



## A Bargain Price for a Lip Watch

by Ernie Jensen

In the early seventies, France was having serious labor union problems. That period in France's history is referred to as "The Social Conflict of the Seventies". There was much Communist influence in the unions and Socialism was a major force in politics. The Lip Watch Factory played a pivotal role in the struggle. Inexpensive watches from Japan and the USA were selling well in Europe and making it difficult for the established, quality watch manufacturers to stay profitable.

Lip, located in Besancon France, was a high quality manufacturer with people like President Dwight Eisenhower, Charles de Gaulle, & Winston Churchill wearing a Lip watch. Because of low sales and excessive inventory, it was decided by the management that it was necessary to restructure and downsize. The union obtained a secret copy of the plans that so infuriated them that they took over the plant by force taking three people hostage, two administrators and one government labor inspector on June 12, 1973.

The three hostages were rescued by the CRS riot police in a violent assault during the night. The workers confiscated the inventory and parts for 65,000 watches and hid them in remote locations as well as the drawings and technical information. The workers then decided to self manage the plant and begin assembling watches from the inventory and selling the days production in the company store the next day. This made popular the slogan "C'est possible: on fabrique, on vend, on se paie!" (It is possible: we make them, we sell them, we pay ourselves!)

The labor unrest in France was big news so this strike was covered in the newspapers in the USA. I read about the strike in the Journal and the selling of the watches at (reportedly) bargain prices.

Since my wife and I were planning a vacation in France within a couple of weeks of the strike, we decided that we should stop at the plant and see about getting a nice watch at a bargain price.

When we arrived at the plant early in the morning, there was a long line of people waiting to get into the company store. We were not sure if that was the line for the company store or an employment line. We couldn't find anyone who could speak English so an employee went and found some one who spoke English. It turned out that the person to speak with us was a Labor Union Organizer from Italy that was assisting with the strike. After a short introduction, he found out that we were from California and might know some of his contacts in Berkeley. There were many people at the University of California who were influential and sympathetic to their cause. At the time we called them radicals but I didn't tell him that. We were then given dignitary treatment and were lead around to a back door and were able to make our selection of watches before those standing in the line were allowed into the showroom. We were given a plant

tour showing their production operation and how united the workers were. There were posters displayed though out the plant made by the employees. One showed a USA bomber flying over the city with the bomb bay door open and they were being bombed with tools, watches, sewing machines, etc. That was a depiction of the USA delivering cheap products to their market and delivering technology to make cheap products to put them out of business.

That was a bit of a cruel depiction using an American bomber as we had accidentally bombed the train station during WWII. We were bombing the rail yards during the Nazi occupation and hit the station killing many people. We had seen the memorial at the railway station to that mistake the day earlier when we



## Officers and Board of Directors

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(805) 988-1764 • EagleCreekClocks@msn.com

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(818) 718-8300 • internut@socal.rr.com

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(805) 525-7325 • plskeelsatty@verizon.net

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E-Mail For Newsletter:  
internut@socal.rr.com

Web Site:

www.nawcc-ch190.com

WEBMASTER

David Coatsworth

dave@biswebdesign.com

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

By Mike Schmidt

Chapter 190 is celebrating its third year; having received our charter September 2006. The Board and Membership support has been responsible for the success of making Chapter 190 a viable and award winning chapter. The programs, newsletter articles, workshops, and show and tell reflect the talents we have in all our NAWCC members. I have great fun by constantly being surprised by the discovery of hidden talents and the contributions of our membership. The most gratifying reflection I can personally make is that all of you have all been willing to share and pass on your knowledge, personal discoveries, and interesting stories when I ask you. Thank you.



The month of September is the official month that your Chapter has elections for Officers and Board members. The nominating committee chaired by George Gaglini has had a fairly easy time with this first official election offered to the membership. This process for elections will occur every two years and is open to all the membership. There are no contested positions for this election. The present Officers and Board members have agreed to remain in place for another two year term except for:

Treasurer- Donna Gaglini will be replaced by Alan Davis. For a period of time you will see Donna working with Alan and Jessica Davis at the meeting entrance.

Donna has done an outstanding job as Treasurer. Donna and Sylvia Griswold have, with their smiles and great attitude, greeted the members and guests, handled the entrance and lunch fees, and most importantly, recruited new membership. Donna has been responsible for maintaining the chapter funds, paying the bills and preparing the monthly/ year to date financial reports. As treasurer and board member Donna also has contributed in the board meetings with many constructive ideas. A special thank you to Donna for a job well done!

Director Bill Robinson will continue to be the Chapter photographer and handle the Audio/Visual, but wishes to no longer serve on the Board. Bill has served on Chapter Boards for decades, having served as an officer or Director in Chapters 52, 75, GLAR, and 190. We thank you for your experience, contribution, and sage advice in the startup and positive direction of Chapter 190.

The Show and Tell for September will be a clock or watch with a story. Many of the treasures in your collections have a story attached to it. It would be great fun if you were to share them. Please share them. Any other watch, clock, or tool would also be fun to share.

See you at the meeting, *Mike*



## Happy Birthday

**Ed Armstrong, Tom Beard, Paul Highfill,  
David Rubright & Norma Zuber**



were looking over the city. After seeing the manufacturing area, we were taken to the magnificent lobby of the plant where a large 100 ft. mural depicting the History of Time greets the visitor. He explained the story of the mural where creatures were evolving, crawling from the ocean; monkeys changing into man and Mr. Lipman, the owner of the plant, standing alongside Einstein delivering us into the future world. This was his example of the Crowning Blow: the big egomaniac that the people had to work for and then explained the terrible working conditions that they had experienced.



On August 11, a military unit forcibly took control of the plant and expelled the workers and returned the company to the owners. There had been serious financial and labor union problems before this incident and nothing changed until the company was forced into liquidation in 1977. There was such labor unrest at Lip and throughout France that a more right-wing government came to power enacting much stricter labor laws. This changed the direction of politics in France and Lip was right in the middle of it all.

The watch that I purchased is a very good quality mechanical watch with a self-winding movement. It has wheels, rather than hands to show the time. It is difficult to read: more a piece of jewelry than a practical watch. The watch is now a collectible item and still runs perfectly. I just found the sales receipt and I paid \$65 for the watch. ■

**If you haven't been to a Chapter 190 meeting, come join us for the best \$5.00 lunch in town!**

**The next Meeting & Mart for Chapter 190 is September 20, 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**

**"How to use a Bergeon Bushing Tool "**

**Presented by George Antinarelli**

**This is an informative program on the bushing clock plates**

**SHOW & TELL**

**"Bring a watch or clock with a story"**

**CHAPTER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Wristwatch Collectors- Many NAWCC members keep asking me about classes or workshops for wristwatches. If you are interested in repair classes, send me an email. If there is enough interest I will work to find instructors and schedule some classes or workshops.

If you are interested in learning clock repair, or know someone who might be interested, we are compiling a list of students for a beginning clock repair class. Contact Mike Schmidt email [EagleCreekClocks@msn.com](mailto:EagleCreekClocks@msn.com)



The pre-meeting workshops have become very popular. Last month's workshop drew 18 members and guests. (See photo above) If you haven't attended one, come a little early to our next meeting and sit in on it. The starting topic is listed below. I say starting topic because it is an open forum and the subject can, and often does, change.



**This month's Mini-Workshop will be "An open workshop with emphasis on Striking and Chiming American/German/Dutch clocks etc."**

**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**

# Tales From the Bench

by Ferdinand Geitner

## What Is It?

What makes this profession so interesting is that you never know, when you wake up in the morning, what interesting watch or clock you will be presented with today.

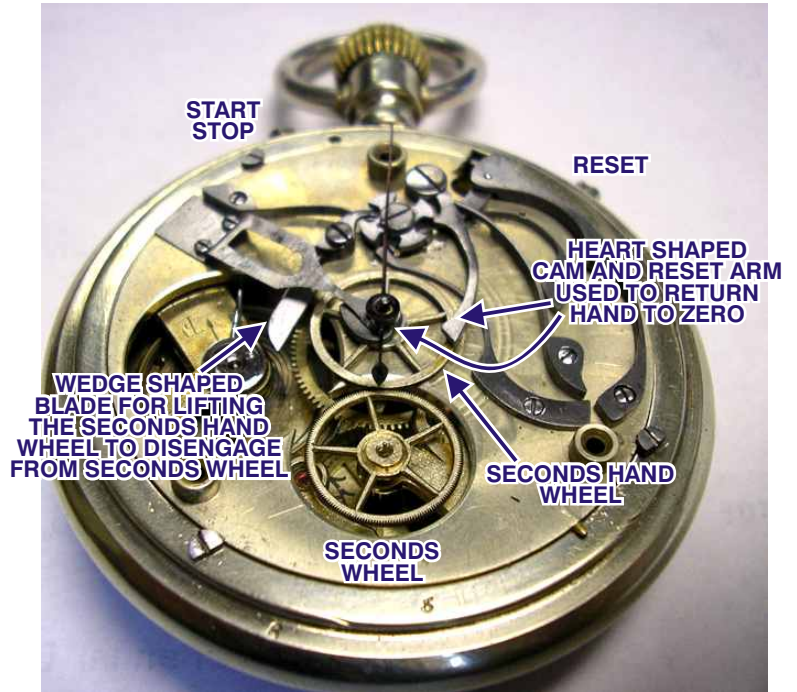
This pocket watch was brought to me by a customer who was not really sure what they had in their possession, To be sure, I have never seen anything like it in my 40 years of practice.



It was, on the surface, an inexpensive pocket watch in a German silver case with small seconds and a date. However, when turned on its face, there was a stopwatch on the back with a hole in the center of the dial so one could observe the workings of the mechanism.



Fine, a little unusual but still just a watch with complications. That is, until one takes a closer look at the workings of the chronograph. The usual method is a movable intermediate wheel which connects the geartrain to the center seconds counter and they tend to work on the same plane. In this case, the center seconds wheel was being moved up and down to engage and disengage from the fixed seconds wheel and both had beveled gears. (Not easy to see on the pictures.) ■



Welcome New Members

Virginia Norwood  
& Ken Young





## The Resurrection of a French Fountain Clock

*By Dan Weiss*

Half a lifetime ago, I sent out printed post cards to Antique dealers offering my services as a clock repairman. I received a number of responses. This began a hobby of repairing clocks, plus acquiring many for myself. One of the dealers in French antiques would, at specified intervals, get shipments from France.

The pictured French Fountain Clock was among one of the shipments. I took it home to check it out. It was in very poor condition. All but worthless, at the moment. Some of the wheels that drove the glass twisted spirals simulating water flowing into the cut glass tank were bent and had teeth missing. One of the glass spirals was broken away from the brass fitting that would keep it revolving. The original clock movement was missing. Only the bezel and dial remained. Years before, someone had installed a German battery movement as the timekeeper. It was ancient and acid had leaked out from the flat oblong battery holder.

On my next visit to the French antique dealer, I told him what was wrong with the clock and approximately what it would cost to repair it, if I could ever find the proper movement to go with the age of the timepiece. Thinking it was not worth the time, effort or money to make it functional again and since I already had it in my workshop, I was told to keep it as a gift. It stood in the corner of the room where I placed it for quite a few years

Fast forward about 10-12 years. It was always my intention to restore this beautiful horological item conceived by the mind of man sometime around 1860-1880. One day, for no particular reason, I was looking through the NAWCC Mart magazine and noticed an advertisement for wheel cutting, clock repairing and fabricating. After some correspondence with this person, I sent him the entire mechanism that drove the twisted glass spirals. Luckily, none of the wheel arbors were bent when some unknown person, years ago, had released the ratchet click spring. The huge barreled spring, if let loose, could cause major damage to anyone standing near it. In due time, it came back to me completely restored. It would turn two of the spirals, the third would not turn because of a break in the brass tubing. I tried finding a similar glass spiral in lamp shops and books from chandelier makers, no luck, impossible.

After giving the broken glass spiral much thought, the solution came to me, fabricate a new and longer brass holder for the broken spiral since it would not show because of the trim below the spiral. Another difficulty had been taken care of by simply using human ingenuity.

Now that the three spirals simulating the flowing water into the tank were functioning properly, all that remained was the most difficult part, finding the proper French movement from that time period.

Two or three more years passed and there stood this beautiful Fountain clock without a movement to tell the time. I had invested much time and some money up to this point. One day, I drive my wife to Merritt's Antiques in Douglassville, PA and while there, I walked into the clock shop area. There, sitting on a shelf, was a little French platform movement. After a closer look, I was overwhelmed. It was the type movement that I needed. The Fountain clock could now be completely restored. I paid \$40.00 for it and was as happy as a puppy wagging its tail.

After some minor adjustments and cleaning, the newly acquired timepiece was fitted into position and wound. The platform escapement took right off and kept just about perfect time. This French horological beauty was once more a sight to behold with the spirals simulating flowing water into the fountain. One could just sit and marvel at its motions.

A few years later I sold it at a Chapter #1 mart, I had too many clocks in the house and the sale enabled other ventures in this Horological.

Today, as I complete this article, I'm sorry I never took pictures of its inner workings, however I did have the foresight to photograph the clock. ■



### **Editors note:**

Dan Weiss is a member of chapter 190 but you probably won't see him at many meetings. You see, Dan lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Dan is a prolific writer though, so you will see more of his articles in the Chrono Times. He is ninety three and shows no signs of slowing down.

This article first appeared on the Global Horology Message Board.



# In Praise of Old and New

by Mostyn Gale

As much as I like old things and especially old clocks, I also appreciate the benefits of new technology. Taking care of the Santa Barbara Courthouse Clock is an honor, I appreciate the old. Being an electrical engineer by education and vocation, when I first became aware of Bryan Mumford's microset timer, I had to have one. In fact, it was the very first significant tool I bought for clock repair work. An extra bonus was that he lived in the same town I did so rather than order one through the mail; I was pleased to pick mine up in person.



**Microset Timer**

The Santa Barbara Courthouse Clock is an original 1929 Seth Thomas, Model #18 power-wind. When I first started to take care of it, I wanted to measure the rate. Normally, when I use my microset, I use the audio pick up, but it didn't take very long for me to realize that it would not work with this clock. The double-three-legged gravity escapement does not "tick-tock" in the same way that we are used to hearing a recoil or dead beat escapement sound. There is the sound of the gravity arms hitting the pendulum, which by the way bounces a bit, and then there is the sound of the escapement itself.



After talking with Bryan Mumford he reminded me about his optical pickup and suggested that I attach a piece of tape to the bottom of the pendulum. If the optical pickup is placed correctly the tape will break the optical beam and record a "tick" in the microset. I attached the optical pickup to a flex-shaft test stand with a Velcro strap. The stand also has a magnetic base. The base holds firm onto the clock frame and the flex shaft allows me to position the optical pickup accurately and hold it steady.

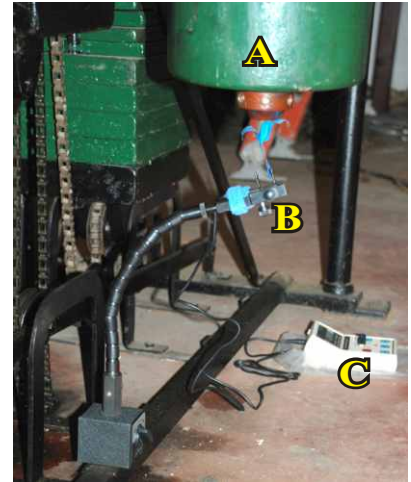
Using this setup I have been recording the rate of the clock for over a year. When I first starting measuring the clock it was running at 2879.4 beats per hour – that's losing about two minutes per week. I made an adjustment last year that brought the rate up to about 2879.9 beats per hour. It has been running very consistently at that rate since then. That turns out to be losing 20 seconds per week.

Of course, I had to determine the design rate in order to know what to adjust to. Normally, that is accomplished by counting teeth and making a calculation. That is a little bit difficult on a moving clock, but I did it. Later, when I retrieved a microfilm copy of the original Seth Thomas order record I read that the design rate was a 1.25 sec beat. That is equal to 2880 beats per hour.

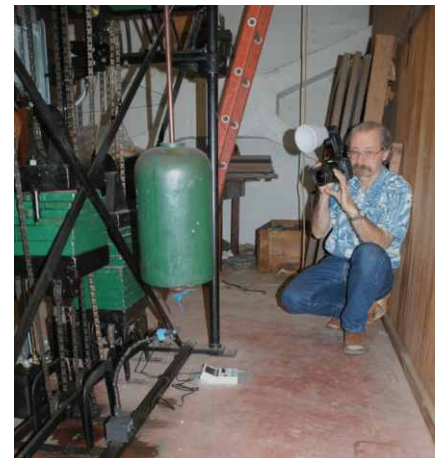
A few weeks ago, I made another small adjustment to try to get it closer to the design rate. I measured it a few days ago and it was running at exactly 2880.00 beats per hour. That is the exact design rate for the clock. I was surprised to hit it so close. Bryan Mumford was visiting the clock with me that day and showed me that if I changed the mode to measure the seconds per beat, I can get even more digits of precision in my measurement. (That's Bryan kneeling next to the clock.) So we

turned on the seconds per beat mode and were very surprised to find that it was running at a rate of 1.250005 seconds per beat. That is only 2 ½ seconds per week! We'll see if it holds that rate over time – I fully expect that it will be quite close. The gravity escapement is inherently very accurate.

My pleasure in working with old clocks is enhanced by also being able to work with modern instrumentation. Thanks Seth Thomas! And thanks Bryan Mumford! ■



**A=Pendulum  
B=Optical Pickup  
C=Microset Timer**



# CLASSIFIED PAGE

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

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### **The Montecito Clock Gallery**

Restoration, repair, sales of clocks and watches.

**Ferdinand Geitner**, mbhi, owner and operator

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I will have a huge selection of watch repair  
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buy at the Chapter 190 meeting.

**Dave Coatsworth**

[dave@daveswatchparts.com](mailto:dave@daveswatchparts.com)

## WANTED

### **URGENTLY NEEDED, VISIBLE ESCAPEMENT MOVEMENT**

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Winding hole spacing of 38.9 mm, (1.53")

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### **I'm looking for a five inch piecrust bezel for an Ansonia clock.**

**Contact:**

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**805-444-6383**

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*Antique English* 2 or 3 gear-train skeleton clock.

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

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**NEW**

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Chapter 190 members Gary & Joan Benoit  
[clockworksunltd@sbcglobal.net](mailto: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](mailto:giorgio@spanport.ucsb.edu)

(I'm teaching in Spain so there is no local California phone)

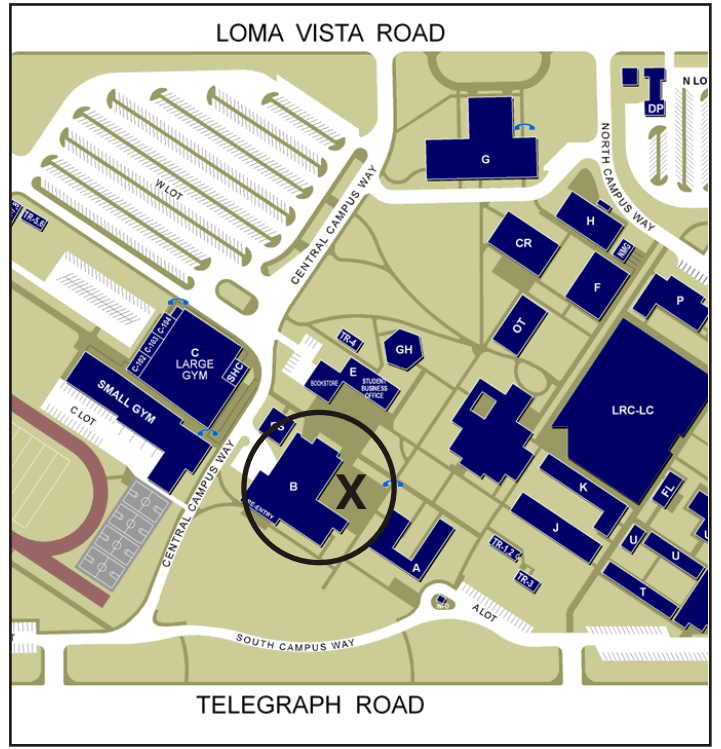
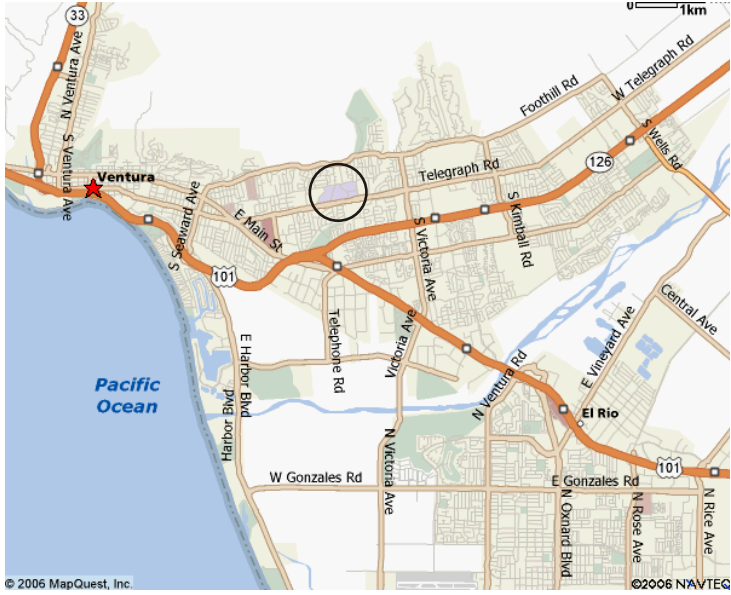
### **- Watch Repair Tools -**

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!*

*September 2009 Issue*

**SEPT 20**  
**NEXT MEETING**

**Chrono Times**  
 If Undeliverable return To:  
 17738 Superior St. Unit 21  
 Northridge, CA 91325