

August 2004

Raleigh Coin Club Newsletter

A monthly numismatic publication for the RCC

In This Issue:100 Greatest US Coins

Established in 1954

PO Box 12363, Durham, NC 27709

From Whence We Came

by Robert Hoadley

(this letter was sent by Robert Hoadley on January 6, 2004 and after some extensive mail delays and publishing delays, is now offered for your enjoyment. The newsletter editor does admit to taking liberties and adding a title.....)

I have just received my Raleigh Coin Club Newsletter and was most interested in the article about the 2005 50th anniversary of the club. This is wonderful, I thought, but with a few minutes of additional thought, I believe it is off by 4 years.

As I remember, the Raleigh Coin Club was formed in 1958 by an advertisement placed in the News and Observer calling for those interested in forming a coin club. Guy and Mary Sparger were the people behind this call. Ted and Dot Hendrick were also members of the charter organization. I remember the 1958 date because I was employed by the City of Raleigh in 1957 and started collecting Lincoln Cents soon after. The formation meeting of the RCC was held in a meeting room at

the News and Observer building and we met there for several years after.

I am not sure if Guy and Mary Sparger are still in Raleigh. Dot Hendrick may know, or may have her own memories of the formation of the Club.

I do not have any records of the formation of the club, but do have these memories. I hope this information is of value and does not upset the apple cart, but better to be safer than sorry.

(Robert later jotted on the note that he since found that that Ted and Dot were not charter members)

The Club Business Page

The Raleigh Coin Club

PO Box 12363
Durham, NC 27709
<http://www.raleighcoinclub.org>

Established 1954

Club Officers

President
Paul Landsberg
Vice President
Harry Corrigan
Secretary
David Provost
Treasurer
Kent Woodson
Sergeant at Arms
Thomas Powell

Directors (Term)

Dot Hendrick (2004)
David Boitnott (2005)
???? (2006)

Club Affiliations

American Numismatic Association
ANA Member #C079478
Blue Ridge Numismatic Association
BRNA Member #C-3383
Eastern States Numismatic Association
ESNA Member #0026 (Life)
North Carolina Numismatic Association
NCNA Member #C-14 (Life)

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July 2004 RCC Minutes

Hey! Three newsletters in a row!! At the July meeting we basked in the glow of a job well done for the June Raleigh Coin Club show. We welcomed a number of new faces to the meeting and we hope to see each of them back. Remember, if we don't, we shall have to form a committee to hunt them down and provide "positive reinforcement" to attend another meeting (grin)!!

Refreshments: Kent Woodson to bring cookies, sodas, plates, bowls, and napkins.

Show and Tell

I'm sure I will miss some but here goes.....Paul Li. brought an 1826 bust half, Aaron brought a 20 cent coin and a state quarter set. David B brought (guess!!) a NC quarter error and Gary W brought Celtic ring money and some Vatican coins & stamps that the Pope had personally given to him! Alex L shared 7 Japanese trade dollars while Richard R displayed an original 1949 mint set. Bill L brought a bicentennial medal.

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Newsletter Requests

I am trying to get the newsletter back up to snuff and so some of the formatting and infor is from nearly 2 years ago. Here are some trivial items that I need.

Alex L – what is your mailing address, the June one was returned. Someone please make sure he is aware at the meeting.

Vince C – same as above.

Directors – note that I have ???? for one fo the directors. Can anyone definitively tell me who the correct directors are.

Articles – as always the newsletter needs your help for content. Please consider writing an article, no matter how small, to share your knowledge, insights, or experience. This is your club so please help!!

President's Message

Hello and welcome to August!! Given how beastly hot July was, I fully expected to be putting this newsletter safely hiding in an air conditioned environment. How wrong I was! The other day I was leaving a building at our work complex and I was puzzled by this odd cool breeze blowing across the lawn. I hadn't experienced one of those in ages!!

Coins, coins, coins.....and paper money, tokens, and show cards. The August American Numismatic

Association convention will be held from August 18th through August 22nd in Pittsburgh, PA. Airfares have gotten particularly cheap over the past week where I now see roundtrip, non-stop tickets for \$268 (before taxes). My current plans do put me there so I'm sure I will have a few (dozen or so I hope) goodies to show at the next meeting.

On a topic near and dear to us, there was a paid advertisement in the August 2004 Numismatic that particularly caught my interest. I will be writing a small article on a legal battle over "accurate grading" but if someone could bring a clean copy, mine was damaged.

As always, I realize this newsletter will be getting to you at the very last moment (JITNM = Just in Time Newsletter Manufacturing) but I hope each of you is able to bring an item for Show and Tell, as well as some good coin & currency hunting stories from the past few months!

See you at the meeting!

SMALL CHANGE -Part 25 China

by Halbert Carmichael

China has a long and complex numismatic history. The twentieth century part of that history has some interesting paradoxes.

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1945 found China in a mess. Manchuria was a puppet state of the Japanese and issued coins as late as 1945. Most of eastern China was occupied by the Japanese. Northwest China and a lot of the rural areas were controlled by the Communists led by Mao Tse Tung. The Republic of China, governed by the Koumintang led by Chaing Kai-Shek and recognized by the United States held only the southwestern part of the country around its capital of Chungking.

After the surrender of Japan the Koumintang armies occupied most of the areas surrendered by the Japanese with considerable American help. The Communists, with Russian help, occupied most of Manchuria. This set the stage for a civil war.

The Koumintang issued no coinage until they fled to the island of Taiwan. There they issued numerous coins in the name of the Republic of China: all text is in Chinese characters. There were 10 cents to the chiao and 10 chiao to the yuan. ANA president John Wilson likes to pronounce the latter 'yawn,' but my Chinese colleague at school pronounced it with two syllables. Most of the coins had the portrait of Chiang Kai-Shek. Several had a map of the island of Formosa: a strange design for a government that claimed to rule all China. The dates (in Chinese characters) were based on the founding

of the republic with the overthrow of the Emperor in 1911.

The Peoples Republic of China, the world's most populous country has paradoxically one to the simplest coinages. Between 1955 and 1997 they issued just three types: 1 fen, 2 fen, and 5 fen aluminum coins of the same design: five stars over the great gate of the forbidden city inside a wreath and the name of the country in Chinese characters on the obverse and a wreath surrounding more characters on the reverse. The AD date is given in western numerals. Note that the AD date is used by a country that was never a colony nor had it been Christianized. These coins were struck almost every year in large, but unpublished, numbers.

Tibet was a semi-autonomous region of China in the mountainous southwest of the country. Ruled as a theocracy by the Buddhist, lamas it had issued a small number of coins for many years. The coins have a complex oriental script. The monetary system was 10 sho to the srang. Coins of 3 sho, 5 sho, 1 srang, 1 1/2 srang, 3 srang and 10 srang exist for the period before the Chinese invaded and took over the country in 1950. The coins have complex, stylized pictures with lions, mountains, and clouds in the center surrounded by eight characters. For any one type several varieties exist with different numbers of moons or clouds. Of all the coinages in the world

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this has been the most difficult set to complete.

Mongolia is an independent country sandwiched between Siberia and China. It has a coinage of 100 mongo to the tugrik. With a limited economy, coinage was more a matter of expressing national sovereignty than of economic necessity. Sets were issued only in 1946 and in 1959 obviously under Soviet influence. Each set had 1, 2, 5, 10, 15, and 20 mongo coins. The 1946 set had the national symbol of a horse and rider in a wreath. The later set had only the denomination, some text in Cyrillic and the AD date.

Two additional parts of China are represented in the 1945-1969 coinage. Hong Kong had been a British colony since the 19th century. A coinage based on a dollar of one hundred cents was used, coins were struck for four denominations from 5 cents to 1 dollar. They showed the British monarch's portrait and titles in English on the obverse, and showed the denomination in both English and Chinese on the reverse.

Macao was a Portuguese colony. It had a coinage of 100 avos to the pataca. These coins showed the Portuguese arms on the obverse, and only two out of the dozen types showed any Chinese characters.

What are the 100 Greatest U.S. Coins?

By Robert A. Izydore

In Issue #88 of the journal *Weimar White* described the Liberty Seated coins in the book *100 Greatest U.S. Coins* by Jeff Garrett and Ron Guth. This interesting book contains nice photographs of the listed coins and includes some good background information on each of them. The Numismatic Literary Guild and the Professional Numismatists Guild (PNG) both chose this book as their best numismatic book for 2003. The top 20 coins were ranked by 84 PNG members while the remaining 80 were ranked by the authors. The PNG members were given a list of the top 100 greatest coins and asked to rank them. The members had the option of adding any coins to the list that they thought should be included. White's summary stated that the concept of greatness was based on the factors of rarity, value, quality, popularity, beauty and history. It was nice to see that the authors ranked 16 Liberty Seated coins among the 100 greatest U.S. coins in their book. The top three ranked coins were the 1804 silver dollar, the 1913 Liberty Head nickel, and the 1933 double eagle, respectively.

White pointed out that greatness is a subjective quality, and I wholeheartedly agree. However, as I look at the coins ranked at the top of the list, it is

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apparent that these are the coins that sell for the highest prices at auction and in private sales. In other words the rank given to a coin was heavily skewed by its value. An argument can be made that this is reasonable. If a coin is rare, popular, and attractive enough, it can be classified as great, and its price can be said to be a barometer of its greatness. However, value is not the only measure of greatness. It is also true that historical significance and impact make something or someone great. George Washington and Abraham Lincoln are great because of their roles in the establishment and preservation of our country at a time of national crisis. There is no monetary value involved. Industrialists such as Andrew Carnegie and Henry Ford made a lot of money, but that is not why they are great. They are great because their achievement in their respective industries changed the landscape of America and the lifestyle of its citizens. The paintings of Pablo Picasso are great because they represent the development of the painting style called cubism that pioneered the modern art movement. They are expensive, but their price is not the primary reason for their greatness.

Given the fact that the three coins at the top of the greatest 100 list satisfy the requirements of rarity, value and popularity, let's examine their historical significance and impact. For many years it was believed that the 1804 silver dollar was actually minted in 1804. Its

reputation and popularity as a true numismatic rarity grew on that belief. It was crowned the King of American Coins by Fort Worth dealer B. Max Mehl in the early part of the 20th century and even earlier by the Chapman brothers. As such these coins were coveted by those numismatists who could afford to own one. Since 1962 we have known that these dollars were not minted until three decades after 1804. They are not genuine coins in the usual sense. The eight Class I dollars were struck from new dies in 1834-1835 at the request of the Department of State to be included in presentation sets, two of which were presented as gifts to the rulers of Muscat and Siam. The Class II and Class III restrikes from the 1850s were illegally made by mint employees and sold to collectors. The Class I dollars have some historical significance in that two of them were presented to foreign rulers. The Class II and Class III coins have no real historical significance. None of the 1804 dollars had any historical impact on the development of coinage in America. The five known 1913 Liberty Head nickels became famous as rarities in the 1930s as a result of advertisements placed by B. Max Mehl offering to buy them. These nickels were believed to be authentic by the public. It is now known that they were struck without legal authorization by one or more mint employees and that they were not authorized U.S. coins. They too had

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no historic impact on the development of U.S. coinage. The 1933 double eagles were struck as legal U.S. coins before they were ordered melted by the government under Presidential order #6260. A few were removed from the mint in some way, but most were eventually seized by the Treasury Department. Only the King Farouk specimen and those in the Smithsonian Institution are known to have survived. They are historically significant in that they represent the last regular issue gold coins minted in the United States.

When I first read that a book had been published that listed the 100 greatest U.S. coins, I took some time to consider what the top ranked coins might be. My choices were made largely on the basis of my perception of their historical significance and impact. It was my feeling that the three greatest coins were the 1793 chain cent, the 1794 silver dollar and the 1836 Judd-60 Gobrecht dollar. I felt confident that these coins would be ranked in the top five or six coins in the book and certainly in the top ten. The 1793 chain cent was America's first coin having the unit value of 1 cent or 1/100 dollar, and since it was minted earlier in the year than the 1793 half cent, it was the first regular issue coin to be minted. It was also the first U.S. copper coin. The 1794 silver dollar represents the nation's first one dollar denomination coin which is the basic unit of our coinage. It along with the

1794 half dime and half dollar represent the first regular issue silver coins. These were also the first regular issue coins depicting the image of Liberty whose image would remain on circulating U.S. coins until the 1930s. The 1793 chain cent and the 1794 silver dollar both had very low mintages and both are rare. The chain cent was minted for less than a year and the flowing hair dollar was minted for only two years. However, these two coins are ranked 15 and 20, respectively, in the book. The 1836 Judd-60 Gobrecht silver dollar is a true classic among U.S. coins. Christian Gobrecht's flying eagle design is truly majestic. It was the first silver dollar coin to be minted in 33 years, the first coin to depart from the Liberty head design, and one of the first coins to be struck on the mint's new steam presses. Gobrecht dollars are very unusual in that they were minted with brilliant proof finishes and then placed into circulation. Most importantly the Gobrecht dollar was the first coin to feature the Liberty Seated design that was to dominate U.S. silver coinage for the next 55 years. It has a very low mintage, and it is rare. This coin is highly prized by collectors. It was quite surprising that the PNG dealers did not include it in their top 20 choices of the 100 greatest U.S. coins. It was even more surprising that the authors of the book placed it as low as 69th on their list. What were they

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thinking?.....*continued in September Newsletter*

The Grading Battle – Civic Duty or Random Acts of Kindness?

By Paul J Landsberg

I don't know how many of you saw the two page paid advertisement written by Barry Stuppler for the ANA publication: The Numismatist. At it's most basic form, Accurgrade is suing 46 individuals. This all started with a PNG / ICTA survey of 151 dealers that found that Accurgrade was the lowest rated. Read the survey at: <http://www.pngdealers.com>

In my many years as a coin collector I have often seen the more fanatical amongst us proclaim with a great deal of righteousness and certainty that dealers should stand up and publicly "fat finger" any dealers who sell counterfeits, altered, or dramatically overpriced coins. The reasoning from my "only black or white" fanatical friends is that dealers owe it to the hobby to safeguard it from sharks in the water. Truly these people believe it is a dealer's civic duty to keep the hobby clean.

Personally I tend to see all shades of gray and I understand how talking down another dealer's practices or inventory can lead to ugly situations and in the worst cases, legal problems. Well, in

this case it did. Big time. However, I also realize that with my approach a person relies upon random acts of kindness by dealers to steer them clear of particularly nasty vermin in our hobby.

The close of the paid advertisements asks people to contribute to an ANA legal defense fund that has been set up to help defray legal costs. The lawyers are involved and you can only imagine the billable hours that are being rung up regularly in this matter. I simply ask that you read the article and if it moves you, act!!

August Ice Cream Social

As we traditionally do, Our August Meeting is an Ice Cream social. Please bring some of your favorite ice cream and the club will supply some drinks and cookies to make this a complete sugar rush!! We always need some ice cream scoops so if you can lend yours for the evening, please do so.

Next Meeting
August 12, 2004
7:30 PM

Kiwanis Park Club House
2525 Noble Street
Raleigh, NC 27608

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PO Box 12363
Durham, NC 27709
