



LAST MEETING & NEWSLETTER OF 2009

As we wrap up another year I look back at our chapter's progress and can say, without hesitation, that it has been another banner year.

Our fledgling group received the coveted "Chapter of the Year" award. Our membership is continuing to grow, while most service organizations are dwindling. Two long standing NAWCC chapters filed to dissolve their charters this year. Why are we different? I have pondered this question for some time and I think that the answer is simply: our members believe in our mission and care about each other.

It has been said that "It takes a village to raise a child". The same is true for organizations like ours. Just about every member we have has contributed in some way over the past year. Some have dedicated an enormous amount of time and effort to keep this organization growing and fun. I can't list everyone that has helped (the newsletter isn't big enough), but I can mention a few that have gone beyond the line.

It starts at the top. Our president, **Mike Schmidt**, saw the need for clock and watch collectors, in the Ventura/Santa Barbara area, to be able to get together, so he set out to form a new NAWCC chapter. Not being one to rest on his laurels, Mike continued to work on improving the chapter. He not only works on 190 but also on the national level.

Not a week goes by without Mike calling me. It usually starts like this: "Hi Ken, I've been thinking and". As soon as I hear this, I find a comfortable chair because I know Mike is about to present a new idea or project.

We have a very good website that keeps us in touch with our membership and the rest of the world. **Dave Coatsworth** is the driving force behind this. Dave created it and maintains it. He not only does 190's website, but he also does chapter 75's and GLAR's. That is a lot of work, and he does it free of charge.

The excellent photos of our meetings that I use in the newsletter are furnished by **Bill Robinson**. He not only takes them every week, he adjusts them in Photoshop to my specifications. This allows me to just drop them in, saving me a lot of time. (The January issue of Chrono Times is going to showcase Bills work in a pictorial review of 2009.)

Speaking of the newsletter, it wouldn't be what it is without our contributing authors. Here is a list of some member authors: **Robert Gary, Paul Skeels, Ferdinand Geitner, Bill Robinson, Dave Coatsworth, George Gaglini, Henri Bonnet, Gary Girrod, Mike Schmidt, Jeanette Barcroft, Ray Marsolek, Mostyn Gale, Ernie Jensen, and Dan Weiss.**

As I said before, this newsletter isn't big enough to acknowledge all of the contributors to chapter 190's success. We thank all of the people that present the live programs every month, the members who bring clocks and watches for show & tell, the sellers, the ladies that greet members and collect the fees, our hospitality crew who provides the excellent lunch, the volunteers that help with our community projects, the members who help with our annual mart, and the list goes on and on.

We should all be proud to be part of this fine group of people, I know I am. I wish you all a very happy holiday season.
Ken McWilliams, Editor

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

By Mike Schmidt

Happy Holidays to All

This Time of the year is one of reflecting and giving thanks. The support, sharing and goodwill from all the Chapter 190 members and friends once again have been truly inspirational.

To recap some of the highlights for 2009: The NAWCC awarded Ventura County Chapter 190 "Chapter of the Year for 2009". We put forth an outstanding educational program. The chapter sponsored five Field Suitcase Classes, a case repair class, two Sherline lathe classes, and ten early morning meeting workshops. All of these educational opportunities were successful thanks to the efforts of outstanding teachers and coordinators. We had our 2nd Annual Mart at the CAF Air Museum in Camarillo. We produced a professional outstanding newsletter with interesting members written articles, and our website remains tops with new features added on a continuing basis.

As we close out our third year with the last newsletter and meeting of the year, I want to thank the Officers and Directors, newsletter contributors, program presenters, workshop leaders, committee members, and all 113 chapter members who worked, gave of their time or support to make another great year for Chapter 190.

The Show & Tell for the last several months has been outstanding. Thank you all for bringing so many interesting clocks, watches and horological items to share. The topic for this month will be to share a favorite watch or clock and a good story. Of course anything you wish to share is welcome.

See you at the Meeting

Mike



Happy Birthday

November

David Clarkin, Dave Coatsworth,
Ferdinand Geitner, Jim Gilmore, Ernie Jenson

December

Robin Campbell, George Dubois, Dutch Friou,
Gary Girod, Robert Malcomb, Bill Robinson,
Andrew Samuels and Daniel Weiss

Tales From the Bench

by Ferdinand Geitner

Broken in the middle

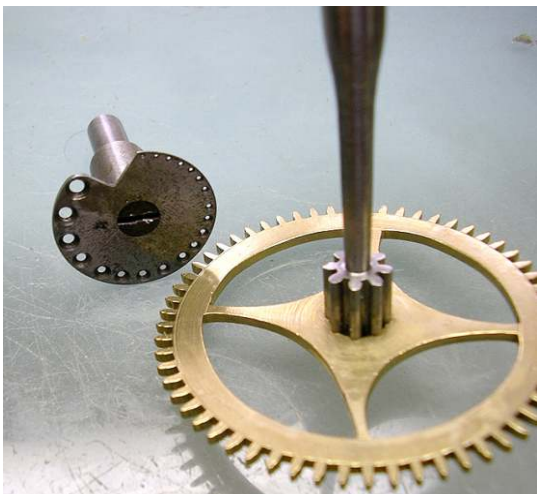
When the customer brought me the movement to his Grandfather clock for repair I noticed immediately that the hands were flopping around and little too loose. After removing the hands and the dial, it was a little disconcerting when the motion work came off with the dial.



When you look at the above picture it is clear why!

The center wheel arbor was broken just above the canon pinion friction spring. There is a small step with two flats that fit the hole in the friction spring so it does not turn with the canon pinion, providing more friction.

Being a 150 to 200 year old clock no replacement parts are available so the best (and only) choice is to replace the missing piece. Also, the Rule of Conservation is to just repair or replace the minimum that is necessary to make a functioning antique object, and this must be adhered to.



The next step is to drill a hole in the center wheel arbor. It must be “exactly” centered, which is not an easy feat as the center wheel is not easily mounted in the lathe. One can put the pivot in a chuck or mount the wheel in a step chuck but the other end, which needs to be drilled, is another story. It must be constrained and not allowed to move.

The largest hole in the eccentric pivoting disc on my lathe was not big enough to handle this (see previous photo), so I decided to make a custom one for this job.



As you can see from the above photos, it is quite time consuming to make the new holder, but it makes the overall job easier and very professional.



The end result speaks for itself. Sometimes one has to make special tools just for a specific job to achieve the desired result.

THE NEW CHALLENGES OF CLOCK REPAIR

by Ken McWilliams

Antique clock repair is becoming more challenging every day. When you have a clock that has been around for a hundred years or more, it has seen its share of repairmen. Many of them don't deserve to be called clock repairmen. Bad repairs are no longer the exception they are becoming the rule. So far this year, I have repaired or assisted in the repair of about 150 clocks. The majority of them showed evidence of poor to unbelievable repair practices.

A good clock repair person has always had to be the master of many crafts. Besides understanding hundreds of variations of mechanical clocks they also had to be a Metallurgist, Machinist, Artist, Woodworker, Historian, and Chemist. Now we can add one more category, a Columbo.

Yes, I'm talking about the detective from the TV show, "Columbo". You will find yourself spending more and more time trying to figure out how the previous repairman killed the clock.

Sometimes it is very obvious, but often it is not. This year alone, I have found three escape wheels that were running backwards, two American strip pallet escapements and one German Graham deadbeat escapement. The escape wheels were obviously replaced and inadvertently (I assume), mounted backwards. The amazing thing is that all three actually ran! They didn't run very reliably but they would sometimes run for a day or two before stopping.

The first one that I encountered really had me puzzled. Overall the movement didn't look all that bad, a marginal bushing which I replaced, normal cleaning, polish pivots assemble and test. Nothing to suggest the erratic behavior that the owner described.

It was during the test phase that I began to get a sense that something wasn't quite right. I couldn't keep it in beat. I was using my Microset Timer and the beat error would vary randomly from 2% to 60%. Normally when I see this it is due to the tips of the escape wheel teeth being bent or burred, eccentric wheel or bad bushings. These all looked fine.

I decided to connect the Microset to my computer and plot a dozen or so revolutions of the escape wheel, looking at one tooth at a time. The results showed that it was slightly eccentric, certainly well within tolerance, but the tooth to tooth error was dramatic and void of any pattern, random, just like the beat error.

I rechecked the bushings and end shake. No problems. Next I removed the escape wheel and mounted it onto a programmable rotary table, programmed it for 32 teeth, and checked each tooth using a microscope with a measuring reticle. They all looked good.

It was around this point that I began to consider finding an easier way to spend my time, like maybe rocket science or brain surgery.

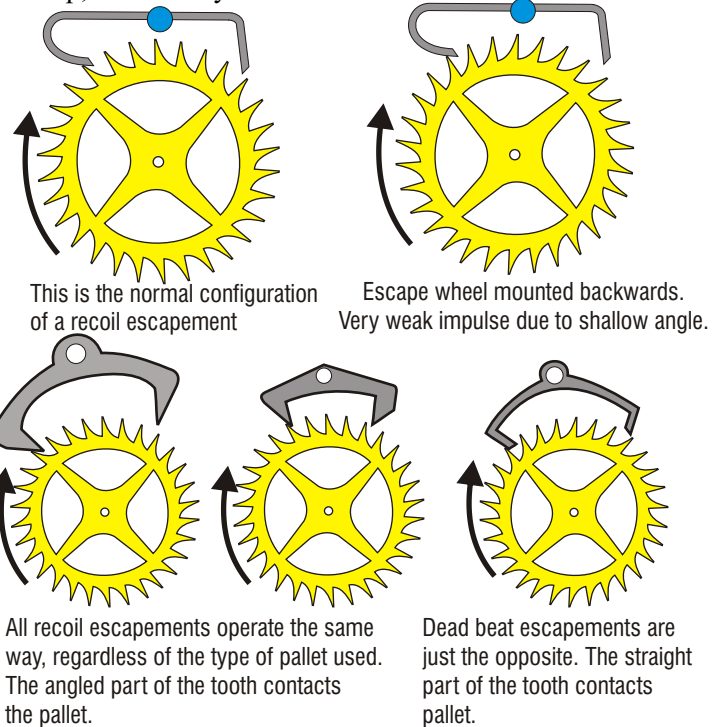
I again assembled the movement and while I was watching the hypnotic action of the escapement, half hoping that it would put me to sleep and temporarily relieve me of this beast, I suddenly realized that the wheel was turning backwards. I couldn't believe it at first, but sure enough that's what it was doing.

Again, I removed the escape wheel, chucked it up in my lathe, and took a few thousandths off the escape wheel hub to

free the wheel, flipped it, put it back on the hub and re-staked it. I checked the for concentricity and cleaned it.

Now the moment of truth. After reassembling the movement and setting the lock and drop, I set the pendulum in motion and connected the Microset. After making a few small adjustments the beat error held at a steady 1% to 4%. Problem solved.

Normally, after solving a baffling problem I have a feeling of satisfaction, but not this time. It bothered me that it took me so long to notice such a basic error like this. I also wondered how many others like this I may have missed? Now that I am sensitized to it, I look at all escapements a little differently. I no longer assume that anything is as it was when it left the factory. My routine now is: when I check the lock and drop, I also verify direction.



In a seven month period after that one, I found two more escape wheels assembled backwards. (Two of the three were from a clock repair shop that had been in business for 35 years.)

Another one that contributed to some grey hairs was a German movement that the owner said behaved strangely since it was last repaired. (Six years earlier.) She just put up with it. The time train ran fine but the strike side would sometimes go for days without striking at all and other times it would add or subtract an hour. I assumed that it was going to be a marginal power problem and the gathering pallet was stalling.

The movement was in good shape, no appreciable wear. I did notice that the hammer was on the rise and this is a big no no for these movements. Since six years had passed, I decided to do a complete overhaul. Everything looked good, assembled it and put it on a test stand.

It ran fine, struck correctly and I assumed that I was done with it and went on to my next project.

About three hours later, I noticed that it was five minutes after the hour and I hadn't heard it strike. I checked it and, sure enough the rack was down and the gathering pallet had barely moved. I gave it a little help and away it went. I also

noticed that the hammer was on the rise again.

Now, it just isn't like me to overlook something this basic but there it was.

I made the necessary adjustments and set it up again. I put it in beat and double checked to make sure that the hammer was not on the rise. Everything ran great, for about three and a half hours. Same as before, rack down, gathering pallet stalled and hammer on the rise. Obviously, I must have a loose wheel somewhere that is allowing it to get out of sync. (No comments please.) Note: The strike pins are not on the same arbor as the gathering pallet as most regulators are.

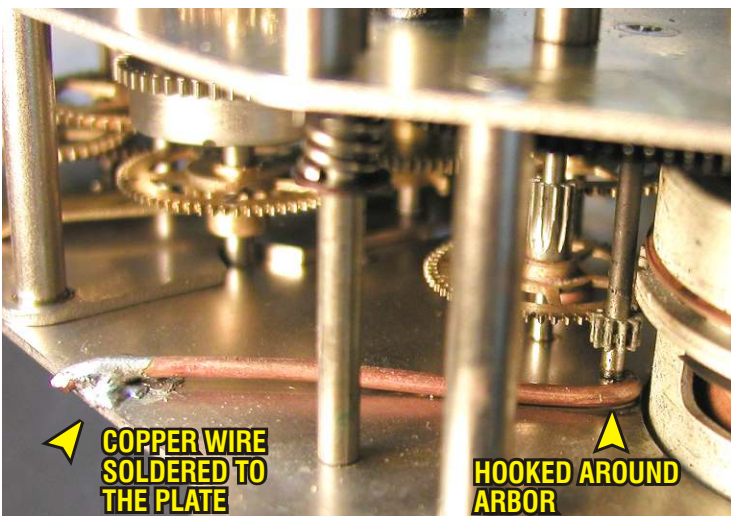
Well, to keep this short, there weren't any loose wheels or pinions. The previous repairman had replaced a wheel but his replacement had two more teeth than the original. This caused the hammer lifting pins to be in a different place every time it struck. How did I discover this? I ended up counting the teeth and leaves for the whole strike train and doing the math. Another case where you just don't expect to find something like this. The extra teeth caused a tighter gear mesh, robbing power, and when the strike train had to start with the hammer partly lifted, it wasn't able to.

They aren't all hidden problems like these, some are really blatant and tend to make you doubt your eyesight when you first see them.

Here is one that a member recently brought to me for repair. It belonged to his neighbor and he wasn't comfortable taking on a complicated electric/mechanical chime clock like this one.

It is a Seth Thomas Falbury 2E, chime & strike, with a Sangamo motor (1939). The time is driven directly by the electric motor, but the time & strike trains are spring driven with the springs being wound by the motor. It is an interesting movement and if you ever run across one, at a good price, it is well worth getting just to learn how it works.

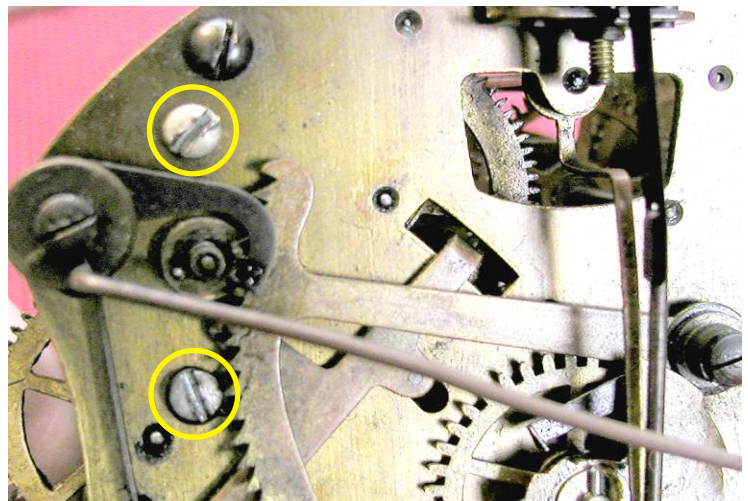
When I removed the movement from the case this is



what I found.

The pivot had worn the plate and to get the arbor back to where it belonged, some enterprising repairman took a piece of heavy copper wire, made a hook on one end, put it around the arbor, pulled it back to where it belonged and soldered the other end to the plate. Can you believe it? Yuk!

Here is a similar one from a very nice Waterbury open escapement movement. The gathering pallet pivot had worn the plate and another inventive repairman found a similar way



to "fix" the problem.

The two screws circled in yellow were not part of the original movement. On the other side of the plate is a strip of brass that has been cut and filed to fit around the gathering pallet arbor and return it to its original location. It was tapped to accept the screws that hold it in place. I could have put in 10 bushings in the time that it took him to make these parts.

This guy also believed that by putting some oil into a bucket of kerosine you could clean and lubricate the movement all at once. (As you can see by the grime.)

We have all seen the "Helper springs" that repairman have added to levers and arbors to "assist gravity." These are used because they did not do a good job of repairing the movement. The original clock most assuredly never left the factory with them.

One of my students brought a Gilbert bim bam to class that he had bought at a flea market. It must have had ten feet of wire in it. Every lever had helper springs. Some of the pivots were worn so the repairman just wrapped some wire around the arbor and pulled the other end of the wire through some holes he had made in the plate.

When we finished overhauling the Gilbert it had no wire, ran fine and was a lot lighter.

The purpose of all this is to alert you to the fact that you will be seeing the results of a lot of unskilled people attempting to repair clocks. You will have to become a good detective to keep from expending excessive time on some of these. Listen to the owner's complaint and ask questions. Learn as much as you can about the problem and the previous repairs. Spend a little extra time carefully going over the entire clock when you get it on your workbench. Don't just concentrate on the area where you think the problem lies.

Lastly, but most importantly, **Do not become one of these bad repairmen!** If you are unsure about how to make a particular repair, seek out some help from someone that does. Our chapter has many knowledgeable repair people that will be more than happy to give you some guidance.

Half our life is spent trying to find something to do with the time we have rushed through life trying to save. Will Rogers

I'm a great believer in luck and I find that the harder I work, the more I have of it. Thomas Jefferson

Opportunity is missed by most because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work. Thomas Edison

Southwest California Regional

Nov 20 (Fri) NAWCC Members only

Nov 21 (Sat) Open to the General Public

Del Mar Fairgrounds (Wyland Center)

For more info, visit the website: www.nawcc59.org



Dave Weisbart, from chapter 69, presented October's program. It was a video horological documentary of his recent vacation to Vienna & Prague.

THE FLYING BALL PENDULUM CLOCK

by Ken McWilliams

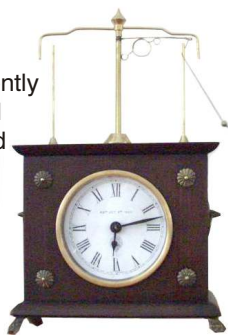
Have you ever seen these fascinating little clocks? They can be seen trying to run at just about every regional and national mart. The *Ignatz* or 'flying ball pendulum' clock was supposed to be a superior form of "escapement less" clock when it was invented in 1880, but it fell far short of its promised performance. The Horolovar-built replica from the 1960s does well if it can keep itself accurate to within 5 minutes an hour! Still, it's fun to watch. I understand that the originals were made and sold only to jewelry store owners to use as attention-getting window displays, hence their rarity today.

The Horolovar reproduction of the original Flying Pendulum Clock has been on the market since 1960. Over 50,000 have been sold in almost every country in the world. The flying pendulum clock is not as accurate a regulator as the conventional pendulum. It is, in fact, impossible to regulate. The Horolovar Flying Pendulum Clock, known as "The Craziest Clock in the World", has two interesting promotional features:

1. The clock is guaranteed *not* to keep time and
2. It is the only clock ever made that runs faster as it runs down.



An original (left) that recently sold for \$2650.00 and a copy (right) that sold for \$129.00 on ebay.



Welcome New Members

Barbara "Barb" Barnes and her
Father Lee Wade from Hemet,
Gene and Jan Corriden
from Santa Cruz



The next Meeting & Mart for Chapter 190 is November 15, 2009

Sellers may start setting up at 11:30

The Mart is open from 12:00 til 1:15

The Meeting starts at 1:15

PROGRAM

"Standard Electric Time Co."

Presented by Alan Bloore (From Chapter 133)

Here is a good opportunity to learn about electric clocks

SHOW & TELL

"Bring a watch or clock with a good story"

CHAPTER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Wristwatch Collectors- Many NAWCC members keep asking me for a series of workshops on wristwatch repair. A dialog has begun with 7 interested members and the NAWCC education committee. If you are interested in repair classes or a dialog, send me an email. EagleCreekClocks@msn.com

FSW 101- (Beginning Clock Repair) Introduction to Basic Time and Strike March 12-15
Coordinator -Ken Young 818 353-0918 email krybob@hotmail.com



This month's Mini-Workshop will be

An open workshop.

**Any subject is open for discussion,
any clock, watch or tool may be brought.**

*This is an open forum workshop and will be an
excellent opportunity to learn and share knowledge.*

Ferdinand Geitner will be the moderator

The workshop begins at 10:30 am. Free to members

CLASSIFIED PAGE

This page is dedicated to advertising for Chapter 190 members. It is, of course, free to members.

SERVICES OFFERED

The Montecito Clock Gallery

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Monday through Saturday 10:00 to 6:00 pm.

Tel. 805-650-8800

FOR SALE

WATCH REPAIR TOOLS & MORE!

I will have a huge selection of watch repair
tools and other items from my latest estate
buy at the Chapter 190 meeting.

Dave Coatsworth

dave@daveswatchparts.com

WANTED

URGENTLY NEEDED, VISIBLE ESCAPEMENT MOVEMENT

French type-platform escapement (no pendulum)
Winding hole spacing of 38.9 mm, (1.53")
Repairable, other details available on request.
Bob Reichel, welchdoc@yahoo.com **Ph: 1-206-364-7374**

NEW

- SALEM CLOCK PART -

Need a warning wheel for a 3" diameter Salem ship's
strike movement. I might be willing to buy an entire
working movement or something in between.

Please contact:

Virginia Norwood **Tel: 310 455-3028**

Antique French 2 or 3 dial calendar clocks.
Antique English 2 or 3 gear-train skeleton clock.

Loren Miller, **Pacific Coast Clocks**

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Located in Firehouse Plaza (Main St. & Telephone Rd.)

Tel. 805-650-8800

We are in the Market for an Ansonia
"Admiral" crystal regulator.

Chapter 190 members Gary & Joan Benoit
clockworksunltd@sbcglobal.net

- Chronometer -

Hamilton 21 Marine Chronometer in running condition, with
inner box and gimbals; outer box not essential.

Please contact: Giorgio Perissinotto
E-mail: giorgio@spanport.ucsb.edu

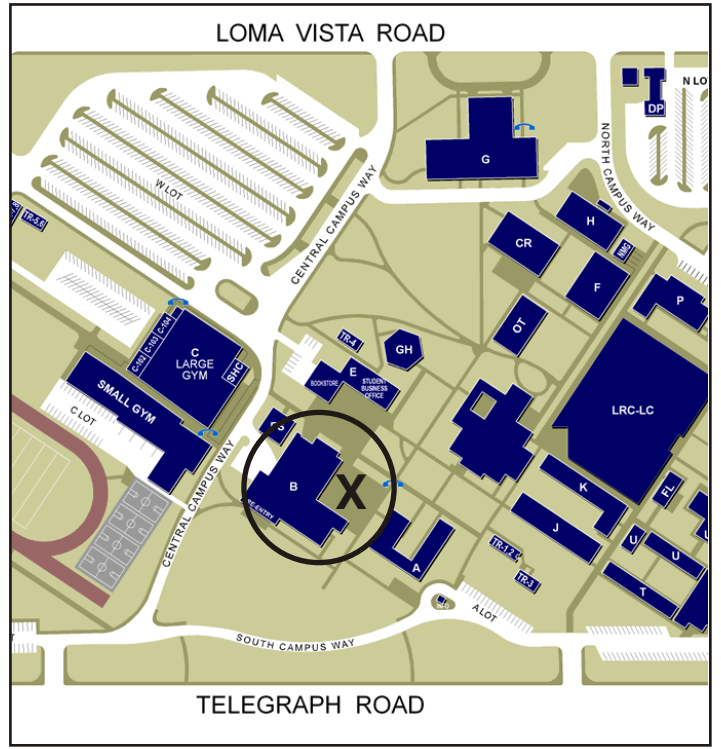
- Watch Repair Tools -

I'm just starting out and need just about everything.
I would prefer to purchase an entire collection of old
watchmaker's tools.

Please contact:

David Clarkin **Tel: 805-988-4384**

**The Chapter 190 meetings are held the third Sunday of each month. (No meeting in December)
 We will meet in the cafeteria on the Ventura College campus. The cafeteria is located in building "B", east of the gym and athletic field.**



Hope to see you there!

November 2009 Issue

NOV 15
NEXT MEETING

Chrono Times
 If Undeliverable return To:
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 Northridge, CA 91325