



It Never Hurts to Ask

by Mostyn Gale

A January 22nd, 2005 article in the Santa Barbara News-Press peaked my interest. It mentioned that the clock in the Santa Barbara Courthouse had stopped. Apparently, the motor used for winding the clock had burned out. The article mentioned Robert Ooley, the County Architect, as a person who was taking an interest in repairing the clock. I saved the article thinking that one day I would call and see if I could get involved with the clock maintenance.

About May 2008, I ran into that article again (cleaning up the desk) and decided that it was time to call. I googled Robert Ooley and emailed him to ask about the clock. "Who maintains it now and can I help?", I asked. I received a prompt reply, "The building maintenance folks take care of it and when it does break down (usually the winding motor has burned out) it takes weeks or months to repair. When do you want to see it?"

I eagerly replied and we arranged to meet the next weekend at the courthouse. I didn't know what to expect. When we got there the clock seemed enormous. It was housed in a room enclosed by plywood walls with about two feet of walking room on each side. A roof had been built over the clock to prevent water from dripping on it from the observation deck above. As we clock people have come to expect, there was grease all over the clock so I knew that at least it would need to be cleaned up. In general however, the clock was in great shape despite not having received professional care. We spent about half an hour and I said I would be happy to help. A few weeks later, I met with the building maintenance folks to learn what

they had been doing and their methods/schedule for maintenance. I received a key and was told that I could visit at any time.

My initial visits were spent looking and learning. This is a glorious clock. According to the original Seth Thomas Clock Co. records, (I retrieved these from the NAWCC library) the order was received on 14 March 1929 and the clock was shipped on 10 June 1929. It is a ST Model No 18, time, strike, and chime clock with a double three-legged gravity escapement, 1¼ second beat. It is weight driven but uses electrical power to rewind the

weights every two to three hours. This power rewind feature is original to the clock – only the winding motor has been replaced.

My assignment was none too early. Within the next two months, I had to repair the power wind trip lever and two of the leading-off rods. Leading-off rods are the connectors between the clock and the motion work controlling the hands. The leading-off rods are made up of two lengths of tubing joined approximately in the middle with a coupling. The joints had become so worn and loose that the tubes were sagging and almost binding as they rotated. One day, I showed up at the clock to find one of the tubes completely broken at the coupling and hanging limp from the clock – making the south-side dial non-functional. I have made up and installed new couplings so that the rods now run true.

The other big problem was the power wind trip lever. This is actually a copper rod (1/8th" dia). The rod is attached to a lever coming from a micro-switch. The weights run up and down this rod and when they are low enough, the micro-switch is turned on which powers the motor to lift

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Santa Barbara Courthouse Tower Clock

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

By Mike Schmidt

Chapter 190 has provided many diverse and alternating programs, workshops and newsletter articles to keep everything interesting for both Clock and Watch collectors. This diverse approach to chapter activity has brought about some interesting results. We now have clock collectors repairing and collecting watches. We also have watch collectors repairing and collecting clocks. We all have learned a great deal about Tower clocks, tools and other horological interests beyond our initial interest. Broadening our horizons in horology has been great fun.



Please keep giving us your ideas for programs and workshops. Articles and stories are always welcome for the "CHRONO TIMES", the most interesting and read chapter newsletter. Send articles to Editor Ken at internut@socal.rr.com. Tell us about your first watch or clock or your current project.

A very interesting program will be presented at the August meeting by Dave Coatsworth on "Horology and the Banking Industry 1870 to 1920". An historical story about the sophisticated horology used to keep ahead of the clever thieves. Examples of the devices will be available for viewing.

Congratulations to the students who have completed the August FSW 201 Beginning Lathe Class. Instructor Ray Marsolek, students Alan Davis, David Clarkin, Tim Harriman, Jerry Konicek, Lex Rooker, and Glen Webb.

Chapter Elections-The directors of Chapter 190 are to be elected for a two year annual term starting January 1, 2010. The process begins with a three person nominating committee in July. The committee is chaired by Board member George Gaglini and chapter members Mostyn Gale and Sylvia Griswold. Nominations shall be made by the nominating committee or by oral nomination from the floor at the July or August meeting. An official ballot shall be emailed or mailed to those without email. All votes received by the Secretary by the beginning of the September meeting shall be tabulated by the Nominating Committee and the winning candidates shall be announced during that meeting. If you would like to be on the board and give some of us a rest (just kidding), contact a member of the nominating committee.

The Chapter electronic "BULLETIN BOARD" is up and running well. If you have a meeting announcement or any other item you would like posted, please send them to me by the end of each month prior to the next meeting.

The Show and Tell for August will be your recent acquisition. I know that some of our members found some treasures at Chapter 75' mart and the other Chapter marts. Please share them. Any other watch, clock, or tool would also be fun to share.

See you at the meeting, *Mike*

Welcome New Member

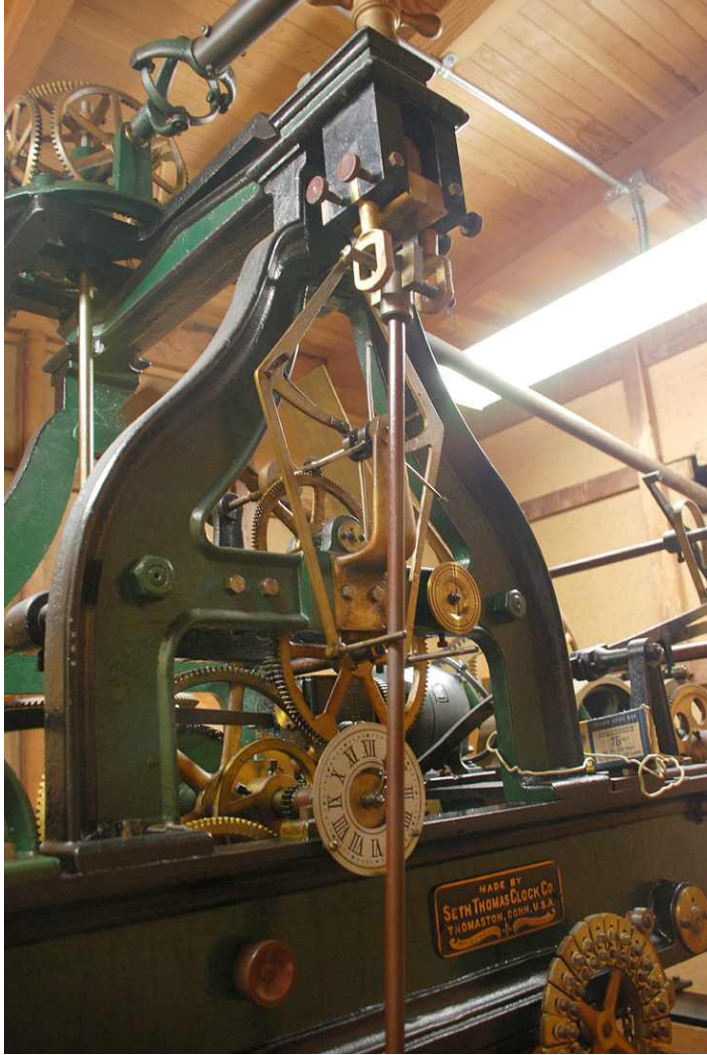
Tom Beard



Continued from page 1

the weights until they reach a high point when they are turned off. This rod was so oily that the weights could not move easily without moving the rod. The net effect was that the motor was cycling frequently without allowing the weights to fully wind down or up.

I have spent some time cleaning up the old grease and oiling critical parts. There is still more cleaning to be done but the worst parts are now shining.



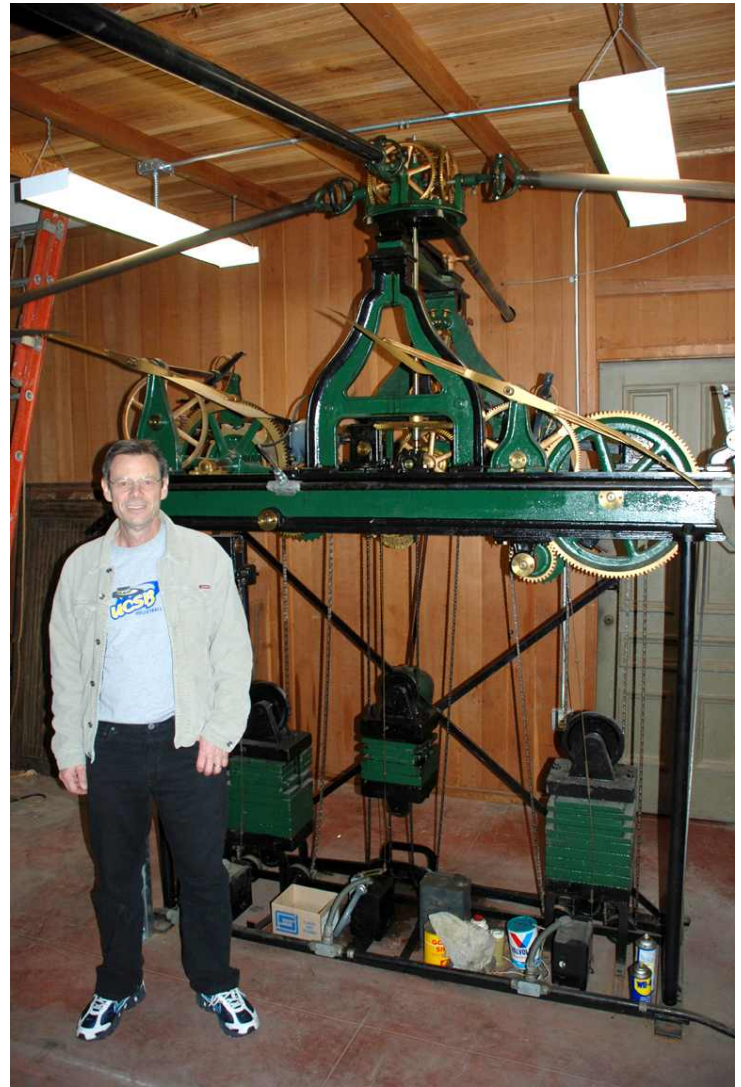
Seth Thomas #18 movement with gravity escapement

I have also spent time aligning the clock dials – minute and hour hands were not positioned properly and also the dials on each side of the tower were not well synchronized.

One interesting note about this clock (although somewhat disappointing also) is that the chime and strike trains have never been run. Although the clock was delivered with all the capability to strike and chime, it was never set up to ring bells. All the pulleys, springs, and strike hammers (minus bells) are next to the clock in their original boxes. In talking to the County Architect, it appears that the building was never designed to handle bells – why then was a three-train clock purchased by the County? Perhaps we will never know but I will keep pursuing an answer to this question.

In the meantime, an electronic chiming system was set-up and the unknowing public thinks that the sounds are coming from the clock.

I consider it a great privilege to be maintaining this clock and pleased that I am able to bring more of the history of this nice clock to the public as well as participate in expanding the good reputation of the NAWCC. Be careful what you ask for – you just might get it. ■



Mostyn standing beside his "Project"



Happy Birthday

**Jeanette Barcroft, John Berney,
Jim Chamberlain, Bill Frank, Leroy Grove,
Phyllis Larson, & Ken McWilliams**

Tales From the Bench

by Ferdinand Geitner

Hubble Space Clock?

An interesting analogy, but one look at the attached pictures explains everything. This clock arrived in my workshop from an old friend/customer. He is a collector of the “unusual” and a micro electronic wizard (expert) who, among other things, designs circuits in chips. For example, he previously brought me an elaborate globe style high quality quartz clock, (I work on almost everything), which drained every new battery within a day. I tested the circuit and checked the current consumption which was well within specs (just a few milliamps). When I told him how I tested the circuit with my expensive, quality instruments accurate to micro amps, he responded by explaining to me that his equipment can count the electrons traveling through the wire, but he still was unable to figure this problem out. It turned out to be a faulty design in the battery casing which could short out.

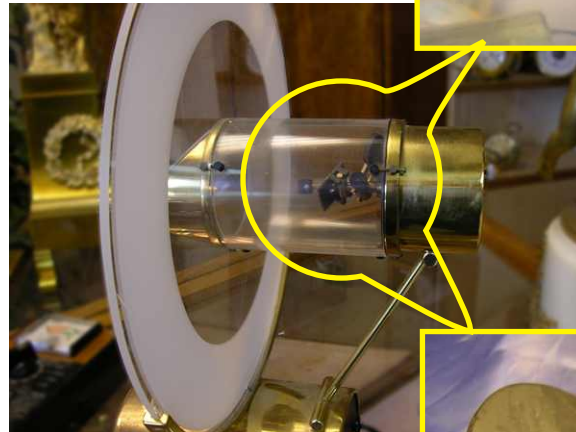
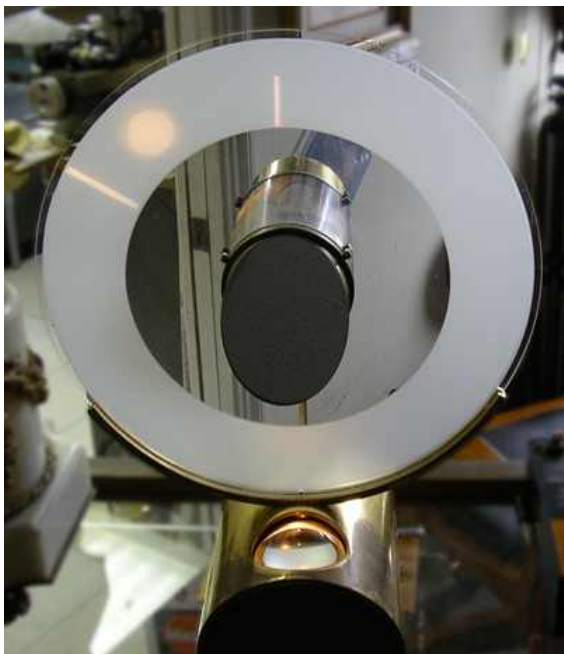
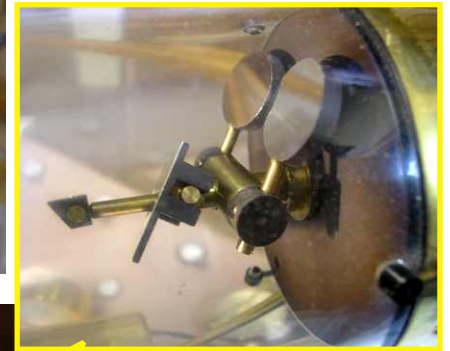
But getting back to my newest project, a “light” clock which is even readable in daylight. In the curved brass base there is a transformer which lights a small car bulb that projects through a large half round lens a beam of light straight up onto an oval mirror at one end of an acrylic tube slanted at 45 degrees which sends the beam 90 degrees through the tube onto an array



of mirrors at the other end of the tube. It then goes through the center of a large 10 inch acrylic disc.

The mirrors are mounted on the shafts usually reserved for the hour, minute and second hands of a simple electric motor & gear box. The acrylic disc acts as the “dial” with a matted circle at the outer edge. The mirrors reflect a larger round spot for the hour, a thicker line for the minutes and a thin line for the seconds.

An impressive spectacle which most customers wanted to buy on the spot. A plaque placed the manufacturer in Massachusetts.



Ventura Chapter 190 people

By Paul Skeels

Lex Rooker



Lex and the clock he restored for the Santa Paula Inn. The room that the clock resides in, has been renamed "The Clockmakers Room." The Inn has a very old and storied history, including once being a brothel. For more information on the Inn, go to their website at: www.SantaPaulaInn.com

Lex Rooker became interested in pocket watches when he was in the 8th grade. His grandmother took him on a train trip to New York City, and while there a family friend, who was a photographer, invited Lex along on an assignment for an estate jewelry shop at 131 Canal Street. Lex spotted a wonderful pocket watch in the window and stopped by there every day during his visit to admire it from the sidewalk. One day, the salesman came out to see what Lex was up to. The watch, a Hamilton with a Montgomery railroad dial, was priced at \$150.00, which Lex could not afford. The salesman asked how much he had, which was \$40.00. The salesman went back in and checked, found that the shop had paid \$40.00 for it, came back out, and told Lex he could have it for that price. Lex bought it and never looked back.

It remains one of the prize pieces of his collection, which includes many highly jeweled and very desirable pocket watches.

In the 70's, Lex spent his early professional life as an electronics technician. This was when electronic components could still be "repaired" as opposed to the present-day solution which is to replace the component or its software.

Later, he worked in telecommunications infrastructure for Edison, from which he retired 3 years ago. Meanwhile, he found himself becoming interested in clocks, particularly case and dial repair. He has extensively studied calligraphy, which has helped him to create new dials and restore old dials.

Lex joined the NAWCC a few years ago and started searching for additional educational opportunities. Lex, who lives in Norwalk with his wife, found that it was not feasible for him to attend full time classes in Pennsylvania and Field Suitcase Workshops in Texas. Not much seemed to be available in Southern California until he learned that Chapter 190 was sponsoring a series of Field Suitcase Workshops.

Lex joined Chapter 190 and has taken several classes. In fact, the day this article was written, Lex was taking the basic lathe workshop in Ventura.

While attending previous FSW's in Santa Paula, Lex stayed in the Santa Paula Inn, a vintage hotel on Eighth Street. The owners and he came to an arrangement whereby he restored a Seth Thomas #2 for their hotel lobby. The project included his creation of a new dial for the clock, all measured, cut, designed, and hand lettered in India ink by Lex utilizing his calligraphy and other skills. (See photo) Having seen the clock, the author can testify to the skill and beauty of Lex's work. ■

**The next Meeting & Mart for Chapter 190
is August 16, 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

"Horology and the

Banking Industry 1870 to 1920"

Presented by Dave Coatsworth

This is an interesting, and often overlooked, part of horology

SHOW & TELL

"Bring a recent acquisition of yours"

CHAPTER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

FIELD SUITCASE WORKSHOPS

FSW 103 September 25-28 Introduction to Chiming Clocks
Contact Laurie Conti, coordinator (805) 813 2216
e-mail: Remember_the_clock@me.com

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



This month's Mini-Workshop will be

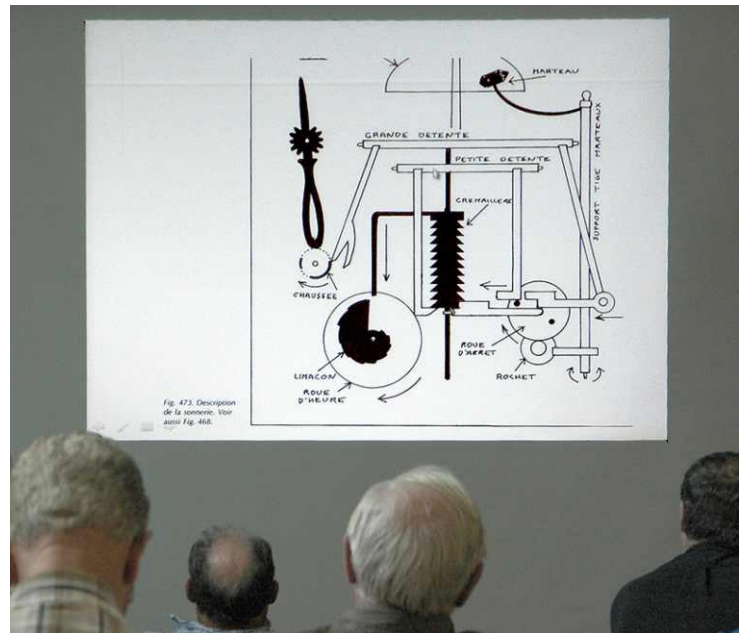
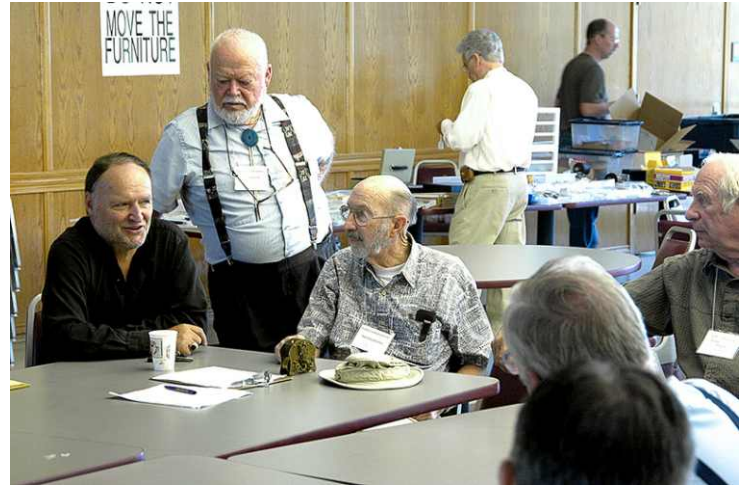
**"An open workshop with
emphasis on answering clock and
watch repair questions."**

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

Henri Bonnet will be the moderator

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

Some faces seen at the July Meeting



“God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one that I can, and the wisdom to know it's me.” *Author unknown*
A variation of "The Serenity Prayer" by Reinhold Neibuhr

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

Restoration, repair, sales of clocks and watches.
Ferdinand Geitner, mbhi, owner and operator
Now located at 1187 Coast Village road, unit 10a
Montecito (one block from old site)
(805) 565-9097

The Clock Gallery

Serving All of Ventura County
Precision Repair - Service - Restoration
Grandfather - Wall - Mantel - Marine Clocks
House Calls • Packing & Moving
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e-mail: theclockgallery@roadrunner.com

The Tic Toc Shop

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Repairs,
Restorations
& Appraisals.**

**Ken McWilliams
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Jorge Montoya

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Repair & Restore all American & Swiss watches.
12 years as a Rolex technician. We maintain a
complete shop with all the latest equipment.
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E-mail: jorgemont2001@netzero.net

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In business since 1977.

Sales and Restoration of both new and antique
clocks. Repair of all types of mechanical clocks.

Loren Miller proprietor.

4255 E. Main St., No. 15, Ventura, Ca. 93003

(Located in Firehouse Plaza at Main St. and Telephone Rd)

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**

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

**Contact:
Tom McKnett
805-444-6383**

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

Loren Miller, **Pacific Coast Clocks**
4255 E. Main St., No. 15, Ventura, Ca.
Located in Firehouse Plaza (Main St. & Telephone Rd.)
Tel. 805-650-8800

NEW

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

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

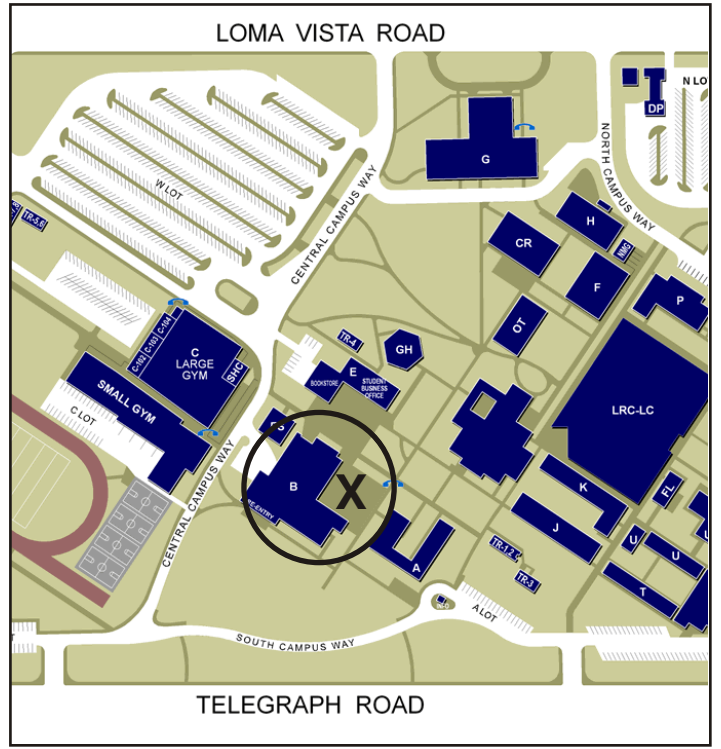
- Watch Repair Tools -

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!

August 2009 Issue

AUGUST 16

NEXT MEETING

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

Chrono Times