

The MAINSPRING

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

The First Christmas Gift

Young people think they know almost everything about their parents, though they discover a thing or two in the years after they leave the nest. But after more than half a century on the planet, some stories are still a bit of a surprise. Such was this Christmas story that I learned from my father earlier this year.

My parents married out of high school—18 years old. I knew that they had married in November 1954 and I knew that my Dad was working as a low-level clerk for the state, making very little money. I was vaguely aware that my mother was employed before I was born, but didn't know much more. Earlier this year, my father mentioned that he had a 1954 Gruen wristwatch that didn't run, and asked if I wanted it. 1954—the year registered in my head quickly: the year my parents married. Being a clock person, I wasn't very familiar with old watch companies, but I listened to my Dad's story and researched the company.

Gruen, it turned out, was once the largest watch manufacturer in America, and perhaps one of the greatest innovators. Dietrich Gruen invented and patented an improved safety pinion in 1874, a date that he would use as the "founding" date of his later company. But his first real company, the Columbus Watch Manufacturing Company was actually started in 1876. This was the forerunner of the South Bend Watch Company (after the Studebaker family purchased the assets and moved them to Indiana). But Dietrich had left that company in 1894 and formed a new company with his son—a company that bore their name. Unlike his first company, this new company would use movements often designed in the US, but built first in Germany, then Switzerland. Gruen

developed a reputation for quality, value, and practicality. The Verithin pocket watch was much less bulky than other pocket watches—10 to 12 size and only 7mm thick, yet able to meet railroad standards! Through the years, Gruen used movements from and formed associations with companies such as LeCoultre and Rolex. So in spite of a reputation for "value", their watches were not "cheap", which leads to the rest of this story.

My newlywed mother was working for an insurance company in late 1954, making a meager salary. But she did receive a Christmas bonus, which she concealed from my Dad. She used it to buy a new Gruen wristwatch, engraved on the back with the month and year and "To Jack, with Love from your Wife, 12/25/54." I learned that she was laid off from her job shortly after Christmas, and I already knew that I came along (unplanned) less than 11 months later. It was no small financial sacrifice that my Mom made for that gift! I found out that it ran well for a few years, but after a few crystal and balance staff replacements, the balance staff broke once more, and it was relegated to a jewelry box for nearly 50 years. But as with the old family crystal regulator (see my Oct and Nov 09 articles), somebody knew to hang on to a nice timepiece rather than sell or throw it away. Is it any wonder that clocks and watches are in my blood? It's genetic!

Merry Christmas!
Mike Williams, President

Welcome

Join us in welcoming new Chapter 15 member
Karen Rasmussen
Georgetown, Texas

Chapter Announcements

~ Mike Williams

We have a new chapter officer! Bob Rasmussen is our new Chapter 15 Treasurer. Bob is a fellow computer geek like me and a Baylor graduate. Karen and Bob live in Georgetown and he is also a member of CAWCG. He has been treasurer of a non-profit organization in the past and is already dissecting "the books" and making/implementing recommendations on how to efficiently and accurately track our finances.

Thank you Neill Day for serving as chapter treasurer for two years, plus nearly seven more months as acting treasurer after your term expired!

It's now official: The 2010 Great Southwestern Regional has been canceled and we've notified NAWCC. We still have a vacancy in the chapter Vice President position, and this is the person who serves as the general chair of the regional. It's now too late to plan for an April event. Chapter 15 will co-sponsor the Lone Star Regional in March and the All Texas Chapters Regional in August, as we do every year, and we will schedule a general chapter meeting, including a robust educational program and perhaps a one-day mart in April.

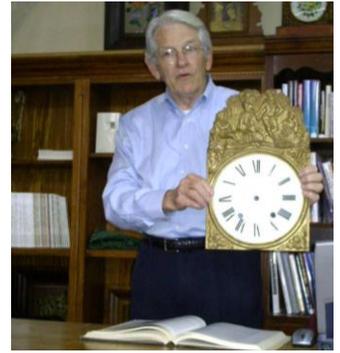
A Chapter 15 look back on 2009

2009 was a busy year for Chapter 15. We had 5 programs, a potluck social, and hands-on workshops on comtoise clocks and reverse glass painting. We also hosted the Great Southwestern Regional and co-hosted the Lone Star and All Texas Regionals. Through all these activities, we learned, shared our knowledge and experience, sometimes got our hands (and clothes dirty) and had fun!

During the year, we said good-bye to some long-time friends, welcomed six new members and made new friends.

As you look at your 2010 calendars, mark the 4th Saturday of each month and make plans now to join us for the exciting year ahead!

Fun times in 2009



Membership Renewal

There has been a great response to our Chapter 15 membership renewals for 2010! If you're unsure if you've renewed, the year through which your dues are paid can be found in the upper right hand corner in the mailing label of this newsletter. "2009" on your mailing label means you have paid through December 2009 and will need to renew for 2010. If you receive the newsletter via e-mail, an email will be sent to let you know your renewal status.

Thank you for your continued support of our Chapter!

Chapter 15 Membership Application
New Application / Renewal (circle one)
Membership Dues are \$10

You must be a current and paid NAWCC member to join a Chapter.

You may be a member of more than one Chapter.

Please Print or Type

NAME: _____

SPOUSE'S NAME: _____

STREET: _____

CITY: _____

STATE/COUNTRY: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

PHONE: _____

NAWCC Member # _____

HOROLOGICAL INTERESTS: _____

_____ Please send my Chapter 15 newsletter by email.

Make Check Payable To: Chapter 15, NAWCC
Enclose this application and check and send to:

Pat Holloway
1105 Lafayette Lane
Pflugerville, TX 78660

Treasurer's Report

Chapter Account		\$8,375.42
Expenses – None	\$ 0.00	
Income – Dues	\$300.00	
Regional Account		\$4,463.60

2009 November Potluck

The second annual Chapter 15 Potluck Social is now history, and we're already looking forward to the next one. As promised, there was plenty of food to go around, and second helpings seemed to be the trend. In fact, I think there were a few who had "thirds" of Carrie Williams' chess pie! If you missed it, you may want to put next year's social on your calendar now!

In addition to the wonderful food, everyone seemed to have a great time visiting – as well as enjoying some friendly football rivalry since the time coincided with this year's UT/Baylor game. (We promise to check the game times before scheduling next year.)

Board Officers and Contact Information

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NAWCC Chapter 15 website

<http://www.nawcc-chapter15.org>

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Save The Date

- December – no meeting scheduled
Happy Holidays!
- January 23
Chapter 15 program
- February 20/21
Dial Painting workshop
- Lone Star Regional
March 5th – 6th, 2010
- March 27
Chapter 15 program

Dial painting workshop

The dial painting workshop originally scheduled for October has been rescheduled for February 20/21. If you have a painted metal dial in need of some TLC, or would like to increase your skills, this is your opportunity! We still have a few openings, so please contact Pat Holloway as soon as possible to reserve your space.

Did you know...

NAWCC members will soon have online access to the information included in the Supplements to the Bulletin? Read more about it by going to the Publications > Other Publications section of the NAWCC website at <http://www.nawcc.org/>.