



The MAINSPRING

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

Contents

President's Message..... 1
 Ken's Corner 2
 June Program Recap..... 3
 Celluloid and Horology 3
 Upcoming Events..... 3
 Spot a clock 4

Save these 2016 dates

July 9th

10 a.m. – noon
 Program – Archie Smith
 Pok-e-Jo's – 2121 Parmer, Austin

July 20th – 23rd

National Convention – Louisville KY

August 25th – 27th

All Texas Chapters Regional – Houston TX
 Houston Westchase Marriott
 Preregistration available now

August 21st

6:00 p.m. – NAWCC Webinar
 Lawson Electric Clocks
 Neil Kuns

September 17th

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

September 25th

6:00 p.m. – NAWCC Webinar
 Clockmaking in the 19th Century
 Andy Dervan

Current Board Members

President – Jay Holloway
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Vice-President – Ken Reindel
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President's Message

Dear Members and Friends of Chapter 15,

Our next meeting is coming up quickly as we moved our normal monthly meeting from the 3rd Saturday to the 2nd Saturday for July only. Our normal meeting time had conflicts with members attending the National Convention in Louisville KY.

As a Chapter we have to change to adapt to the situation and that is what makes our group fun. We have members who like many different types of clocks and watches. The ability to change what we like as we learn more about different horological items expands our knowledge and makes us better. We are planning to join with the CAWCG for a hairspring workshop, featuring clock hairsprings. Tentative date will be in September. Please let me know if you are interested in attending.

When I travel and speak to people I hear comments that the NAWCC is just a hobby group which tends to upset me. Maybe I define a hobby incorrectly, but it leaves me with the feeling that one has a hobby just to kill time. The members I know enjoy the area of horology they pursue whether it is research, collecting, or servicing horological items. I would hope their desire is to get better as they learn more. We would laugh at anyone who wanted to be the "worst collector" of clocks or watches.

With the concept of becoming better we invite our members and anyone we know who has an interest in horology to come to our monthly meetings and become better in their area of interest. We look forward to seeing everyone at Pok-e-Jo's on July 9th when Archie Smith brings us his program.

Jay

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING CHAPTER MEMBERS

This year the following Chapter 15 members are celebrating milestone anniversaries of NAWCC membership. Be sure to congratulate these members next time you see them!

10 years

Hugh B. Guill
 Evelyn Slough

20 years

Norman Zetka

30 years

Lynn Paul Gastinger

40 years

Dale D. Smith
 Donald G. Bond, Jr.
 Bill Pickett

Ken's Corner

To Restore or Not to Restore?

Ken Reindel 7-2-16

I am sure many of us in Chapter 15 who are presently practicing clock repair have faced this same quandary. If you don't do repair but collect clocks, you've had to face this question as well.... so bear with me as we explore this question....

A customer sends or brings in a 1915 era clock (with a triple-decker movement) to have repaired. They indicate that they are on a limited budget, but love the clock, which has very special sentimental value. Upon inspection, you find that it is going to require full restoration: disassembly, cleaning, rebushing, a new mainspring or two, and much, much more. You know the drill.

So, you quote the repair, which might, depending on the work required, range anywhere from \$450-700. Of course, the customer exclaims, "That's way more than it is worth. What can be done for less?" (How much a clock is "worth" is a lively topic for a future Corner article.)

Recently I had this happen. The clock in question was a very nice 1915 Waterbury No. 1 Ships Bell clock, which given its age and condition is in excellent shape on the outside. However, the movement was another story.



Through the usual series of previous service events, the movement was a mess. Despite that, I tried to get it to run on the bench. After a series of adjustments and oilings, it seems to run, but poorly. Several bushings in the miniature going train are worn and it may need new balance jewels. There is physical looseness in the front center wheel hole bad enough that you can rock the arbor side to side! The concern is this large wheel engages with the miniature going train on the third level. Sending the clock back this way is a guarantee of a near-future return trip.

When presented with the cost of restoration, the customer immediately declined, saying he would be better off saving his money for a Chelsea. He lamented that the cost is disappointing because he and his wife both truly adore the clock, but it seems like too much to spend.

Would he really be better off with a Chelsea? They're great clocks, but...The last time I looked, new Chelseas were selling on their site for somewhere in the \$2500-3500 range. Used Chelseas are on Ebay and similar for somewhere in the \$600 range. The last time I restored a Chelsea (which many need), I handed the customer a \$900 bill. Anyone who has done a full restoration on a Chelsea knows why.

I presented the customer the above facts and a few others:

1. I can find at least a dozen Chelseas on Ebay any day of the week, but none of them are turn of the century.
2. If I am lucky I *may* find 1 equivalent Waterbury No. 1 Ships Bell clock and it is in the same shape as his or worse.
3. The last time I looked for one, I found no Waterburys with a wood case.
4. He would end up with an unusual, beautiful, reliable, Ships Bell clock (that he loves) for a comparatively low price.
5. I routinely warranty my work for 2 years. Chelsea will only warranty brand-new clocks for longer.

Those with a broader reach of resources or who buy and trade antique clocks more frequently than I do might debate some of these facts, but they'd probably agree that the trend is right.

Upon further review, the customer agreed to the restoration, and I agreed to try to keep the cost towards the low end of the range.

A few weeks earlier I had a nearly identical scenario unfold with a Self Winding Clock Co. movement.

Jay and I have traded stories on this phenomenon over and over. Meanwhile, there are times when we resort to unthinkable compromises to stay within a budget (haven't we all), hoping to wind up with a satisfied customer. But at the end of the day, the customer ends up unhappy because the life of a compromised repair is always short.

If we think it is good for business that a clock comes back right after a 1-year warranty has expired, think again. The inconvenience, frustration and expense we cost the customer will be remembered the next time that work is needed—whether on the clock in question or another. As in this example, sometimes (not always) helping the customer evaluate their options will lead them to feeling more comfortable about the decision to do a thorough and complete job. And, that is good for business.

June Program Recap

The June presentation by Steve Tibbitts focused on the long and interesting history of Morbier clocks. These rugged, simple clocks are generally very low maintenance. They were made in remote provinces



where farming was the primary industry. This area was rich in natural resources such as wood and water, but short on a long growing season. This left the farmers with time for a second

job, and different facets of clock-making fit well. In many cases, the entire family was involved in production of the various parts, as well as getting the clocks to market.

Steve brought two clocks that showed many of the differences between early and later models:

- crown wheel vs anchor escapement
- pendulum mounted in the back vs the front
- jointed wire pendulum comprising the bob on a flexible folding rod vs a fixed rod or a large, decorative brass pendulum
- string suspension vs suspension spring
- pierced brass piece above and below the dial vs large, embossed decorative brass surrounds
- dial with 5-minute increments prominently marked around the hour markers vs a simple chapter ring



Early Morbier



Later Model

There are several books available that detail the history of Morbiers, including *Morbier Clocks History, Identification, and Repair* by Laurence A. Seymour, available from the NAWCC. This book consolidates a 1970s series of *Bulletin* articles.

Thanks, Steve, for a very informative presentation!

Celluloid and Horology

Many are familiar with adamantine clocks, but how many know that adamantine is actually celluloid? September 7, 1880, US patent number 232,037 was awarded to John Wesley Hyatt, inventor of the celluloid veneering process, and president of the Celluloid Manufacturing Company. This patent includes the following description: "The invention relates to an improved process and apparatus for applying coatings or veneers of celluloid and other plastic or elastic materials to moldings and similar articles having uneven surfaces."

A quick summary of the process described in the patent – the case part's surface and the back of a very thin sheet of celluloid are coated with an appropriate cement or adhesive material. The entire part is then enclosed in rubber tubing, and the nozzle of the tubing is inserted into a vacuum pump. In addition to the vacuum, exterior pressure can also be applied to more firmly compress the veneer to the article.

Seth Thomas acquired the US patent rights for veneering celluloid to wooden clock cases, but the patent was never assigned to Seth Thomas.

Please see references and pictures of adamantine clocks on page 4 – Spot a Clock.

Upcoming Events

July 9th – Chapter 15 Program

Archie Smith has offered to share his experiences with a recent repair. It was a learning experience for him, and he's looking forward to hearing feedback and suggestions.

August 21st – NAWCC webinar – 6 p.m.

On August 21st, Neil Kuns, president of Western Electrics Chapter 133 will discuss *Lawson Electric Clocks*. You may register now at the following link <http://www.nawcc.org/index.php/workshops/webinars>

August 27th - 29th – All Texas Chapters Regional

No Chapter meeting since many members attend the All Texas Chapters Regional in Houston. If you haven't registered, for the Regional or host hotel, you can find the preregistration form and information in the July/August Mart or on the Chapter 139 website <http://sanjacinto139.homestead.com/> Register before the end of July for a 25% discount on registration prices.

Treasurer's Report

Chapter Account	\$7,858.57
Inc: None	-0-
Exp: Webhosting (\$119.40); Newsletter	-126.87
Closing Balance	\$7,731.70
Regional Account	\$3,313.60
No Change	

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Spot a clock

Many thanks to Mary Ellen Bell for providing these pictures that show some of the *many* variations in adamantine clocks.

There are two very informative *Bulletin* articles if you'd like to learn more about adamantine clocks:

“Celluloid, Adamantine, & Seth Thomas” by P.V. Russell and Bob Maclver, Oct. 1988, p406

“The American Black Mantel Clock” by P.V. Russell, April 1991, p151

