



AWCI Trade Show/Publicity Committee
2010 Annual Report

Submitted by Henry Kessler, chairperson

Three years ago, AWCI began exhibiting at the JCK Las Vegas Show and two years ago at the InStore Chicago Smart Show. This is important, because it marks the first time our organization has stepped forward, showing its face and staking its rightful claim as the American entity responsible for training and certifying watchmakers and clockmakers for the 21st Century.

You would be proud of AWCI, too. Our trade-show booth display looks first class, with tremendous graphics. Over the years, AWCI members, employees and sponsors, representing some of the best and the brightest individuals involved in horology, have staffed our booth. All of this was made possible, thanks to the generosity of AWCI's Industry Advisory Board and numerous sponsors. And it is important to note, our organization has managed to obtain the trade show exhibit displays and attend these shows at virtually no cost to our members.

The CW21 and CC21 programs have been progressing, and a new breed of professional watchmakers and clockmakers has been born. While the number of AWCI certified professionals is destined to continue growing, there are members of AWCI's Board of Directors and IAB that have come to realize that the future growth of horology in America and in turn for AWCI, may be related to expanding AWCI's membership and training programs to the benefit of all levels of horology.

Everyday, thousands of watches and clocks are repaired throughout America by technicians possessing all levels of expertise, ranging from Swiss trained watchmakers with 4 years of college level horology (I refer to these people as the PHDs of our industry) to self-taught experts - and virtually everything in between. One of the best ways to reach the thousands of people involved in watch repair is via their employers, watch dealers. Most watch dealers are also jewelry dealers. One of the best ways to reach watch technicians employed by watch dealers, in addition to watch wholesales and manufacturers, is by exhibiting at major watch and jewelry industry trade shows. By exhibiting at these shows, we are now actively engaged in marketing our organization. But we have much work yet to do!

At the recent JCK Las Vegas Show, Kessler/Renata offered to sponsor a 45-minute watch battery replacement training program. At practically the last moment, JCK agreed, and offered to arrange to move the beautiful workbench JBorel was exhibiting in our booth, to an area in the JCK technology exhibit hall, set up to accommodate 100 people, with a sound system and support staff. They also offered to advertise our training program on their website, which was indeed helpful.

Our seminar was titled: **"How to cautiously yet profitably replace watch batteries."** Swiss trained watch repair instructor and gemologist Jean-Jacques Mamie acted as our seminar instructor. "JJ" is the owner of a watch service company called Swiss Connection, and a retail jewelry store that operates under his name in Dana Point California. Although proficient with all major brands, Jean-Jacques has worked with Cartier, Piaget, Concord, Corum and other famous brands over the past 30 years.

About 20 people, ranging from watchmakers to retailers that changed a high volume of batteries without ever having received any formal training, attended our seminar.

While the training was indeed interesting, and helpful to those that attended, Jim Lubic and I managed to interview everybody in attendance. We asked questions such as:

- What do you need training in?
- How long would you be willing to send employees away from work for training?
- How far would you ask these staff members to travel?
- How much would you be willing to pay for training?
- What would be the best way for AWCI to package and delivery our training materials for you.

Overwhelmingly, the responses pointed AWCI toward emulating GIA, and their gemological training programs, including correspondence classes, DVDs and printed training materials and regional trade show classes, as well as web based training seminars. The possibility of sending these potential students off to school for weeks or months at a time was simply not a viable option for most employers.

If any of our AWCI and IAB members are willing to help begin the process of creating training materials that could be marketed by AWCI and its IAB members, as web training seminars, DVD training lectures, and printed support materials, please let me know! We need to perform more market research to fully learn what the market needs, yet it is conceivable that we begin with watch battery replacement, water proof testing, watch band replacement, service diagnostics and estimates, and general product knowledge and sales training. One day, AWCI may be selling boxes filled with training materials from our trade show booth, as well as jewelry supply houses around the world.