

The art of **TELLING TIME**



'Dr. Cuckoo Clock' keeps novelty clocks ticking

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In today's high-tech society, telling time is as easy as catching a glimpse of a smartphone, a dashboard, or a cable television box. However, there was a time when telling time possessed whimsical entertainment value for the owner of a cuckoo clock.

Introduced in the United States in the mid 1850s, a typical cuckoo clock strikes the hours by pendulum with a sound similar to a common cuckoo's call, and a cuckoo bird movement accompanies each sound.

The development of the cuckoo clock is attributed to the Black Forest in Germany, where the clock was popularized and where a majority of the clocks are still made.

"Cuckoo clocks may not be the best functioning clocks in the world, but they are a novelty," says Dr. Lloyd Lehn. "Their owners love them, especially if they relate to a family member or an event in their lives. They give people a great deal of pleasure."

Following a 35-year career as a mechanical/manufacturing engineer with the Department of Defense, Lloyd began repairing cuckoo clocks from his personally created "Cuckoo Clock Hospital." When Lloyd and his wife Laura

moved to Greenspring, the hospital came with them, occupying a spacious walk-in closet.

"Most clockmakers won't work on cuckoo clocks because it takes a lot of trial and error to make a repair," says Lloyd, whose work includes oiling, cleaning, replacing or adjusting movements and music boxes, and making a variety of other adjustments.

Setting up shop

The heart of Lloyd's Cuckoo Clock Hospital is a 7- by 7-foot walk-in closet in his Greenspring apartment home. He uses his home's den for the computer aspects of his work. Since he and Laura usually eat at one of Greenspring's on-site restaurants instead of at home, the dining room table sometimes stores clocks awaiting his skillful touch.

"I enjoy working on the cuckoos since I find it both challenging and rewarding," he says. "I enjoy making people smile."

Much of Lloyd's business is local, but he has repaired cuckoo clocks from all over the country. The largest cuckoo clock he repaired was three feet tall and resides in a Georgetown restaurant in Washington, D.C.

While some clients find Lloyd

through word of mouth, many learn of his services on the Internet through his website, cuckooclockhospital.com.

When repairing cuckoo clocks, Lloyd uses a timing device called MicroSet and associated computer software programming to record, analyze, and adjust cuckoos.

"The device is sort of like a clock EKG," he says. "It provides detailed information and precise measurements regarding the timing and beat of a clock."

These metrics and diagnostics allow him to properly adjust a cuckoo.

In addition to personally repairing cuckoo clocks, Lloyd sells DVDs he's made that provide step-by-step direction on the repair of the clocks and their accompanying music boxes. A preview of the DVD is available on YouTube at <http://bit.ly/1SrEtBZ>.

Learning the ropes

Prior to beginning his work on the cuckoo clocks, Lloyd attended a local clock repair workshop. He eventually earned designation as a certified clockmaker from the



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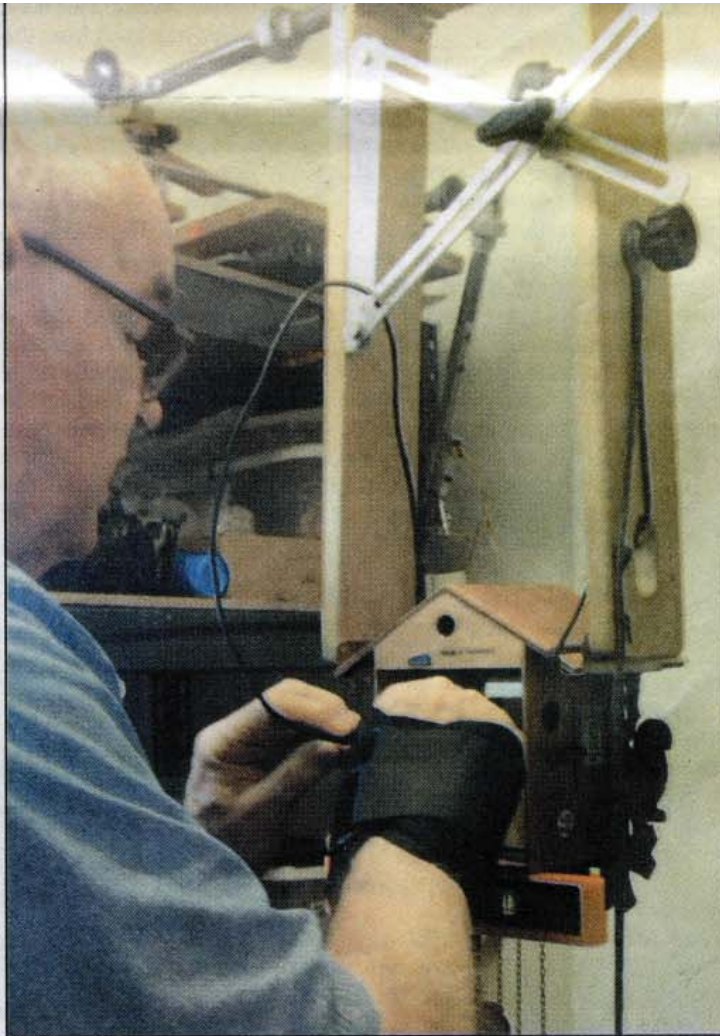


Photo by Jessica McKay

Dr. Lloyd Lehn transformed a walk-in closet in his Greenspring apartment home to the renowned Cuckoo Clock Hospital.

American Watchmakers-Clockmakers Institute (AWCI) and was elected to the AWCI board of directors.

He currently represents the local Potomac Clock Guild as a board member of the Horological Association of Virginia (HAV), edits the quarterly newsletter, and attends local clock guild meetings.

"I am delighted that Lloyd is doing something he really enjoys," says Laura. "We meet so many interesting people and clocks."

"People seek me out because of their emotional attachment to the clocks," says Lloyd. "It's difficult to forget one customer's tearful joy after hearing her grand-

mother's cuckoo clock for the first time."

Busy schedule

When not working on cuckoo clocks, Lloyd is busy with a variety of Greenspring clubs and activities, including the computer, woodshop, and gardening clubs. He plays billiards and visits the on-site fitness center three times a week.

He also admits to garnering some attention from neighbors as "Dr. Cuckoo Clock."

"It's nice to receive the attention. One neighbor even kidded me and asked for an autograph," he says. "But the biggest reward is making people happy."