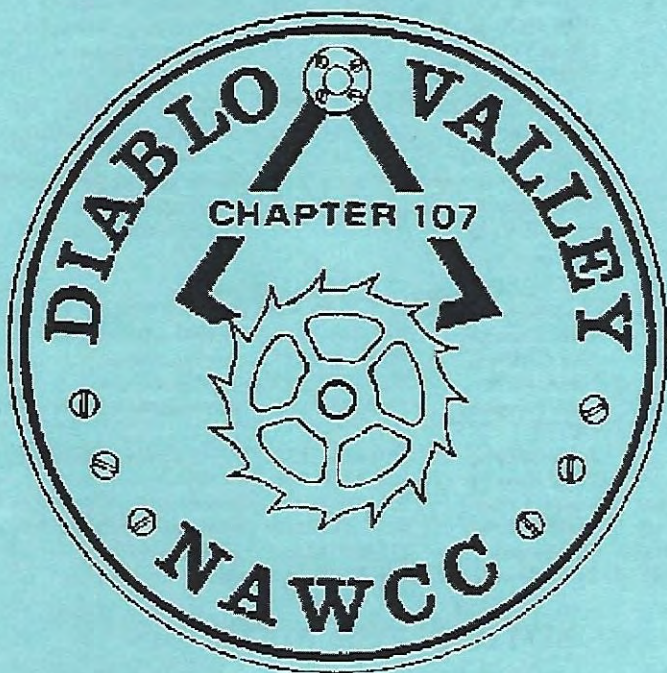


BULLETIN



October 2019
Volume 245

DIABLO VALLEY

Chapter 107

National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors
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Chapter Established March 5, 1978

"Accent on Education"

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NOTICES FOR MEMBERS

(The Bulletin accepts notices from Chapter members for all items/subjects horological - wanted, for sale, give-away, services, and so forth. There is no charge. All you have to do is supply copy to the editor.)

Wanted: Articles for the *Bulletin*. Contact Tina Thomas (209) 481-3930. Or email ch107bulletin@comcast.net.

Meeting Notice

October 13, 2019

Mart 10:30 Meeting Noon

Grange Hall, 743 Diablo Rd, Danville

October Speaker: Ernie Lopez

Fellow NAWCC

Topic: My 50 Years of Collecting and Update of the West Coast Watch & Clock Museum

The presentation will start about 11:30 and be followed by a reception. Plan to stay for refreshments and to chat with Ernie.

West Coast Clock & Watch Museum

AGSEM AT
 2040 N. SANTA FE AVE.,
 VISTA, CA 92083
 (760) 941-1791



WCCWM
 Exhibit Gallery
 Photo

<https://www.wccwm.org/Exhibits.php>

President's Message

Let me start by thanking Bob Simon for his presentation in August on marine master clocks. As we have come to expect, he did an excellent job. If you missed it, the presentation was recorded for our video library. Bob is always willing to share his knowledge with the Chapter. That gets him another Thank You.

I am excited that Ernie Lopez has agreed to speak at the upcoming meeting (October). Ernie has a distinguished horological background including being an NAWCC Fellow and Executive Director and Curator of the West Coast Watch and Clock Museum. In his day job, I believe Ernie was chief of boat on the USS Lapon, a fast attack submarine. By the way, a lapon is a type of scorpionfish which are so named because of their venom coated spines. We have to be out of the room by 2:00 PM, so we will start the presentation a little early. Ernie's talk will be followed by a reception with light refreshments. Plan to stay and chat.



This issue's "Shop Hint" came to mind while I was working on the case of a Warren Type C master clock - a strange clock intended to use a mechanical clock to control AC line frequency. Once I get it operational, it is a likely candidate for a presentation. In this instance, the case had a yucky shellac finish that I largely removed with alcohol and replaced with fresh shellac.

Walt Hubrig has reserved the Back 40 for the December luncheon and auction. Thank you Walt. Mention of the December meeting brings me to the subject of elections. As I pointed out at the last meeting, now is the time for someone to volunteer to serve as President for 2020. John Koepke, who seems to always be willing to help, has agreed to serve as Nominating Committee Chair. Don't be surprised if you hear from him about this. I want to emphasize that this is critical. Without a president, there will be no chapter.

Price Russ

The Peacock Clock
From the 1770's located
in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Purchased as a gift for Empress Catherine the Great, the Peacock Clock is the only large example of 18th century robotics to have survived unaltered into the 21st century



The Peacock Clock is a large automaton featuring three life-sized mechanical birds manufactured in London by the British entrepreneur James Cox in the 1770s.

It began under the commission of Grigory Potemkin, who wanted to give it to Catherine the Great. The history of the Hermitage's Peacock Clock begins in 1777 when the Duchess of Kingston came to St. Petersburg. Grigory Potemkin learned from the Duchess about James Cox, the most famous creator of the mechanisms in the second half of the 18th century.

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NAWCC Chapter 180 - "Friends of the West Coast Clock & Watch Museum" Is The Driving Force Behind West Coast Clock & Watch Museum

National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors (NAWCC) Chapter 180 - *Friends of the West Coast Clock & Watch Museum* was formed to grow and maintain WCCWM. Members come from the USA and Canada. They provide the financial and volunteer support that brings this unique and amazing museum to the public. Pictured here are Chapter 180 members who attended the 2017 NAWCC Southwest Regional Conference in Del Mar, CA.

Shop Hints

There are many methods and personal preference for cleaning wood finishes. It is safe to say that there is no one solution for all situations.

In the August 1987 issue of this publication Phil Russell passed along Bob Zirix's (Classic Clocks in Turlock) recommendation to use the following mixture after surface dirt has been removed.

- 1 part vinegar
- 1 part boiled linseed oil
- 1 part turpentine
- ½ part alcohol

The well shaken solution is applied with 0000 steel wool or a cloth. Dry with a clean cloth.

An internet search turned up many variations on this formula. Most don't include the alcohol. I have successfully used the Zirax formula but recommend testing on an inconspicuous area before proceeding further. Keep in mind that alcohol softens shellac and varnish.

You can read the entire article on the Chapter's web site.

Shortt Report

There is nothing like a mechanical device to promote humility. I started writing this report a couple of days ago with the statement that the clock was behaving. Of course it proceeded to stop that night. It has a tendency to do this about once a month. I can think of several possible reasons. All of them are difficult to assess. I think the most likely is vibration of the wall in my house. It is also possible that the pendulum is not getting enough impulse from the gravity arm. Fortunately it is possible to increase the impulse, but I don't want to do that quite yet. First I will monitor the pendulum amplitude. Increasing the amplitude should also reduce the sensitivity to vibration. Time will tell.

Price Russ

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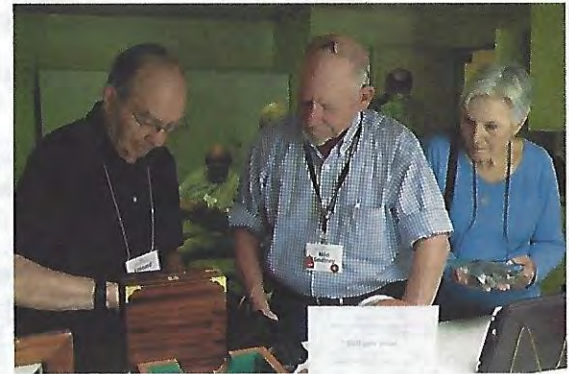
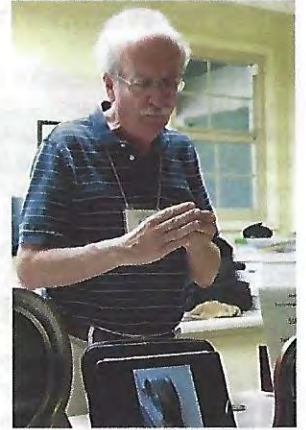
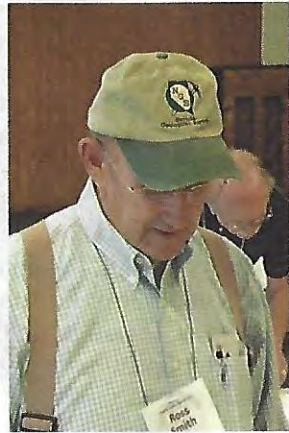
The Peacock Clock

Knowing the passion of Catherine II for collecting, the Prince commissioned the celebrated craftsman to make a monumental automaton with a clock for the Empress's Hermitage. Cox invited Friedrich Urey, a German craftsman who had settled in London, to work with him on this order.

In 1781, the clock was brought to Russia unassembled and Russian mechanic Ivan Kulibin restored the clock on the request of Grigory Potemkin. Four separate mechanisms are combined in the Peacock Clock: three of them set the figures of birds in motion, while the fourth is the actual clock movement. These mechanisms are linked by a system of levers which ensures that their operation is in the correct sequence.

Even while it is not in operation, this timepiece-automaton is extremely impressive: a peacock, a rooster, and an owl are depicted on an oak tree. Each of these birds has a lot of symbolism in art history: the peacock is the richest symbol in astral symbolism.

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The Watch That Made the Dollar Famous

In 1889, the Connecticut-based Waterbury Clock Company started selling a watch case with a clock movement inside, just small enough to be carried in an overcoat pocket. It was essentially a pocket clock. The watch, which they called the "Jumbo," was an inch-and-a-half thick and nearly three inches in diameter. But though it was huge, it was also radically simple. It only had 58 parts, fewer than half that of any other watch at the time. The whole movement rotated inside the case, moving the hour hand as it turned. More revolutionary than anything else, though, was the price. It sold for only \$3.50 (equivalent to about \$97 today): terrifically cheap.

A few years earlier, a young striver named Robert H. Ingersoll had left his father's farm in Michigan to strike it rich in New York. With his brother Howard, he had founded a successful mail-order business selling novelty toys like rubber stamps, cheap cameras and small typewriters, all of which he sold for a dollar. Once he saw Waterbury's Jumbo, Ingersoll decided he wanted to sell watches for a dollar, too. Established watchmakers told him he was crazy. It would be impossible to sell one at that price, even after the Jumbo.

But eventually he contracted with Waterbury to produce a watch under the Ingersoll name, one that would work more like a watch and less like a scaled-down clock.

In 1892, Ingersoll first sold an early version of the watch that would eventually be dubbed the Yankee for \$1.50. Orders were so great that over the next few years, he was able to drop the price to a single dollar. From a marketing and production perspective, the watch was a breakthrough. In nearly four centuries of watchmaking, no one had ever been able to make a functional personal watch for so little money. By 1896, the Ingersoll Yankee "dollar watch"—the "watch that made the dollar famous," as its slogan went—had become a smash success.

In the early years of the 20th century, Ingersoll would sell 12,000 Yankee watches every day. By 1914, Ingersoll's watch business was so successful that he was able to purchase the entire Waterbury Clock Company. Much later, in 1933, Ingersoll-Waterbury launched the first Mickey Mouse watch. About 30 years after that, the company was rebranded with the name it is still known by today, Timex. The Ingersoll Yankee was widely seen as a testament to modern American ingenuity. All of its parts were made by machine, not by hand. More importantly, the watches were available to everyone, not just the wealthy. As one of Ingersoll's many admirers put it, "[f]ive hundred years ago, watches were only for kings, weighed pounds, and cost hundreds of dollars each. Now any lively boy can earn and carry a better watch than any of those kings toted."

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The Yankee was an inexpensive, well-engineered watch that could be appreciated by nearly every American. Eventually, Thomas Edison, J. P. Morgan, and William K. Vanderbilt all owned Waterbury-made Ingersoll Yankee watches.

Of course, Mark Twain had to have one, too. On May 21, 1901, Twain wrote to order a Yankee watch: "Dear Sirs: Please send me a watch. \$1 enclosed. Truly Yours, Mark Twain." Less than a month later, he ordered another one.



The Yankee Dollar Watch
Absolutely guaranteed for one year same as a Hundred Dollar Watch.
Just the watch for rough use—Hunting, Logging, Fishing, Working, etc.—and every one that a high priced watch can be put on.

DESCRIPTION:
Furnished in two styles of case, Roman and Arabic and two styles of dial, gold and nickel.
Patented winding arrangement, with polished spring attached to a spring, thus giving maximum power. Second hand, nickel arrangement. No beads per minute, about 1000 per second in motion with the watch, and so on. The watch is guaranteed for one year, and the case and movement are perfectly waterproof. Weight, complete, only 25 grams.

GUARANTEE
We guarantee the watch for one year, and the case and movement are perfectly waterproof.

READ OUR ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE
MADE IN AMERICA BY AMERICANS.
PRICE, \$1.00 EACH, PREPAID.
Your money back if you are not satisfied.
Large catalogue of interesting specialties free for the asking.

ROBERT H. INGERSOLL & BRO.,
"Watchmakers to the American People" 65 Canal St., Dept. 20, N.Y.

Mark Twain's Quest to Bring Affordable Watches to the Masses

At one time, he even invested in a watch company that launched a signature 'Mark Twain' pocket watch.

The "Mark Twain" launched in early 1882 as an 18-size, key-wound movement with a subsidiary seconds function. (Jones & Horan)



Today, it's common for celebrities to hawk products that seem to have little, if anything, to do with what made them famous in the first place. Although this phenomenon may seem recent, it's actually quite old. American novelist Mark Twain, for instance, endorsed a lot of products. Some made him money; some didn't.

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Mark Twain's Quest to Bring Affordable Watches to the Masses

But there was at least one product he genuinely loved. Twain loved watches. And like many watch enthusiasts, perhaps the only thing Twain loved more than owning watches was complaining about them.

In one piece published in the November 26, 1870, issue of the *Buffalo Express*, the 34-year-old told a story about getting a new watch. Wanting to make sure he was setting it to the correct time, he brought it to a watchmaker, who took one look and told him it needed to be adjusted. No, Twain explained, the watch was new—he only needed to know the correct time. The watchmaker refused to listen. Finally, Twain relented and let him adjust the watch. Sure enough, the watch, which had previously kept perfect time, began to gain several minutes a day.

The way Twain told the story, he was a kind of rube at the mercy of so-called watch experts. Twain was forced to take the watch to an escalating series of preposterously incompetent watchmakers, all in an effort to get the watch back to where it was originally. Each made it worse than the last. That the watchmakers' expertise was bunkum was, of course, all part of the joke. One told him the barrel was swelled, which is impossible. One said its kingbolt was broken, which is a part that doesn't exist. Another claimed the mainspring needed straightening, then added that the movement also needed a half-soling, as if it were a worn-out pair of shoes. By the end of it, Twain maintained that it had cost him two or three thousand dollars to repair a \$200 watch. Much like "a good horse was a good horse until it had run away," he concluded, a "good watch was a good watch until the repairers got a chance at it."

What he wanted, he realized, was a watch that watchmakers couldn't get their hands on. At the time, horology, or the study of timekeeping, was still an artisanal craft catering largely to the wealthy. If someone could afford it, he owned an expensive, mostly hand-built pocket watch. If he couldn't, he didn't own one at all. To know the time, most people listened to church bells or checked the clock in the town square. Watches were hardly democratic objects.

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The Peacock Clock

It represents the cosmos, the sun, and the lunar disk. The owl is a sign of night, quiet and wisdom and the rooster symbolizes light, life, and resurrection. In addition to the birds, the tree is decorated with oak leaves, acorns, and a few squirrels.

The ornate timepiece-automaton is still in working order and it is the only large example of 18th-century robotics to have survived unaltered into the 21st century.

These days the clock is wound only on special occasions.

Today it is a prominent exhibit in the collections of the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg.

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Mark Twain's Quest to Bring Affordable Watches to the Masses

But after 1869, the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, which required a national, standardized system of time, spurred the need for more democratic timekeeping. The rise of the railroad dovetailed perfectly with Twain's rise as a writer. In 1883, the United States instituted its system of time zones in response to the needs of the railroad. The following year, Twain published *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The heroes of Twain's books weren't proper, genteel types. Twain made his name as a democratic, accessible writer. And in part because of the railroad and ongoing urbanization of America, timekeeping needed to become democratic and accessible, too. Watches shouldn't be available only to owners who could afford to blow hundreds of dollars on a watch and then thousands on its upkeep, Twain realized. Watches needed to be for everyone.

CHAPTER #107 MEETINGS

Second Sunday of the Even Numbered Months

Mart: 10:30AM
 Chapter: 12:00PM
 Board: after the Chapter Meeting

Future Meeting Dates

December 8, 2019

We want to keep our members coming to the chapter meetings on a regular basis. If you have problems with transportation to and from meetings, let a director or officer know so we can help you find a carpool.

Only NAWCC members can participate (buy or sell) in our Mart. Be prepared to show your current 2019 membership card.

Other NAWCC Chapter Meetings in Northern California		
Chapter	Meeting Address	Meetings
De Anza #94	Odd Fellows Lodge 20589 Homestead Rd Cupertino, CA	2 nd Sunday even months (except April)
Sacramento #71	Sacramento Garden Center 3330 McKinley Blvd. Sacramento, CA	4 th Sunday odd months
San Francisco #5	James Monroe Elementary 3750 Monterey Blvd. San Leandro, CA	2 nd Sunday odd months

DIRECTIONS TO CHAPTER MEETINGS

(except August and December)

743 Diablo Road, Danville

Take Interstate 680 to the Diablo Road exit in Danville. Go east on Diablo Road for 0.6 mile. The Grange Hall will be on your right. Parking is available in the front and rear. Enter from the front; *i.e.*, street side. Facing the building from the street, there is a ramp on the right side for handicap and cart access.

CHAPTER LIBRARIES

BOOK: The Chapter book library is located at Classical Clocks and Antiques, 1082 E. Stanley Blvd., Livermore. Contact Nile Godfrey (925-449-2127) for more information.

VIDEO: Chapters 107 and 5 share a DVD video library. Contact Price Russ (925-937-9231) for information.

TOOL: Contact Walt Hubrig (925-685-0260) or Price Russ (925-937-9231) for information on the tools and parts available for use by Chapter members.



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