

## Telling Time

by Bob Frishman (MA)

I strongly urge NAWCC members who enjoy public speaking to spread the word. Public speaking venues benefit the speaker, the audience, and the larger horological community.

I have addressed more than 90 groups so far. Some are NAWCC chapters and horological meetings, and they often hear about a past Ward Francillon Time symposium I have organized, or an upcoming one that I encourage them to attend. However, most are non-technical timekeeping talks to general audiences at museums, historical societies, service organizations, adult learning classes, libraries, senior centers, and other non-profits.

I don't charge for these presentations, but I find them greatly rewarding. Not only do I spread the word on horology, but I also have promoted my repair business, found opportunities to see and buy important timepieces, and helped organizations and individuals identify their clocks and watches. Many times, the talks are professionally recorded by local cable TV stations and aired in those communities.

My one-hour lectures are richly illustrated with more than 100 projected pictures quickly advanced. The talks are continually updated and specially tailored for each audience, and they show much more than clocks, watches, and movements. Included are ships (including the Mayflower and Titanic), portraits of key people like Christian Huygens and Simon Willard, church towers, book covers, NAWCC marts, and of course *Horology in Art* examples of clocks and watches in famous paintings. The images are stored in my iPad, which I connect to my projector and shine onto my screen; the venues do not need to provide that equipment.

I bring more than pictures. I have an 8-day Connecticut brass movement ticking on a Plexiglas stand. I pass around an antique Terry-style wood movement. I line up reference books by Ly, Spittler, Loomes, and Shugart. I give away auction catalogs, past issues of the *Watch & Clock Bulletin*, parts and supplies catalogs, and even complete Hermle movements (with



Bob Frishman conducting a presentation at the Dartmouth Historical Society. PHOTO COURTESY OF RON PRICE.

mainsprings let down) that I've replaced in modern mantel and grandfather clocks.

If the venue is an historical society, I ask if they have clocks and watches in their collections. If yes, I examine them with their curators and include the objects in my talks. The societies are grateful to learn about what they have but know little about. I have uncovered real gems in those local repositories.

A bonus attraction is a pre-advertised "Roadshow" verbal appraisal session for audience timepieces.

These items are on view during my talk, and I point them out as they relate to what I am saying. After my final image and audience questions, I move down the table of clocks brought by hopeful attendees. Mostly I apologize for how common their cherished possessions are, but sometimes we get excited. A rare Howard gold pocket watch probably tops the list; it was accompanied by a penciled list of townspeople who presented the watch to a local hero in the late 1800s. An English bracket clock, not carried in but described to me and soon afterwards driven to my shop for repair, was signed by *the* John Harrison. It had been missing since it was sold in New York City in 1940. My article about this discovery was in the January/February 2014 *Watch & Clock Bulletin*.

Although I do not charge for these evaluations, the sponsors sometimes use them as fundraisers, asking a modest donation for each object appraised. The items I see at my lectures sometimes come to me later for sale, or the owners afterwards bring me the really good things they had left at home.

My lectures are winners for everybody: the groups always are looking for good speakers (who don't charge big fees); horology and the NAWCC receive a strong plug; and the audiences are educated and entertained. I get publicity, new contacts, and cookies. I would be happy to share details about my experiences, pictures, topics, and resources to anybody who may find them useful. You can also visit my website to see the lectures that I offer: <http://bell-time.com/lectures.html>.