damsel. You end up being President of the outfit!

*Editor's Note –any submissions about how you came to be a member of Chapter 15 would be welcomed.*

### President's Message

One fine November day a woman came into my shop with a box full of clock parts. There was a battered kitchen clock case without glass and some broken wood. There was a brown paper bag containing all of the filthy, oily, and rusty movement parts rattling around in the bottom. With a shaky voice and trembling hands she described how her husband had decided to work on her grandmother's clock which had been a wedding present. Apparently he had separated the plates without clamping the mainsprings. Amazingly, however, a fairly nice paper label had survived on the back of the walnut clock case. It read, "Fargo by the Ansonia Clock Company". This model dates from 1895.

After considerable wailing and gnashing of teeth over the disastrous condition of her clock, she calmed down and asked if there was anyway I could resurrect her treasured timepiece. I laid a cloth on the counter and dumped the clock parts out of the bag. Sure enough, all the parts were there and I assured her that her clock would one day rise up from a pile of parts to once again strike the hours and keep the time for her home. She was ecstatic over the news and asked if I could have it done by Christmas. I knew it would be a challenge to meet a four week deadline, but I promised to have it done in time for Christmas. I enjoyed playing the part of Santa Claus, the Clockmaker, and making one more happy customer.

## A Trip Back in Time

Pat Holloway

On this quiet Saturday morning in July of 2008, surrounded by a back drop of rhythmically striking and chiming antique clocks, it wasn't difficult for almost twenty Chapter 15 members and guests to transport our minds to another place in time. 1868: a time of turmoil and change for the United States such as had never been seen before or since. Back to the city of Indianola, Texas, through the eyes of Robert Brewer, a man who had been a successful business owner in this thriving port, but due to the effects of the Civil War had turned to life as a war correspondent and bounty hunter.

Mr. Brewer came to us, dressed as he had in 1868, complete with the tools of his trades: tools with which to protect himself and carry out his bounty hunting duties, as well as tools with which to report the news of the war to the people who remained behind in Indianola. And prominently displayed across his vest, a watch chain and fobs; a watch tucked in his pocket for easy reference.

He spoke of the battles of San Jacinto and the Alamo, and his entry into business. Mr. Brewer shared with us his memories of a load of camels being brought to Indianola in 1856 in an experiment to replace the lowly pack animals currently used. He told us about the growing difficulty to continue as a businessman due to the blockades and his goods being confiscated. All of the events leading up to and surrounding the Civil War and the change in his career. He then showed us a pocket watch that had been damaged during a battle; the watch sent back to the family of the soldier and later purchased complete with a note handwritten by the young soldier's sister.

During these discussions, we learned about the state of watch and clock manufacturing during these times. Clock factories turned to manufacturing for the war effort. Goods manufactured in the North often came to the South by way of blockade runners via Bermuda. People in the South refused to buy clocks manufactured in the North, so clocks appeared bearing labels such as Davis or Beauregard pasted over labels that might have originally said Waterbury or Jerome.

As happens all too often, time grew short and after answering many of our questions, Robert Brewer returned to the past. Who knows when we may meet him or one of his friends again to gain even more insight into the fascinating history of our country that impacted people and industry?

In the meantime, we can rely on sharing our questions and findings with others who are interested in the past, museum exhibits, Bulletin articles, NAWCC

and the ever-expanding world of technology. Just this morning, when the conversation turned to clocks, a friend mentioned having a Davis clock. Thanks to Robert Brewer, I have a frame of reference as to the timing of this clock - and a desire to actually see it and start searching my Bulletin Index for Davis clocks!

A special thanks goes to Luther and Laverne Rains who made our morning even more special by providing coffee and homemade cookies. As we walked in the door, the wonderful scents of freshly brewed coffee and just-out-of-the-oven chocolate chip cookies helped set the scene for our trip back in time. Thanks!

### Pocket Watch Program Very Timely

If you missed the June meeting which featured pocket time pieces (pocket watches) from 1830-1930, you will want to read this. **Mr. Fred Bell** of Lockhart presented the program in the **Southwest Museum of Clocks & Watches** at Lockhart, Texas. He displayed and discussed the watches, most of them key wind and key set, and passed them around for all to get a close up look. He also had some interesting stories about many of the watches. Does anybody know about the Dueber pocket watch? He had one in hand and gave an interesting history about it. It seems that the Dueber Watch Company was in Canton, Ohio from 1888 to 1923. Then Dueber bought the Hampden Watch Company and produced watches under the name of Dueber-Hampden Watch Company from 1923 to 1931. Times were rough during these depression years. The company sold its complete factory to a Russian manufacturer, Amtorg, U.S.S.R, which made cheaper grade watches from 1930 to the present day.

Dueber made several grades and sizes of watches. Most have nominal value (\$60-\$150), but a few were made in Railroad Grades with 23 jewels and command prices from \$300-\$1,700. As in any watch or clock, condition is everything. Extra fine quality may bring \$500, while mint condition watches will bring three times that amount. Compared to Elgin and Waltham, there were relatively fewer Dueber-Hampden watches made and consequently are more difficult to find.

Mr. Bell boasts a collection of 300+ pocket watches. He has been hunting for watches at estate and garage sales for over 30 years. He buys almost anything. He has been known to pay as much as \$3.00. Then he pays a watchmaker \$75 to get it to run!

All of us who attended the program came away with a new appreciation for the fine watches produced over a 100 year span. Our thanks and appreciation goes to Fred for sharing his knowledge and a few of his watches with us. ~Gene Galbraith

## Board Officers and Contact Information

President – Gene Galbraith  
512-658-3853

President@nawcc-chapter15.org

Vice President – Michael Williams  
(512)733-7375

VicePresident@nawcc-chapter15.org

Treasurer – Neill Day  
(830) 896-2363

Treasurer@nawcc-chapter15.org

Secretary – Pat Holloway  
(512) 252-3881

Secretary@nawcc-chapter15.org

Director of Programs – Luther Lucko  
(512) 260-8942

Programs@nawcc-chapter15.org

Director of Workshops – Scott Clark  
(210) 824-0794

Workshops@nawcc-chapter15.org

Director of One Day Marts – Roy Barnard  
(512) 225-4783

OneDayMarts@nawcc-chapter15.org

## Survey – in process

The Chapter 15 survey is being tallied and the results will be reported in the next newsletter. But it is not too late to get your ideas submitted. The Survey form is still on the website, or contact one of the officers (listed to the left) or the Newsletter editor to get a copy to fill out.

Thanks for your participation.

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Southwestern Chapter 15  
1502 Dartmouth Ave  
Austin, TX 78757-1310