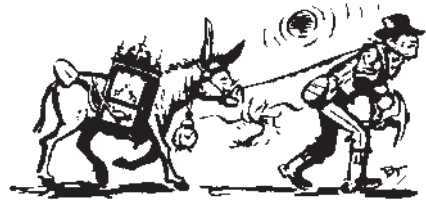


THE Tic Talk Times



April 2003
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Newsletter of Orange County Chapter 69 of the
National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors

Meeting minutes, Mar. 8, 2003

That's Unusual!

Vice-President Charles Register called the meeting to order at 8:00pm. He thanked Julie and Les Lesovsky for the refreshments and announced the following guests, Jim Glidewell, Robert Gerlach (nephew of the late John Gerlach) Mike Kusik, Peter Panos, and Mike Bantel. The minutes of the last meeting were approved as written.

There was an announcement that Chapter 69 members Hoke Dillon and Jay McAlister have been admitted into convalescent hospitals recently and that Bud Saiben is doing better and recuperating at home.

Beginner's corner was a presentation by Robert Gerlach on the restoration of an 18th century tower clock in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Mr. Gerlach comes from 4 generations of clock makers in America and a couple generations in Europe.

The owners of the tower clock wanted the repair done for their daughter's wedding as they wanted the clock to ring at exactly 12 noon to announce to all guests that the wedding was beginning. The clock had not run in many years. There were problems were getting into the clock tower, making and replacing many parts, and working on the deadline of the wedding date. The Gerlachs were successful in their endeavor and the clock worked and rang as planned for the wedding.

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This month

Art Deco Watches

Karen McCready, author of *Art Deco and Modernist Ceramics*, uses a broad definition of Art Deco, arguing that "the style encompasses so many diverse aspects that it is not easy to sum up, except to say that one knows it definitively when one sees it." In America, we most often associate the "Streamline" school with Art Deco; clean lines, geometric shapes, and striking symmetry. But Deco can also be very ornamental and asymmetrical.



This month we will be treated to a close-up look at how the Art Deco movement influenced the design of ladies' wristwatches. Our speaker will be Jana Smith. In addition to discussing watches, Jana will also be showing us watch advertising from the period.

Where technology meets art, you'll find timepieces. Don't miss this fascinating program!

Visit us on the web at www.nawcc69.org

Message from the President

What's It Worth?

One of my favorite members of our chapter is someone who's been collecting and working on clocks for a very long time. Apart from the considerable knowledge he has shared with me and others, one of the things I find most intriguing about him is his perspective on pricing.

In some cases, particularly regarding the prices of clocks he does not collect, his perspective seems frozen in a time warp; he insists that the clocks are worth much less than the prices being asked. In regard to repair prices, he recognizes the realities of the amount of time required to do movement work, and is aghast when he feels the repairperson isn't compensated fairly for his or her time, so he takes a position for higher than prevailing market prices.

With our Goodtyme Supermart coming up next month, and with my regular end-of-the-month financial reality rearing its ugly head, I have been contemplating these issues. It's no mystery that if you are determined to sell only properly serviced timepieces, it's next to impossible to make any money dealing in low-to-medium priced pieces (assuming you figure in your time for the service). Often, the going price for a clock or watch is just slightly over what one would pay for a movement overhaul at retail.

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Meeting Minutes *(from page 1)*

Gene Osten presented an interesting program on how companies making pocket watches were competitive and used various innovations to make their watches more appealing to customers and be profitable. He had many examples to display on the screen: damasking, two toned cases, appealing dials, fancy cases, two hands on railroad watches for two time zones, engraving cases, side winders, stop watches for military and different ways to put numbers on the dials. There was some question on when time zones began, the consensus being about 1880.

FYI from my 1994 World Book Encyclopedia: "The USA has not always had standard time zones. Every locality once set its own time by the sun. Various railroads tried to make their schedules simpler by establishing *railroad* time along sections of their routes. But in 1883, there were still about 100 railroad times. That year, all the railroads divided the United States into four standard time zones."

Worldwide time zones were established in 1884 by an international conference who divided the world into 23 full zones and 2 half zones using the Greenwich meridian as the *prime meridian*.

Show and tell:

Bernie Peralta explained a small machine that regulates the beat on watches and clocks. There was a lot of interest in this and Bernie has agreed to do a beginner's corner on the beat regulator.

Phyllis Adams shared her pocket watch with Rolling Stone logos.

Roy Irick showed three different sized carriage clocks, largest weighed 16# and was a Grande sonarie.

Ed Athey, Derald Kliem, Julie Stevens won Door Prizes, and the last two names fail me. Sorry for that as I do not want to offend any one.

The meeting was adjourned at 940 PM

Respectfully submitted by Sally Di Mino

Clock Rededication

This past month, Dave Weisbart overhauled an Ansonia Regulator "A" for the Heritage Hill Historic Park in Lake Forest. He did so at no charge to the park on behalf of Chapter 69. On April 5, the park will hold a rededication ceremony at which Dave will speak about Ansonia, the clock itself, and the standardization of time zones in the United States. In attendance will be the staff and docents of Heritage Hill as well as members of the local historical society. NAWCC members are also welcome to attend.

The event is Saturday, April 5 at 10:00 A.M., 25151 Serrano (near Lake Forest Dr.) in Lake Forest.

Dave's Shop Talk

Frozen Hands

As in past installments, this tidbit comes from multiple occurrences of one particular issue in my shop this month. I've spent quite a bit of time this month undoing the work of people who did not understand the function of collets on a clock hand.

Particularly on European-made clocks, the minute hand (and sometimes even the hour hand) is equipped with a brass collet that slips over the square at the end of the canon arbor (or hour tube). What I saw several times this month was modification that defeated the function of that collet, which is to allow the hand to move in relation to the square hole.

Why is this needed? When disassembling the movement, you need to remove the minute pinion that's staked onto the canon arbor in front of the top plate. This pinion also carries the lifting cams for striking or chiming. When you go to reassemble the movement, it is nearly impossible to be completely accurate in replacing the pinion so that the hand is pointing exactly at the 12, 3, 6, and 9 when the cam releases the lifting lever. Hence, the moveable collet in the center of the hand.

You should be able to put a square-shafted tool into the collet and turn the hand in relation to that square to make adjustments so the hand position is accurate when striking takes place. Tools for this purpose are available from Timesavers (19439), Merritt's (P-1590), and LaRose (can't find my catalog). In some cases, you can also use an old square needle file if it's a proper fit.

This month, I had three of these collets that had been deliberately punched tightly closed, and one that had been painted shut. In all these cases, I used an X-acto blade to carefully whittle away the punched brass and paint until I could get the hands to move again.

The point of this article is to say, *Don't do that!* If a hand becomes so loose on its collet that normal time setting gets it out of adjustment, gentle peening with a drift (blunt steel rod) just until the problem goes away will do. (Tap, test, tap, test.) If you must paint a hand, take steps to protect the joint around the collet. If paint gets on there, remove it before it dries.

Tic Talk Times On Line

Would you prefer to receive the Tic Talk Times over the Internet? Send an email request to webmaster@nawcc69.org.

Video Library

Don't forget about our fantastic library of video tapes. For just \$5.00, you can take home a tape for a whole month!

President's Message *(from page 1)*

It seems to me there are three basic pricing structures for buying and selling: *wholesale*, or what a shop will pay to someone who brings a timepiece in off the street; *mart* pricing; and *retail*. On line auctions operate with their own logic and emotion, and as far as I'm concerned, often reflect fads and typically defy categorization.

There are similar divisions in repairing. In addition to retail jobs, I have been doing "trade work" for other shops in the area. While this has been a source of steady work and income, it is, by nature, done at some fraction of retail repair pricing. The shop that took in the clock has to make something on it, too. Clock sellers who don't do their own repairs also want trade pricing so they can make some money on their transactions.

When dealing with the public (retail), most customers seem to choose the closest shop from the Yellow Pages (or Internet), and only a select few care (or know anything) about the repair quality. Customers who shop for price seem to be the exception.

So back to the question: What's it worth? The stock answer is, of course, "what the market will bear." But we do not operate in a simple market. In both dealing and servicing, there are multiple "classes of trade." Sellers can make a choice: they can choose to take smaller mark-ups and get higher volume, or they can demand top dollar and just wait for the customer who must have what they're offering.

In servicing, the choice is different. "Making it up in volume" just isn't an option if one is unwilling to take shortcuts. It just takes a certain amount of time to go through a movement properly. Granted, some take less time than others based on their condition, but there's no way to take in only the easy jobs. Personally, I'm unwilling to take shortcuts. When I work on a movement, I want the next person who services it to recognize the quality of the work. I want to do what I can to preserve the clock for future generations. It's tough to do trade work that way, but when I'm working on a movement, I'm not thinking about whose clock it is.

I used this column to talk about this because I think it's useful to keep such things in mind when walking a mart. Certainly, some clocks and watches are just commodity items with well-known market values. Apart from the beginning collectors among us, most of us probably pass over such items without much, if any, consideration. But when that rare timepiece appears, the one that will augment your collection, and the price isn't what you think it should be, take a moment to think of what may have gone into the piece that isn't immediately apparent. A well serviced movement adds value, even if you work on timepieces yourself (it's one less you'll have to fix). In addition, market values may have been rising such that the

next "magic number" in pricing is reached (e.g., a clock that was \$450 a couple years ago might be \$495 now – a 10% increase, but the next logical price point).

So then it's time to negotiate, but both sides need to do so in good faith. The seller knows what he or she has invested, and communicating some of that to the buyer might soften the buyer's position somewhat. Conversely, the buyer knows what that timepiece went for a few marts back. The buyer may also have seen the item sell on Ebay; personally, I don't believe that price point is necessarily a fair one to compare against a timepiece being sold in a mart by a reputable seller. But when the buyer and seller finally come to an agreement, that definitively answers the question: What is it worth?

So if you haven't done so already, mark your calendar for May 17. I think this Goodyme Supermart is going to be a good one!

It's going to be a good meeting, too. Beyond just watches, we'll be seeing high fashion design and interesting and rare ephemera. See you there!

Dave Weibert

The Skeleton Clock

The Skeleton clock is thought to have had its origin in the Gothic wall clocks of the Middle Ages. These early clocks were made with their movements exposed, the motive being not to display fine finish of parts, but to render visible what was then considered a very wonderful object.



In the late 18th century, when France was producing highly finished clock movements, the idea of using the movement of the clock as a decorative object was revived. The plates were made as narrow as possible to allow the wheels to be seen, and every surface was given a high polish.

From Clocks & Watches by E.J. Tyler

**DATED MEETING NOTICE
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY**



Orange County Chapter No. 69
2855 Carlsbad Blvd.
Carlsbad, CA 92008-2902

Our Next Meeting: April 4, 2003

Program:
LIVE Presentation
**"Art Deco Ladies' Wristwatches
and Their Advertisements"**
by Jana Smith
Refreshments by the Linkenhokers

Beginner's Corner Mini-Seminar:

To be announced

Show & Tell:

Horological items beginning with the letter "H" or
Art Deco timepieces

Board Meeting:

Wednesday, April 9, 2003 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of:
Bob & Cora Lee Linkenhoker

Time: 7:00 – Doors open
8:00 – General Meeting

Admission: \$4.00 – General
\$6.00 – Couples

Location: The EBELL CLUB
625 French Street
(at Civic Center Drive)
Santa Ana, CA
(714) 547-6331

