

NAWCC NEWS

National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors
Atlanta Chapter 24
April, 2010



Josiah Percy Stevens Watchmaker, Inventor, Clockmaker

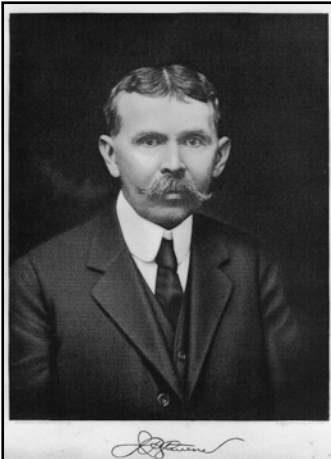
by Katherine Kittle

I'd like to introduce you to J.P. Stevens, a soft-spoken, lightly built man who believed in himself, hard work, and, above all, persistence. Through a combination of determination, luck, and self-education, he made a name for himself that survives today. He was born March 23, 1852 on his father's plantation in Liberty County, Georgia, just in time to miss being called to serve in the Civil War. J.P. Stevens was a tireless inventor, a successful businessman, a unique clockmaker, and the only watch manufacturer of the South.



Katherine Kittle

Stevens' Early Years - At age eight, in 1860, Stevens was already showing a mechanical aptitude with steam engines and watch repair. His mother, Ann Quarterman Stevens, died when he was only 14 years old. Although he attended schools in neighboring Quitman and Bainbridge counties, and later studied literature in France, his mother had always been his educational mentor.



The young Stevens tried his luck as a sawmill worker at 16, but with his slight frame it did not go well. He began working in a watchmaker's shop in Newton, where he met J. Howell Williams,

who became a lifelong friend and mentor, and, later, a stockholder in his watch factory.

The 1870 Georgia census, when J.P. was 17, places the Stevens family at Halcyondale, Screven County. At this time, Stevens was employed by a watchmaker in Macon, but by age 19 he had bought the owner out.

In Atlanta - In 1879, Atlanta was the largest city in Georgia. Less tied to agriculture, it was a city of commercial enterprises and a magnet for young men wanting to work in the stores. Moreover, it was a rail distribution center for southern and northern goods, where the need for precise railroad timing would be critical for the growth of the watch making industry. According to the 1879 *Illustrated History of Atlanta*, "A nervous energy permeates all classes of the people and all departments of trade, and the spirit of enterprise never sleeps!"

Stevens found employment with jeweler George Sharpe Jr., owner of the largest jewelry store in the city. There, Stevens gained knowledge in business, engraving, marketing and watch-

making. With a monthly salary of \$125, he continued to study horology, reading trade journals from France - even studying while standing up in order to prevent himself from falling asleep.

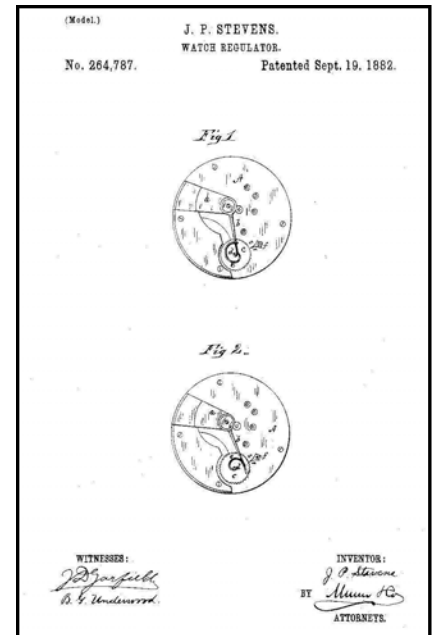
J. P. Stevens and Co. - After four years, Stevens rented a room over Sharpe's store for his own jewelry shop. His brother, L. O. Stevens, worked with him and also for George Sharpe. In 1876 Sharpe's business went under, and Sharpe abruptly left town. Stevens took over Sharpe's business, calling it J. P. Stevens and Co.

About 1879, J. P. Stevens purchased partially finished watch movements from Hampden Watch Co. in Springfield, MA, to be finished in Atlanta. He shortly employed W. H. Todd, an Englishman and an exceptional watchmaker who had previously worked for E. Howard and Company.

In March, 1882, Stevens applied for a patent on his new regulator and received it that September. Most of his regulators were a spiral-shaped groove on a disk, but there are examples of heart- or apple-shaped grooves as well.

J. P. Stevens Watch Co. - By June, 1882, J. P. Stevens had purchased the Bowman Watch machinery. In three days' time he organized the watch company as a separate entity from his jewelry house. He also purchased machinery from the American Watch and Tool Company of Waltham, MA, and C. T. Sloan of Newark, NJ. Although he had a number of backers, he himself was president, and his brother L.O. was secretary until 1885, when he discontinued the business. Thus, the "originals" (those J. P. Stevens watches numbered consecutively from 1 to 169) may have been made from late 1882 or early 1883 until spring of 1885. They were originally sold only in the Southern states.

During this time, he moved to the corner of Whitehall and Alabama Streets, completing a two-story factory building with a staff of 18 employees in the spring of 1883. Around this time, the model for the original J. P. Stevens regulator watch was developed. It had similarities to the Bowman and the Lancaster Watch models, including the Adams & Perry model that Ezra Bowman had helped to design. The Stevens serial number, between 1 and



(Continued on page 2)

Minutes of NAWCC Atlanta Meeting: February 7, 2010

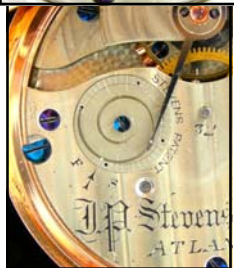
- President Chris Brown called the meeting to order following a lively auction led by Brooks Coleman.
- Chris Brown asked for introductions of new attendees. Guests: Amy & Todd Caldwell, Russ Fleenor, Michael Garland, Bob & Maria Harms and Larry Lyskowinski introduced themselves.
- Tom Noesges read the Minutes of the December 6, 2009 meeting. The Minutes were unanimously approved as read.
- Donna Kalinkiewicz gave the Treasurer's Report, including our account's beginning balance, receipts, expenses paid and ending balance. The club acquired an IRS EIN number in keeping with the requirements for our 501(C)3 non-profit status.
- Old Business
 - ◆ Bernie Tekippe announced that the April 2010 issue of the NAWCC Bulletin will headline the Tekippe Regulator. Bernie suggested we ask for donations to the Annual NAWCC Fund. to match or exceed the \$111 average.
 - ◆ Tom Noesges gave a status on the Field Suitcase Workshops and reported there is no progress on the Atlanta School of Horology.
 - ◆ George Waterhouse is seeking volunteers to work on the Georgia Historic Clocks Project.
 - ◆ Pete Schreiner gave a status on the Mansion Clocks Project.
 - ◆ Chris Brown nominated Pete Schreiner for the position of Director. A motion was made for approval of the nomination, seconded and carried unanimously by the membership.
 - ◆ Chris Brown announced that Dixie Chapter 16 is hosting the Henry Horton joint chapters meeting.
 - ◆ A donation of \$400 to the American Watch & Clock Museum for the Adopt-A-Clock was approved by the membership.
- Program
 - ◆ George Waterhouse explained the extent of restoration work he did to a Seth Thomas Pillar & Scroll clock.
 - ◆ Frank Lindauer gave a Show & Tell on his Mastercrafted novelty clocks (see article in this publication).
 - ◆ George Waterhouse introduced Katherine Kittle to deliver her research on the history of J.P. Stevens Atlanta's Watchmaker, Inventor & Clockmaker (see article in this publication).

J.P. Stevens Watchmaker, Inventor

(continued from page 1)



169, is located close to the center wheel. According to Katherine Kittle's research, the lowest number found has been No. 10 and the highest is 72. The "original" Stevens watches were nickel, 3/4-plate, lever-set, 16-size, and fit standard Elgin cases.

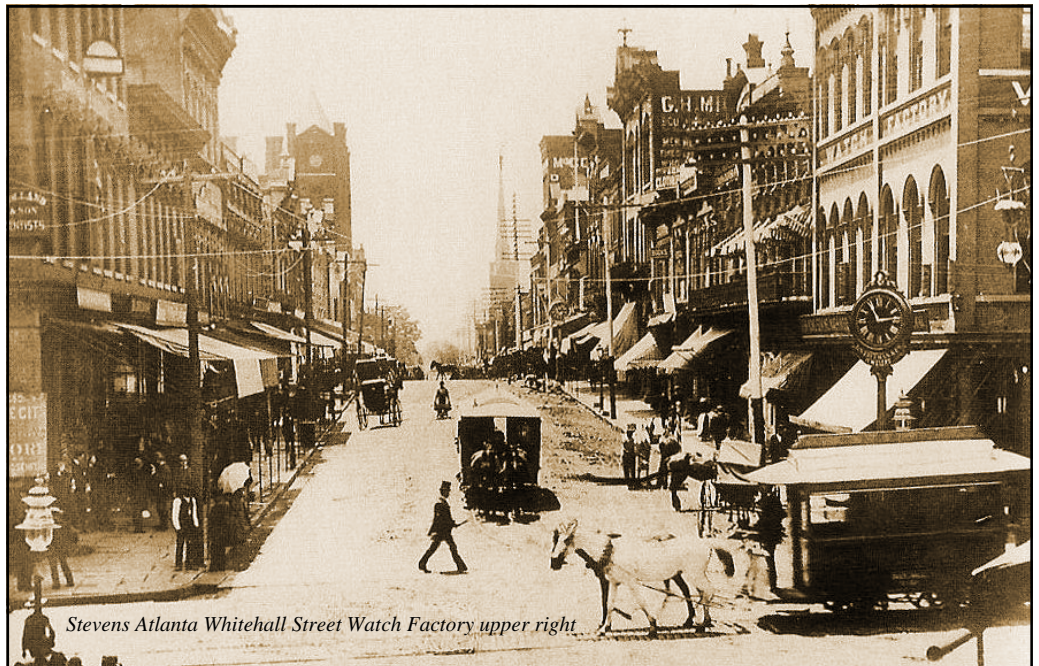


Stevens added his regulator to his own watch, as well as the following mostly 18-size watches: Hamp-

den, Swiss models, Aurora, Columbus, Elgin, Hamilton, Illinois, New York "Bond" model, Potter, Rockford, and Waltham. Many of these examples have not been documented, however. A ladies' line of 6-size watches was also available, but without the added Stevens regulators.

On June 10, 1884, the firm of J. P. Stevens and Co. purchased all the stock of the J. P. Stevens Watch Co. held by four prominent Atlanta businessmen who were not members of the firm, giving J. P. Stevens and Co. full control. They leased a four-story building on the corner of Whitehall and Alabama Streets, devoting the top two floors to watch making and the bottom two floors to the jewelry store. Here they turned out about 10 movements per day ranging in price from twenty to one hundred dollars each.

In spring 1885, Stevens discontinued the watch company due to production disruptions by his workmen. He insisted, according to a 1925 article in *The American Jeweler*, that his company did not fail, but a conscious decision had been made to discontinue it. In October 1885 a further blow occurred with the death of J. C. Freeman Sr., a large stockholder of both companies. Due to litigation of the heirs, Stevens withdrew from the jewelry and watch companies and on November 1, 1885, sold his shares to D. N. Freeman and Co. – which failed itself in spring of 1887.



Stevens Atlanta Whitehall Street Watch Factory upper right

J.P. Stevens & Bro. - Stevens established another jewelry store at this time, toward the end of 1885, as J. P. Stevens and Brother, retail jewelers. In 1899, this company was sold to his

(Continued on page 3)

J.P. Stevens Watchmaker, Inventor

(Continued from page 2)

employees, V. R. Davis and Myron E. Freeman, who founded the company of Davis and Freeman.

J. P. Stevens Engraving Co. - Sometime before 1896, Stevens established his next and last company, the J. P. Stevens Engraving Company. He built, patented, and successfully operated a steel die embossing press which could inscribe a variety of typefaces directly on to the plate.

In 1898 he developed the “first automatic press for printing wedding invitations and visiting cards from copper plates.”

Six years later, in 1904, came the most important of his engraving inventions—the first machine for cutting letters in copper plates. This machine, the basis of his eventual financial success, revolutionized the industry. By the time of his death, this concept was in common use all over the country, and dies cut on Stevens’ machines were in use until the early 1980s.

Stevens Clockmaker - Stevens embarked on a third career in the 1920s. In a basement workshop at his home on 10th Street in Atlanta, and using window light enhanced by tiles, he created six

long case clocks, four of which have been located. These clocks each feature a different style pendulum and bob, and are single train timepieces.

According to Stevens, he did not want to make a striking clock, as he did not want to hint to his guests that it might be time to leave. Never sold, his clocks were



Stevens Clockmaker

given away to family members and friends.

The clocks were built between 1923 and 1927. Three have Graham deadbeat escapements and three have pinwheel escapements. Because Stevens was an accomplished engraver, some of the dials are beautifully engraved -- four with Arabic numerals and



two with Roman numerals. An interesting feature on one of his clocks is the hands, spelling out his initials JPS on the minute hand and the date 1925 on the hour hand.

Stevens made several experiments with pendulums. To quote Stevens, “As a general rule, the inventor is a poor man for logical reasons. He may

have a one track mind, excluding everything but the goal he is seeking. He may use his last cent to perfect his invention, only to find at last that his machine or invention is too expensive for prof-

itable use.” He also believed that watch and clockmaking were more of an endeavor “in the field of scientific accomplishment,” than a mere trade or occupation.

Personal - He was a charter member of the Capital City Club and a member of the Piedmont Driving Club. Fluent in French, he had a pleasant singing voice and sang in more than one choir. He was a member of the Horological Institute of America, a member of its advisory committee, and was elected president in May 1927. He believed that horology should be characterized by “inventive ability” and “artistic accomplishment,” and he decried the commercialization of the industry.

The Horological Review had this to say about Stevens’ demeanor: “It was the writer’s privilege to come in contact with a modest, soft spoken little man, unobtrusive and unpretentious, who said he had begun life as a watchmaker.” Humorous insight into his character comes from Dr. Barclay Stephens. He relates that Stevens’ shop was beside that of a young druggist, Asa Candler, who was developing soda mixtures. Candler asked if Stevens could advance him \$500 for a half interest, but Stevens declined. The soda mixture became Coca Cola. Stevens’ comment upon telling the story, was, “I guess it’s just as well for me that I didn’t go into it—it isn’t good for a man to have too much money.”

J. P. Stevens passed away at age 77 on March 25, 1929, and is buried in West View Cemetery in Atlanta. From a hard start he succeeded against the odds of his time. He was a cultured and educated gentleman of rare talents. He utilized self-education, hard work, and his travels to improve his mind and life. His legacy of inventiveness remains with us today. In business his name survives today with his engraving and fine stationery company in Atlanta. From his beautiful, fine watches, to his precision mechanical engraving machines, to his large fascinating clocks, we observe lasting signs of this great man.

Josiah Percy Stevens - Southern watchmaker, inventor, world traveler, scholar, and clockmaker—his name is an honorable name to remember in Southern Horology. ■

Mastercrafters Clocks - Show & Tell

Frank Lindauer tells of the history of some exquisite Mastercrafters novelty clocks. He showed a small sampling—a roaring fireplace, a delicate bal-



lerina and a steam engine where the engineer pulls the trains whistle. As expected with these highly animated clocks, Frank has to do a bit of troubleshooting. ■



Groaner by George

Waterhouse What did the Leaning Tower of Pisa say to Big Ben? If you’ve got time, I’ve got the inclination! ■

NOTICE: Next Meeting April 11

Up-Coming Programs & Presentations

April 2010

A Small Market Segment - Kent Singer will present the developments of a small watch market niche during the first decade of the 20th century.

The 16-size, 17-jewel, open-face, lever-set, standard watch, adjusted to five positions, filled this small segment of the railroad market. After looking at the forces that generated the niche, the program explores the watches that were built to fill it.

In conjunction with this, the Watch Focus Group will display these timepieces at the meeting. Those members having examples are urged to bring them to the meeting. ■

June 2010

Polishing and Lacquering Brass - Henry Newman will give a live demonstration on the chemicals, techniques and procedures he uses to attain a high and lasting gloss on brass. ■

August 2010

The Tower Clocks of Salisbury Cathedral - Jim Coulson will give a presentation that will focus on what is probably the oldest clock in existence. This will be a 35mm slide presentation and will include a tour of the cathedral. ■

New Members & Guests

The Officers, Directors and our entire membership welcomes you!

Amy and Todd Caldwell come from Cartersville, GA hoping to get an appraisal on their elaborate French clock and left with a lovely grandfather clock!

Russ Fleenor came from Loganville, GA and just enjoyed the club so much that he became a member. Thank you Russ.

Michael Garland drove over 60 miles to visit us from beautiful White, GA. Glad you made the trip Michael.

Maria and Bob Harms of Lawrenceville, GA enjoyed the lively spirits of our club. Thanks so much.

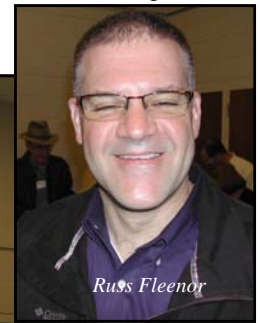
Larry Lyskowski a resident of McDonough, GA was not new to our watch and clock programs and today, became a member. Welcome aboard Larry. ■



Amy & Todd Caldwell



Maria & Bob Harms



Russ Fleenor



Michael Garland



Larry Lyskowski



FREE STUFF

The Door Prize raffled off during our February 2010 meeting was won by Donald Schwarz. The prize was the Tran Duy Ly book "American Clocks-Volume 2" Congratulations Donald.

Every person attending (guest and member alike) has the opportunity to win a Chapter 24 Door Prize. ■



Donald Schwarz

Treasurer's Report

By Donna Kalinkiewicz, Treasurer, Chapter 24

Seventy-five folks attended our February meeting. This number included seven guests.

Bernie Tekippe challenged the membership to donate the dollars in their pockets for NAWCC. At the end of the meeting we had collected \$171.

The chapter also donated \$400 to the American Clock and Watch Museum, for the, adopt a clock program. We requested that the Atlanta Chapter 24 name stay on the clock that was part of the Ward Francillon collection. ■

Classified Section

This area is dedicated to advertising for Chapter 24 members. It is, of course, free to members.

WANTED WANTED WANTED WANTED WANTED

- 🕒 One OG iron weight. Call: George Waterhouse - (770)-939-5799
- 🕒 French clock movements—complete with bezel, glass and ready to install in 4 1/2" diameter opening. Not running is OK. Call: Tom Liady - (404) 873-4400
- 🕒 Used Franz Hermle, 451-050 85 cm set of works that I can cannibalize for parts. Email: Allan Imes - AllanImesSr@aol.com

If you would like to place an ad in this space for your items needed, services you offer or horological items for sale, contact
Tom Noesges -
email Thomas@Noesges.com or call (770) 262-0883.

NAWCC Atlanta Chapter 24 Officers and Directors

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Christian H. Brown | President | Browncg@Bellsouth.net | (770) 962-7480 |
| George Waterhouse | Vice-President | ClockDoc35@yahoo.com | (770) 939-5799 |
| Thomas M. Noesges, Jr. | Secretary | Thomas@Noesges.com | (770) 262-0883 |
| Donna Kalinkiewicz | Treasurer | DMKTimes2@Comcast.net | (770) 321-1057 |
| Peter G. Schreiner III | Director | PGS3@Mindspring.com | (404) 633-4772 |
| Carol Tekippe | Past President | TBnie@Comcast.com | (404) 538-7286 |
| Bernie Tekippe | Director | TBnie@Comcast.com | (404) 538-7302 |
| Brenda Wiggins | Director | Brenda232@Comcast.net | (770) 979-5197 |

Chapter Educational Opportunities

The Atlanta School of Horology (Chapter 24's educational organization) will hold its first class on clock education on Friday, May 14, 2010 and Friday May 21, 2010. The specifics for this first class are:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| TITLE | AC101 Beginner 8-Day Spring-Wind Clock |
| DESCRIPTION | The class will use the 8-day open-spring pendulum American Kitchen Clock to provide hands-on training for disassembly, repairs, lubrication, time & strike setup, assembly and testing. |
| INSTRUCTOR | Bill Knaak |
| LOCATION | City of Duluth Activity Center |
| DATE & TIME | Friday, May 14, 2010 & Friday, May 21, 2010 - 8:00AM - 5:00PM |
| COST | \$100 per Student |
| CLASS SIZE | Minimum 3 students & maximum 6 students. |
| DURATION | Two eight-hour days. |

Classes are held at the City of Duluth Activity Center, 3180 Buntun Road, Duluth, GA. If you are interested in the classes, contact Tom Noesges at Thomas@Noesges.com. ■

| CLASS DESCRIPTION | DATE |
|--|------------------|
| F202 Lathe II for Clock Repair Course Instructor: Joel Dunipace | Apr. 23-26, 2010 |
| AC101 Beginner 8-Day Spring Wind Course Instructor: Bill Knaak | May 14&21, 2010 |



F101 Intro to Basic Time & Strike - Class of February 5, 2010
Back: Tom Dod, Armond Groves, Larry Patrick, Greg Horning, Kelsey Downum. Center: Joel Dunipace, Rose Bezenah, Karen Benson, Bill Knaak. Front: Robert Collom, Lloyd Foster.

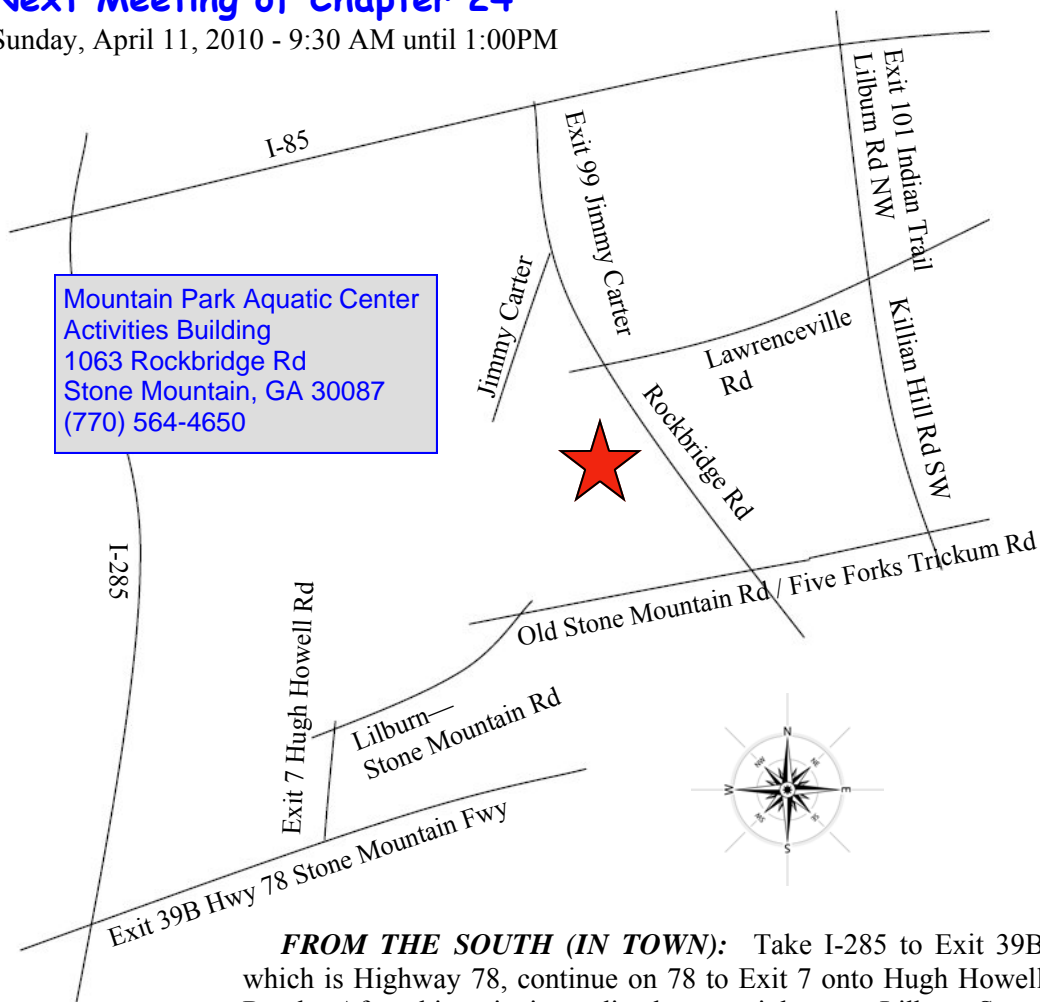


F200 Fundamental Skills & Lathe Prep - Class of March 12, 2010
Back: Blair Stanicek, Kathy Talbot, Jim Coulson, Hank Scott, John Wagner, Jae Martin. Center: Greg Gorton, Rich Guemmer, Joel Dunipace, Bill Knaak. Front: Tom Noesges.

F301 Intro to Basic Pocket Watch - Class of March 19, 2010
Back: Leonard Hines, William Johnston, Lindsay Rasberry, Lehr Dircks, Rose Bezenah. Center: Donna Kalinkiewicz, Robert Lucido, Thomas Koch, Charlie Russell. Front: Robert Collom.

Next Meeting of Chapter 24

Sunday, April 11, 2010 - 9:30 AM until 1:00PM



FROM THE SOUTH (IN TOWN): Take I-285 to Exit 39B which is Highway 78, continue on 78 to Exit 7 onto Hugh Howell Road. After this exit, immediately turn right onto Lilburn-Stone Mountain Road. After 0.2 mile, turn right onto Old Stone Mountain Road. Continue to the intersection of Rockbridge and Five Forks Trickum. Turn left on Rockbridge Rd. The Aquatic Center is two blocks north on left.

The Atlanta Chapter of the NAWCC typically meets the first Sunday of February, April, June, August, October and December. As part of the Mid-South Group, it also sponsors the regional meeting in Chattanooga on Labor Day Weekend each year, in rotation with the Alabama and Tennessee chapters.

FROM THE NORTH-WEST: Take the I-85 east exit from I-285. Exit 99 and turn right on Jimmy Carter (Hwy 140). Continue and bear left onto Rockbridge Rd. Aquatic Center will be on right—two blocks before Five Forks Trickum Rd.

FROM CUMMING / HALL COUNTY: Take Exit 101 Indian Trail / Lilburn Rd NW off southbound I-85. As you cross Hwy 29 Lawrenceville Rd, Indian Trail becomes Killian Hill Rd. Turn right onto Five Forks Trickum Rd.

Turn right onto Rockbridge Rd. Aquatic Center is two blocks north on left.

Tom Noesges, Secretary
NAWCC Chapter 24
5211 Willow Creek Overlook
Woodstock, GA 30188

Membership paid through...