

Mardi Gras

The Columbia Jaycees are holding a Halloween Mardi Gras this year, starting Wednesday, October 26th and ending Saturday, October 29th.

The high point of the Mardi Gras will be the 30th anniversary parade on Thursday, starting at 7:00 PM rain or shine. 11 marching bands will play, and Miss PA, Lynn Grote, will appear. \$400 in prizes will be won by some lucky persons.

Other activities of the week will be a market house, a haunted house, and store window decoration by local students.

Solar energy

The engineers at Capitol Campus are holding an energy workshop, dealing with solar heat, on Nov. 2nd. It costs \$45 and lasts all day. Call 787-7753.

...more on clocks

[continued]

curator of the museum. (Mr. Wood had been kind enough to send us a copy of a book he recently co-authored, **Clockmakers of Lancaster County and their Clocks**, and thus aroused our editorial interest in local horology.)

Mr. Wood took us around the museum and pointed out some of the many interesting pieces in the Association collection of 540 clocks and watches.

In addition to standard types of grandfather and wall clocks, there are a variety of water clocks, rolling ball clocks, hickory-dickory-dock clocks, Cuckoo clocks, Mickey Mouse clocks, plastic and wood clocks, an atomic clock, a tower clock, and an organ clock that plays Polka music on the hour.

There's a clock for everyone in the museum, even a wrist watch designed for racing drivers: it has case extensions which lodge it on the narrow part of the wrist, near the thumb. The driver doesn't have to turn his hand to read it.

One especially strange pendulum clock is hidden behind a reproduction of **American Gothic**. The eyes of the farmer and his wife roll back and forth with the swing of the bob.

Even if you aren't interested in clock cases and movements, you'll enjoy this collection: There's a clock for every taste in the museum.

If you like high precision, they have an atomic clock that loses less than one second every 3200 years. (Strangely enough, it doesn't have a second hand!)

Are you kinky? Several "Master and Slave" clocks are exhibited.

Trivia freak? A Mickey Mouse wristwatch might amuse you.

The museum is open the public, free of charge, every weekday from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and on

Saturdays from noon to 5:00. There are no steps, so handicapped persons in wheelchairs can enter easily.

On your way in, take a peek at the IBM System 3 computer in the front room. It keeps track of all records for the N.A.W.C.C. and runs continuously.

Joe Balt

On this side of Chiques Hill, in Maytown, is Joe Balt's clock shop. It's not a museum, but it could qualify as one.

Joe Balt isn't just a clock repairman; he's also a photographer, author, and historian.

Joe is working on a book now which he hopes will tell the public how to identify genuine antique clocks.

"Many people put out good money for an 'antique' clock," Joe told us, "and years later learn it was a fake."

To illustrate his book, Joe takes photos of clock movements in a tiny table-top studio set up in the back of his shop. The set-up creates just the right diffuse lighting needed to shoot clock works with their shiny surfaces.

Along a shelf in the darkroom is a row of old cameras, another of Joe's many interests. Many of them are made of wood.

When the *Times* visited him, Joe spoke at length about early clockmakers in Donegal. There were several in Maytown and one in Mount Joy in the first decades of the 19th Century.

"The introduction of mass production equipment killed off hand-made clocks," he explained.

By 1850 grandfather clocks were crowded out of the market by factory-made New England shelf clocks. Hand-made clocks had been a luxury available to the wealthy, but shelf clocks were cheap enough to be bought by anyone.



Joe Balt in his shop with some of his clocks

One manufacturer of this period decided to make clocks even cheaper by using wood for the works as well as the cases. Joe Balt owns one of these.

Joe showed us another clock with a globe instead of a face, and told us that the inventor of this type thought he had made the ordinary clock face with hands "obsolete." Only a few were ever made.

While hand-made clocks are long gone in most places, they live on in Joe's shop. Besides repairs, Joe occasionally makes a complete set of works for someone. "Some people are willing to pay the price to have an American-made clock works in their antique case," he says.

It takes about one month to make a clock works (which does not include the dial). Joe proceeds in much the manner of the early makers, first calculating and making oversize drawings on a drawing board,

then cutting all the gears on a special machine, and finally finishing and assembling. His equipment is faster, but not different in principle from the old machines.

After learning how much some of the pieces in his shop are worth, we asked Joe if he isn't afraid of being robbed.

"See that TV camera up there on the wall?" he asked. "That's a motion detector. If you moved your finger it would set off an alarm and automatically call the police, if it was switched on."

Pendulum 1776

A good place to browse for old clocks in at **Pendulum 1776** on Locust Street in Columbia. Proprietor Jane Reisinger told us that about 25% of her merchandise consists of old clocks (the rest is antiques and collectibles).

Jane's husband, Clarence, repairs clocks. He taught himself this skill because he wanted to save money.

Jane has so many clocks, she doesn't even know how many are in the store. "I'd guess between 100 and 200," she told us.

Hostetter wins flower show

Lester Hostetter, of 315 N. Barbara St., Mount Joy, took the top prize at the Fall Flower Show, sponsored by the Men's Graden Club of Lancaster, last Sunday.

Mr. Hostetter's crysanthemum, *Enchantment*, won him the award. *Enchantment* is an orchid-pink spider variety.



Jane Reisinger with just a few of her clocks in **Pendulum 1776**

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