



# British Horology Times

NAWCC CHAPTER 159

## IMPORTANT MESSAGE from Chapter President, Frank Del Greco

The most important issue in the history of the NAWCC will come to a vote of the membership in February of 2004. Council and the Trustees have proposed a merger between the NAWCC and the National Watch and Clock Museum (NWCM). I urge all members to vote YES on the merger. Here are the details.

Most members don't know that the NAWCC and the NWCM (the museum) are separate corporations. The NAWCC is a New York corporation; the museum was started as a separate Pennsylvania corporation in 1978. Management and headquarters staff routinely split their efforts between the two corporations, making it difficult to focus on overall priorities. This situation has been less than ideal and is not a cost-effective method of doing business.

A little less than two years ago, the NAWCC Council began looking at options to manage the two corporations more efficiently and cost-effectively. Our studies pointed toward merging the two entities into one. Sometime after that proposal was made, the Internal Revenue Service (through a randomized selection process) audited the NAWCC. The IRS pointed out that the NAWCC did not do enough public good to keep its 501(c)(3) tax exempt designation, but that merging with the NWCM would allow us to meet the requirements easily. In other words, the IRS gave us another good reason for merging and reinforced our belief that a merger was good for the organization, but told us to expedite our actions.

A task force, of which I am a member, worked on all of the details of the merger. This included creating new articles of incorporation, combining the NAWCC and museum bylaws, developing the look of the new "board of directors" and creating the plan and agreement of merger between the two corporations.

At a special joint meeting of Council and the Board of Trustees in September, Council members and Trustees approved the proposed merger. The proposed merger

must now be voted upon by the membership. All of the details of the proposed merger will be printed in the December MART magazine for members to review.

Please read the details carefully and ask questions of me or your favorite Council member or Trustee. Also, in the December Bulletin you will receive a proxy ballot so that you can vote by mail either for or against the proposed merger. Alternatively, you may vote at a special members' meeting scheduled for February 20, 2004 at the Florida mid-winter regional in Orlando. A two-thirds majority of all those voting by mail or at the meeting is necessary for approval. If approved, the merger will occur on April, 2004.

Here are a few critical points to remember:

1. The "new" NAWCC will be transparent to our members. Nothing will change from a practical standpoint. You will continue to enjoy all of the benefits and services you now have. Your dues will not increase as a result of the merger. Your chapters will continue to function as they always have. The Bulletin and MART magazines will remain the same. Regional meetings and national conventions will be unaffected. Your free access to the museum and library services will continue.
2. The merger organization will meet the requirements of a tax-exempt entity and have greater opportunities for grants and donations from outside organizations (including governmental). That will help us to improve our financial health.
3. Recently, the IRS has put pressure on the NAWCC to complete the merger. If we don't merge, we will likely lose our 501(c)(3) status. This means we will have to start paying applicable state and/or federal taxes on materials used at headquarters, on our real estate, on incidental income and on any donations. Also, any donations made to the NAWCC will no longer be tax-deductible on your personal federal tax return. A financial analysis showed that if we don't merge, the NAWCC will likely run out of money in the next few years.

Please turn to page 8

## IS THIS SKELETON CLOCK AMERICAN?

Doug Cowan (Ohio) discusses the details of a clock with a puzzling origin. It says "American" but it exudes English. What do you think?

Photographs by Doug Cowan

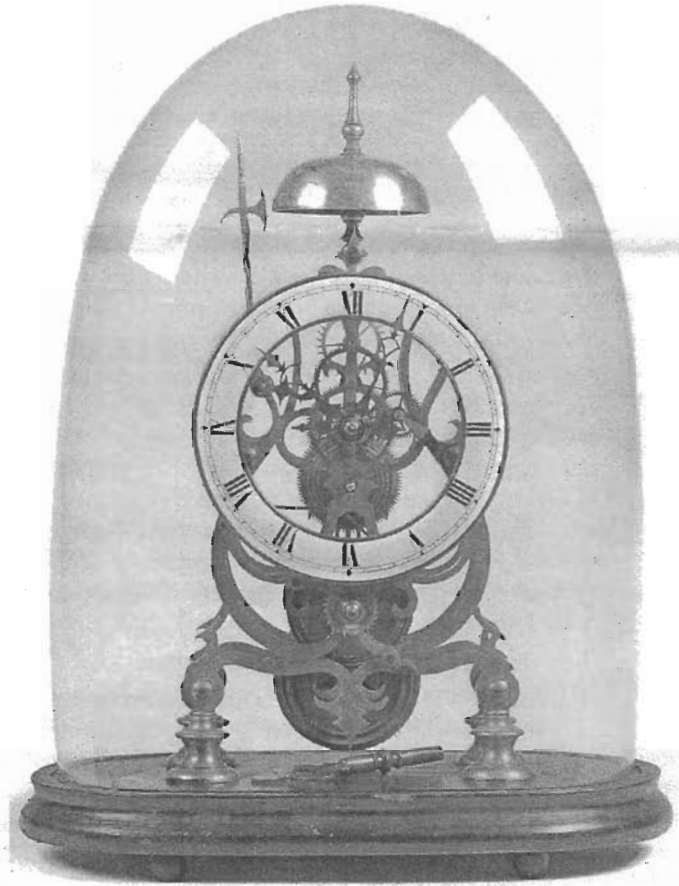


Fig. 1, The Harris, Griffin & Co. skeleton clock

Wesley Cowan (no relation), an area auctioneer, asked my opinion concerning the pictured skeleton clock. He very much wants to believe it is American, circa 1850. My initial reaction was that it is English, hence its inclusion in BHT. After poring over books and records, I have a slightly different view.

Here are the observations:

The clock is very finely made - see the fine squaring of the bell ham-

mer shaft and head. The bell is engraved in nice old script "Harris, Griffin & Co., Philadelphia, MAKERS". The Spittlers' *American Clockmakers and Watchmakers*, the most thorough reference on the topic, lists a Harris and Co. in Philadelphia, silversmiths who imported Black Forest dial clock movements for use in American cases, ca 1830. No Griffin is listed.

The bell is of a size and quality that matches the rest of



Fig. 2, The Harris, Griffin and Co. bell

the clock - that is, it looks original. The look of the clock both mechanically and stylistically very strongly resembles an English clock of the 1840s or 1850s. EXCEPT that the pendulum is not English in style. English clocks would use a lenticular disc pendulum or rarely, a cylindrical one. Once again, the pendulum seems

**BRITISH HOROLOGY TIMES**  
IS A NEWSLETTER OF  
BRITISH HOROLOGY  
CHAPTER 159 OF THE  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
WATCH AND CLOCK  
COLLECTORS

British Horology Times is published  
3 times yearly by  
THE ROYAL ARCHIVISTS  
975 Topaz St.  
New Orleans LA 70124

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Opinions expressed in articles in this newsletter are those of the writers and are not necessarily endorsed by the Chapter and/or by the newsletter and/or by the National Association.

Annual membership costs: USA \$5; Canada \$5 overseas \$6 — in US funds or equivalent.

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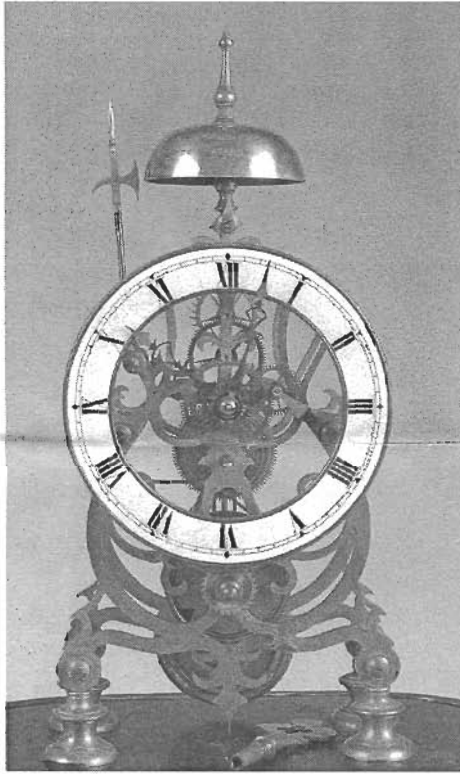


Fig. 3, Front view of the Harris, Griffin & Co. skeleton clock

to "be of an age" with the rest of the clock.

The dial is narrow as it should be for a mid 1800s English clock and the turned and finned pillars are also not unknown for the period. The whole thing is very nicely finished as you would expect from a clock made while English skeleton clocks were still in their early years of popularity, before they were mass produced in the 1870s. It is chain fusee and runs 8 days with a passing strike on the hour.

So what do you think is its origin? Is it an American copy of an English style? Is it an English clock with a replaced pendulum and a phony signature?

I think that it may be a clock finished in America from largely English components. This guess is based upon the following observations:

1. Tom Spittler and others have shown that English component clock parts were shipped to the USA for finishing and casing during the early 1800s. I have personally seen a quarter chiming bracket clock clearly made in England but with an original American dial signed by Simon Willard.
2. Finishing the clock, providing a glass cover and a locally made pendulum would adequately cover Harris, Griffin and Company as MAKERS.
3. If there was a Philadelphia company making such high quality skeleton clocks in the 1800s we would know about it before now!
4. Harris and Co. (from the

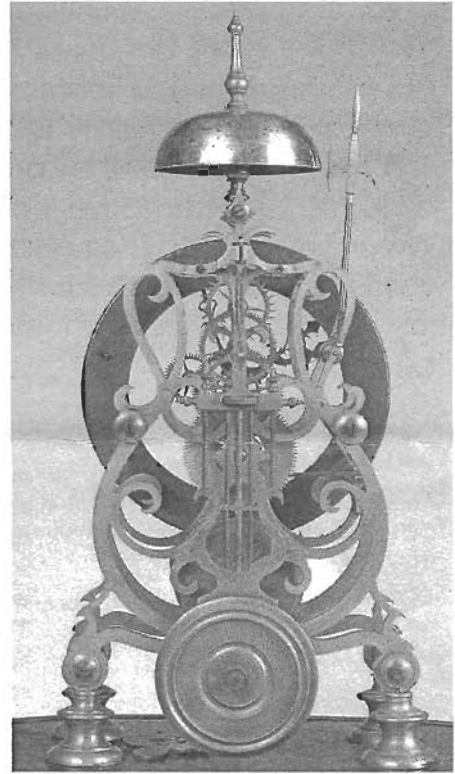


Fig. 4, Rear view of the Harris, Griffin & Co. skeleton clock

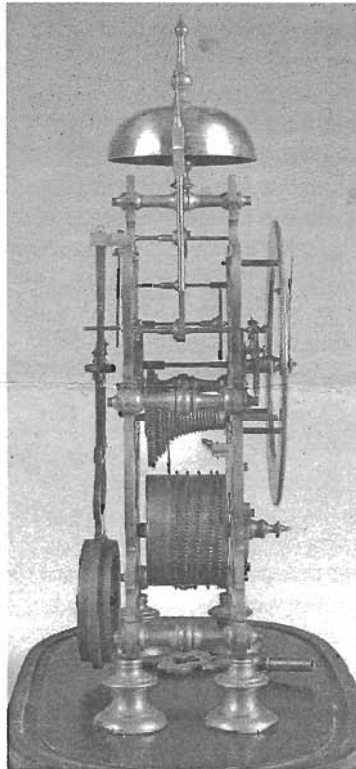


Fig. 5, Side view of the Harris, Griffin & Co. skeleton clock

Spittlers' book), if it is the same firm, are known to have imported movements.

Both Cowans would welcome your opinions. ①

Doug Cowan, co-founder of Chapter 159 and past president of NAWCC continues to share his wealth of information with us.



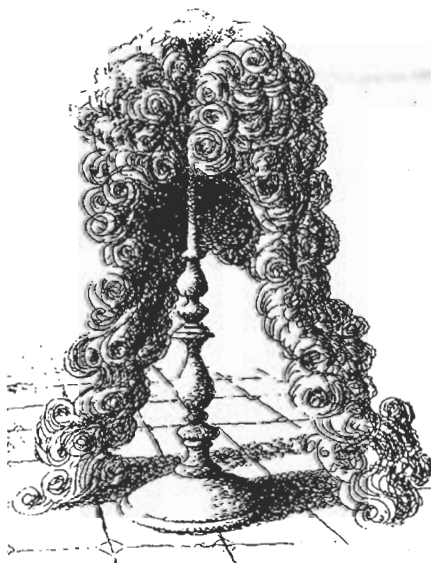
## HENRY - Part 9

Abridged from *The First Henry*, copyright © by The Royal Archivists. Used with permission.

Paul Odendahl (LA) continues with Henry and Tom Tompion returning from their work in Paris only to walk into the jaws of the London fire of 2 September 1666, into an attempted looting of the clock shop of Edward Norris, into their rescue of Mr and Mrs Edward East, and into the further rescue, with Edward East, of Samuel Betts, whose shop was in the path of the fire.

Safely back in Whitehall, named by Mrs. East "the black, sooty ragamuffins", Tom and Henry fell asleep well after 2 AM. The date was 4 September 1666.

Their rest didn't last long. The Easts were quartered in a guest room. Henry and Tom found shelter in a small room in a secluded location on the third floor. It was evidently a room for the storage and fitting of wigs. There was a large mirror and to each side of the mirror was a lounge. There was a movable screen alongside each lounge between it and the entrance door to the room. Several wigs were on stands along the walls.



After less than an hour of needed sleep on the two lounges, at about 3 AM there was a clamor at the unlocked door and it was thrust open so forcefully that it swung and hit the wall. Both men were awakened. They couldn't see the door directly because of the screens but they could see its reflection in the mirror. There just inside the door in the dim light of two candles, were two women and a man and one of the women and the man appeared to be struggling. Both Henry and Tom arose as quickly as their grogginess would allow, went around the screens and faced the interlopers. The man had pulled off the woman's robe and thrown it to the floor and he was groping at her nightgown. One candle was burning on the floor. The other woman, still holding her candle, was fretting and wringing her free hand and was calling out,

"Oh, Miss Frances! Oh, Miss Frances!... Oh!... Miss..."

And then she saw Henry and Tom. She rushed to them. The light was dim but Henry could see fright on her face as she pointed toward the struggling pair who were still oblivious of the men. The nightgown was now ripped down the front to the waist.

Instinctively Henry went for the man's neck while Tom tried to wrap his arms around the man's legs which were moving as he struggled.

Together they wrestled him to the floor and the woman, now freed from his grasp, quickly went over to the other. Rising from the floor, Henry and Tom approached the women.

"Are you hurt? Did he steal anything?"

In doing this the boys violated a cardinal rule of hand to hand combat which Henry had learned from his army sergeant. They took their attention away from the enemy.

"Look out!" screamed the woman in the ripped nightgown, looking over Henry's shoulder. Henry wheeled to his right and Tom wheeled to his left just in time to avoid the slash of a sword aimed at Henry's neck. Now that Henry and Tom were separated the swordsman decided to go for Henry. That placed his back towards Tom. Tom made a diving run at the swordsman's back, Henry stepped aside, and the off-balanced swordsman was bounced off a wall with Tom still hanging on. Some of the wig stands were knocked over in the process. Henry grabbed one and smashed it down on the swordsman's head. That quieted him. Then Henry got the longest wig he could see and they both used it to bind the swordsman's hands behind his back. They thought him to be a looter.

Now they could turn their attention to the two women who were standing by the mirror with their arms around each other, whimpering and obviously not knowing what to do.

Again, "Are you hurt?" looking at the woman in the torn nightgown.

Even in the dim light Henry could see that this was a most beautiful woman and her present state of attire showed her well developed body. He looked as long as he thought he should without



Frances Stewart, a beauty in the court of Charles II. She rejected his aggressive advances for several years and in 1677 she married the Duke of Richmond, bastard son of the King himself.

causing her embarrassment. Then he fetched the crumpled robe and helped her put it on. Now it was Henry who didn't seem to know what to do next.

Miss Frances took matters into her own hands. Leaving the other, who was obviously her maid, she advanced the few steps to Henry and Tom who were now standing together, paused, looked straight at them and gave each a brief kiss on the cheek.

All she said then was, "Thank you."

Henry and Tom just stood there in their state of shock while the maid retrieved the candle from the floor and re-lit it.

Miss Frances was now in charge of her wits and of the

situation. "Will you escort us to our quarters?"

"Of course we will," both answered at once. Then Henry added, "Just give me one minute."

He went over to the looter's crumpled figure to make certain that he was firmly bound. He was apparently still unconscious. Henry then retrieved the sword from the floor, went to one of the lounges and stuffed it beneath the pad.

Then the four of them proceeded in uneventful silence to a door on the same floor which was ajar. When Miss Frances seemed reluctant to enter, Henry stepped into the room motioning for Tom to remain with the women.

"There seems to be no one

here."

"It would be kind if you were to walk through all of the rooms to make sure. Here, take this candle."

Tom observed as he walked through the various rooms that this must be the apartment of an important person. There were rugs and tapestries in abundance and a great deal of good oak furniture. It was obviously a woman's apartment for he saw no evidence of any male clothing nor any objects meant for use by a man. He couldn't help notice that the bed had been slept in and was now in disarray.

He came back to the doorway, nodded and said, "All's clear." The women passed into the apartment in silence. There was only a smile and a grateful look from Miss Frances.

As they returned to the wig room, each had his own thoughts. Henry was thinking about Miss Frances. Tom's mind turned to the night's events and he wondered aloud,

"What were those two women doing abroad in the palace at this hour. It would have been kind if they had explained things to us but they didn't choose to and I thought that I shouldn't ask. Why didn't they tell us where we should take the looter for arrest? Why didn't they even express interest in the looter?"

Questions, to be sure, that couldn't be answered by the clockmakers. Questions, though, that could be speculated upon after the events which were to come on the following day.

Upon arrival back at the wig room they found another unexpected sight. The looter had gone! Oh well, they reasoned, we would not have known exactly what to do with him and we are so tired we are glad to be rid of him.

They fell back asleep on the

two lounges at half after 4 AM on the morning of Tuesday, 4 September 1666.

This time they had an uninterrupted sleep for 12 hours. Strangely they both awoke at the same time and they simply sat and yawned and talked about the events they had encountered since they left the boat on Sunday. Then they realized that they were hungry and thirsty. When they opened the door they found three armed sentries immediately outside. Two were stationed at each side of the door, backs to the wall, facing out. One was right in the center of the door facing toward the door with his musket in both hands barring the doorway. The door opened in so there he was staring at the men as they

attempted to leave.

This sentry explained that they were to remain in the room until further orders and when they asked for food and drink he agreed to send for something.

Prisoners in the Whitehall Palace Wig Room. Who would have thought this? Why? Can we reach Mr East? All this and more crowded into their minds. They had no choice but to accept their fate and they simply used the time to rest and for Henry to try to make plans.

At 6 o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, 5 September 1666, when Henry's planning had turned to making a possible escape, the door opened and there stood a big man dressed in satins, silks, leather and a brown wig. He looked important, powerful and he had a big smile on his face. He advanced into the room and closed the door behind him.

"Good morning," he said and went to the only chair and table in the room and sat down.

"I am John, Earl of Rochester.

Please tell me your names."

They told him and their curiosity showed. The Earl wrote down their names. Then he reached into his cape and produced a leather bag about the size of an orange.

"In this bag," he said, "are £200 in gold."

"I want from you a promise. Your sacred promise." He was looking directly at Tom.

Then he shifted his gaze to Henry, pulled out another bag and continued, "**And I want a promise** from you. Do you both understand me so far?"

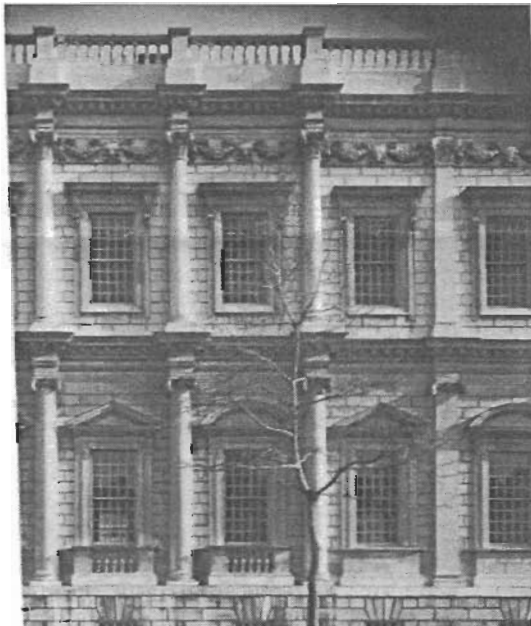
They both said they understood — so far.

The Earl continued, "I want you to forget that the events of yesterday in this room ever occurred. I want you to forget that I ever visited you today. You did not see anyone in this room yesterday save yourselves. Nor was anyone posted outside the door. You did not enter any other rooms in the palace except this room. You both slept in this room during the night of 3-4 September. You were not in this room today. Yesterday you left the palace and you went out of London not to return for four years. If you agree to promise this, each of you shall have one of these bags."

They looked at each other in astonishment and it was obvious that they felt the need to discuss this between themselves.

"There will no discussion, no talking between yourselves. If you agree now you may depart with your bags. If you decline, I am bound to tell you that total confusion reigns outside this palace and any citizen who finds himself out there is risking mortal danger."

"Mortal danger!" Henry repeated to himself. "Why this thinly veiled threat? Why this bribe to



Whitehall Palace. The wig room is behind the two top windows at right.



Charles II, King of England 1630-1685 (reigned 1660-1685). Kingly ruler...or looter?



The Earl of Rochester, longtime friend and confidant of King Charles II.

forget a looter? Looter indeed. There is more here than Tom and I can overcome so we'd best accept and go."

He looked sharply at Tom and said aloud, "We will gladly accept your proposal."

The Earl asked Tom, "Do you accept, Thomas?"

"I accept," answered Tom.

"Good," said the Earl. "There is one more provision."

**Both looked** uncomfortable

The Earl carried on, "You must turn over to me, right now, the sword."

Neither of them wanted a sword to carry around. The knives they had were perfectly adequate and far less cumbersome. They walked over to the lounge. The Earl followed. As Henry produced the sword he noticed two things. The gleam of triumph in the eyes of the Earl and the crest engraved on the hilt of the sword. When last he had seen the sword it was in the dim candlelight. Now in the light of day, it was perfectly clear and bold. He knew what it was.

"Egads!" thought Henry to himself, "this *is* big."

The Earl took the sword and handed over the bags. Tom and Henry walked out of Whitehall Palace and left London, not to return for four years. It was 5 September 1666. Henry was 34 years of age. Tom was 28. Ⓜ



Paul Odendahl continues a curious mix of history and fancy in this story about 17th century clockmakers.

**IMPORTANT MESSAGE, continued from page 1**

4. We looked at alternative scenarios other than merging as a 501(c)(3) organization and found those to be unsatisfactory. Those other options would increase our costs and reduce opportunities for grants and donations. We cannot survive as a 501(c)(7) (private club), a 501(c)(6) (trade association), or a for-profit corporation without raising dues substantially. Also, the museum (that contains the Library and Research Center) can't survive by itself if we don't merge.

I urge members to vote YES on the proposed merger. Under the laws of the states where the NAWCC and the NWCM are incorporated, Council and the Board of

Trustees cannot make the decision for you. Only you can decide the future of your Association. You must approve the merger by a two-thirds majority of those voting, for the merger to take place. Please do not let a few members decide the fate of the NAWCC for you. Please vote!

-Frank Del Greco

**RECOIL**

Tom Spittler writes:

"I enjoyed Lewis Miller's 'My New Watch - Help' in the March 2003 British Horology Times (BHT29). I was able to find an answer to one of his questions, 'Who was the watch's maker - Peter Holmes, and when was he working?'

"From Brian Loomes *Lancashire Clocks and Clockmakers* (thank you, Doug Cowan, for selling me the book), I find 'Peter Holmes, Liverpoole, 49 Greenland Street, in 1834.'

"Mr Miller's watch was hallmarked 1836/37 so this is a very good fit. Hope other readers can supply the rest of the answers."

- Tom Spittler

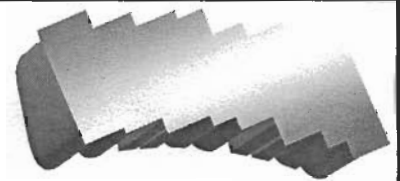


**YOUR EDITOR** has added this little corner of the page to give you some respite from the concentrated horology to be found elsewhere.

-Paul Odendahl

**Things You Can Learn From Your Dog:**

1. When your loved one comes home run to greet him/her.
2. Eat with gusto.
3. When it's hot, drink lots of water.
4. Take naps.
5. Don't bite, just growl.
6. Give unconditional love.
7. Stay close to your loved one in times of distress.
8. When you want something badly, dig for it.



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