

The Howard Banta Alarm Clock Chapter



Chapter 178 of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors

www.acc178.org

2007 Volume 2

Turn that TV dial to Bedroom Tech on A&E Monday August 13th

History Channel filmed a "MODERN MARVELS" documentary at the West Coast Clock and Watch Museum. The hour-long program entitled "BEDROOM TECH" is scheduled to air on Monday, August 13th. Check your local network for viewing times. Also, find out more about the West Coast Clock and Watch Museum from their web-site at

<http://www.vintagepocketwatches.net/wccwm>

The opening segment will focus on the evolutionary history of the modern day alarm clock and how it relates to changing technology in the bedroom.

Members from NAWCC Chapter 180 and the Alarm Clock Chapter 178 contributed to this effort. Viewers will be able to see some very unique alarm timepieces including a rare and completely functional mid-19th century French automaton self-igniting alarm clock.

Thanks to all the members that made this program possible. Be sure to tune-in to A&E on Monday, August 13th.

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In this Issue

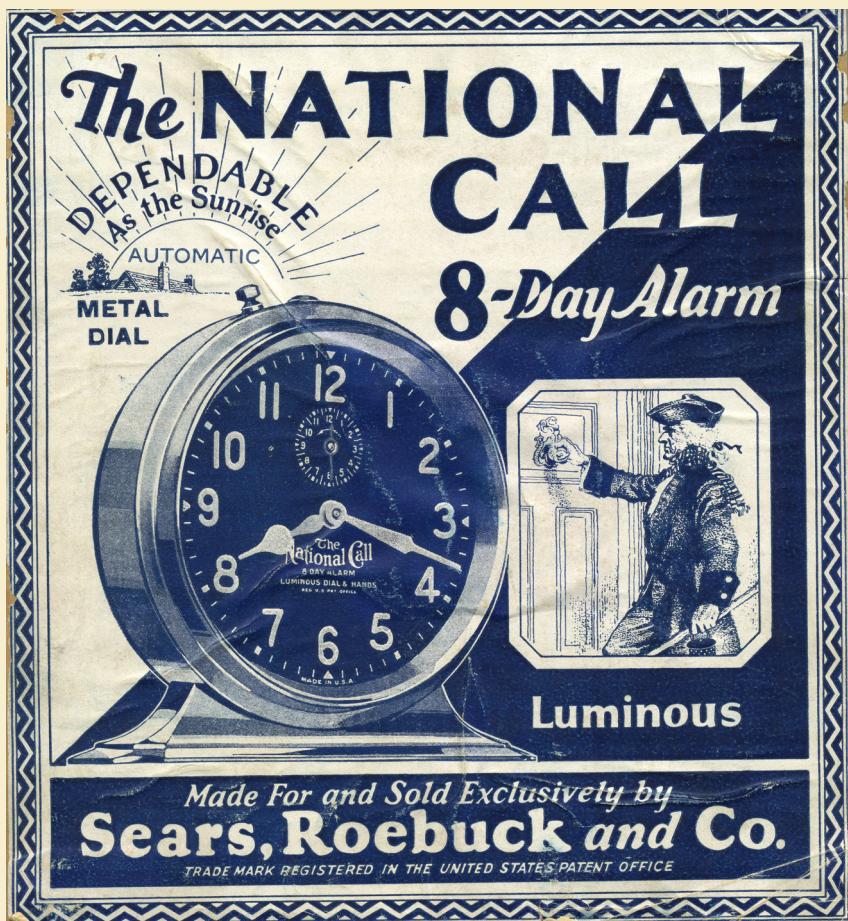
We have great images of two regionals - do you see yourself in any of them?

Another wonderful poem by
Roger Royal.

An interesting dialog on 'War Alarms'.

We're also pleased to provide the first in a multipart article by Ken Reindel -

The Baby Ben Movement Restoration Highlights.



Many thanks to Vince Angell for this wonderful image of the Ingraham box for the National Call Alarm.

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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.

Author Instructions



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:

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:

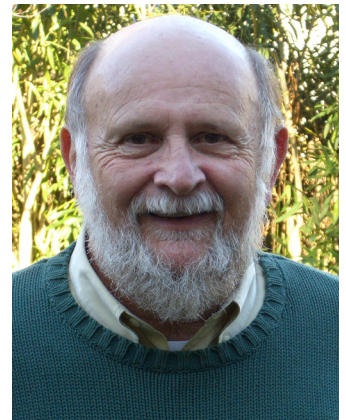
saraandmary@sbcglobal.net

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

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President's Corner

For several years now, most of you have enjoyed one of the best Chapter newsletters of the NAWCC and, hopefully, will enjoy it for many years to come. One of the main reasons for our newsletter's success has been the interesting articles and short stories that several of you have shared about your interest in collecting alarm clocks or antidotes on alarm clocks that have been sent in to our Editor or me.

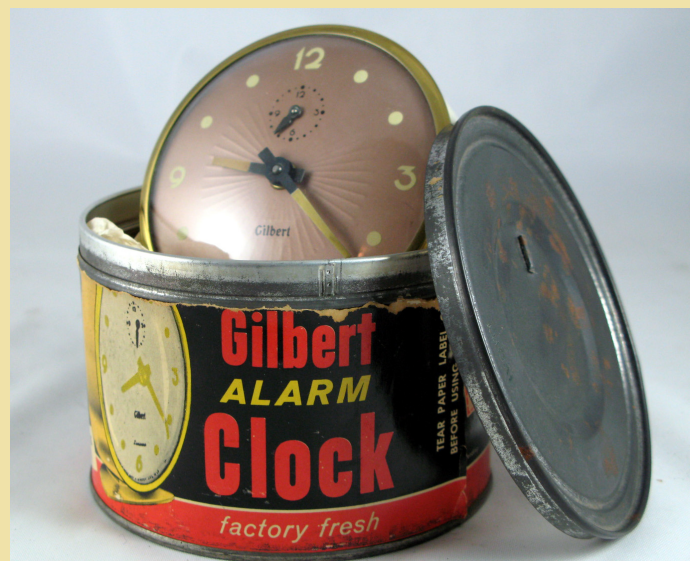


Not all chapters are lucky enough to have major contributors such as Ken Reindel and his ongoing articles about restoration of alarm clocks, dials and novelty clocks.

Thanks very much Ken!

It is for this reason that I would like to urge all HBACC members and guests to contribute articles or short stories about yourself and your alarm clocks. Suggested topics are: my favorite alarm clock; my best buy for an alarm clock; my most interesting alarm clock; how I restored an alarm clock; how I started collecting alarm clocks; or just a short paragraph on why you like alarm clocks.

Even though we have several fine contributors to our Newsletter we need to receive new articles and contributions to ensure that the HBACC Newsletter remains the "Best in the NAWCC"



Isn't this a neat old alarm 'in the original can'?

Thanks to Vince Angell for the Gilbert Alarm image.

War Alarms

Remember Bill Triska's article in our last newsletter about his restoration of a Westclox 'War Alarm'? Many industries in the United States changed their manufacturing lines to help fill in the gaps for needed military items during WWII.

Please enjoy the following series of emails between Vince Angell and some of you, our members, about alarm clock production during WWII.

From Ernie Lopez:

"IN 1942, U.S. ALARM CLOCK PRODUCTION HALTED BECAUSE FACTORIES WERE NEEDED FOR THE WAR EFFORT. THIS CAUSED AN EPIDEMIC OF WORKER TARDINESS. AFTER THE WAR, ALARM CLOCK FACTORIES WERE AMONG THE FIRST TO RESUME PRODUCTION."

From Robert A Linkenhoker:

I haven't heard of this but Westclox continued to produce alarm clocks through out the war. I have some War-alarms made in 1943 and 1944.

Bob

From Bill Triska:

Never heard that they stopped production. Gilbert & Westclox made some alarms in the paper mache cases. They also made some in the metal cases. Is there an authority in the club on Westclox alarms? I have one shaped like the old Big Ben Peg Leg that is called "Sleep Meter" with the peg legs & bail on top, nickel case that is about the same size as the large Big Ben Peg Leg that was made 4-24-1918 & is an Intermittent. Don't think I have ever had one of these before.

From Steve Elliot:

Yes, I have heard that same thing - except about them being the first to open. I think Howard told me.

From John Benfatti:

Vince,

There's a great piece titled "Big Ben Goes to War in "WESTCLOX - Wind-Up" by Jim Linz, Schiffer Publishing Ltd, Copyright 2004. It describes how the General Time plants changed from manufacturing clocks and watches to mechanical fuzes for bombs, rockets and shells.

John Benfatti
Granbury, TX

From Dick Vigal:

"Vince,

I grew up in central Illinois and during the war the non metal cases for the Big Ben were I believe made from the same material that was used for license plates. The material was made from among other things soybeans and being farm country some of the farm animals, especially goats would eat the plates off the cars and it was a real nuisance. I have never read anything about this but that is from family experience. Suffice it to say these soybean plates lasted for only about two years I believe. If anyone else has heard about this it would be of interest. Thanks for keeping all of us in the loop and thanks for your good work,
Horologically,
Dick Vigal "



Has Anyone Heard of This?

"IN 1942, U.S. ALARM CLOCK PRODUCTION HALTED BECAUSE FACTORIES WERE NEEDED FOR THE WAR EFFORT. THIS CAUSED AN EPIDEMIC OF WORKER TARDINESS. AFTER THE WAR, ALARM CLOCK FACTORIES WERE AMONG THE FIRST TO RESUME PRODUCTION."

Please let me know,

Vince

phylathome@hotmail.com

Ads From Yesteryear

This ad in the Women's Home Journal is dated February 1920. It shows Westclox's line of Ben's.

Many thanks to Robert Linkenhoker.

February, 1920 The Ladies HOME JOURNAL 175

Westclox—*for a leisurely breakfast*

ALITTLE time to spare in the morning means a better day all 'round; better for the man of the house who gets off to business feeling *right*; better for the little folks who have to be at school on time; and so much better for mother! You know what an unruffled morning means to her.

Everywhere, Westclox alarms are timing smoother-running homes and better ordered days. They help you get more things done by doing each thing on time. They're the most practical and economical household time-keepers you can buy today.

You'll find it a sensible investment to have several Westclox telling time in different rooms. Put them where you need them most: the kitchen, laundry, bathroom and garage. More than one clock saves many steps.

All Westclox are good clocks. The name, Westclox, means that the clock is made by the same folks who build Big Ben. It must be right before the name can go on the dial and tag.

Western Clock Co.—makers of Westclox
La Salle and Peru, Ill., U. S. A.

Congratulations to Our Fellow Members

Richard Vigal (WA)

Richard is a member of Pacific Northwest Chapter 31 and Willamette Valley Chapter 157. He served as Chapter 31 president from 1994 through 1998 and was a chapter director from 1998 through 2004. He has been the chairman of the chapter's Elections Committee from 2000 to the present; chairman of Chapter 31 programs from 2005 to the present; and was a member of the Chapter Bylaws Review Committee in 1995.

At the Regional level Richard was the co-chairman of the 2000 Pacific Northwest Regional and was the general chairman in 2002 and 2004.

Richard was the chairman of the display committee for the 1998 National Convention in Portland. In January 1996 Chapter 31 took on the task of restoring the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry's tower clock. Richard, along with the clock restoration team, devoted hundreds of hours to the project.

Richard held a workshop for Chapter 31 on pocket watch repair in August 1994 and a program on the Illinois Watch Co. in February and March 2004. He also presented a program on the Illinois Watch Co. to Chapter 157 in February 2004.

In 1995 Richard was a member of a team that restored a tallcase clock that is on display at the Columbia River Gorge Interpretive Center. Richard has organized field trips for Chapter 31 to Beacham's Clock Co. in Sisters, OR, from 1994 through 1997 and again in 2000.

Richard is considered as one of the "spark plugs" of Chapter 31 and gives of his time freely to share his horological knowledge with other members and to promote the NAWCC.

HBACC member Richard Vigal receives 2006 NAWCC Fellow award.



This is the pin received by Fellows of the NAWCC. So when at your local regionals or a National and you spot someone wearing this pin, you know they've given selflessly to the success of the club.

Stanley A. Mueller (WA)

Stanley is a member of Puget Sound Chapter 50, Mt. Rainier Chapter 135, Horological Science Chapter 161, Pocket Horology Chapter 174, and Friends of the West Coast Clock and Watch Museum Chapter 180.

Stanley served as vice-president/program chairman in 1970 to 1971, 1982, and 1986 for Chapter 50, and in 1992, 1993, and 1996 for Chapter 135. He was president of Chapter 180 from 2001 to 2006 and vice-president from 2000-2001.

Stanley was the Western Washington Fair display chairman in 1994, 1999, and 2006 for the long-standing Chapter 135 clock display booth at the Fair in Puyallup, WA. He also has helped with the setup over many more years. Stanley served as the display chairman for the Pacific Northwest Regional in 1993, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2003, and 2006.

New HBACC member Stan Mueller receives 2006 NAWCC Fellow award.

Corner

Poet's

WHICH ONE

By

Roger Royal

I still go bonkers
For old alarm clocks
From the top of my head
to the tip of my socks.

There's no doubt about it
I'm really obsessed
But I don't know which one
Of my clocks I like best.

Is it Big Ben or Ben Hur
Pluto or Echo
The Clatter, the Nutmeg,
The Pirate, I don't know?

There's the Sunrise, the Thrift
And the Junior Tatoo
I love all my clocks
I sure enough do!

But there's always another
Great clock to be found
So, as long as there's clock shows
Then you'll see me around.

Regional Recaps



The Treasurer of HBACC, Mike Wilson



Arizona Sunshine Regional Report

by Mike Wilson

The Arizona Sunshine Regional held March 24-25 was a success. All of the tables were sold and a small section was even added at the last minute to satisfy the demand.

Total attendance by NAWCC members was equal to prior years and our regional was selected for testing the new policy of allowing the public in to the regional on the second day. On the second day, which was open to the public, 101 adults and 5 children came to learn about watch and clocks and to take home some examples of the offerings.

The selection of alarms was small but very interesting. The Jansennite was in excellent condition and if I didn't already have two I would have brought it home. The Reflector was tempting but also didn't come home. The best deal for alarms was the box of alarms offered on the silent auction table.



Sunshine regional makes a big splash in the local newspaper.



Article text and photos from the newspaper clipping, including captions for Lucille Wible and Carol Wilson, and a sidebar with contact information for etrib.com.

Chattanooga, Tennessee National 2007 Alarm Clock Chapter Meeting

There were six of us in attendance: Charlie Banks-FL, Rodney Lewis-Australia, Robert Stafford-PA, Don Baker-AL, Marshall Knowlton and Cora Lee Linkenhoker –CA.



In absence of any board member present, we attempted to have a little impromptu meeting among ourselves. Robert Lewis shared a Chapter 1, 25th anniversary Westclox pocket watch he bought at the mart. It was the first one any of us had seen. He also shared a number of alarm clocks he had purchased at the mart and is looking forward to adding them to his large collection.

Charlie Banks told us about a Westclox book that goes into great detail about the repair of the time pieces. Don Baker is not a member of our chapter, but came in hopes of getting a little information about alarm clocks, and said he enjoyed our little "meeting."



This Darche has great potential .
A true diamond in the rough!

Meeting was adjourned at 3:15.

Cora Lee Linkenhoker



Wonderful display of electrics. Can you guess how many are alarms?

Westclox Parts

"I have a lot of Westclox Mainsprings in the original containers some for baby bens and some for the Big Bens. If anyone in the club is interested in purchasing one for a favorite alarm please let me know. I may have some glass to but would have to check on the inventory. I have lots of alarm parts for Big and Small Bens."

Please contact Joel at
jr33@charter.net

Sell It In The Newsletter!

Every member can advertise in the newsletter for free. And unlike eBay, hidden fees and charges. Advertise to other collectors like yourself.

Just email photos and text and your ad will appear in the next newsletter.

I also have tons of westclox parts available.
Please contact Charlie Banks
banksaj1@aol.com

More Great Ads from Yesteryear

Thanks to Dennis Sagvold for this ad.

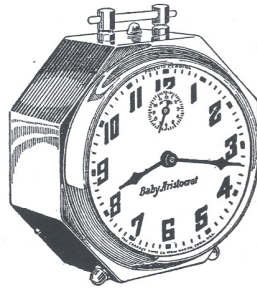
Next Page 3105 MARSHALL-WELLS COMPANY September 1, 1924

Freight, First Class

ALARM CLOCKS
"BABY ARISTOCRAT"

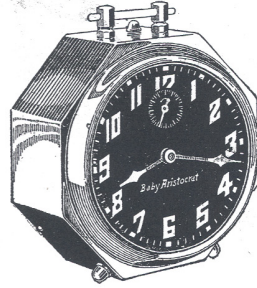
40-hour Movement; Intermittent Alarm, which is insistent, but not loud, and does not shock; Heavy Nickel Plated Octagon Case, 3 1/4 in. high, 2 3/4 in. wide; Improved Steel-Cut Pinion Movement; Easily Wound, and has a soft tick; An attractive little model, with tidy 2 1/4 inch dial; The last word in neat, high grade Alarm Clocks.

The Plain Dial Clocks are the Better Sellers



Plain Dial

Each



Radium Dial

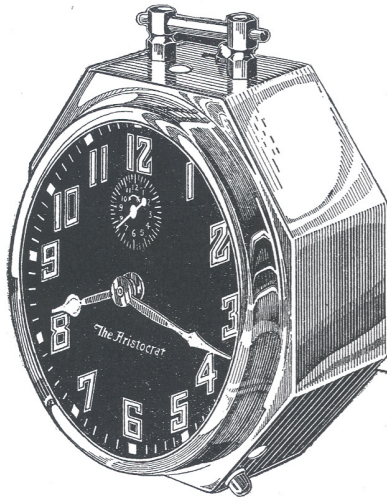
Each

No. G-50—Nickel Finish	\$3.50	No. G-150—Nickel Finish	\$4.75
No. G-51—Copper Finish	3.50	No. G-151—Copper Finish	4.75
No. G-52—Old Brass Finish	3.50	No. G-152—Old Brass Finish	4.75

One in Box; Weight 1 Lb. Each

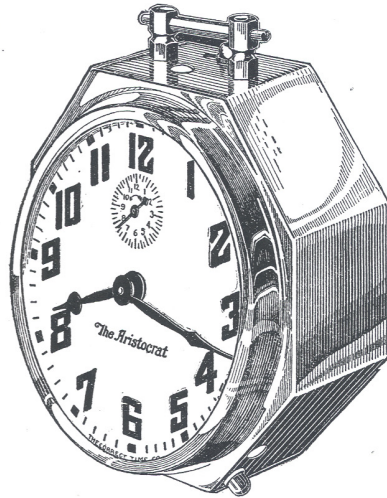
THE "ARISTOCRAT"

40-hour Movement; Intermittent Alarm, which is long and loud, and a sure rouser; Heavy Nickel Plated Seamless Brass Case, in Octagon Cubist design; 5 1/2 in. high, 4 1/4 in. wide; A big, handsome Clock with 4 1/4 in. Dial; Dependable, good-looking, and quick to make friends.



Plain Dial

Each



Radium Dial

Each

No. G-40—Nickel Finish	\$3.50	No. G-140—Nickel Finish	\$4.75
No. G-41—Copper Finish	3.50	No. G-141—Copper Finish	4.75
No. G-42—Old Brass Finish	3.50	No. G-142—Old Brass Finish	4.75

One in Box; Weight 2 Lbs. Each

Korner

Ken's

*The
Baby Ben Movement
Restoration
Highlights*

by Ken Reindel*

Now that we've completed the case restoration articles on the Baby Ben, we will focus on movement restoration. In preparing the topic, we came to the realization that a single article couldn't do the topic justice. So we will be preparing a series of articles on restoration of miniature alarm movements in general. Although we'll feature the Baby Ben we started with, this series will also show highlights and techniques for dealing with problems found in other alarms as well. Some of the other alarms that will be seen in this article set will be Big Bens, Ansonia miniatures, and perhaps even a Junghans German alarm clock now and then. We will focus on 30 hour alarms for the majority of this article set, although techniques described will generally apply to the majority of 8 day movements as well.

Periodically as I travel through Marts and other clock events, I still run across conversations referring to alarm clock movements as "practice movements," or "junk movements." From a restoration point of view, this is an unfortunate message. Having restored movements from early American clocks, Self Winding clocks, Vienna Regulators, modern German movements, jeweled Chelsea ships' clocks, English bracket clocks, French clocks, and many others, I have to admit that there are definite differences in quality between the various movements. But to the owner of a treasured 1914 Style A brass-cased Big Ben, the movement is very important and in no way should ever be used as a "practice movement" for an apprentice or treated as junk.

There are parts on some of these clocks that are very difficult to find, even though these clocks were once produced in hundreds of thousands or more. Unfortunately very few of the older vintage movements have survived in good condition partially due to these beliefs. Further, there are actually techniques used in restoration of these other clocks mentioned above that do not work effectively with alarm clocks and miniatures due to the thinner plates, smaller pivots, more delicate escapements, etc. Indeed, the proper restoration of an alarm clock can challenge even the most experienced professional. I know personally of experienced clockmakers

and shops that are so intimidated by alarms that they will not even quote repairs on them.

In the process of restoring an alarm clock movement, there are a myriad of things that might need to be addressed. We've encountered problems ranging from simple worn holes to stripped winding ratchets and clicks. Broken teeth may be present. Broken or rusted mainsprings are very common. Escapement problems occur in nearly every clock we see. Wear occurs in all pivots, including the conical balance pivots AND cups used in the vast majority of these clocks. The most important part of restoring an alarm movement is inspecting the movement thoroughly before work begins, as well as throughout the restoration process. It is even worthwhile, before doing the full tear down, to attempt getting the clock to run again so you can see where the major problems exist.

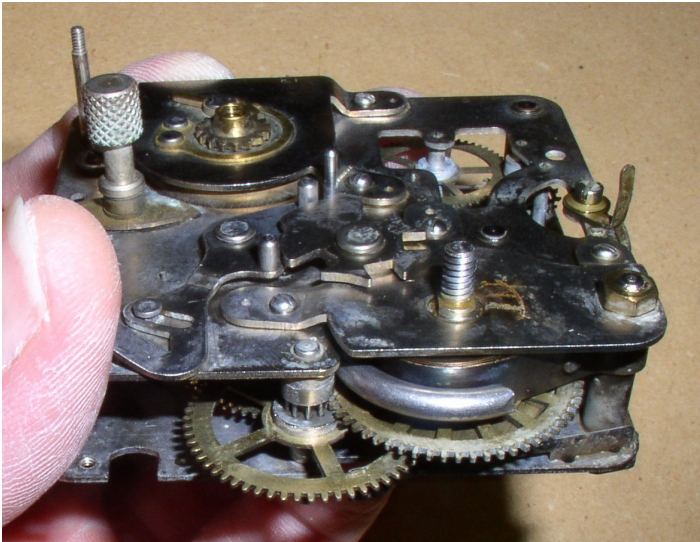
A technique we sometimes use for initial inspection of a non-functional alarm movement is to do a preliminary cleaning, with the movement assembled. I want to emphasize here that this is not recommended as the final cleaning. It will not suffice as a restoration, or even a satisfactory temporary (or bargain priced) repair. The movement will have significant residue. It is NOT clean enough to put back in service. If you clean a movement fully assembled and that is the end of your cleaning, you are doing the customer a great disservice. The clock will return with more problems later, and you will end up doing the work you should have done in the first place, but this time with customer relationship and additional movement damage to deal with.

This method is most useful as a diagnostic tool if all parts are fundamentally intact and there are no severely worn bushings. If mainsprings are broken, bushings badly worn, or parts missing, then you should skip this step and go directly to tear down, unless you still prefer to handle a grease-free movement during disassembly. Keep in mind that our intention is to use this method to clean out the gum, dirt, and dried oil so an inspection of the movement can take place while assembled. It also helps prevent contaminating your prized tank of clock cleaning solution. But again, it is an optional step.

This "let down method" is described in Donald DeCarle's "Practical Clock Repair" book. It involves removing the pallet and balance wheel (as described below), winding the clock up, and letting it run down while immersed in kerosene. (Note: Before removing the pallet, LET DOWN THE SPRINGS as described below!) Actually, I prefer Watch Rinse #3 over kerosene, but either will work for this particular task. I keep a small quantity of it with a tight fitting lid to prevent vapors from escaping into the work area. I keep the material I use for an initial rinse away from the material that I use for a final rinse after proper cleaning. That way I don't contaminate my final rinse with fouled movement grease, ground metal paste, etc. Either way, a toothbrush can be used to help loosen stub-

* Ken Reindel is the owner of Ken's Clock Clinic found at <http://www.kensclockclinic.com>

born surface grease. Excess cleaning fluid is allowed to drip back into the tank, the movement shaken off, then blown dry



Rinsing Movement. (Style 3 Chime Alarm)



Movement after rinse. Note residue.

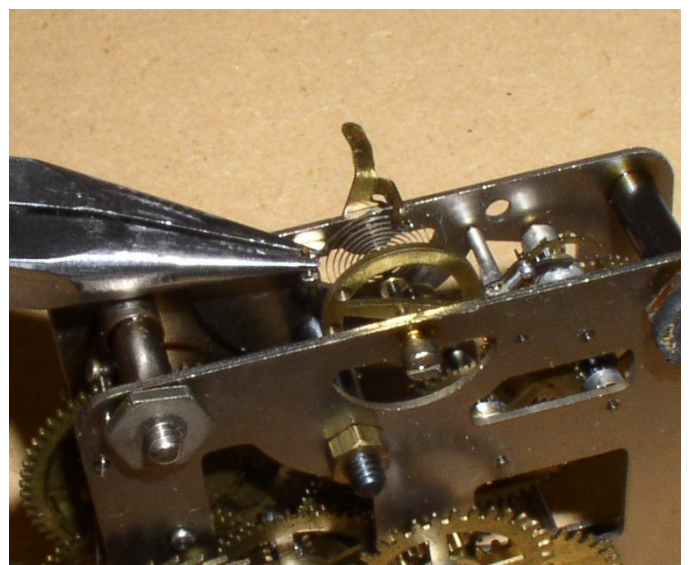
thoroughly with compressed air, and temporarily oiled. The escapement components are put back in, and diagnosis begins.

With most 30 hour alarms, worn holes will likely be obvious around the third wheel pivots most prominently on the side of the plate closest to the pinion. These are the most severely worn of any pivots normally, but by no means the only worn pivot holes. Main wheel holes are often worn as well. Rebushing main wheel holes on alarm movements or inside barrels presents a challenge that we'll cover in the next ar-

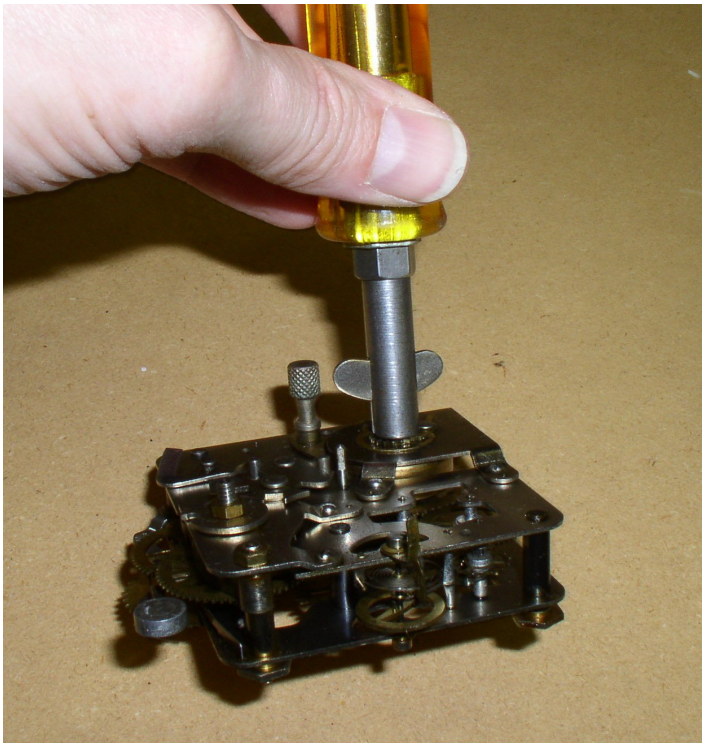
ticle. If a hole is worn oblong even slightly, mark it for repair. If the movement will not run, the problem may be severe wear. ("Severe" means that the hole is worn oversize to more than 25% of the pivot's diameter.) I personally avoid the practice of scratching notes and arrows into the plates to mark the bad pivots. I much prefer a separate piece of paper carefully annotating where the work must be focused. Any time you encounter a severely worn pivot hole, make a note to inspect the corresponding pivot carefully once disassembled.

If you are able to identify the major problems with the movement at this point, then mission accomplished. Keep in mind that there may be more than one problem interfering with the clock's function (time or alarm). Examining for wear between the plates is next, but this will require a full tear down.

The first step in disassembling an alarm movement is to remove the balance wheel and hairspring. This is the most delicate assembly in the movement. Let's get it out of the way and in a safe place before proceeding further. To do this, remove the retaining pin with a pair of needle nosed pliers. Be careful that the pliers don't slip and smash the delicate hairspring. Sometimes it helps to lever the nose of the pliers against a nearby pillar and "rock" the pin out. If the hairspring is glued, you can usually remove the hairspring by grasping it with tweezers right at the base of the retaining stud, and gently prying it loose. We'll deal with gluing this hairspring back in place later. Thread the hairspring out of the rate adjust lever. Loosen the lower cup on the balance wheel a few turns and the balance wheel should now lift right out of the movement. Put it in a safe place.



Removing Hairspring Pin (Style 3 Chime Alarm)



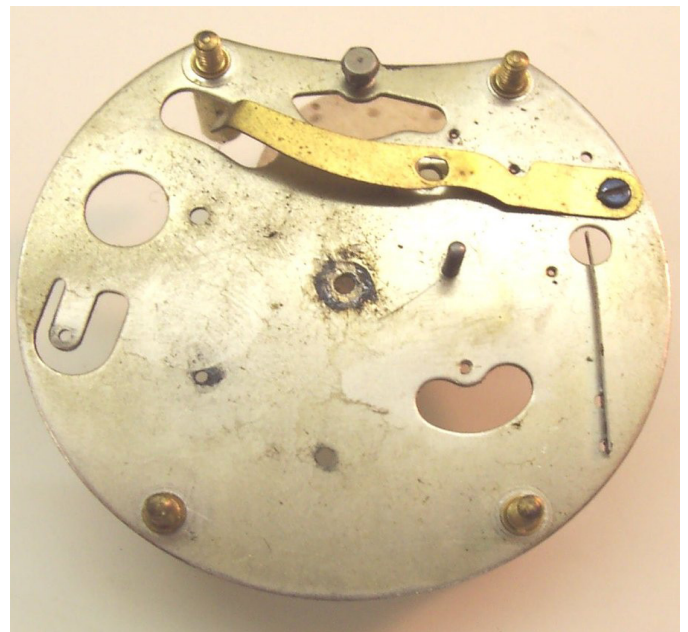
Let Down Key in Use

Before proceeding further with the disassembly of any clock movement, it is important to let down the mainsprings FULLY! NEVER remove the plate retaining nuts, screws or pins with the springs wound up. Severe damage to the movement can and WILL result. The best way to do this is with a let-down key (available from Timesavers as #10075 and mates with handle #10076). This tool fits over most every alarm clock key and assures safe let down of spring tension. This process is shown below left. If the mainsprings are not in a barrel, you can use miniature spring clamps so that the spring doesn't let down to full size while still in the movement. This avoids surprises when the plates are separated—like broken pivots and cut fingers. If the mainsprings are in a barrel, then it is advisable to use a mainspring winder to remove the springs from the barrels. While this might seem unnecessary with the strength of these springs being minimal, unwinding by hand will always result in distortion to the mainsprings. This distortion can detract from the mainspring power as its edges are forced against the upper wall of the barrel while the clock is run.

On the left below we see the movement disassembled into pieces. When we clean the movement, we prefer to associate like parts. The alarm components are kept in a cleaning basket, the time train components in another, mainsprings and barrels in yet another etc.



Image below shows it's important to note that we are seeing some signs of trouble already. The pre-cleaning did not get at the grease and oil underneath the cannon pinion. The



black residue around the center wheel hole is telltale of a possibly worn bushing. Below is an enlarged image of the center and third wheel holes.

This great article will be continued in the next newsletter!