

# AMERICAN NOTEBOOK

## Clockmaking at Beacham's

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**S**isters, Oregon is an out-of-the-way place for most Americans, located at the edge of the high desert on the east side of the Cascade Mountain Range in the Pacific Northwest. A town of fewer than 1000 permanent residents, it swells on holiday weekends to a population of 10,000 or more. Aside from its tourist appeal, it boasts the homes of several artists and craft workers.

One of these is clockmaker Ed Beacham who has lived in Sisters since 1978 with his wife Kathi. Together they run a retail clock establishment which includes repairs, and is the site of Ed's clockmaking shop. **Figure 1** shows Ed at his work, and I understand that it really is this neat, since he works in an 'on view' environment.

To date, Ed has made 628 clocks—all weight-driven and mostly wall clocks. What makes him unique in my

experience is that he makes the entire clock, starting with his own gear train design and proceeding through all the steps of movement and case making to the spectacular finished product. Other than hobby workers I know of no-one else doing this today in the USA. The other significant American craft clockmakers design and make cases, buying their movements from others.

Production at the Beacham establishment averages about 50 per year, usually in batches of 12, and most are spoken for before they are even made. The clocks have included half-scale reproductions of E Howard regulators and small (28in long) skeletonised Vienna regulators as shown as seen in **figure 2**. These beautiful eight-day timepieces have been very popular, with more than 100 sold. But Ed is an artist, easily bored with making the same thing over and over. He has made large long-running wall regulators too, with calendar and other complications—all to his own designs. He is winner of many first

prizes at NAWCC craft shows as well as international trade shows, competing against European and Japanese makers.

Most recently, Ed has built the clock shown in **figure 3**. It is a year-going regulator with year calendar, day of the week, penny moon, and sunrise/sunset complications. The clock stands 64in tall and is venerated in burlled Chilean laurel.

Again, Ed Beacham makes the cases himself! The trim is black hand-rubbed enamel and the finish on all of the clocks is to a French-polished standard. This particular clock was displayed at the NAWCC National Convention in Anaheim, California. The clock won its blue ribbon, was sold, and then flown to its new home in a specially chartered private aeroplane!

Master clockmaker Beacham is already planning his next clock series—and they will be dandies! If you wish to contact him, the email address is [beachamclockco@bandnet.com](mailto:beachamclockco@bandnet.com)—or mail to Beacham's Clock Co, PO Box, 748 Sisters, Oregon 97759, USA.



Figure 1. Clockmaker Ed Beacham at work.



Figure 2. A small (28in long) skeletonised eight-day Vienna regulator.



Figure 3. Year-going regulator with complications, 64in tall.