

# The Howard Banta Alarm Clock Chapter



Chapter 178 of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors

www.acc178.org

March 2017

## President's Message

### "Get The Word Out"

In this Newsletter you will see an article by a very new member named Chris Johnson. I met Chris at The Sacramento Valley Chapter 71 about 2 months ago. In the conversations we had I mentioned that I was in the Alarm Clock Chapter.

To my surprise he said he collected alarm clocks. I sent him a few newsletters and the link to the website and he immediately had questions and was interested in joining. I asked how long he had been collecting and he said for a few years. Then I asked if he had many alarm clocks. To my surprise he said "over a hundred"...Later in the month he sent me pictures of an alarm clock that he had that was very unusual and wanted to know something about it. I do not know everything about alarm clocks but did find some information and pictures from a catalog of the clock. This turned out to be the article that he contributed in this issue. He now wears his HBACC pin proudly. Thank you Chris.

This meeting was just by chance. That being said, I keep wondering after that on how we could inform more people of the Howard Banta Alarm Clock Chapter. There are fewer Conventions to display alarm clocks and promote the Chapter. Apparently new members for this Chapter find out about it the way Chris found out. Through "word of mouth"...

There must be a better way to get the word out. Well, about a month ago Mike Wilson sent me an email from one of our long time members. This member suggested that The Alarm Clock Chapter start a FACEBOOK page. Not being a Facebook person I would not know what to do. I am asking the membership to chime in on this idea and either let me know your thoughts about this idea or what we have to do to initiate a FACEBOOK page for the Chapter. Also, if there is any other way to "get the word out" about one of the best Chapters in the NAWCC.

Please feel free to email or phone me with your thoughts. You can contact me at:

[phylathome@hotmail.com](mailto:phylathome@hotmail.com) or call me here in Sacramento at 916-952-4961.

I'll be waiting for your calls or you emails.....

Vince

## EDITOR'S NOTE

I want to thank Tammie Sloup, the Editor of the Starved Rock County (Illinois) magazine who gave us permission to reprint the articles on the Westclox Museum and the short Westclox. history written by Steve Stout. I also want to personally thank our member Pat Dowd for making me aware of this article and giving me contact information to the publication.

The article and pictures on the New Haven dual alarm clock was sent by new member Chris Johnson. As I always say we need your help or there will be no newsletter

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Page 1** President's Message
- Page 2-5** An Unusual New Haven dual alarm Clock
- Page 6** Article on the new Westclox Museum
- Page 7-8** A short history of the Westclox company
- Page 9** Membership renewal form

**EDITOR'S.** Please take a few minutes and send pictures and written material to me at [rlink3@juno.com](mailto:rlink3@juno.com) or Vince Angell at [phylathome@hotmail.com](mailto:phylathome@hotmail.com)

## **WITH OUT YOUR HELP THERE WILL BE NO NEWSLETTER**

So please give some consideration to sending material with or without pictures.to

[rlink3@juno.com](mailto:rlink3@juno.com), by phone at 951-898-5825

or mail at:

Chapter 178  
7186 Calico Circle  
Corona, Ca. 92881

## New Alarm Clock from New Member

By Chris Johnson

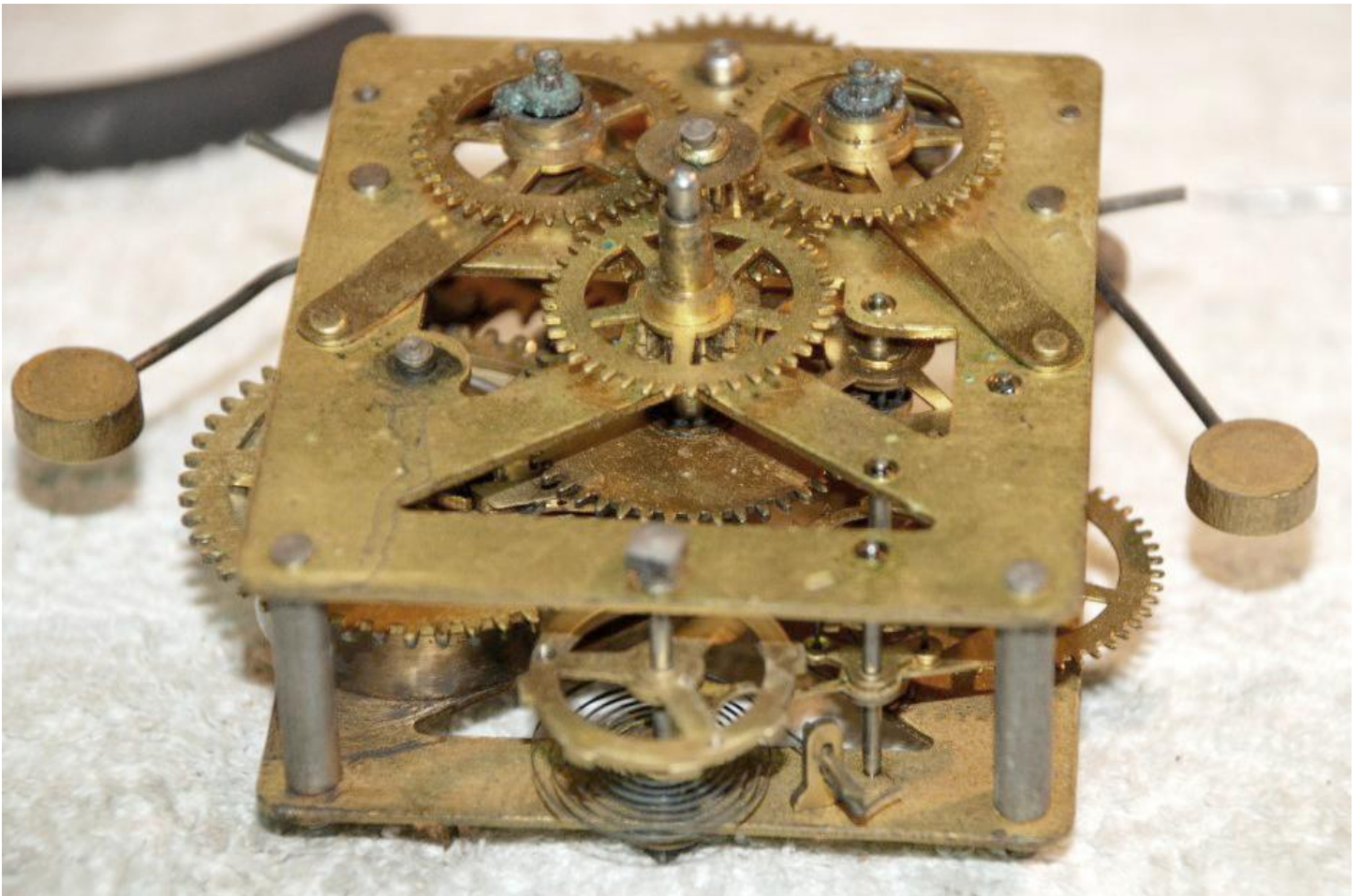
I have only been involved with alarm clock collecting for a few years. I found this rather unusual one on eBay a while back that I would like to share with other members.

I have enclosed a few pictures of a New Haven model labeled the Recall. As you can see it has two alarm settings. Very handy if for instance you have to get up at six and your wife gets up at seven and you don't want to have to be responsible for resetting the alarm. There are also separate on/off switches on the top of the case.

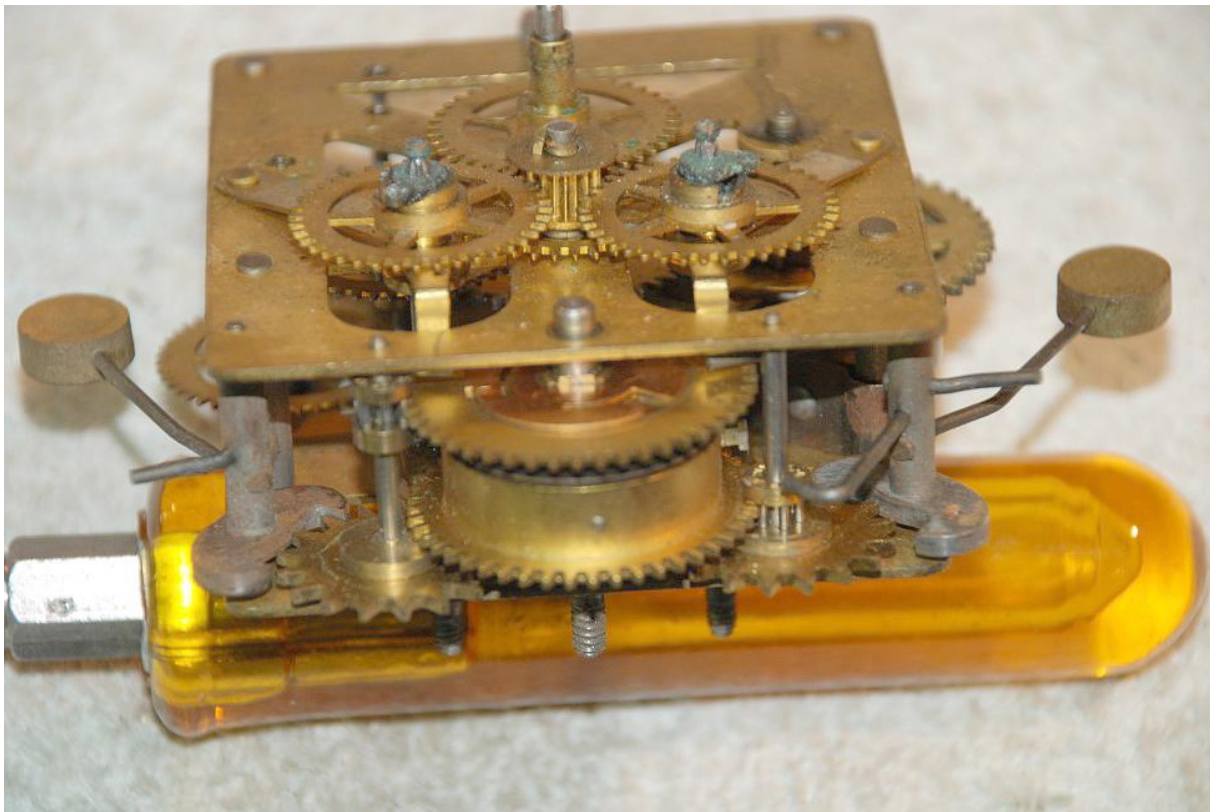
I got it cleaned up and running and both alarms work although not entirely accurately. (Give or take 10 minutes). I probably should have replaced the springs as it only wants to run about six hours.

It wasn't listed in my Tran DuLuy's New Haven book but thanks to Vince Angell's research we have this old advertisement. If anyone has any information on production numbers for this particular clock I would be interested to know.

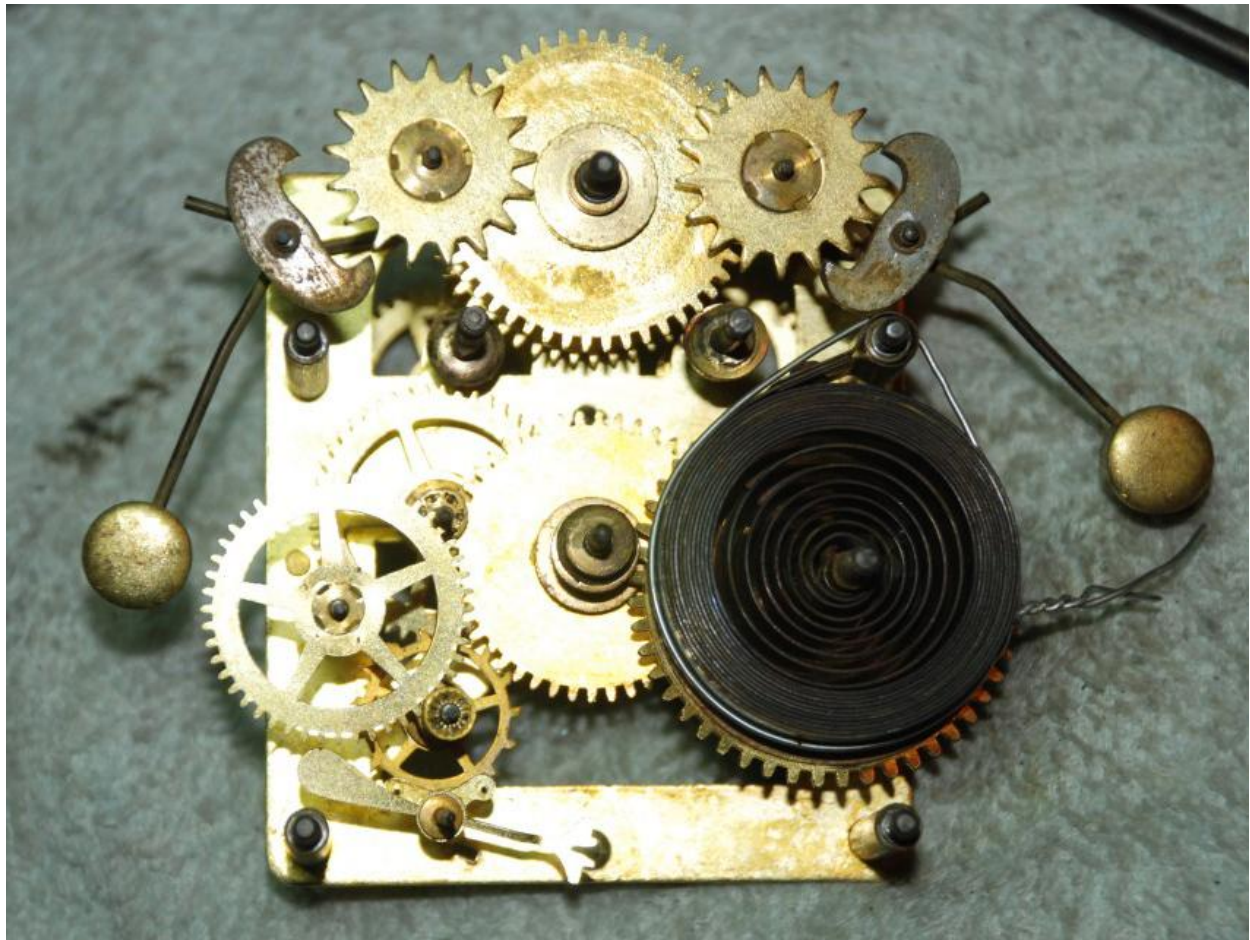
It is great to now be a member of the Alarm Clock Chapter where we can share ideas and information about some of the most interesting clocks that are available today...Hope you enjoy the pictures and will send any information or comments to me at: [mysterydriver@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mysterydriver@sbcglobal.net)







**NOTE THE TWO ALARM WORKS**









## Re-Call

The Re-Call Has Two Alarm Dials; Each Alarm Operates Independently of the Other; they Serve as Two Separate Alarm Clocks; the "First Alarm" Should Always be Set to Ring the first Call, the Same as an Ordinary Clock; then Set the "Second Alarm" the Same Way, which May be Minutes or Hours Later; in Both Dials the Alarm Hands indicate the Time the Alarms will "Go Off."

Height 7 inches;  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inch Dial; Seamless Brass Case.

Each

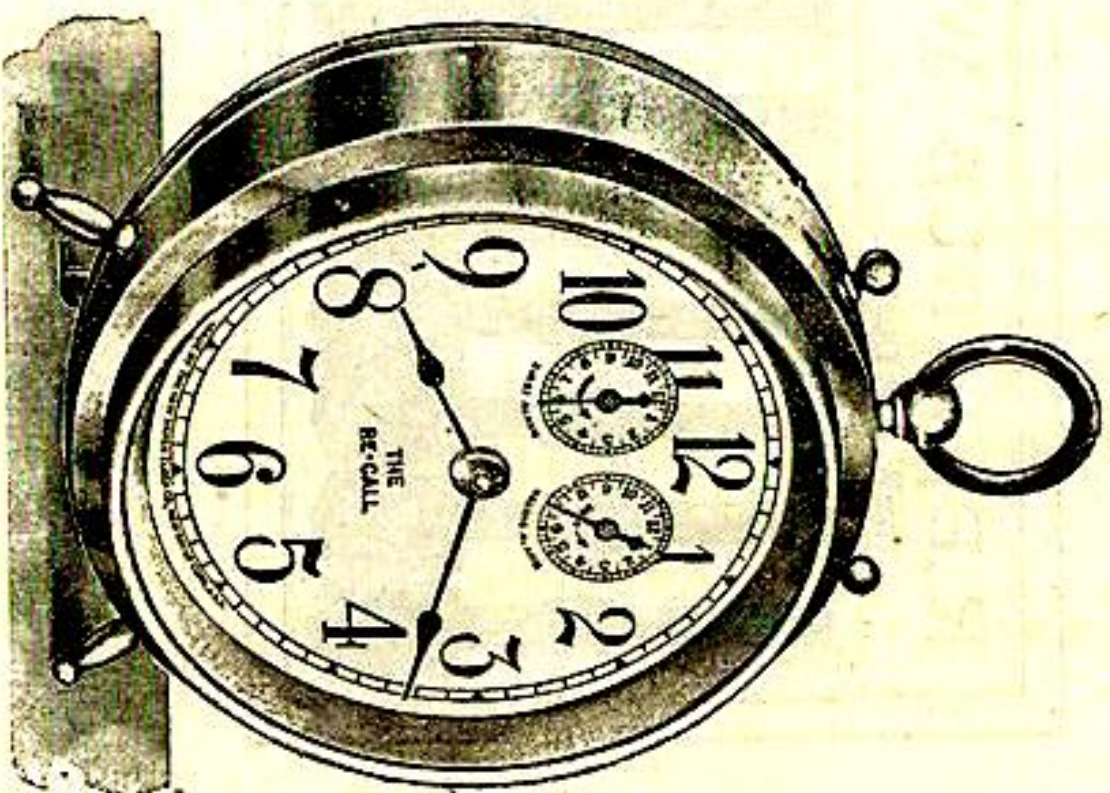
No. RC—Recall; Nickel

Plated; Weight per

Case 90 lbs. . . . . \$4.10

One in a Box; 24 in a Case

(Made by the New Haven Clock Co.)



## TIME STANDS STILL AT WESTCLOX MUSEUM

**Byline:** Steve Stout

**Credit:** steves@mywebtimes.com

**Pub Date:** 11/05/2016

Hundreds of clocks and watches of all shapes and sizes line the walls and dozens of displays at the Westclox Museum. However, the museum, which is located in the heart of Starved Rock Country inside the former clock factory near the city borders of La Salle and Peru, is more about the people, the thousands of "Westcloxers" who worked there than the millions of timepieces they produced.

"Despite the fact that there was so many of us working here — some 4,600 at our peak — we were really and always a family," explained Don Spayer, a former employee employed as a machinist and supervisor from 1963 to 1980. "We were our own community with husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, working in various departments, eating in the company's restaurant and later, the cafeteria, going to parties, activities like that. We had our own fire department, baseball teams, and there was even a bowling alley in the complex. It was such a great place to work."

Spayer, 77, who now regularly volunteers in the museum with his wife, Ruth, said he remembers how well the company took care of its employees. "Westclox was one of the first factories which paid women and men the same wage for the same job," he said, citing the documented fact emblazoned on the museum's brochure that noted the company was "a leader in safety, cleanliness and employee benefits which fostered long-term employee loyalty."

Don said, when he retired from Westclox in 1980, he thought that would be the end of his Westclox days. "I had tears in my eyes when I left. But here I am 36 years later, back at the plant," he said, laughing. "At one time, the factory was important to the community when it was in operation and now this collection is." "We love spending time here at the museum," said Ruth. "We hear so many stories from visitors who had relatives work here and we're hearing more and more every week." From wall to ceiling the museum is covered with clocks, advertising, watches, machinery and historical photographs.

The museum was the idea of Michael Wollack, who had grandparents who worked in the factory. Wollack, who works for Premier Products, the company that owns the massive brick building, talked his superiors into donating space for the museum a few years ago. The building is now on the National Register of Historic Places. "I felt the history of this famous factory — and the story of the many thousands of people who worked here— should be told," he said. "In the almost two years since we've opened, we have created a place where the locals can learn more about their history and out-of-towners can see how important this place was to American (industrial) history." "We're getting donations of clocks and other items every week now, so we're continuing to grow," said Don. "And, to me, many of these in the collections are pieces of art such as our Big Ben clock collection, which changed the way the world woke up." Ruth agreed and said, "You never know what you might find here in the Westclox Museum.

"GO INFO HERE:

350 Fifth St., Suite 265

Peru

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday, Wednesday Friday; 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday

MORE INFO: [facebook.com/westcloxmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/westcloxmuseum)

Check out their website at [www.westcloxmuseum.com](http://www.westcloxmuseum.com)

## WESTCLOX CHANGED THE WAY THE WORLD WOKE UP

The nearly century-long history of Westclox began in 1885 with the arrival of Charles Stallberg, a brilliant German mechanic who moved to Central Illinois from Waterbury, Conn., with little working capital, but with a revolutionary idea for assembling accurate, low-priced clock workings.

Stallberg, realizing that broken springs from owners winding clocks too tight were the biggest problem with timepieces of that era, he found a simple solution by designing a spring assembly mechanism that was easily replaceable with just a few screws. He also designed inner workings that could be mass produced instead of each individual part being hand-tooled as was done by traditional clock makers of his day.

Gathering local financing, Stallberg hired unskilled workers who learned to quickly produce up to 50 wind-up alarm clocks per day. These unique timepieces were delivered to a handful of stores in and around the Illinois Valley where they were sold or given away by businesses to valued customers as sales premiums.

The unique process proved to be an immediate success, but unfortunately, the young country and its inexperienced owner faltered under poor business practices after only a few years. Enter local entrepreneur Frederick W. Matthiessen, the legendary Illinois Valley business genius and generous philanthropist who, upon purchasing the small clock company in 1887, supplied the necessary funds to make the business profitable. A man of vision and distinction, Matthiessen was convinced that a huge market was waiting for the unique timepieces. The industrialist handpicked a management team and, under a new name, The Western Clock Company, began producing solid, reliable windup clocks that gained popularity through a smart marketing strategy. The business grew rapidly and soon became the world's largest manufacturers of affordable alarm clocks for many decades.

Its most famous product, Big Ben, proved to change the time industry forever. In fact, it changed the way the world woke up, retailing for \$2.50, giving low income families — for the first time — an inexpensive, dependable clock for their homes. The company, which evolved into the world-famous Westclox, grew to employ thousands of men and women who produced, at one point in the 1940s, an astounding 36,000 timepieces (clocks, watches, timers, military fuses) per day. The company, which produced timepieces up into the digital age, closed permanently in February 1980.





UNDATED PHOTO OF THE WESTCLOX FACTORY

In the early morning of January 1, 2012, a fire broke out at the Westclox compound in Peru, IL. The fire destroyed about 50% of the structure. Two teens were charged with aggravated arson; Steven M. Gallacher (then 17) of LaSalle, IL, and an unidentified minor (then 16). The fire required firefighters and police from 20 surrounding municipalities to extinguish. One firefighter, LaSalle fireman Steve Smith, sustained a career-ending injury when a fire hose attached to a hydrant popped loose and the metal coupling on the end hit him in the leg. Gallacher was convicted of aggravated arson on October 11, 2012, with a sentence of 6-30 years without the possibility of probation. Gallacher's sentence of aggravated arson was the direct result of the fire plus Smith's injury.

Possibly the most recognizable Alarm clock ever produced





# 2017 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

## THE HOWARD BANTA ALARM CLOCK CHAPTER #178 OF THE NAWCC

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_

NAWCC # \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK BOX IF INFORMATION HAS CHANGED.

PLEASE MAKE OUT A CHECK to "The Howard Banta Alarm Clock Chapter #178"  
FOR \$15.00 FOR ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP.

MAIL TO:

The HOWARD BANTA ALARM CLOCK CHAPTER # 178  
c/o Mike Wilson Secretary/Treasurer  
15508 East Chaparral Way  
Fountain Hills, Arizona 85268

Phone: 480-816-6483

**Fax: 480-836-8766**

Email: [mike@oldephotog.com](mailto:mike@oldephotog.com)