

Tools for the ‘New Busy’?

~ Ken Reindel, Vice President

Some of you may have heard the radio commercials, or seen the bill board advertisements. Have you wondered what the “New Busy” is all about? I did some research. Apparently, I’m not a member of the “New Busy.” I don’t really enjoy making pancakes in the shape of exotic animals. I don’t remember when I thought working 9 to 5 was a “cute idea,” since I haven’t been able to limit my day to 9 to 5 in decades. I don’t really have time to “look for interesting ways to be bored,” and I don’t “keep a suitcase always packed.” However, I do find time to do the things I love, just like the New Busy do. And, I’m certainly familiar with the new technologies and tools that are the basis for these ads, again just like the New Busy. Maybe there’s hope for me yet. Well, maybe not.....

I’ve watched my kids do texting at an alarming rate—with both hands! Yes, I text, but at a snail’s pace, poking one key at a time. Frankly, I’d rather meet over lunch with close friends and associates since my fingers are too big for those tiny texting keyboards and my eyesight long since passed the point where I can read those little screens without glasses. Plus, I like to see and hear who I’m chatting with. Recently I saw an article that expressed a concern for the offspring of the new “Social Media” (e.g., texting, Twitter, MySpace, Facebook—apparently the toys for the New Busy). The concern was that these new Social Media are creating a generation of offspring that may never learn how to socialize face-to-face since the majority of the relationship experience is via a computer screen. Some dare describe it as “Antisocial media” due to the startling lack of interpersonal relating with computer-based media. As a parent this greatly

concerns me. On the other hand, I remember how my parents worried about me buying a fixer-upper home when interest rates were over 14%. Somehow it all worked itself out albeit somewhat painful along the way.

One of the greatest things about the NAWCC is the various Chapters. Very much unlike the new Social Media, the Chapters offer a rich means of interacting locally and directly with others that share our passion—face to face! When I moved to Austin over 10 year ago, I was completely unaware that Chapter 15 even existed. For the first 6 years we were here, we eagerly looked forward to attending the shows in Mesquite and Houston, unaware that Chapter 15 had a great thing going right here, within a few miles from our home in Cedar Park. I was very excited to meet Gene Galbraith (the VP of Chapter 15 at the time) with his enthusiasm to recruit a new member to the Chapter. Since then I’ve met many more wonderful people here and have begun to realize what the true purpose of the NAWCC Chapters is all about. I’m even more excited now to play a greater role in Chapter 15 and am thankful for the opportunity to do so. I look forward to working more closely with and getting to know our membership here.

Welcome

Join us in welcoming new Chapter 15 member

Rick Smith
Austin, Texas

Treasurer’s Report

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|---|------------|-------------------|
| Chapter Account | | |
| Beginning balance | \$7,878.81 | \$7,670.91 |
| Income: annual mtg & dues | \$460.00 | |
| Expenses: newsletter, internet, annual mtg | 667.80 | |
| Regional Account | | \$4,363.60 |

“Real or fake? The Story Continues”

- Coming June 26th to a location near you

Our “Real or fake?” May program played to a standing room only crowd and received rave reviews. Everyone who was able to attend is eagerly awaiting the sequel “Real or fake? The Story Continues” which will be opening at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, June 26th at the Holloway’s 1105 Lafayette Lane, Pflugerville.

Make plans now to be there as Penny Armstrong brings us the second installment of this intriguing story, looking into the very heart of precious gem stones. Learn more about what makes them shine and sparkle, what creates the depth of color and how you can tell if they’re genuine or merely trying to deceive.

Watch for cameo performances by other Chapter members. Be ready to take the stage yourself – to introduce your own gems – to ask questions and learn more about their true colors. Discover whether your watch is gold to the very core or merely hiding behind a thin veneer that will soon reveal the truth that lies beneath.

You won’t want to miss this opportunity! See you there!

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Member news

We received word that F.A. “Babe” Jensen of Houston passed away on May 21st. Babe had been a member of Chapter 15 since 1977, serving as President in 79-80. He and his wife, Joan, were very active members for many years, and they are both greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with the many friends and family who share this loss.

Restoration Projects: Miniature Ansonias and Waterburys (Part 1)

For some reason in the last few years we’ve seen an increased interest in restoring miniature American-made turn-of-the-century clocks. We have repaired or restored about 14 or so miniatures, many of which have been full restorations (movement, case, less frequently dial). The most interesting of these have been the early eight-day Waterburys (Spiders, Hornets, and Wasps) as well as the Ansonia Bees (peculiar that they’re all named after insects!). All of them prove to be very interesting and technically challenging restorations for a variety of reasons.

One of the reasons the miniatures listed above are a challenge is that they are all 100 years old or more. They were designed to enter the marketplace at the time against many competitive products. Those that have made it this far are often extensively worn, have survived generations of owners’(and repairers’) hands, perhaps having been wound and set thousands of times over.

The Ansonia Bee. One technical aspect all of these clocks have in common is a less-than-robust method for delivering power from the mainspring to the center wheel. Part of the challenge is the compact “double decker” design of these clocks, with the mainspring stacked on top of the rest of the movement. For example, the Ansonia Bee uses the rear cover of the clock as a combination winding key, mainspring barrel and “ratchet wheel,” as shown in the following figure:

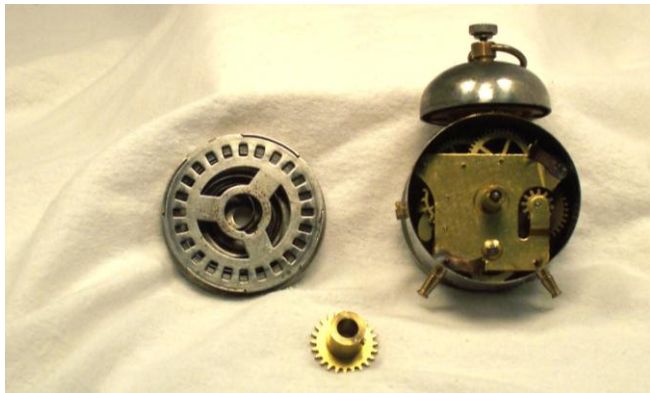


Figure 1: Above is the rear cover of the clock (acting as a mainspring barrel and ratchet wheel). In the center is the main wheel (driven by the mainspring in the barrel shown at the left.) At the right, the Ansonia Bee movement with cover and main wheel removed. Inset: One of the Ansonia Bee clicks.

The “click” is a pair of flimsy brass tabs protruding from the pillars of the movement as shown in the inset. We have only seen one original undamaged click out of the many clocks we’ve examined. Usually they have been soldered onto the pillars (as is shown here) because the original staking had come loose or the click had broken off at the base. Most of the time, one or both of the clicks are missing and replacements must be fabricated. It’s best to fabricate replacements from strips of spring steel (brass does not hold up), then fasten them back to the posts with taper pins inserted into a 0.020” hole drilled into the pillar tab. Solder must be avoided. Blobs of solder are unsightly and flux from the solder can cause irreparable corrosion and damage to the rest of the clock.

There are two other common problems with the Ansonia Bee power train. First, the mainspring is often shortened because more than likely it suffered a fracture some time in the past. The last Bee we had in the shop was particularly challenging: the mainspring was broken in the middle. Unfortunately, there is no standard replacement available for this family of clocks, which use a ¼” x 0.015” x 84” spring. There isn’t anything even close to this available from the suppliers. So now what?

Sometimes you have to take drastic measures and Gibbs Wire and Steel was happy to accommodate. Gibbs manufactures the raw stock for this mainspring, ¼” x 0.015” radiused spring steel strip. Yep, we purchased 300ft of this material (their minimum order)—but fortunately, at a fairly reasonable price. So now, we have a lifetime supply of spring material for Ansonia Bees—enough to replace springs on over 40 clocks! That’s when you know you’re a true alarm clock lover!

The second common class of problem with the Ansonia Bees is damaged or worn main wheels, second wheel pinions, and second wheels. Somehow the center wheel survives and can be reused. But often, the main wheel and second wheel assembly must be fabricated. This is a topic for a future article. For now, suffice it to say that it is a rather time-consuming process but always yields very satisfying results.

There is one important note on bushing work with miniature alarms. The standard Bergeon or KWM approach is too much of a compromise between available bushing sizes, ratio of plate thickness to bushing diameter, etc for miniature alarms. An approach which is just as fast, much neater, and longer lasting is the time-tested method of making bushings on the lathe and staking them into the movement. Although nearly non-existent today it seems, there is nothing more rewarding than seeing the bushing disappear into the plate, hardly detectable except under a 10x magnifier. The staking operation also work hardens the brass and makes for a longer-lasting repair.

A friend of mine was telling me about an alarm clock that he had shipped to him from an Ebay purchase, in which one of the friction-fit bushings had fallen out of its place and was rattling around inside the clock! Horrifying stories like his solidify our belief in staking and riveting bushings into place, especially given the somewhat thinner plates found in alarm clock movements.

(Ken Reindel’s restoration projects article is to be continued next month)

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Save The Date

- NAWCC National Convention
June 16th – 20th
York, PA
- June 26th
“Real or fake? The story continues”
10 a.m., 1105 Lafayette Lane
- July 24th
Clock case restoration and refinishing
Ken Reindel and Jay Holloway
- August 27th – 29th
All Texas Regional
Houston, Texas
Chapter 15 is co-host

Have you been to a Chapter 15 program recently?

If not, you're missing out on first rate presentations and fellowship time with some of the best people in Central Texas!

Don't want to come alone? Call up another member or a friend who might be interested and invite them to join you.

Have a question about a clock or watch? Bring it along to the meetings. We have a lot of talent and knowledge in the Chapter to assist.

Would you be willing to give a program? Willing but don't think you have enough information for an hour long program? We can combine several topics. We can also help with computer presentations and handouts.

Let us hear from you!