



## Thank Goodness for Vintage Timepieces

by Henri Bonnet

I have never turned down a birthday present, until recently, when my wife offered to buy me a new wristwatch for my birthday. We drove to one of the biggest watch retailers in our area. Since I could find no nice mechanical wristwatch under 44 mm in diameter and 15 mm thickness, I simply decided to pass. Wristwatches that size may have looked okay on the wrist of a Sumo wrestler, but definitely not on mine. It may be useful to note that the size of practically all mens wristwatches, from the nineteen thirties and until 2000 (approximately), was between 30 and 33 mm in diameter. (For a period of over 70 years.) Those wristwatches were extraordinarily elegant and utterly comfortable to wear. Such timepieces, now referred to as vintage, are to be found nowadays almost exclusively at auctions or at watch shows.

The thriving vintage watch market exists, because brand new timepieces like that are simply nonexistent, and therefore unavailable at any price. Even "new old stock" inventories of those watches, have long since been depleted. The net effect of all this is that a large population of would be wristwatch buyers is being excluded from today's watch market.

Those of us who refuse to look ridiculous (not to mention uncomfortable), wearing a pocket-watch-sized timepiece on their wrist, have nowhere to turn to, save for the vintage watch market. As a result, the vintage market has been affected accordingly, and good mechanical timepieces in decent condition are extremely hard to find. In addition, prices have skyrocketed and fakes have proliferated. Those larger wristwatches on the market today (usually fitted with small movements) are not better nor more accurate.

Their enormous size is merely due to the "dictates of fashion", rather than to good horology. Although fashion has always played an important role in watches, in the past the emphasis was on beauty, elegance, and comfort, in addition to accuracy. Not anymore. So, until watch manufacturers start producing wristwatches for the rest of us here, we have little choice but to scour the various watch shows and auctions for the vintage timepieces that we love. When one is lucky enough to find a good vintage wristwatch from the fifties or sixties, it most likely has previously belonged to more than one owner.

An important consideration, in contemplating the purchase of a vintage timepiece, is the condition of the dial. The appearance of the dial is often a reliable indicator of the condition of the watch as a whole. Although some dials may have been "expertly redone", a reconditioned dial is relatively easy to spot. The greatest satisfaction really comes from wearing a well running vintage timepiece which has been kept as closely as possible to its original condition. It isn't unusual to find some personal engraving on the back cover of a vintage timepiece, thus giving it additional character. When purchasing a wristwatch like that, I always ponder the circumstances that might have led to its acquisition by its original owner. In many instances, the watch had been a birthday gift, a retirement memento, a graduation or even a Christmas present. I consider myself fortunate to get to wear

such a timepiece, even though the identity of its original owner will forever remain a mystery to me.

For several decades now, I have worn practically nothing but vintage timepieces, and I go to great lengths to keep them in good running condition. A vintage timepiece is a legacy which deserves to be cherished and preserved. Even if the vintage wristwatch you've just purchased is in need of serious repair, the satisfaction of bringing such a timepiece back to life is beyond description. Knowing a truly

competent and friendly watchmaker in your area is indispensable.

Obviously, no one knows what mechanical wristwatches will be like in the foreseeable future. Will there even be new mechanical wristwatches altogether, or will most watches be electronic some day? Hard to tell. One thing is certain however: "new" doesn't necessarily mean better. Virtually all technologies reach their apogee at some point in time, beyond which there is no going back. Past that point of no return, the inevitable decline that follows often spells the demise of things that once have been beautiful to behold. Wristwatches in particular.

On rare occasions, one is given the opportunity to postpone such decay, and in a matter of speaking to turn back, (or at least slow down) the nefarious ravages of time. Collecting, repairing, and wearing vintage timepieces certainly affords us such a unique opportunity. By all means, do not miss to partake in it. The satisfaction therefrom will last you a lifetime. Think about it! ■



left, circa 1960

right from 2010.

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## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

By Mike Schmidt

The Annual Mart Committee led by Ernie Jenson is preparing for a great event. Tables sales are going very well, on the way to selling out. We have many new NAWCC sellers coming from all over California to bring you many interesting items for your viewing and buying pleasure. The Seaside Clock, Watch, and Jewelry Show” is our new venue, just north of the Ventura Pier at the Seaside Ventura County Fairgrounds. The move to Ventura gives us the ability to expand with additional room, tables, and parking. The show will be well advertised in the Ventura and Santa Barbara County newspapers and we expect to surpass last year's record attendance.



I am pleased to announce and present a new Board director for the Chapter, Giorgio Perissinotto. Giorgio is a professor of Historical Linguistics at the University of Santa Barbara and is a founding member of Chapter 190. Giorgio has agreed to take on the responsibilities of Programs Director.

This coming Sunday we have a very special program on local horological history at 1:15 PM, entitled “Santa Barbara's Time Piece Takes Its Place in the History of American Tower Clocks”. It is presented by Dr. David Bisno; he will share with us the story of discovering Santa Barbara's 1929 Seth Thomas Tower Clock and the journey to present this clock to the world in the new “BISNO SCHALL GALLERY” Santa Barbara Courthouse Clock Room.

Congratulations go to of all the students who completed the February FSW 200 “Fundamental Skills for Clock Repair and Introduction to the Lathe”, Instructor Ray Marsolek, assistant Lex Rooker. Students: class coordinator Giorgio Perissinotto, Steven Schechter, Frank Huttlinger, Alan Bloore, Jean Markevich, Daniel Kerker, Ron Weiss, Larry Leal, Ron Maricich and Bob Parsons.

### *New Educational Opportunities:*

A FSW 301 Introduction to Basic Pocket Watch Workshop is offered and will be coordinated by George Gaglini contact information 805 647 6463 email ggaglini@roadrunner.com

A FSW 101 Beginning Clock Repair is offered for October contact Mike Schmidt 805 988 1764 email eaglecreekclocks@msn.com

A Chapter 190 one day Workshop, “*Improving your photography and photo editing skills*” is offered for Saturday May 7th. This workshop will be presented by Ken McWilliams. (See additional info elsewhere in this newsletter.)

There will be 2 mini workshops at this months meeting. The first workshop on clock repair begins at 10:30 AM and will be led by Ferdinand Geitner. The starting topic will be “How to remove dents from a brass pendulum.” The second workshop on Wristwatch & Pocket Watches will begin at 11:30 and will be led by Jorge Montoya. These 2 workshops are open to all. You are welcome to bring any questions related to repairs. The coffee will be on early.

See you at the Meeting *Mike*



## Happy Birthday

Richard Brinser, Laurie Conti,  
Alan Davis, Robert Gary,  
Richard Glenn & Jorge Montoya

# The Skies of the Santa Barbara Tower Clock Gallery

by Mostyn Gale

When Sebastian Viscaïno sailed into the Channel of Santa Barbara on December 4, 1602, he gave it that name because the 4th day of December is sacred to the memory of Saint Barbara.

As you have read in earlier articles, the Seth Thomas tower clock in the Santa Barbara Courthouse will not be alone – the clock room is also going to contain a 57 foot long mural depicting the history of timekeeping from earliest times to 1929, when the courthouse was first opened. This will be the topic of a future article.

In addition to its surroundings, the “skies” above the clock will receive special attention – the ceiling of the clock room will depict the skies as they would have been seen by Sebastian Viscaïno on that December evening in 1602 – the night that Santa Barbara got its name.

In order to accomplish this, research was done to determine the position of the stars on that date and a star map created. A majority of the constellations were visible as well as the moon. After this, imagine standing in the middle of the room and looking straight up. If there were no ceiling in the room, the span of sky that would be visible was determined. This span was marked on the star map and its size adjusted to match a scale drawing of the ceiling. The star map was traced onto a clear sheet and overlaid onto the drawing of the ceiling. The ceiling has two large beams that will block a portion of the sky. The ceiling drawing was then partitioned into sections and numbered to match up with panels of rigid insulation that will be used to support light fibers that simulate the stars. The panels were then marked for the positions of the stars and the relative brightness of the stars.

Light fibers were pushed through the panels in the positions marked. Brighter stars have two or three fibers, dimmer stars just one fiber. The fibers will be run to light sources, some of which will provide a “twinkling” feature.

Working with the fibers proved to be very tricky because they are hard to see and very long – forty to fifty feet each. Thousands of feet of fibers have been bundled together, one bundle per panel, each strand marked as to its location in the panel. Scaffolding is now in the clock room and in a few weeks the panels will be mounted on the ceiling.

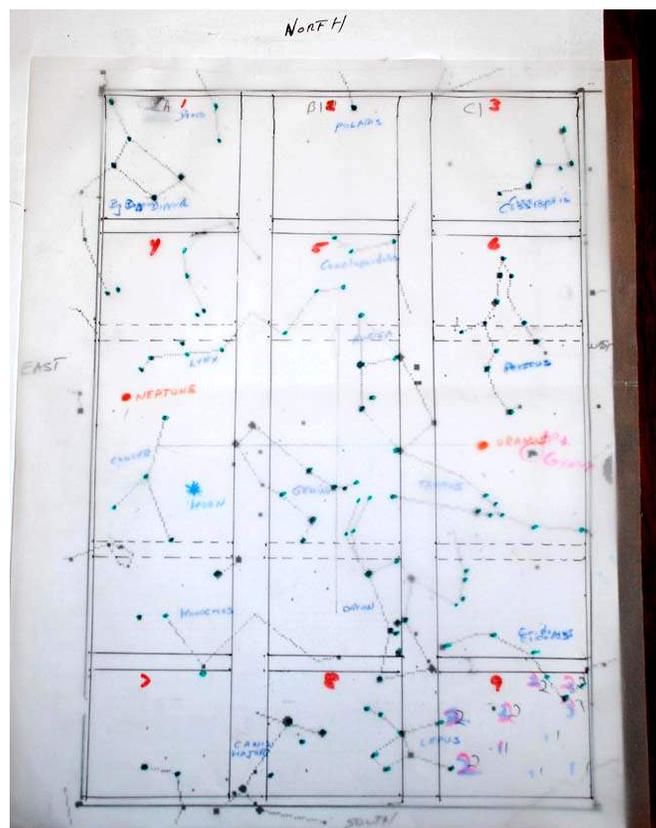
Having the ceiling in place will enable the scaffolding to be removed and then the work of mounting the hammers and bells begins (see last month's article about the bells.) ■



*Panels, ready for light fibers.*



*December 4th, 1602 sky map*



*Sky map, transferred to ceiling drawing*

by Robert Gary

### Jim Gilmore



Jim became interested in clocks when his wife Barbara bought him an Eighteenth Century English bell strike grandfather clock in early 1972. After bringing the clock back to his house in Thousand Oaks, he found he could not get it to run. He was advised to contact Jim Chamberlain by a mutual friend. After Chamberlain showed him how to adjust and make the clock run, he encouraged Jim to join the NAWCC, which he did in mid 1972 to begin his long association with clocks and watches.

Jim is a long time member of Chapter #75 where he has served as President and most of the officer positions. He was the class coordinator for 20 plus FSW classes and has taken all of the classes himself. He is currently the Chapter 75 Vice-President. Additionally, he is a member of Chapter 22, 116, 178, 180, and 190.

He has served as a committee chair for the Greater Los Angeles Regional since the mid 1980's, first as the Door Prize Chair, then the Mart Chairman for 12 years, General Chairman for 6 years, and the Facilities Chairman up to date. He is the Co-Chairman, with Robert Linkenhoker for the 2012 Pasadena National. He has served as the Chairman of the NAWCC Award Committee for 14 years.

Jim collects a great variety of clocks including Vienna Regulators, Grandfather Clocks, French, English, Austrian, and German clocks, and a large selection of Early American Clocks. Additionally he has a collection of Animated Character and other Alarm Clocks and also a good collection of Character Watches.

Jim has a BA Degree in Park Administration with a minor in Civil Engineering; an MS Degree in Outdoor Resources; Certification in Environmental Planning and is a licensed California Landscape Architect. He was the Park Planner for the Park District in Thousand Oaks for 32 years. With the Park District, he was responsible for the design and construction of 44 parks and developed the Park District

Master Plan for Parks, Open Space and trails in the Thousand Oaks area.

After retiring, he started his own consulting Landscape Architect/Engineering business. Additionally, he has run a clock repair and restoration business for many years.

Born in Sacramento, Jim came to Thousand Oaks with his wife and two children in 1968 as a new-hire for the Park District. Previously he was an Assistant Engineer in Aerospace and with the California Department of Transportation, Bridge Department. He served two years active duty in the U.S. Navy as a ships Navigator assigned to the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, where of all things, he was responsible for winding and monitoring all of the ship's clocks and chronometers.

Jim and his wife Barbara have two children and two grandchildren. He and Barbara travel extensively. They have attended 9 Summer Olympic Games and 10 World Track and Field Championships along with other trips of interest. The trips provide a great learning experience as well as a venue for buying clocks and watches. ■

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## An Editors Worst Nightmare

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Ken McWilliams, Editor

*There are a few things that every editor lives in fear of, misspelling someone's name, misquoting someone and cutting a story. Well, last month I managed to do one of these.*

*Kris Clarkin wrote the bio on Mike & Beverly Schmidt for the February Chrono Times. She submitted it to me as a MS Word document. It is a relatively simple job to re-flow the word text, adjust format, font, and leading to fit the publications style. It is almost automatic for me, maybe too easy. I inadvertently omitted the entire text on the second page. I humbly apologize to Kris for cutting her story short.*

*The following is what should have been the end of Mike & Beverly's bio last month.*

According to Mike, one of the best things about the chapter is to learn about other aspects of horology. He also adores the people he's met since becoming a collector and member of the NAWCC. "So many people are willing to help others to learn, share knowledge and expertise, and sometimes even material items."

As for the future, Mike's main goal and aspiration for Chapter 190 is to provide as many educational opportunities as possible to 190 members and all of the NAWCC.

In much the same way as an expert horologist takes levers, dials, gears, and wheels, etc and is able to turn them into a magnificent clock, there seems to be a synergy with Chapter 190 too. You take Mike, members, educators, and officers and put it all together and something magical and magnificent happens where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

We thank Mike a thousand times for bringing Chapter 190 to Ventura and into our lives. ■

# Tales From the Bench

by Ferdinand Geitner

## The Right Color

Presentation & overall appearance is 99% of the sale and the appreciation of the customer's new purchase. A majority of figurine French and American mantle clocks are made out of a lead alloy casting (Spelter) which is easier to cast, but needs to be specially plated to look like the exquisitely fine detailed gold plated (much more expensive) bronzes.

After some time, the plating develops fine cracks and discoloration. The customer sometimes tries to bring back the original luster by polishing and other methods best not mentioned, which results in actually removing more of the plating. One is left with a dull brown-gray metal which is quite porous, showing the remnants of polishing paste in the cracks which continues to attack the metal.

one can get slight variations in shading and the end result is a nice "gold" color. Check the pictures and judge for yourself.

By the way, there is one finial which did not need painting, can you tell which one! ■



**BEFORE**



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

The metal should be cleaned and washed to remove any foreign substance. To achieve this, the clock must be dismantled, marble or alabaster parts removed, and loose parts stabilized.

The ideal procedure would be to send the pieces to a plating company and have the pieces completely replated. Usually a copper plating first and then gold plating over it. This is very expensive and I found a satisfactory and much less costly shortcut, paint!

Now I know it sounds cheap and patchwork like, but wait until you see the results. I had much difficulty finding nice "gold" paint. ACE makes "Antique Gold" but it looks more like copper and the "Brite Gold"(metallic) looks like brass. But, If one mixes the two, and I mean in the air, spraying both at the same time,



**AFTER**

## CHAPTER 190'S ANNUAL CLOCK AND WATCH SHOW

by Ernie Jenson

Chapter 190's Annual Antique Clock and Watch Show is April 17 this year. Events are moving quickly and the space is filling up, so register early. Over half of the tables are already sold. We have more space than last year at our new location. It looks like we will have eighty tables of clocks, watches, collectable custom jewelry, and much more. We want to have something of interest for the entire family. In some families, only one person is a clock or watch person and this year we hope to satisfy everybody.

The Mart will be at the Ventura Fair Grounds in the Santa Rosa Building. It is the front and center building directly accessible from the main parking lot.

We have great door prizes again this year. Each attendee will receive a ticket for the drawings. Additional tickets for the drawings are available for \$1 each. (You choose what prize you want your ticket(s) to be entered.) At this time we have a family tour of the Channel Islands and one whale watching tour for a couple. In addition, we have a beautiful German regulator wall clock and a number of other great prizes.



Island adventure at Scorpion Cove, Santa Cruz Island

The show is open to the public and we expect a good turnout as the event will be covered by the local newspapers.

We are offering a free service to the public this year, much like the Antique Road Show. People can bring a clock or watch and we will have experts available to give critiques and repair advice if needed.

We will have a special display of museum quality clocks provided by Jim Chamberlain. Jim has an extensive collection of clock and will be showing four or five of his more interesting clocks.

The fairgrounds also provides good food services, so no one will go hungry.

We will have carts and helpers for loading and unloading. The middle of April means great weather, not too warm and not too cool. Our aim is to provide for an enjoyable day for everyone. See you there! ■

## DR. DAVID BISNO, THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM PRESENTER

by Ken McWilliams

We are being treated this month to a program presented by a very special guest speaker, Dr. David Bisno.

Dr. Bisno is an internationally known speaker on many topics.

At a recent lecture in San Francisco on "The right of privacy", he was

introduced as a "polymath." New word to you? A polymath is someone who is particularly knowledgeable on many subjects. David definitely qualifies in this regard. He is comfortable discussing everything from constitutional law to horology.

He is with us this month to talk about a little local horology history, "*Santa Barbara's Time Piece takes its place in the History of American Tower Clocks*".

Dr. Bisno was instrumental in creating the Santa Barbara Tower Clock Gallery project, which, as you know, many of our members are very involved with. He is not only an intellectual contributor but also a major financial contributor to the project.

David and his wife, Fay, call Hanover New Hampshire home, close to Dartmouth College. Winters are spent in San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Melbourne, Australia, or Cape Town, South Africa. That is why we were able to coerce him to join our little group, it's winter now.

Many of his lectures can be found on the internet and I believe that you will enjoy his fresh approach to old topics.

If you would like to learn more about Dr. Bisno, visit his website at: [www.davidbisino.com](http://www.davidbisino.com).

Try to attend this month's meeting, I think that you will enjoy it. ■



Welcome New Member

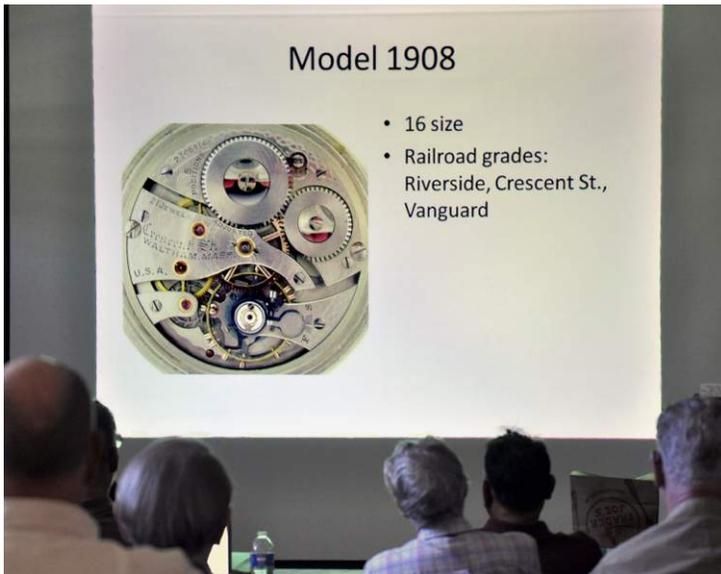
Ralph Napolitano  
from Camarillo



# THE EXTRA PAGE

## FACES SEEN AT FEBRUARY'S MEETING

Photos by Bill Robinson



The next Meeting & Mart for Chapter 190  
is March 20, 2011

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

**"The Santa Barbara Tower Clock"**

Presented by Dr. David Bisno

*This is one that you should not miss.*

### SHOW & TELL

**"Clocks & Watches beginning with "A"**

Chapter 190 is sponsoring  
a One Day Workshop

on

## IMPROVING YOUR PHOTO TAKING AND PHOTO EDITING SKILLS

INSTRUCTOR: Ken McWilliams

9:00am to 5:00 pm

SATURDAY, MAY 7th

at the Odd Fellows Lodge  
in Santa Paula, Ca

**THIS WORKSHOP IS FOR DIGITAL CAMERAS**  
**YOU WILL LEARN:**

- HOW IMAGES ARE CREATED IN THE EYE
- HOW YOUR CAMERA WORKS
- THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER LIGHTING
- UNDERSTANDING YOUR CAMERA'S SETTINGS
- HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CAMERA
- HOW TO CORRECT PHOTOS USING PHOTO EDITING SOFTWARE. (WE WILL COVER THREE PROGRAMS, PHOTOSHOP, PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS, AND COREL PHOTO PAINT)

Workshop fee: \$45. Space is limited, sign up early.

Contact Ken McWilliams to register or for info  
(818) 718-8300 • [internet@socal.rr.com](mailto:internet@socal.rr.com)

# 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  
**805-497-8381 or 805-647-0699**  
e-mail: [theclockgallery@roadrunner.com](mailto:theclockgallery@roadrunner.com)

### **The Tic Toc Shop**

**Clock  
Repairs,  
Restorations  
& Appraisals.**

**Ken McWilliams  
(818) 718-8300**

**Jorge Montoya**

### **Complete Watch Service Center**

Repair & Restore all American & Swiss watches.  
12 years as a Rolex technician. We maintain a  
complete shop with all the latest equipment.  
**(562) 531-0545 • (562) 688-6171**  
E-mail: [jorgemont2001@netzero.net](mailto:jorgemont2001@netzero.net)

### **PACIFIC COAST CLOCKS**

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



### **MicroSet Timers for Clocks and Watches**

Precision electronic timing tools for clock and  
watch repair with many unique features. Prices  
start at \$250. Full information is on the website:

[www.WatchTimer.com](http://www.WatchTimer.com)

**Mumford Micro Systems**  
3933 Antone Road  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110  
**(805) 687-5116**

## 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](mailto:welchdoc@yahoo.com) **Ph: 1-206-364-7374**

*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**

### **- Chronometer -**

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

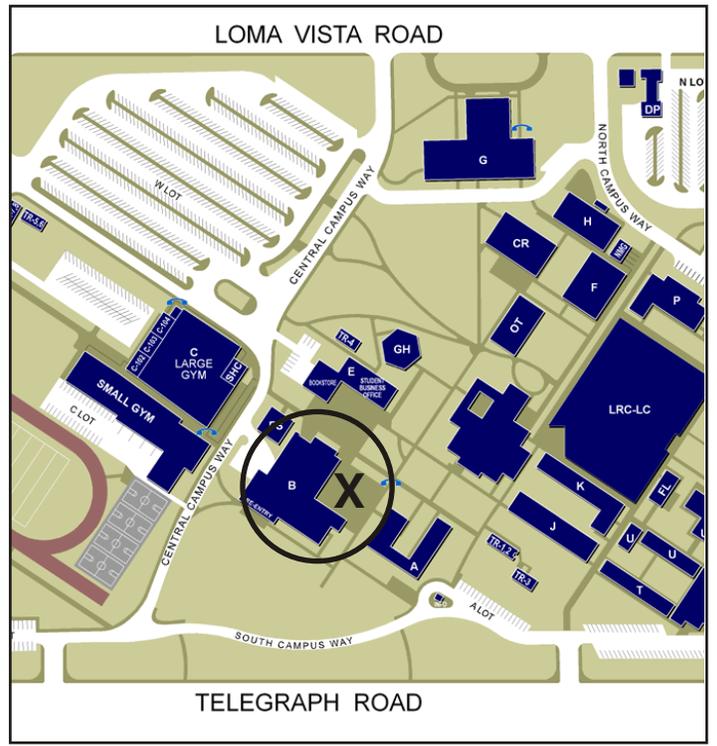
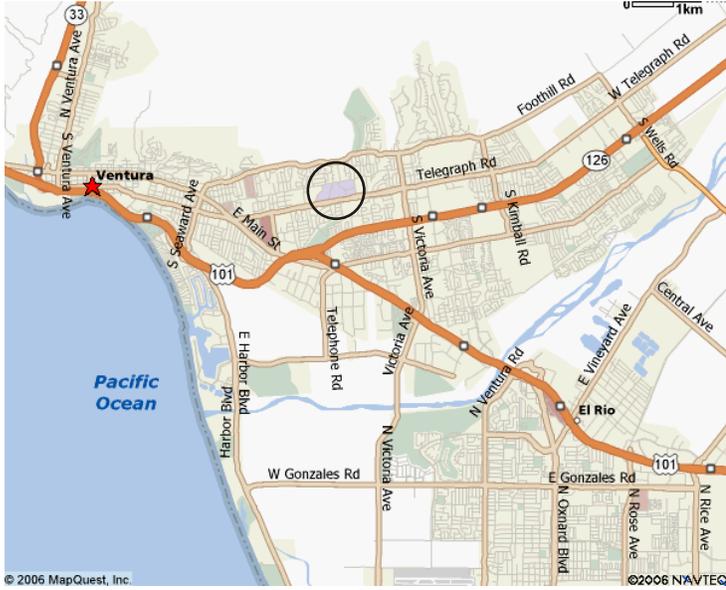
Please contact: Giorgio Perissinotto  
E-mail: [giorgio@spanport.ucsb.edu](mailto:giorgio@spanport.ucsb.edu)

### **- 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.



**March 2011 Issue**

**NEXT MEETING**  
**MAR 20**



**Chrono Times**  
 If Undeliverable return To:  
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 Northridge, CA 91325