

Horology Meets the “Makers”

by Bob Frishman, FNAWCC

“Where are the young people?” We hear this all the time at our Chapter meetings. Well, hundreds of thousands of them are in the Maker movement, spawned in 2005 with the first publication of *Make*: magazine and continuously energized by hundreds of Maker Faires worldwide.

The website makerfaire.com describes a Maker Faire as “the greatest show (and tell) on Earth — a family-friendly festival of invention, creativity and resourcefulness ... Part science fair, part county fair, and part something entirely new, Maker Faire is an all-ages gathering of tech enthusiasts, crafters, educators, tinkerers, hobbyists, engineers, science clubs, authors, artists, students, and commercial exhibitors. All of these “makers” come to Maker Faire to show what they have made and to share what they have learned.”

My colleague, Dug North, and I exhibited clock repair September 23-24, 2017, at the World Maker Faire in New York City. Tens of thousands of people of all ages saw our table of movements, tools, and publications. Hundreds stopped to ask about our centuries-old technology, displayed amidst promoters of futuristic robots, 3D printers, video displays, and lasers. Hundreds more took the introductory handout we prepared. NAWCC Executive Director Tom Wilcox joined us one day to witness the phenomenon.

Will all these people start collecting and fixing old clocks? No. But would even one of them have given old mechanical clocks a second thought if we had not been there?

As I learned displaying vintage clocks and watches at antiques shows, people need to see us—they will



Figure 1. Dug North in the Gear Time display. Note the working oversize escapement model Dug built and the running ogee with movement exposed. COURTESY OF BOB FRISHMAN.

not seek us out on their own. My personal story of horology began by an accidental visit in 1980 to somebody’s basement shop; Dug’s began when he was drawn into my booth at an antiques show. We, as missionaries of horology, need to be out there where present and future “makers” can find us.

The next flagship Maker Faire is in San Mateo, CA, in May 2018. “Maker” tables are free. We should be there, and we should be at some of the dozens of local and regional Maker events listed at <https://makerfaire.com/map/>. We now know where the young people are; go meet them!



Figure 2. Future horologists? COURTESY OF MAKER FAIRE AND HEP SVADJA.