



Friday, August 7, 2009

AWCI – IAB Meeting.

The following are Henry Kessler's Minutes from the meeting.

In attendance (21):

Bernhard Stoeber – Rolex USA bstoeber@rolexusa.com
Charles Berthiaume – Rolex USA CBerthiaume@rolexusa.com
Don Wester - Jules Borel don@julesborel.com
Gary Borel - Jules Borel gary@julesborel.com
Gehard Loitz Richemont Gehard.Loitz@Richemont.com
Henry Kessler - Kessler / GemOro / Renata hkessler@sykessler.com
Jack Kurdzionak - Boston Watch Corp bostonwatchco@gmail.com
Jerry Faier - AWCI jfclock@worldnet.att.net
Jim Lubic - AWCI jlubic@awci.com
Jon W. Horton, CMW21 PTRC INC. jwhorton.usa@sbcglobal.net
Joseph Juaire - Saint Paul College joseph_juaire@yahoo.com
Klaus Lehmann - Swatch US Klaus.Lehmann@swatchgroup.com
Manuel Yazijian - Manuel Yazijian info@manuelyazijian.com
Pat Cassedy - CasKer pcassedy@casker.com
Paul Borel - Jules Borel Paul@julesborel.com
Peter Foster - Swatch Group peter.foster@swatchgroup.com
Robert Arn - Witschi Robert.arn@witschi.com
Tamara Houk - Swiss Service Center thouk@swisservice.com
Urs Haeni - Witschi urs.haeni@witschi.com
Wes Grau - AWCI wesleygrau@sbcglobal.net
Yoshi Hashimoto - Spring Watch Factory Yoshiwatch1@yahoo.com

Tamara Houk introduced herself and welcomed everybody to this IAB Meeting
All of the attendees introduced themselves.

Don Wester made a motion to accept the minutes from the last meeting.
Klaus Lehmann seconded.
The minutes from the last meeting accepted.

Joseph Juaire said thanks for all of the support, and then apologized for getting off to a late start. AWCI is a professional organization. He thought about his role, and where we are going. Thinking of the role of our organization in our industry. Moving forward, we will be asking for extended support. Our certification program is hailed as a success. He is proud of his AWCI certification, more so than his Wostep certification. It was difficult and rigorous work. He passed in 2004, using all of his skills - like climbing Mt. Everest. Wants more emphasis placed on the AWCI CW21, so that it becomes a recognized credential. Then we must deliver / require continuing education.

When we developed the CW21 program, the depth of knowledge needed was enormous. It takes time! AWCI needs more classroom space, more instructors. How can the IAB offer more support to the organization?

#1) We need to increase membership in our organization. IAB members should consider offering incentives to their employees to join AWCI membership. We represent the best interests of your employees. How can AWCI help to generate this incentive?

#2) Parts suppliers. How can you help AWCI to grow?

Tamara Houk: Next, the report from REC. Jim Lubic offered to help.

Schools participate, 12 members presently. They had their meeting in May in Okmulgee. 5 schools were there. Richemont put on a presentation, talked about their watch-training program, very much like our WT concept. It has 3 levels: 1st watch batteries, waterproof testing, band replacement. Level 2, case refinishing. 3rd level covers movement replacement. It has no mechanical portion - removed. It covers exactly what retail stores need. Even service centers could benefit. In the Spring of 2010, there will be another meeting of REC, at one of the school locations. The watch operators program was developed by WOSTEP for Richemont. It is designed to get techs up to speed in 12 weeks. Cost is \$800. We have 2 new REC members. The Richemont program in Dallas, and the NAWCC joined REC. On AWCI's website, you can see each school, and how to contact them.

Wes Grau, the offered the Chief Examiner's report:

(Only) 1/3rd of exam takers are passing. Overall, there have been 87 exams, 30 people have passed. 39 were full exams, 29 were upgrades, and 19 were retakes from the prior year. Passing is probably up this year over the previous year. There is a trend toward more exam preparation, not to be taken lightly. What needs to be developed for us to be more successful? What should the certification do for the watchmaker? Generate respect, validate skills, encourage the watchmaker to participate in ongoing education. Further develop his skills, ensure proper equipment and training. Avoid regressing. Follow other industries, as our profession evolves. The CW21 should work as a pathway toward obtaining spare parts. For the retailer, it gives them assurance. They have a high level of experience and expertise available. When offering after-sale service, a certain quality level can be expected. This will build public confidence and assurance. Avenue for spare parts. For consumer: Ability of finding a qualified watchmaker via national website. Trust and assurance of the skills of the watchmaker. To the industry: Confidence, ability to meet needs, brand recognition. How does the CW21 differ: Developed in US, specifically for US after sale service. The US is the largest market in the world. Training must be developed for ongoing needs - CEUs. We must have a progressive philosophy. What can industry do for AWCI's certification program? It is not coupled with any one watch company. Elgin and Bulova, gone, needs to come back. What is required for after sale service - better interaction, technical assistance to enhance process. Not just \$\$\$\$. Everything costs, but support is more than money. Relationship with AWCI! Provide instructors and allow them to assess. Many people wanted statistics on pass / fail, for each element. The Board of examiners looks at each area. Wes's big concern is: We have a low pass rate. Does this mean the training process is faulted, or that the level of watchmaker skills in US is low?

Peter Foster: How important is written portion?

Wes Grau: Practical is good, but many fail written/book portion. We are working on ways to help; English can be a problem. (Younger) students do well with written portion. There is an appeals process about certain aspects; concessions can be made due to patterns of test results. Prep work was not stressed enough in the beginning.

Jerry Faier: The BOE was to be the filter for those that were nervous. Don't want to lose those that are good, they want reconsideration. Example: Mechanical watch skills were weak. Allowed them to go back and study for the mechanical portion, then retake. Study first before you take exam! There are no shortcuts. Review process.

Jim Lubic: Nobody said the test was BS, always thought it was very thorough.

Manuel Yazijian: People need to spend more time reading, and must follow procedures and cautions. This is a big problem. Read first!

Henry Kessler: A survey is needed! How much are these graduates earning? Who is hiring them? How much income are they generating for their employers?

Jerry Faier: We are just now getting to the point where we can collect numbers!

Jim Lubic: We have 25 IAB Members. 31 students. (Don't have a breakdown 1st year, 2nd year. REC grads get a 1st yr membership for free. It is hard to get grads to rejoin. Now offering a 50% discount for students... Maybe this will help? Membership is now 2,486 overall. The difference is we now have 76 members less. However, the best point in time to gauge membership numbers is mid October when we send out notices.

Jim Lubic: SAUTA – AWCI is working with them. Spending more time with exams.

Trade Fairs: We did the InStore Show in Chicago. Henry Kessler and his wife Robin helped, as did Tamara. Glenn came in for a day. Wes came to help along with his wife. The show was small, but worthwhile. JCK: We had a different booth location this year, and it was a good move. We had good traffic, but overall, show attendance was down. Pat Cassidy, Gary Borel, plus Michael Klaefiger of Greiner / Vibrograf worked the entire show. We enjoy good show sponsorship and support, along with positive cash flow. We have also been invited to exhibit at the Atlanta SJTA show. The show management said they would help to cover some expenses. They want us to do a training program. This needs to happen, but for now, it is too tough for AWCI to work in to the schedule. The Atlanta Fall show is better than the Spring show for SJTA.

Another benefit AWCI has achieved: We got some very good equipment for our classroom! AWCI now has about \$50,000 in new high-tech equipment from Greiner / Vibrograf and Witschi. Applause to them!

Bernhard Stoeber: We need a good microscope at the school.

Sponsorship to classroom: Mark Jones / Rolex Escapement. Kerry from Rolex Dallas – did timing. Bernhard Stoeber did Chronographs. On Oct 1st we will work with a man from Rolex Geneva. ETA's Alexander Better, comes to us from Switzerland for a course. Breitling is thinking of developing something for us too.

New Business: Chuck Berthiaume thanked Jack and Pat. This year, they proposed 2 nominations: We nominated Henry Kessler for IAB Chairman. For Vice Chairman, we nominated Rick Foster. Jack moved to close, peter closed. Accepted. Thanks to Tamera.

Henry Kessler Report (Inserted)