Watchmaker practices dying art with precision

BY RICK GREEN

BELMONT — At age 19, Denis Carignan made a fateful discovery while treasure hunting through old debris in Laconia.

He found a Waltham, 18-size, 17-jewel railroad-style pocket watch, dating to about 1870.

“It was the coolest thing I had ever seen,” he said. “I was just flabbergasted. I couldn’t believe it was made so long ago, and yet how intricately decorated it was.”

The timepiece was a handmade marvel of precision, produced in a time before electricity was used to manufacture watches.

Amazing intricacy

“I was fascinated with its intricacy,” he said. “I was absolutely amazed at how well it was made. I couldn’t believe the tiny little screws. It was six- or seven-thousandths of an inch across the screw. From there, it was a full obsession for me. Every day, that’s all I did, all I talked about and thought about was watches.”

Always interested in repairing mechanical things, he went to work on the Waltham, cleaned out rust, replaced one of its jewels and returned it to working order.

His interest in watches was fostered by a local dealer, who provided him with starter tools, books and some business as well. Carignan taught himself the trade and expanded, doing work for local jewelers and private customers.

Challenging work

Now 45, he has repaired thousands. He enjoys the challenge, and takes satisfaction in fixing things others think are beyond repair.

“If somebody says, ‘Oh, you can’t fix that,’ I say, ‘OK, I’ll figure out a way to do it.’

“I try to do be able to do everything myself. I cut my own glass for watch crystals. I do electroplating, gold, silver, platinum. I set jewels. I learned how to braze, how to weld, how to solder.”

He also likes restoring items that have sentimental value. A father’s old wristwatch may survive long after he is gone, and it may mean a lot for a son to keep it in use.

“That’s what makes it fun,” he said. “I just finished a military Swiss watch from a man’s father. It was all beat up and all disgusting. It didn’t run. We fixed it up, and he’ll have it for Christmas. He’s so happy.

“After it was polished, it looked beautiful. The dial came out perfect. I refinished the hands and I redid the paint in the hands. I actually had a band that went with it, the same age, the same type of band that would have been on it when it was new. He’s tickled.”

Grandfather’s watch

Another gentleman, who is 85 years old, came in with a watch that his grandfather had. It was damaged by children, and further damaged by a watchmaker who didn’t know how to fix it properly.

“Most of the work I end up doing is undoing all the previous repairs and getting it back to the original way it was made,” he said. “It’s like investigative work.”

Carignan’s watch repair business at 38 Church St., Belmont, is full of components and tools that range from antique machinery to state-of-the-art computerized robotic machining equipment.

There are fewer and fewer people who do what Carignan does.

He specializes in the repair and restoration of vintage, luxury watches that may cost tens of thousands of
Franklin Savings Bank announces promotions

FRANKLIN — Franklin Savings Bank announced today the promotions of Joseph Thornton to Senior Vice President, Retail Banking Officer; Dawn Beers to Vice President, Marketing Officer; Julie Biker to Assistant Vice President, Retail Operations Officer; and Kenneth Sawyer, Assistant Vice President, Business Relationship Officer.

“This is a wonderful accomplishment for Joe, Dawn, Julie and Ken,” said Ron Magoun, president and CEO. “Their commitment to and passion for community banking is evident in how they carry out the responsibilities of their respective roles at the bank. Collectively, they have over 65 years of experience in community banking in their area of discipline which is truly amazing.”

In his role, Thornton will continue to lead the bank’s Retail Banking Division to achieve exceptional customer service throughout the bank’s seven offices, as well as attain the strategic objectives for the department. Thornton joined FSB in 1992 as Teller Supervisor. Throughout his 25 years with the bank, he has advanced to several key positions to include Branch Manager (1996), AVP, Regional Retail Officer and Assistant Branch Administrator (2000), AVP, Retail Banking Officer & Branch Administration (2005), and VP, Retail Sales & Branch Administration (2011).

Next, Beers is responsible for general oversight and management of the bank’s marketing and public relations initiatives, in addition to planning, organizing and directing all advertising, public relations, sales promotions, and research efforts. She also has control over strategic brand management, direct marketing, branch merchandising, product management, marketing communication materials, media relations, and departmental budgeting. Beers joined FSB in 2015 as AVP, Marketing Officer.

In her role as AVP, Retail Operations Officer, Biker will continue to maintain responsibility for the operational performance of the bank’s branch network, ensuring all policies, procedures, security and compliance are being adhered to in accordance with state and federal regulations. Biker joined FSB in 2010 as Branch Manager of the Upper Central Street location. In 2013, she was promoted to Customer Contact Center Manager, then advanced to Branch Operations Officer in 2015.

Sawyer will continue to oversee the bank’sGilford office and will remain focused on cultivating business relationships throughout FSB’s geographic footprint. He joined the bank in 2006 as Branch Manager and was later promoted to Regional Sales Manager in 2010, then Business Development Officer & Market Manager in 2015.

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dollars.
One of the most valuable watches he has ever worked on was a Patek Philippe Grand Complication pocket watch, but he will also replace a battery in a Timex for a local customer or size a watch band.

Full service
A typical job for Carignan would be the overhaul and cleaning of a watch, cutting new gears or making other parts, grinding crystals, polishing and restoring cases.

With the proliferation of cell phones, wristwatches are not as ubiquitous as they once were. When timepieces need repair, it is hard to find someone nearby who can do the work.

In 2016, he won the Pritchard Prize Award for his restoration of an 18-karat, gold-cased, key-wind, Adams & Perry Watch Co. Breitling Laederich pocket watch. The award is the result of a contest by the National Association for Watch and Clock Collectors. It is judged by peers in the industry.

What seems like magic is really just skill
“A lot of guys see the work I do like magic, but it’s not,” he said. “If you have Harley-Davidson motorcycles and you have a guy that’s really good working on Harleys, it’s almost magical, but really the guy just knows what he is doing. There’s no mystery to it. It’s a mechanical thing.”

Business Briefs

Bank NH staffer earns certificate in fraud monitoring

GILFORD — Jennifer Goddard, a Banking Secretary Act compliance assistant for Bank of New Hampshire, has earned Certified AML and Fraud Professional (CAFP) designation.

This designation is given to banking professionals who have shown their ability to detect, prevent, monitor and report current and emerging money laundering and fraud risks.

The American Bankers Association created the CAFP designation, which requires experience, education and training, to recognize those who have knowledge complying with U.S. laws and regulations to respond to a wide variety of financial crimes. CAFP designees are required to maintain their designation by earning continuing education credits every three years.

“Jennifer joined the bank’s compliance department 6 years ago after working several years as a Bank Services Representative and has a broad knowledge and firsthand experience in preventing, detecting and reporting fraud risks,” said Karen Cornell, president – BSA compliance officer for Bank of New Hampshire.

Local attorney completes human resources program

LACONIA — Attorney Kristofer S. Wilson of Martin, Lord & Osman, was recently certified as a Professional in Human Resources (PHR) by the HR Certification Institute.

The certification has professional experience requirements, and required exposure to all areas of human resource practice, including workforce planning and employment, employee and labor relations, compensation and benefits, human resource development, business management and strategy, and risk management.

Wilson is a member of Martin, Lord and Osman’s Corporate and Business Law Department which offers drafting, planning and advice on all issues affecting businesses, including formation, operations, employee relations, growth, and business succession planning. The PHR training is instrumental in understanding the business context and implications of all personnel issues such as hiring, offering benefits and compensation, disciplining, training, promoting, or terminating.