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Save these 2015 dates

August 20th – 22nd

All Texas Chapters Regional
Marriott Westchase
Houston TX

August 23rd

6:00 p.m.
NAWCC Webinar
"The 7 Clock Companies of Joseph
Henry Eastman"
Ken Hogwood

September 26th

10 a.m. – noon
Program – Turn the Beat Around
Ken Reindel
Pok-e-Jo's – 2121 Parmer, Austin

September 27th

6:00 p.m.
NAWCC Webinar
"Starting a Vintage Wristwatch
Collection Without the Tears"
Adam Harris

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President's Message

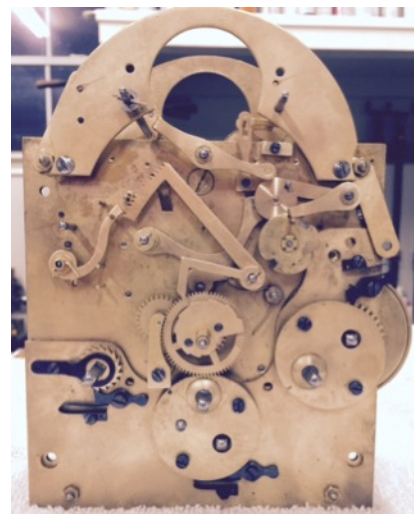
Dear Members,

Well, after our record-breaking rainfalls, flooding and lake recovery in April-June, we now await our next raindrop. Last week there were a few showers spotted in Texas overall, but nothing near here. The Dog Days have arrived! Early morning temps are in the upper 70s and afternoons are in the upper 90s to just into the low 100s. It appears that this pattern will be with us all the way through to the Houston Regional later this month.

This weekend Jay and I worked on a disastrous Junghans movement. It was a real winner in the Hall of Shame. There was solder and butchery throughout. At some point, a shameless repair person had modified the chime side count wheel, levers, and lifting pins on the minute wheel with no end of random ideas, steel buttons, huge globs of solder to (we think) compensate for a missing chime locking wheel. So far the count is at 5 parts we have fabricated as replacements, including a new locking wheel. We are hoping that one more part (the count wheel) will complete the project. It's been an interesting learning experience on a very nice quality movement worth some extra attention. Once all that work is done we move on to the normal cleaning, pivot and plate work. It will be a long project!

There are other items with intentional damage that could require further work. For example, the barrels are sliced and sections bent up inside to secure the mainsprings. But as bad as these repairs look, they appear stable. Given that the barrels would have to be replaced with either fabricated parts or from parts from a donor movement, we have tentatively decided to leave these as is. But that could change. Jay brings over a butchered movement on the average of once per 3 months, clearly an indicator that there is plenty of butchery going on out there. Some of these movements are very nice antique movements from 1700s and early 1800s clocks that have not run in years but certainly deserve preservation.

This movement (like others that we have seen over and over) is an example of very poor clock repair habits and understanding run amuck. One has to wonder if this is the result of a tinkering owner or a professional. While there isn't anything anyone can do to stop a tinkering owner from ruining their own clock, we would hope that professionals have more training and discipline than this. It raises the question about whether or not there should be some kind of qualification-based testing for professionals. *(continued on page 2)*



President’s Message continued

This is an emotionally- charged topic on both sides. Other organizations, like AWCI and BHI, have qualification-based testing. But at the end of the day the clock repair customer needs to enforce it with their dollars. With all that in mind, it brings us back around to training—as well as training the trainer—and their importance in assuring that the art of horology continues and grows stronger. Here in Chapter 15 we have been committed to providing the best training we can, as a top priority. And we will continue to support this topic as we move forward..

Upcoming Events

August 20th – 22nd – All Texas Chapters Regional

Although it’s too late to take advantage of the early bird special, if you haven’t already done so, be sure to take a few minutes to get your registration in the mail.

August 23rd – NAWCC webinar – 6 p.m.

Ken Hogwood will be speaking on *The 7 Clock Companies of Joseph Henry Eastman*.

September 26th – Chapter 15 Program

Continuing our focus on practical repair skills, Ken Reindel will be speaking on *Turn the Beat Around: Diagnosing Clock Issues from Beat*.

include: type writing machine, 1880; thread case, 1882; Siphon-Starter 1883; typewriter shift key, 1886; upper/lower case type spacing 1887; typewriter cabinet, 1888 and others. His patents were directed toward tools used in areas where he worked during his career. He did not invent Plato clocks because he needed a desk clock but because he could see an item that could have a dual purpose. That is, record time and advertise. His days working in dry goods and being part owner of a general store and typewriter company (1885 and about 1888 respectively) must have had something to do with this. He was a seller of merchandise and needed to improve everything around him.

In December 1902 and April 1903 (Coleman et. al. 1948) Mr. Fitch received a patent for a Time Indicator that would eventually become the Plato Clock. After several years and many mechanical changes, failures and design changes he finally had something that would keep time while, at the same time, advertise on the back sides of the numbered plates. He finally had what he wanted – an advertising clock. The clock was named Plato by his patent attorney, who suggested the name because of all the metal plates. The metal was eventually replaced with celluloid for better clock operation and the Ansonia Clock Company provided the clock works.

In 1903 the president of the American Ever Ready Company, Mr. Conrad Hubert, financed the production of the clock and approximately 40,000 clocks were sold between 1904 and 1906. Confusion as to whether it was a clock or advertising piece hindered sales. The Fitch patent was the only patent in the US for this type of clock. It was licensed to a French company that had a 30-hour and 8-day Fitch Clock, and prior to WW1 there were four non-licensed companies, one French and 3 German, making them. Josef Mergenhagen (Uhrenfabrik Laufamholz Kohler Co.) 8 day 7 j (Kohler or Abessi) is a more recent maker of these clocks in a more reliable form by using modern durable materials.

Here is a list of features that describe the Plato clock:

- Brass (round or rectangular) or gilded molded metal (round) body with glass (sides or tube)
- Height apx.2x > width
- Vertical positioned sets of leaves on extended drive shafts
- Time train separate from movement
- Ansonia clock movement (square and screw keys)
- Leaves (plates) made of celluloid (colors)
- Both sides of leaves (tabs, cards) used for display

Treasurer’s Report	
Chapter Account	\$7,765.34
Inc: Dues and training	70.00
Exp: Newsletter and postage	<u>-69.08</u>
Closing Balance	\$7,666.26
Regional Account	\$3,538.60
Exp: Houston Regional door prizes	<u>-100.00</u>
Closing Balance	\$3,438.60

Cool Clock Collecting

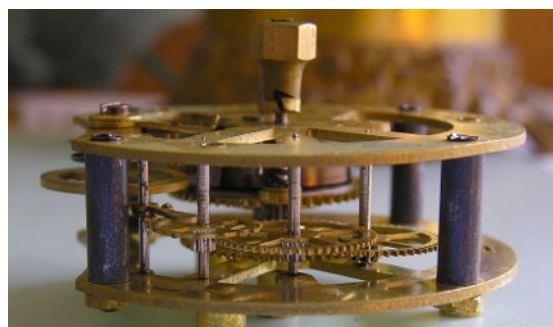
- Darrah Artzner

Plato clocks were patented in 1902 by an inventor who really did not have that much interest in anything that kept time. On the other hand, Charles O. Terwilliger, Jr. who did have an interest in horology gave a fairly decent account (1964) of the inventor’s career that led up to his invention of the Plato clock and a portion of his work is summarized here.

The inventor was Eugene L. Fitch who was born in New York City in 1846, had a residence in Minnesota in 1869, and moved to Iowa around 1870. He worked as a dry goods merchant in 1890 in Breda, Iowa and as a bookkeeper in Des Moines, Iowa from 1882 to 1885. He was truly an inventor, as his patents will verify. These

Over time the celluloid tickets become brittle and do not provide enough elasticity for keeping proper time. However, a clock maker can get one to record reasonable time if the tickets are fairly well preserved.

Cleaning these clocks is fairly easy especially since the movement is one of Ansonia Clock Company's simpler movements. This is the same movement (Figures 1 and 2) that can be found in many of Ansonia's smaller desk or table clocks and 'fat body' watches. However, there is a so-called trick to getting it out of the case for servicing. Basically, the movement cover is removed from below (2 screws) to expose the movement and then the entire case is dismantled. Wait! It is not as bad as it sounds. The movement is detached from the case by removing three screws located inside the case at the base. However, getting access to remove the screws requires disassembly of the case housing which is done by turning one of the handle brackets counter clockwise to loosen a retaining screw. The handle will come off during this process making the other bracket also available for loosening and removal. The rest should be straightforward. The ticket carousel can be lifted out and set aside as well as the glass panels or tube. You now have access to the three screws holding the movement. Further disassembly of the case is optional.



Fitch designed four models, as shown in this pamphlet: one round with glass tube, one square with cut glass panels, one cylindrical with female head and housed under a glass dome (one pictured below has dome removed) and cylindrical with mushroom cap and glass tube. Examples are shown below. The standard tickets are white but can also be found in colors such as red, blue, black, and green. A few have been seen as bi colors where the background is one color and numerals are another. The colored tickets source is in question.

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References:

1. American Electrical Novelty & Mfg. Co., 1904?. Advertising brochure.
2. Coleman, J. E. and Niehaus, James J., 1948. The Plato Gadget Clock With Turning Leaves, NAWCC Bulletin, December, pp. 516 – 519.
3. Terwilliger, Jr., Charles O., 1964, Plato Clock, NAWCC Bulletin, October, pp. 447 – 460

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Spot a clock

Thanks to Jerry Brazil for sharing this month's Spot a clock from the little north Texas town of Muenster. Not sure where Muenster is? I wasn't either, so headed to the Internet to look it up.

Located just west of Gainesville on Hwy 82, Muenster was founded in 1889 by a group of German settlers along the recently constructed Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad. With a population of a little over 1600, like many towns in Texas, their annual Germanfest celebrates the German heritage.

It's great to see that the Uhrmacher (Clockmaker or watchmaker) is honored in this wonderful mural with a nice, large corner shop. It appears that he would have had plenty of light for working, as well as places to display his wares – and we all know there's no such thing as *too much* space for our clocks!

If you're ever in this area, you can also take a little time to check out the beautifully restored courthouses – and tower clocks – in nearby Gainesville, Denton, McKinney and other cities across this area.

