

The Howard Banta Alarm Clock Chapter



Chapter 178 of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors

www.accl178.org

2005 Volume 3

2006 Silver Dollar Regional

The 2006 Silver Dollar Regional will be held in Sparks, Nevada just a few miles from Reno. It will be held on

Sunday, August 27th and
Monday, August 28th. 2006

The hosting chapters are the Sacramento Valley Chapter #71 and the Sierra Nevada Chapter #65. Watch your Mart for more information and registration form for the event. As in 2003, there will be an "Early Bird" entry for those that wish to come in during Mart Setup.

Any additional information please call Vince Angell at 916-453-1953 or email him at

phylathome@hotmail.com

In This Issue

We are pleased to present an article entitled 'An Alarm On The Lighter Side' by Doug Stevenson. The article originally appeared in Clocks Magazine.

Also, we present the first alarm clock movement repair article, kindly submitted by Bill Meehan.

Another regular contributor submits an interesting note on a Rare Advertising Clock.

More Photos from the 2005 Florida National



We're pleased to provide more photos of members

attending the 2005 Florida National. Upper left are Steve Berger and wife Janelle. Upper center is new member Ken Reindel discussing metal re-plating with Gayle Loos. Upper right are members Jim Gilmore and Phyllis Angell. A complete set of 2005 National photos can be seen at:

http://www.kinetotech.com/~vince/misc/florida_2005

A Rare Advertising Clock

The New Haven store regulator shown at right is an 8 day, time only clock. The case is oak and measures 35" high, 15-3/4" wide and 5" deep. I saw it about three years ago in an antique shop in Iowa and I just had to have it!

The **OVB** stands for 'Our Very Best' and was found on the face of a few New Haven alarms. If you have a copy of my book¹, there's one on page 70. I picked up another OVB clock with a brass case - same top, different legs, and no window in the dial. I also show more True Time Tellers on pages 74, 75, 76, 77. I believe the date to be a little earlier than what the sales-person said, simply by looking at the type of clocks it is advertising. I think it is a great find. I have never seen one listed in any book.

-- Dennis Sagvold



(1) Sagvold, Dennis "Legged Alarm Clocks" 2004 Schifferbooks

Officers, Contacts, etc.

Alarm Clock

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saraandmary@sbcglobal.net**Sell It Through the Newsletter**

Every member may submit one ad per newsletter. This includes a *Wanted to Buy* or *Wanted to Sell*. The newsletter comes out at the beginning of March, June, September and December.

Instructions to Authors

All are encouraged to submit articles for publication in the *Alarm Clock Chapter* newsletter. Please include your name, address and phone number with the article. Although certainly not a complete list, suggestions for topics are:

- Specific alarm clocks or manufacturers
- Unique design - movement or case
- Special methods of cleaning
- Descriptions of interesting repairs
- History of a manufacturer
- Helpful tips on repair

Photos along with the text are always appreciated. Please email to the editor at:

saraandmary@sbcglobal.net

or send article on computer disk (MS Word) via snail mail

Mary Maier
530 Staples Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94112

Chapter News and Updates

When you receive the NAWCC Bulletin, please check the *Special Interest Chapter Highlights* for possible updates and news on the Howard Banta Alarm Clock Chapter.

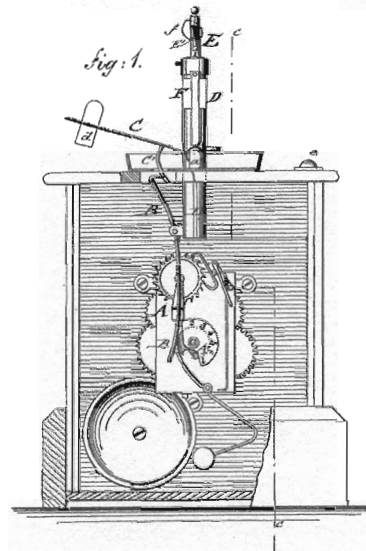
Phyllis and I will try to have a write up, small or large, in every issue.

Vince Angell

Member Mailing

Many thanks to Pat Dowel for sending along photocopies from Edward's book on U.S. Clock patents from the 1700 - 1890. It will come in handy for research in future articles.

Just a quick browse through the list pulled up patent No. 175, 344 (March 1876) for an *Improvement in Lighting Attachments for Alarm-Clocks*, granted to Frank Fischlein. The idea of this patent relates to the combination of an alarm clock with the simultaneous lighting of a candle or lamp. You may recall the article by Vince Angell¹ on "The Illuminated Alarm". That clock was made by Bradley and Co. and was apparently patented by Davies in January of 1877.



It would seem Mr. Fischlein predated the Davies patent by a year. It would be interesting to see how closely (if all) the two patents are aligned in their approaches to the problem. The image shown above² is Figure 1 of the Fischlein patent.

-- the Editor

(1) Angell, Vince "The Illuminated Alarm", Vol. 3, 2004 Howard Banta Alarm Clock Chapter Newsletter.

(2) USPO website.

Repair Tips

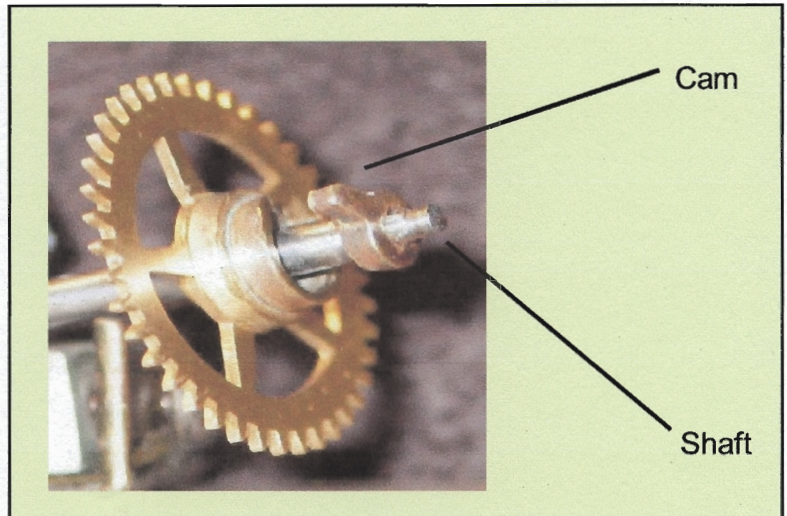
This is a problem I've encountered with several alarm clocks. The clock will stall, lose time, or the alarm hand and shaft will travel around with the hour and minute hands. Assuming all else is in order, you will find the malfunction in the alarm wheel bushing.

Alarm Wheel's Sloped Bushing.



The alarm wheel bushing has a slope milled into it. Its sloped so the cam on the alarm set shaft will snap into it, thus releasing the alarm mechanism. In some clocks excessive wear of this bushing actually allows the wheel (swagged to the bushing) to tilt and destroy the wheel's normally smooth action. When this happens the cam will jam against the slope enough to stop the clock or cause one of the other symptoms mentioned initially.

I had a Baby Ben that had so much worn off the sloped bushing an entirely new bushing was necessary. Fortunately, I found an intact wheel in my faithful junk box. In this case the repair was simple, just replace the old worn wheel with a new one. But with no replacements available, a bit more work is needed. The only remedy, in general, is to dismantle the assembly and *re-bush* the bushing. The steps required are as follows.



(1) As in the figure above, mark the position of the cam before removing it. Usually the wheel can be removed by pulling the cam off the shaft.. On the really old alarms, the entire shaft can be pulled out by disengaging it from its friction drag assembly, so much for the better! This procedure will vary with the design of the movement.

(2) Removing the old bushing: You will have to drill out the bushing. When selecting the appropriate drill bit, make sure the drilled area is not so large as to weaken where the bushing connects to the wheel.

(3) Press-fit a piece of bushing wire into the hole. Then, sufficiently open the hole in this new bushing to allow a smooth running fit on the shaft. You may have to bore the hole to size on a lathe if you can't find a drill of the correct diameter. That can certainly happen! Its critical to remove any burrs or roughness with fine emory paper (600 grit will do). You can finish up with a fine burnishing file. Be sure to preserve the roundness needed for the shaft.

This finishes up the re-bushing. Be sure to check for wear of the sloped area itself and for wear of the cam as well. A touch of light grease on the bushing and the cam-slope will help. I don't use oil here as it may crawl up and stain the dial.

This procedure has worked well for me and I hope you too find it helpful.

-- Bill Meehan --

Patent-Nachrichten.

Patent-Anmeldungen.

(Das Datum bezeichnet den Tag, bis zu welchem auf dem Patentamt Einsicht in die Patentausschreibung genommen werden darf.)

- Kl. 83. R. 4582. Gewichtsuhr. Gallus Roth in Rempertshofen bei Kisslegg (Württemberg); 23. Juli.
Kl. .. B. 8473. Uhr mit wandernder Stundenzahl und Halbkreiszifferblatt. Heinrich Born in Homburg v. d. H.; 6. August.
Kl. .. B. 8320. Regulirvorrichtung für elektrische Uhren. Louis Bouchet in St. Laurent sur Sèvre, Frankreich; 13. August.
Kl. .. E. 2104. Schlagwerk für Vierundzwanzigstunden-Uhren. M. van Buren Ethridge in Boston, H. E. Waite in West Newton und John Swann in New-York, V. St. A.; 13. August.
Kl. .. T. 2072. Schaltwerk bei elektrischen Uhren mit selbstthätigem Aufzug. A. J. Thomas in Paris Rue Albouy⁹⁴; 13. Aug.

Patent-Ertheilungen.

(Das Datum bezeichnet den Beginn des Patentes.)

- Kl. 83. No. 43934. Lichtanzünde-Apparat. H. Kirchner in Landeshut i. Schl.; 12. Januar 1888.
Kl. .. No. 44015. Neuerung am Knopfaufzug von Taschenuhren. E. Francillon & Co. in St. Immer; 19. Januar 1888.
Kl. .. No. 44056. Neuerung an Zifferblattbefestigungen bei Taschenuhren. H. Pippig in Mosbach i. B.; 6. Januar 1888.
Berlin SW., den 24. Juni 1888.

Das Patent- und Technische Bureau
von
Hugo Koblanck & Co.

Figure 1.

by D K Stevenson

Lincoln, who was almost as droll as he was tall, once said that “my father taught me to work — but not to love it”. And whenever I find myself as an enthusiast enthusing about some “fascinating” horological topic, I can sense the professionals out there raising an Abrahamian eyebrow. While softly muttering “me, I’d do it for free”.

That that’s a touch overdrawn might go without saying. Yet it should be admitted at the outset that this short article (as well as three to come) does not pretend to the horologically profound. Nor would it claim utility by offering cures for common clock colds.

Rather, it follows the unexpected gift of a complete copy of the *Deutsche Uhrmacher-Zeitung* (DUZ) for 1888. And was motivated by the excitement of turning through the 24 individual issues — the advertisement sections, somewhat unusually, still attached — and finding all sorts of, yes, quite fascinating things. The purpose, therefore, is to share the same.

That said, it’s not difficult to justify an interest in this first topic, a patent for an alarm clock which has a self-lighting, lighting device. It brings together five threads of interest. These in turn intertwine through a period of German clockmaking history which deserves more attention than it has had.

The first of the five areas is the German horological patent system and process itself. The significance of both was set forth in a three-part article, “German Patent Letter Clues”, which first appeared in the April,

On the Lighter Side

Greatfully reprinted from Clocks Magazine,
February 2002

May and June 1998 *CLOCKS*, and was reprinted in the October, 2000 *NAWCC Bulletin*.

Indeed, this 1888 *Deutsche Uhrmacher-Zeitung* copy was one of several now being secured as part of a larger, non-profit project to list all German horological patents, of both the DRP and DRGM types. The list when completed will make entrance-level identification and dating more convenient and accurate. The list would also further research. It is estimated that around ten thousand horological patents of both types were issued between 1877 and 1944.

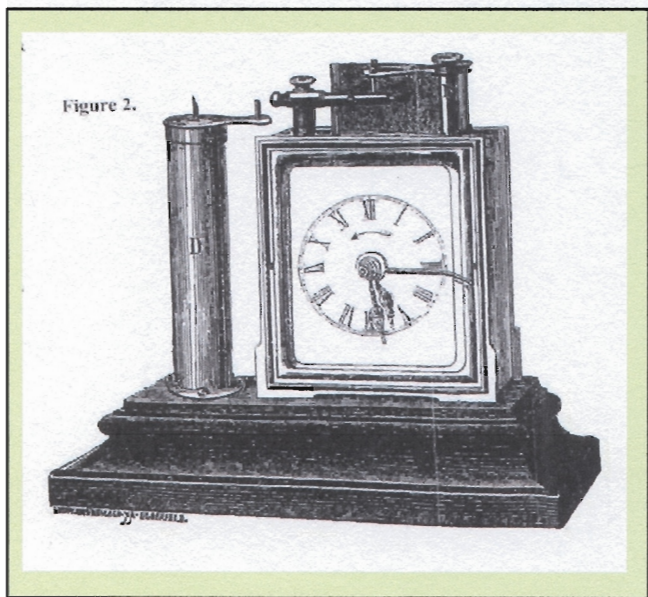
In this specific case, *figure 1*, we have notice in the 1st July 1888 *DUZ* that a class 83 patent, Number 43934, has been granted for a “light lighting”, or light igniting, device. (The “th” spelling of “Patent-Ertheilung”, by the way, is the earlier form of today’s “Erteilung”.) The patent was granted to an H Kirchner, of Landeshut, in Silesia.

The period of protection dates back to 12th January 1888. This is the date (plus a day) from when the patent application was submitted. *DUZ* readers were informed in the 1st March 1888 issue, in the Patent-Anmeldungen listings, that application had been made, and that the application could be examined until 16th April.

In this earlier notice, however, the rather vague “light igniting device” had been given an explanatory, parenthetical note. What then was termed a “Licht-Anzündapparat” was “an Wecker”, that is, attached to an alarm. And in much the

same way, this first broad area of interest, in patents, is attached to alarm clocks, as a second.

The significance of the alarm clock to German horological history — it both furthered and reflected



the industry as it rose to international dominance — has received more attention in the past two decades. This follows the research efforts of experts such as Gisela Lixfeld and Reinhold Krämer. And certainly, as well, the 1991 volume *Wecker* by Mühe, Kahlert and Techen, the first as far as I know which is wholly devoted to alarms.

The German industrial alarm clock has received more attention because of its roles in the rise of that industry. Yet it's also attracting more attention for less academic reasons. Simply put, many enthusiasts know that their chances of finding and affording a so-called important clock are about as likely as the Koh-i-Noor showing up in the next pack of M&Ms.

But many types of alarm clocks (if hardly all) are still available to the average collector at reasonable prices. And no doubt in a few decades, we'll be hearing tales about "back in '02 when you could get truck loads of Baby Bens for a few old euros and a can of Bud." The same type stories we've all suffered about back when no one wanted white dials — when folk would toss longcases onto garden fires "just to see the slugs sizzle".

This rather more popular, and international, interest in industrial alarm clocks is scarcely noted in our traditional antiquarian sectors. And is better traced in the world of ebay and boot sales than Sothebys. Nonetheless, the recent formation of an NAWCC special interest chapter, Alarm Clock Chapter #178, does

reflect this growing interest. Their activities, which include the *Alarm Clock Newsletter*, will surely attract more (for information, write Kim St Denis, Chapter #178 Secretary, 7344 Bonnie Place, Reseda, CA 91335, USA, or email <cstdennis@earthlink.net>).

Some of us, then, will be interested in such a patent just because it's for an alarm, any alarm. Rather more I suspect will be interested just because we are interested, fascinated really, by almost any old horo-related mechanical device. Or even more basically, most of us have a yawp-level curiosity about any unfamiliar mechanical beast. And while one might ponder socio-cultural holdovers of largely 19th century technological patterns, the key words are *wuzzat?* and *howzitwurk?*

Wecker mit selbstthätiger Lichtentzündung
sind zu beziehen für Deutschland durch
die
Uhren-Engros-Handlung
von
Ed. Röhrig, Görlitz
sowie vom Gründer
H. Kirchner, Uhrmacher,
Landesbnt i. Schl.
zum Preise von M 10.— mit 5% Skonto
per Cassa, exclusive Porto.
Versandt an unbekante Adressen nur
gegen Nachnahme oder vorherige Ein-
sendung des Betrages.

This is another area of interest, the third, and is nicely reviewed in *figure 2*, reprinted from the 15th September 1888 issue. The *DUZ* often carried articles on new horological patents. And as here, the drawings which usually accompanied them were often very well done. Then too, the articles were written in normal German, as opposed to the impacted style of patent specifications. This allows us to actually understand them.

This article points out, for instance, that the idea of having an alarm with a light that automatically lights up when the

alarm goes off, is hardly new. Yet none (!) of the previous attempts have met the requirements of being a simple yet still reliable mechanism, as this one has, from Mr (Hermann, we learn) Kirchner, a clockmaker in Landeshut.

Then – delightfully, for those of us who remember when even the pseudo-scientific called for letters on the drawings — we are given an extended “lever A” moves to position etc, explanation. It probably isn’t necessary here to note that yes, the pin on B releases A so that the match inserted in A strikes against the rough surface of C and then continues to flip around to light the wick in D.

Rather clever though that piece C is mounted with a spring, so that when the match rubs across it, it yields just enough so the lever doesn’t stall. And something



that’s probably familiar to students of candle-holders but was new to me. The light in the holder D is kept up by a spring in the bottom “as in wagon-lanterns”.

Kirchner’s device we’re told is mounted on a “Becker’sche Wecker, 4 eckiges” model alarm clock. A photograph of a very similar alarm from Gustav Becker, but with the original handle in place, is shown in *Wecker* as illustration 28 on page 34. It is described as a travel alarm, in a rectangular, sheet-brass case, with an open, [true] enamel dial, from about 1875.

The fourth area of interest conveniently comes with the last sentence in this article. “We have no doubts that this innovation will be well received, and that this practical alarm will soon earn many friends.”

Now, one doesn’t wish to appear skeptical. And wonder for example if (a) there would be a most positive review it weren’t the case, let alone (b) any review, or even (c) if there was perhaps back then a connection between text tendencies, and advertising, which (d) we of course no longer have, at least in this mag, or (e) all of the above.

Yet it is the case that an advertisement for this alarm, *figure 3*, did appear in every issue after the review article appeared. The advertisement announced that the new alarm could be ordered through the Röhrig wholesale house, in Görlitz. Or through the inventor himself. The price of 10 marks was roughly only twice the cost of a normal “nickel” drum alarm at this time.

The fifth and last area of interest is in this period when both the mechanical and the electric intermarried, as it were. This 1888 *DUZ*, for example, carried advertisements from the Hanauer Elektrische Uhrenfabrik (Steinheuer & Rabe) for their patented “electrical regulator, with torsion pendulum”.

And in the 15th March 1888 issue there was a small, rather crowded advertisement from Wolff & Ricks in Berlin, printed here full-sized as *figure 4*. It featured another practical “innovation”, a pocket watch stand with an electric light. Simply by hitting the knob on top, it could be turned on at any time. And because there was no fire and flame involved, it was much safer.

Assumedly it would have been as easy, indeed easier, for Herr Kirchner to have had his “match lever” act as a switch for an electric light. So was he just behind the times? With most potential customers? And when and where was the first “electric light lighting alarm clock” patented, in any case?

Finally, I’d be extremely pleased to hear from anyone who has one of Hermann Kirchner’s patented alarms today. Indeed, I’d be willing to pay more than 10 of today’s marks for one. Even toss in a couple of euros, and a can of Bud.