



Free State Chapter 141

MD, PA, VA, WV

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For more information about the chapter, you may contact the President Lou Orsini by email oh2batc@verizon.net or phone 703-352-7260.

Feedback or questions pertaining to the Newsletter should be addressed to Al Bush at: agbush172@verizon.net or (410)531-5307.

August / September – No.2009-05

President's Message

Welcome back to our regular meeting schedule after what I hope was a relaxing and enjoyable summer. As I write this, it's 90 degrees with high humidity, but I know that fall is fast approaching. Fall is such a wonderful time of the year with the change of seasons bringing cooler weather and beautiful foliage. With the baseball season in full swing, it still marks the beginning of football season and the renewed hopes for your favorite team (I'm guessing most likely either the Skins, Ravens or Iggles). Hope does spring eternal. Our program this time will be very special with noted clock repair author **Steve Conover** joining us to share his knowledge on fusee movements. You will find Steve's bio and additional info on the program later on in the Newsletter. If you have a fusee movement available, this would be a good meeting to bring it along for show and tell. Steve will have some of his books and Newsletters for sale, which he will gladly sign for you. If you are into clock repair, whether you've been doing it for years or just dabbling, Steve will have a book or two that you will find invaluable. I have several and they get more use than any other books in my library. Regardless of your interests, I think you will get some great info from this program, and of course the opportunity to get back together with everyone.

If you missed our annual picnic, you are probably kicking yourself. The weather was perfect; the food was great; there was good action at the mart tables (I picked up a couple of items myself); the entertainment from the impromptu jazz band was outstanding including participation by a couple of our own members – **Harry Lebhertz** on double

bass and **Tom Litzenberger** on sax; and the hospitality by **Bob and Patsy Rothen** could not have been better. Best of all – this was completely free for all members – whoever said that there is no free lunch was never a member of Chapter 141! I am particularly grateful to Bob and Patsy (and the rest of the Rothen household) as they did most of the work themselves (Patsy made all the fixin's except the chicken and sole slaw) rather than hiring a caterer to keep the costs reasonable, while still ensuring the picnic was a smashing success. The money they saved the Chapter will continue to benefit us all in the future. Please be sure to thank them personally when you get a chance. My thanks also to everyone who attended (about 50 people all told) and participated in various parts of the event; it really was a fun event.

Finally, as always, please **remember our brave men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan**, as well as other dangerous places throughout the world. As we slowly withdraw from the Iraqi streets, our efforts and casualties are slowly climbing in Afghanistan, where July was the deadliest month ever in that conflict for U.S. troops. We live in a dangerous world, and we are extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated and professional military and other government officials working to protect and defend U.S. interests worldwide. Please keep them and their families in your thoughts and prayers, every day, until they return home, and look for opportunities to say thank you whenever you can.

Lou Orsini, president

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, September 9, 2009 at The Cozy Inn



Chapter 141 Picnic – June 19, 2009

There are no meeting minutes for June since we had our Chapter 141 annual picnic, June 19, 2009. However it seems appropriate to take this opportunity to thank our gracious hosts for the picnic, Bob and Patsy Rothen. It was a great day— good food and good friends, not to mention the unexpected treat of band music during and after lunch. The lunch was more like what we used to call dinner down on the farm. It included that dessert Patsy gave her special attention to.

We also thank their daughter and friends, including some of

our members, for providing the music. It made the occasion very special. In case any of you were not aware of it, Patsy joined them on one of the songs. We also enjoyed a tour through Bob’s fantastic shop and several of us got a special tour of Patsy’s quilting facility.

If any of you guys are thinking of stocking up on new ties, Patsy would love to turn your old ties into quilts. Just bring them to a future meeting. We have included in this issue of the newsletter a page of photos recorded at the picnic.

Al Bush (for Patsy Rothen, secretary)

Treasurer’s Tidbits

FREE STATE CHAPTER 141
MEMBERSHIP-RENEWAL APPLICATION
*NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF WATCH AND CLOCK COLLECTORS*

Date _____ NAWCC No. _____

Name _____

Spouse’s Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip Code _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Your Primary Area of Interest _____

As of January 2007 Annual dues are only \$8.00 payable to **Free State Chapter 141**. Please send your check with this completed application to: Neil Amrine, 5621 Ogden Road, Bethesda, Maryland 20816. Phone:301-229-2587; email: neil54@aol.com

Hi folks!

I would remind all members to send in their dues, if they are not fully paid...

Contact me at Neil54@aol.com, or call me at 301-229-2587 if you have questions. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Cozy’s in September. Please be prompt with your RSVPs for the meeting reservations. We need to know the head count for the meal so reservations can be made.

Thank you!!

Neil Amrine

Attention: It is important also to keep Joe Joyce (josephjoyce@comcast.net or 301-865-8464) advised of any change in your membership information, address changes, etc.

We cannot keep you informed if you don’t keep us informed.

If you have an interest in clocks or watches you are invited to Our Next Meeting September 9, 2009 at the Cozy Inn

CHAPTER 141 PROGRAM FOR September 9, 2009



For our next meeting Lou has obtained **Steven Conover** who will give a presentation on *"Managing the Fusee."* Steven G. Conover is the author of nine books on clock repair and clock-making. Titles include *Clock Repair Basics*, a beginning book; *Chime Clock Repair*, a text covering the most common chime clocks seen by repairers; and *Building an American Clock Movement*, which illustrates how to make a complete timepiece movement. His most recent book is *Repairing French Pendulum Clocks*. As editor of *Clockmakers Newsletter*, Steven published an eight-page subscription newsletter featuring clock repair articles, repair tips, questions & answers, and product reviews, from 1987 through 2008. He keeps all 256 back issues available to repairers. These are covered by indexes in printed and online formats. Steven hosts a clock repair forum at www.clockmakersnewsletter.com. The site includes an online store offering his books and newsletter back issues. He is a significant

resource of information on the subject. It should be a very interesting and informative talk. We're looking forward to seeing you at the meeting. Come out and join us for a pleasant evening.

Bob Rothen

Meeting time is ~

Dinner: about 6:15 PM

Mart: Come early for the mart

Business/Program: follows dinner

MEETING RESERVATIONS:

You may use the Picnic Reservation form below to mail in your reservations for the Free State Chapter 141 meetings. Please indicate the meeting date as you complete the form. You may also make reservations via e-mail to neil54@aol.com and providing Neil Amrine with the information requested on the picnic reservation form or by Calling Neil at 301-229-2587 and informing Neil directly.

Free State Chapter 141 Meeting Reservation Form

Reservation for Free State 141 Meeting on _____

Name _____

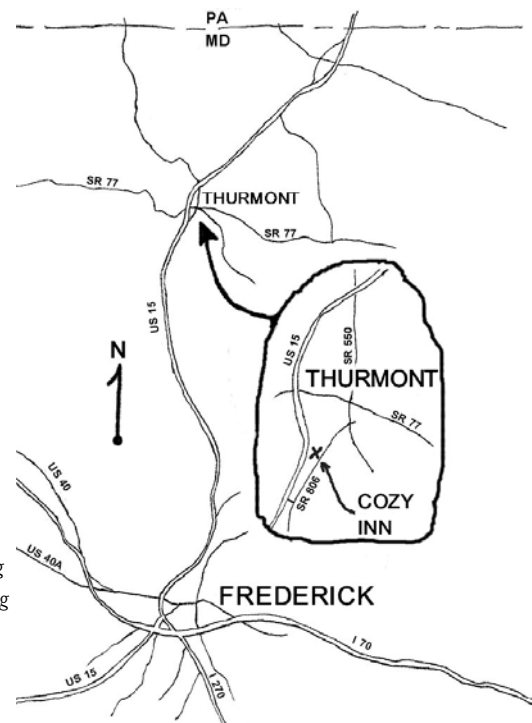
Guest Names _____

Number coming _____ x \$16.00 = Total \$ _____

Number of Mart Tables _____ (Mart Tables are Free)

Please make checks payable to Free State Chapter 141 and mail to Neil Amrine, 5621 Ogden Road, Bethesda, Maryland 20816
Phone: 301-229-2587; email: neil54@aol.com.

Directions: Cozy Inn is in Thurmont, about 16 miles north of Frederick. Take Route 15N if coming from Frederick or 15 South if coming from PA. Take the Thurmont ramp to MD806 and go east on Thurmont Blvd (right if traveling north, left if traveling south) for about a quarter mile, then take a left on Route 806 (Frederick Road) heading north. The restaurant is about 0.4 mile on the left. If you need additional directions please call the Cozy Inn at 301-271-7373.



Tic Toc Tech Tips

Celluloid Case Repairs

Inspired by the April program "Celluloid is Beautiful" I decided to experiment on an inexpensive celluloid clock. I had serviced the movement but the Grecian style simulated ivory case was another story. It was painted antique green as shown in the photo. The paint was thick and runny in some areas and almost nonexistent in others. Otherwise the case seemed in relative good shape. I knew the time and effort involved far exceeded the value of the clock. However it provided a chance to experiment with various situations one might encounter in other celluloid clocks. There were three things I wanted to address. First, I wanted to remove the paint. The other two things are splits in the celluloid and joint separations.

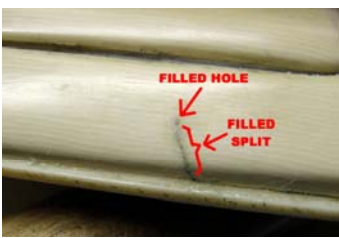
Joe Abrams gave us some tips on care of celluloid cases at the April meeting including the reference of a book by Julie Robinson. The book title is "Celluloid, Collector's Reference and Value Guide" by Keith Lauer & Julie Robinson, ©1999 and Values updated in 2001. I contacted Julie directly and obtained a copy, plus a copy of her new book "Celluloid Dolls Toys & Playthings, Identification & Value Guide" by Julie Pelletier Robinson. She informed me that the first book is now out of print but was able to supply me with one copy of each book. She suggested for anyone wishing a copy to go on Amazon.com. Some were still available there.

The first book is filled with the history of celluloid, its formulation, composition and characteristics as well as care tips. The second book included instructions for repair of celluloid items. One of the things mentioned is that the deterioration of celluloid releases nitrogen dioxide gas which will affect the stability of all celluloid it comes in contact with. Isolate any deteriorating celluloid items. With deterioration you will sometimes find a thin oily residue on the surface. This is a surface acid that affects the texture of the surface and if left it can cause the surface to become mushy. She addresses the effect of temperature on celluloid. If exposed to flame it will burn violently. So when working with it, keep this in mind. For safety, you should work outside if possible or at least where there is plenty of ventilation, since some of the materials you are working with, like acetone and lacquer thinner, are volatile, flammable and not recommended for breathing. Julie recommends that you "refrain from using chemicals, solvents, and detergents to clean celluloid articles. Mild soap and water are all that is needed to remove surface dirt and a light application of pure vegetable oil is usually sufficient to soften adhesive residue." In our case we will be using some solvents since we do wish to affect the celluloid surface. More about that later.

I used three techniques to remove the paint. First, I used lacquer thinner on the clock's back surface, sparingly. The antique green was old and brittle. I had to soften it and wipe it off using cotton pads. Use rubber gloves to protect your hands. Apply enough lacquer thinner to get the paint but not too much to make the celluloid mushy. If you reach that point the cotton will tend to leave fibers adhered to the surface. The good part about this technique was that if done carefully it did not scratch the surface. The

down side was the fact that the dissolved paint would flow in any available cracks. Since this had already happened when someone applied the paint originally, it did not greatly complicate the situation. After cleaning the back of the clock in this manner, I decided to try chipping some of the old brittle paint off.

I first tried a needle to chip the paint. This worked where the paint was thick but not on the thinly painted areas. It was also painstakingly slow. Next I tried using an X-acto knife and carefully chipping and scraping the paint. This worked somewhat better and



was faster. However it left scratch marks on the surface. Also it could not be maneuvered to reach all the areas. Finally I tried a graver tool. It worked well. It was sharp and had small flat edges as well as a sharp point and I had much better control. The photographs show use of the X-acto knife and the graver tool. I finally cleared the green paint with only a small residue left here and there. I found that there were dings, splits and cracks that the paint had covered up and filled in. Now having removed all the paint possible with chipping and scraping, I moved back to lacquer thinner for the clean up. I found that the lacquer thinner melted the celluloid enough that small scratches were smoothed out leaving a fairly nice surface. However, some deeper scratches would not come out with this technique. So I resorted to polishing. When polishing a surface, two things come to mind. On brass you can use a burnishing tool to move the brass and fill the valleys from the ridges. To some extent you can do this with plastic as witnessed when I rubbed it with lacquer thinner and cotton cloth. But if you want to obtain a quality surface, you must use a grit course enough to take the surface down to the bottom of the scratches but not over shoot. Use successively smaller size grit until the buffing scratches diminish and leave the surface smooth and shiny. I also found a very fine fiber glass scratch brush such as used to clean metal for soldering was a good intermediate "grit" scratch reducer.

In this case I was able to do it in three steps (3 grit sizes) and then finish it with a lacquer thinner rub. The final touch was using a very fine (grit) polish ("Scratch Away", www.conceptlabs.org). In the future I would be more careful using the graver to avoid deep scratches. I would also try to clean more surface using the lacquer thinner rather than scraping. Splitting and separation can be addressed together. The splitting results as a crack develops with time. This is likely caused by stress set up when the article was molded to shape. For the brass cases, I drill a small hole at the extreme end of the crack to relieve the stress and then solder the crack. The same should be true for the celluloid. The photo shows one split repair. I used a hot needle and melted a hole at the end of the crack and then applied mending paste to the crack and hole. Next I finished the surface by sanding and polishing. Treating a separation is basically the same except, if possible, clamp it to close the separation. Then sand it down to blend in with the original surface and polish it. I mention mending paste. It can be made by cutting up a small amount of celluloid and melting it with acetone, allow to stand 2 - 3 minutes and mix to a consistency that is easy to work into the cracks. I used clear celluloid, but you should use the same color as your case to make the finishing job easier and produce a more professional result.

Al Bush 200905