

Horological ham

Has Gibson got clocks? You bet!

by Shirley Whittington
Time is measured by the ticking of clocks, and man, over the years has devised ingenious and beautiful ways of keeping track of the fleeting moments.

Six thousand years ago, the sun dial was employed to mark the hours. The first mechanical clock was built for King Charles of France in 1360.

A Midland man, Bill Gibson has collected a mini-museum of interesting and beautiful timepieces. He understands each of his clocks intimately because most of them have been repaired or restored at his workbench. He has dozens of finely tooled instruments, filed away in a bank of plastic drawers, and dozens of timekeeping treasures have had their faces lifted and their innards set in smooth ticking order under Gibson's hand.

"I'm a horological ham" he says. "A horologist is one who studies, repairs restores, maintains and regulates clocks." To a horologist, a train is not transportation. It's the well ordered series of meshing gears that makes a clock work. The case is the cabinet that encloses the train, and the escapement is the device which regulates the driving force of weights.

Horological hams understand these things, and delight in their well ordered perfection. "A ham," says Gibson, "will busy himself for two or three evenings at a workbench to complete inadequately what a craftsman with a lifetime of experience can do in half an hour."

On the hour at the Gibson household, the air is filled with chimes and delicate musical refrains. There are fifty clocks in the family, and almost every one of them has a different way of announcing the hour.

Grandfather came smashing down

The tall grandfather clock in the front hall has a special sentimental appeal. It was made — cherrywood case and all — by Mrs. Gibson's great, great, grandfather who was an early Pennsylvania clockmaker. When the tall clock was first moved into a forced air heated environment, the cat gut suspension within dried out. The Gibsons still remember the night the suspension snapped, and the huge weight crashed to the floor destroying the

ceiling plaster in the room below. Gibson repaired it, with fine picture wire.

A turn of the century catalogue clock was completely rusted, inside and out, when Gibson discovered it. He restored it to gleaming perfection, and like all the other Gibson clocks, it now keeps perfect time.

A French Diplomat's clock is an early version of the alarm clock, designed by Napoleon to get sleepy military personnel up in time.

Gibson's 1837 skeleton clock has its brass works on view inside a huge glass bell. The clapper

which strikes the hour is in the shape of a battle axe.

A Louis XVI ormolu clock with porcelain inlay was ticking away during the French Revolution.

The Viennese wall hung Regulator clock carries the Hapsburg eagle atop its case.

An early American school clock hangs across the room from an international cousin — a slightly smaller copy mass produced in Japan at the turn of the century.

There is a Danish long case clock, several Swiss clocks, and a German cuckoo clock which gives you a choice of The Blue Danube or a theme from a Beethoven Symphony, on the hour.

Bill Gibson has some advice for would-be clock

collectors. "Don't ever try to take an old clock apart," he says. "When a clock's mainspring explodes in your face, it's like jumping feet first into a bathtub full of razor blades. Take a sick clock to a reliable repairman."

He also urges collectors to choose clocks which fit into their particular decor and life style. "Unless you become a devout collector," he says, "you won't be building a clock room. You must allow the clocks to find their place in your home, and your life." Each of Gibson's clocks has its own niche or cranny.

Bill Gibson, the Horological ham, is a student of time and a man who always has time for his hobby.

Setting grandfather's ticker



Clock collectibles

DANCING at the LEGION HALL in Penetanguishene

Visitors and guests are welcome to these Club Room dances EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT 13 Simcoe St., Penetanguishene

PENETANG CURLING CLUB MON., Aug. 1st 8:30 p.m.

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Setting grandfather's ticker

Association for mentally retarded plan casino cruise for August 6th

Are you interested in a gala evening cruise aboard the David Richard with dancing, refreshments and a chance to try your luck at the gambling tables? The Huronia Association for the Mentally Retarded is planning a Floating Casino Night for Saturday, August 6th.

This imaginative venture in fund raising is being sponsored by the Association to raise needed funds to complete their new ARC Industries workshop, and to establish a residence for retarded adults. For \$25 a couple, supporters can enjoy the cruise, dancing

and lunch. A bar and gaming tables will be available to add to enjoyment.

The Huronia Association is experiencing a year of tremendous growth in their programs. The new workshop will accommodate nearly twice the number of the existing building. Planning is underway for a variety of types of accommodation for children and adults. A developmental day-care program is being planned for school aged children who are too handicapped to attend the Huron Park classes. New counselling and assessment services

as well as being provided to retarded persons and their families.

The Association is receiving government grants for much of their work. They continue to depend, however, on the understanding and financial support of the local community. Why not get behind them and enjoy a delightful evening by arranging for a party of friends to go on the cruise?

Tickets are available now from Jean Leavens or Anne Parker, or at the Arcade Pharmacy in Midland and Gignac's Children's Wear in Penetanguishene.

Daughter-in-Law opens August 1

The Daughter-in-Law by D. H. Lawrence, to be presented by the Gryphon Theatre Company, Barrie, August 1-6, is a warm, intimate look at the interaction of family relationships and a mining crisis in England's Midlands in 1912. It is a play about working class people in real situations and the playwright, in one of his earliest works, has captured exactly the rhythm and cadence of the speech of that time and place.

The main theme is the struggle by Minnie, the daughter-in-law, played by Nuala Fitzgerald, to

get her weak husband Luther, played by Dan MacDonald, away from his mother's apron-strings.

The dominating mother, Mrs. Gascoigne is played by Halifax actress Joan Orenstein who has just electrified audiences with her performance as Milly in 'People are Living There' by Athol Fugard for Gryphon Theatre.

Her other son, Joe, also under her thumb, is played by John Peters of

Montreal and Doris Petrie plays the neighbour Mrs. Purdy whose daughter is in the family way.

Performances are at Georgian College Theatre, Barrie, Highway 400 at the Duckworth exit, Monday - Saturday 8:30 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday matinee at 2:00 p.m. Box office at theatre is open 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday - Friday during rehearsal weeks and 9 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. during show week. (705) 728-4613.

The Gryphon Theatre Company Barrie

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Maloney busy

Toronto, July 8, 1977 — Arthur Maloney, Q.C., the Ombudsman of Ontario, today released figures showing that a total of more than 1,000 complaints were received by his office during the spring and summer series of public hearings just ended.

The on-going province-wide program of hearings — designed to make the services of the Ombudsman available to the public throughout the province — has finished for the current season.

and will resume this October with a full schedule of communities to be visited released later this summer.

More detailed statistics — including all aspects of the work of the Office of the Ombudsman — will be published in the Second Report of the office, to be released by Mr. Maloney later this month.

In all, 65 Ontario cities, towns and villages have been visited by the Ombudsman's staff since the start of the public hearings program in November, 1975.

CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP

Registration is still open for the 3-day children's summer workshop at the

HISTORIC NAVAL AND MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS

- for children 10 to 12 years
- cost: 25 cents a per day
- register for Aug. 2-3-4

Aug. 9-10-11 or
Aug. 16-17-18

PICK-UP REGISTRATION FORMS AT:

Midland Library or YMCA,
Penetanguishene Library or
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