



From the President Aaron Recksiek, CW21

I'd like to formally introduce you all to the LWT Alumni Association. A few months have now passed since we took this nugget of an idea and turned it into an actual functioning group. Here are several things that we have accomplished or are on track to accomplish before the end of the year: We have our website lwtalumni.org up and running, we are in the process of filing our articles of association in the state of Pennsylvania, our membership has reached a level that we are now able to qualify as an affiliate chapter of AWCI (the first new chapter in almost 20 years), and of course we have our first quarterly newsletter sent out to all graduates of LWT that we could get contact information for. If you want to continue to receive this newsletter, as well as receive any of the other benefits of the LWT Alumni Association you will need to join.

We started this association to create a unified network of the highest professionals in our field. After twelve graduating classes, it was becoming much more difficult to stay connected with everything going on with the school, faculty, and the curriculum. I have always tried to stay in touch with as many alumni as possible and there was a recurring theme among many of my conversations, "why don't we have a network of alumni?". Making it through those two years not only tempered us for the high precision required by our jobs but it also created a bond between everyone else that completed the same training. We have a responsibility to each other and to the industry to share our hard work and dedication for the betterment of everyone. If there

was only one thing I could list on my resume, it would be that I graduated from the Lititz Watch Technicum. This association can accomplish a tremendous amount with enough hard work and member participation.

I appreciate all the work that has already been put into this, I also want to thank all of the founding members and all those who have joined since its inception who have placed their trust in us and believe in what we are doing. This is a fully volunteer member driven association and it requires member participation and contributions to allow us to continue to grow and thrive. Please help us out in any way you can: offer contributions to the newsletter and provide us with contacts

you may have within the industry that would be interested in working with us. You can always get in contact with me or another executive committee member.

In this initial newsletter there will be several columns that we hope will become regular features in the newsletter: Member Spotlight, Tools and Equipment news, the member directory (which will be published annually), and any other important member events.

For example, in this newsletter we have included Drew Zimmerman's graduation address from this year's LWT graduation.

I want to conclude with a list of our goals over this calendar year:

- Quarterly newsletter delivered on time
- Membership at 60% of graduates
- Special training opportunity exclusively for LWT members
- Reunion event at the AWCI annual convention in Kansas City

Passion is the solution for our time problem.
Respectfully, Aaron Henry Recksiek



LWT Graduates at the 2014 AWCI Annual Convention (L To R)
Justin Harrell, Cameron Bowser, Brendan McDougal,
Sergio Berrios, Jason Woods, Aaron Recksiek, Emily Zimmerman,
Jordan Ficklin, Drew Zimmerman

We Teach More Than Watchmaking

A commencement speech for LWT Graduates by Drew Zimmerman, CW21

Good morning fellow graduates. It gives me great honor to stand up here and congratulate all of you on a job well done. Each one of you should be extremely proud to be sitting in these chairs. I know how difficult the journey was to be seated where you are today.

My name is Drew Zimmerman, and I am a fellow graduate of the Lititz Watch Technicum. I am also a Certified Watchmaker for the 21st Century and have earned my SAWTA certificate, WOSTEP certificate, Lititz Watch Technicum Diploma and am also a graduate of the NAWCC School. I have a unique story to tell because I would not be here today if it was not for the watchmaking profession. I am proud to say that I'm a third generation watchmaker. My Grandfather John Zimmerman moved to Pittsburgh after World War II to study horology on the G.I. Bill. While in school, he quickly became acquainted, and fell in love, with a watch crystal fitter from the local watch supply house. They married and moved around to different jobs before ending up back where

my grandfather's roots were in York PA. My grandfather and grandmother opened up a small jewelry store there and started a family. My father James Zimmerman followed the same career path and graduated from the former Bowman Technical School right here in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He and my mother continue to grow and expand the jewelry store into what it is today.

Growing up, I spent a lot of my childhood in the jewelry store. Every Saturday I would help out wherever I could, mainly cleaning showcases and alphabetizing old job envelops. As I grew older, I went through a wide variety of jobs like any normal teenager. Trying to find my path, I started an internship at a garage, it was then that I realized maybe this was not the career that I had envisioned for myself. I was mechanically inclined but the auto industry just didn't satisfy me. I decided to search for something new, and my father suggested trying a weekend workshop at the NAWCC, a class that my wife and I now teach. Taking apart an old pocket watch and reassembling it gave me a great sense of pride. Not even a week had passed until I decided to attend NAWCC's 1 year course. After starting this program, I was at the jewelry store on one of my days off, and I met a shop inspector many of you know. After talking to him, he was quick to ask me why I didn't apply to the Lititz Watch Technicum. I couldn't answer him. Even I wasn't sure why I didn't apply at the time. My sister had applied several years earlier and was not accepted. I guess looking back at it now I assumed I too would fail the application process, and I didn't want to be let down. Despite this, I applied the following week and a little while later I received the call from Karen saying I was accepted to the program for the following year. From this day forward, I made a promise to myself, to never let an opportunity pass me by.

YOUR ADVERTISEMENT HERE

Do you know somebody who would benefit from advertising to the talented and highly skilled watchmakers who graduated from LWT?

Email info@lwtalumni.org for more information about advertising in our newsletter.

I completed my time at NAWCC School and graduated in 2008. I started the program here in the fall of that same year. My time here was not easy as many of you can vouch for. If this program was easy, everyone who started it would graduate, and the graduates would only be half as successful as they are today. This program is difficult, it is meant to challenge and test your limits. When Mr. Pahl has you first turning brass on the lathe, you believe 4mm is small but within several months he has you working down to .08 mm on some pivot gauges and tolerances within even a thousandth of a millimeter. We are working with items so small, most people cannot distinguish what they are with their naked eye. I remember becoming slightly frustrated with Mr. Pahl my first year. Every time I encountered a problem and had a question for him, he would never give me a straight answer. He wouldn't let me leave his desk until we both went through a thought process of trying to determine what the correct answer was. I knew when I did have the right answer, he would give me a smirk and sit down, and I would return back to my desk. Towards the end of that first year I asked him minimal questions, not because I didn't have them but because I was able to think through the problem to the correct answer. He not only trained me in micro-mechanics, but he completely changed the way my brain encounters problems to this day. Mr. Biscelli in the 2nd year taught me that perfection is something that can never be obtained by a watchmaker. He taught us that no one is perfect, and we will all make mistakes in this field, this is what makes us human. I have made my share and so will you. Learning from these mistakes is the only way to better ones self. Mr. Bisceli taught us to be humble and understand that only experience and time will improve our skills. Mr. Mayer was a huge influence on

me. I recall him once saying to a visitor, "We teach more than watchmaking here." That saying couldn't be more true. He has taught me many valuable lessons in life including to always be respectful and courteous to everyone you encounter in life. Our industry is extremely small, and your reputation is everything. I entered this program as a naive teenager who thought that he knew a lot about watchmaking, and I graduated as a man who was truly aware of how little he knew; understand that you do not know everything.

This school is similar to a construction site for a new house. You apply to the program, this is you surveying the land. You get accepted, this is you settling with the bank to purchase the lot. Year one you clear the brush and level the land and in year two you laid the cinder block foundation. The house is not nearly complete and you're graduated. You are now entering the real world with no instructors to watch over you. The foundation is set, ask yourself, "What kind of house do I want to build." This is not a job, this is a career. A job can be taught relatively quick, a career will require a lifetime of knowledge and dedication to master.

What I was taught here were basic principles, correct procedures and that opportunities were endless in our field. The study of horology goes much deeper than being able to disassemble and reassemble a watch. This is probably one of the most basic tasks that we encounter on a normal day. The difficulty in horology is the tasks that come with it. It's knowing what repairs to make and when to make them. It's knowing what is acceptable wear and what is not. It's not leaving a trace in the watch and returning it to the customer looking and functioning as close to perfection as one can obtain. Your goal now is to make the next watchmaker envious of how the watch

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Member Spotlight

Dean A. Powell

Dean is currently the Watch Department Manager at Brinker's Jewelers in Evansville, Indiana. He graduated from LWT in 2008 as the Rolex Apprentice. After spending 12 months in Lititz post graduation, there was a job opportunity in a relatively small town in southern Indiana. The store was a single location family owned jewelry store that had never employed a Watchmaker on site before, everything besides cell changes had been sent out. Owned and operated by brothers, Dean and Dirk Brinker, they have fostered an environment that makes everyone instantly feel at home.

The Brinker family was fairly new to the high end watch sales market, and relied very heavily on Dean's expertise. The initial shop was a very modest 88 square feet, just big enough to fit one person in with all the necessary equipment. As time passed and he started to get settled, the knowledge and training Dean received came to be a growing draw to the customer base of the store. Little did Dean or the owners know, there was an enthusiastic watch collectors market hidden right under their noses. As the customers interest continued to gravitate toward the watch section and the Watchmaker, the store took notice. When Dean arrived, the store carried the brands Rolex, Tissot and Montblanc. After a few years, the owners decided it was time to expand the watch offerings and decided to send Dean Powell and the CFO, son Kyle Brinker to the Basel show in Switzerland. They came back with new brands NOMOS Glashutte, Tudor, and Shinola. Brinker's Jewelers was one of the first handful of US based dealers for NOMOS and they are experiencing incredible success with the brand. The inclusion of those brands proved to be a success

and spurred a second annual trip to Switzerland. The following year, they picked up the brand Ressence, a new Belgian brand, and became one of only 10 dealers in the United States.

The exponential growth of the watch department is what led to a decision for a complete remodel and re-construction of the store and workshops. The process of the redesign spanned over two years and was overseen by Mr. Powell. The watch repair facilities were increased to 900 square feet and included a laboratory type environment with



Kyle Brinker (on the left) with Dean Powell in the showroom of Brinker Jewelers

full view of the showroom floor, it might not seem too unfamiliar for us who has spend a lot of time at LWT. New equipment was added and the capacity of the shop increased. They currently employ in the watch department Dean Powell, a service coordinator, two apprentices, and a full time quick service technician, with immediate plans to hire another full time watchmaker. They handled over 3,000 jobs last year from the single location.

The belief and trust the Brinker family put in Dean and the watch segment of the business is almost unprecedented and it is a testament to the training we all received at the Technicum. The Brinkers have invested a tremen-

dous amount into the watch segment. They have a vision for the industry and we should all applaud them for taking the chance and having the desire to perpetuate the Independent Watchmaker.

Contact Dean at:
Brinker's Jewelers
111 S. Green River Rd.
Evansville, IN 47715

Equipment & Tools

by Sergio Berrios, CW21

With this being the first issue of our LWT newsletter I wanted to say "Welcome"! This association provides a great opportunity to have a unity amongst LWT Alumni. The newsletter presents all of us with a great platform to communicate about the array of things occurring in and around the watch industry.

As Watchmakers we have a responsibility to provide the best level of customer service and watch repair to our customers but not many of us can say they take equal care of there equipment. Many times the level of customer service from the manufacturer is virtually non existent or there is a language barrier. So who do you turn to? In the upcoming newsletters I will be addressing the need for shop maintenance.

While attending this years A.W.C.I.'s convention I had the chance to catch up with Gary Borel from Jules Borel & Company about this very topic. The convention gave me face to face time to discuss several ideas and collaborate. He was elated to help with the segment and went out of his way to offer assistance in any way they could. Some of the articles I am working on cover maintenance for the following equipment:

- Greiner Vibrograf ACS 900
- Jun Air compressors

Current Members

Aaron Recksieck, President	2008
Cameron Bowser, VP	2011
Sergio Berrios, Secretary	2008
Jordan Ficklin, Treasurer	2006
Russell Allen	2006
Ryan Bentley	2008
James P. Borton	2010
Robert Calderon	2008
Megan Campbell (Lepley)	2006
Steven Campeau	2006
Andrew DeKeyser	2007
Jordan Ferry	2011
Rob Flood	2004
Nate Fredell	2004
Justin Harrell	2007
Ryan Healy	2011
Josh Kroman	2011
Ron Landberg	2003
Jeremy Martin	2010
Brenden McDougal	2012
Eric Norrbom	2007
Dean Powell	2008
Anthony Rachevsky	2008
Trevor Reis	2014
Matthew Schloemer	2012
Greg Tarnai	2011
Jason Woods	2012
Mike Zelinske	2008
Drew Zimmerman	2010
Emily Zimmerman	2010

Do you know a LWT graduate who is not on this list?

Contact your fellow classmates and let them know that with a one time contribution of \$50 they can become a member of the LWT Alumni Association. Encourage them to become a part of the growing network of LWT Alumni.

Joining is as easy as sending an email to info@lwtalumni.org

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was previously serviced.

When I am able to see a watch I worked on in the past, I critique myself. Although leaving this school I took great pride in my repairs, they were nowhere near the level of quality that I am able to produce today. I contribute this to experience and real world scenarios. No matter how bad your teachers can mess up a watch, it will never compare to what some of these timepieces have been through. These timepieces have been serviced by many watchmakers all at a different skill levels. You had a taste of this in the second year during your real life repair. Trust me. You will see repairs that will make you cringe. When you look at these, do not discriminate against the unskilled watchmaker, instead try to seek them out and share your knowledge with them. This profession is all about raising the bar. For me there are no secrets when it comes to watchmaking. If a fellow watchmaker wants to better themselves by talking or working with another colleague, each of the parties have nothing to lose and everything to gain. One of the beautiful things about this career is you will never stop learning. Everyday will bring you new challenges. The more you learn, the easier the problem is to diagnose, and subsequently the easier the repair will become.

In most cases, you will be your own

quality control, whether you choose to work for a jeweler or on the independent side. This means you will be the last one to see the movement until the next watchmaker. Right before you put on the case back, ask yourself, "Am I proud of this repair, and would I feel comfortable handing this in to an instructor to be graded." If you can honestly answer yes to both questions, only then may you secure the back.

When I graduated, I started my own business being an independent watchmaker and working with trade accounts. The first week out of school was the first and last time I ever had to advertise. We have not opened any new trade accounts in almost a year and currently have a waiting list of stores hoping to one day use our services. Finding someone to service a timepiece is fairly easy. Finding someone who truly takes pride in what they do and allows only their best work to leave their shop is difficult to find. I have become very close to the stores I do work for. On birthdays and holidays I receive gifts and cards from them. Once a year, around the holiday season, my employees and I travel to as many of our trade stores as we can to hand out gifts. This allows us to meet face to face and show our appreciation for them choosing to use our services. My advice is take the time to appreciate the people who sign your checks; without them you do not have a career, you have a hobby.

Members: Sign up for your online account and Update your membership listing today!

Visit

<http://lwतालumni.org/wp-login.php?action=register> to get your online account today.



One way I try to reduce the amount of stress I may face day to day is to only accept watches for which spare parts are made available to me. When spare parts are made available, you are not limited by the product but by your own competence. You are able to make the correct repair, every time. When parts are not available to a watch you are working on, you may take shortcuts or decide to reuse a worn part, while if it was available you would prefer to switch it out. I have not had to ask anyone to help me obtain spare parts to a watch for over 3 years because I limit the watches I work on. This was a learning curve for me, as I wanted to service everything when I graduated. I quickly learned that this would not work for me. You do not have to be the best at everything, but you should be great at something.

I met my best friend, now wife, in my class. We became close, and within a few weeks we were inseparable. One day I proposed to her in the lobby where we first met. We recently tied the knot at the National Watch and Clock Museum. I am

now honored to work beside her every day. This brings me to passion; it is something that makes experiences in life personal to you. Just as passion is needed in a solid relationship it is also the key ingredient to produce your best work. If you care for something strong enough, you will do amazing things to achieve the best results. Steve Jobs once said, "Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work, and the only way to do great work is to love what you do."

An opportunity arose last year when I was nominated to run for the American Watchmakers and Clockmakers Institute board of directors. I ran and received the highest number of votes that year and also became the youngest person to serve on the board of directors. This is one of the ways I try to give back to a career that has given so much to me already. I also try to be highly involved in the local watchmaker's guild. This is one of the best ways to socialize with others in our field to share new ideas and techniques.

Since graduating 4 years ago I have had amazing opportunities to work on some of the rarest watches including, Paul Newman Daytonas, Comex Submariners, and watches that belong to royalty and celebrities. You are entering a career that requires a skill that takes decades to obtain. Work slow and consistent, learn and set your limits. I owe everything I have, and am extremely grateful to the education I received here. Graduates: know how fortunate you are to have attended such a prestigious school and never take it for granted. Make us all proud of the work you produce. It is interesting that our profession is all about maintaining time, something that we can never change or get back. It is also the most valuable thing you can ever spend. Again, congratulations, and I wish all of you most success in your future.

JOIN TODAY

LWT Alumni Association

With a one time contribution of \$50 you can become a member of the LWT Alumni Association. Membership grants you access to our alumni directory at lwталumni.org, gets you a copy of the quarterly newsletter, and opens the door for networking with some of the finest young watchmakers in the Untied States.

To join email info@lwталumni.org

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And
The Horological Center
for sponsoring this quarter's newsletter



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