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5850 Commerce Blvd, Suite 100
Rohnert Park, Ca. 94928

Redwood Empire Coin Club

Volume 74, Issue 2, Meeting #844, March 10, 2021

Next Meeting: April 14, 2021

SOCIAL DISTANCING, MEETING #12

I hope this newsletter still finds you in good health, one and all. It is hard to believe that it has been a full year of us meeting virtually. Don't you miss in-person meetings? We are hopeful things will continue to improve and look forward to possibly having some sort of in-person meeting toward summer but are cautiously awaiting further guidelines- stay tuned.

Before we started with the topic, Andy O showed us his 2021 proof set. There were two quarters in the set, with one reverse featuring the Tuskegee Airmen with the current obverse bust of Washington. The other reverse featured Washington crossing the Delaware and the obverse featured a return to the bust of Washington designed by John Flanagan and featured regularly from 1932-1988. The bust was changed with the 50 State Quarters and other programs, and the return to the 'old' bust features a larger size and higher relief.



HEROES AND IMPORTANT PEOPLE

- Paul C started off the topic with a masterpiece of William Barber, U.S. Mint engraver from 1869-1879. His son was Charles Barber, of Barber dime, quarter, half, etc fame. But William was the designer of the Trade Dollar. This coin was authorized to assist with trade in China. The standard U.S. dollar coin had 412.5 grains of silver, which was less than that of other countries- particularly the Mexican Peso which was the standard of the time. The trade dollar had 420 grains of silver and was acceptable in trade now. In addition, many Chinese merchants verified the value of the coins by placing counterstamps ("chop marks") on them. William Barber packed a number of design elements all in the obverse: Liberty is seated facing left and looking across the ocean towards China, holding an olive branch. She is seated on bales of merchandise and has a sheaf of wheat behind her, both signifying trade.
- In researching the trade dollar, I found this direct quote from Walter Breen's Complete Encyclopedia of US and Colonial Coins (a wonderful resource book). "The issue of this coin was an expensive mistake- its motivation mere greed, its design a triumph of dullness, its domestic circulation and legal-tender status a disastrous provision of law leading only to ghastly abuses, its repudiation a source of hardship for Pennsylvania coal miners and other laborers held in virtual peonage by company stores, its recall a long overdue but very mixed blessing, and its collection a source of decades of frustration" (from 1988). Well, Breen certainly called it like he saw it! While most of us disagree about the design and collectability comment, some of the other statements ring true. While most of these coins went to China for trade, an 1873 Mint Act gave them domestic legality in all payments up to \$5. In 1876, a fall in silver prices resulted in millions of trade dollars suddenly appearing in change in California, their face value way over bullion value. Congress later that year voided the legal status, but the mint continued producing them. In 1877-1878 over \$8.6 million



in trade dollars went into 'circulation' in the eastern United States. Employers bought them in quantity at just over bullion value (80-83 cents each) and put them in pay envelopes at face value. Merchants and banks usually only accepted them at bullion value, so the workers lost out. Regular production did finally stop in 1878. TMI?

- o Andy O thinks of John F. Kennedy as a hero and likes the 2014 Commemorative set with the four half dollars each having a different finish and being from a different mint. He also likes his 3/4 ounce gold 2014 Kennedy half dollar commemorative.



- o Matt A showed us the 1995 Special Olympics Commemorative Dollar, in 90% silver. It was the first U.S. coin to depict a living woman: Eunice Kennedy Shriver. The portrait may not be particularly flattering, but it was significant to honor her for her work with the Special Olympics.

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- o Mike M shared his 1992 Christopher Columbus 500th Anniversary of America Discovery set. Not necessarily Mike's hero, but he lived in a difficult era and still had some accomplishments, whether you view them for better or for worse. In today's perspective he is not necessarily viewed in such a rosy light as he was when most of us were kids, and it is unlikely there will be future Columbus coins made- so get one while you can. Also, the \$20 bill with Andrew Jackson on it may also become a thing of the past- maybe you should start saving them too?



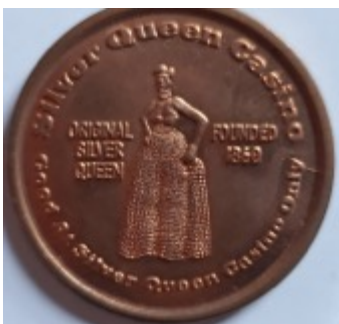
- o Ron S said that his father was his hero. His father was a WWII vet in New Guinea and started Ron with his coin collecting.
- o David B chose U.S. Mint engraver Frank Gasparro as his numismatic hero. Gasparro was the tenth chief mint engraver and designed many coins, including both sides of the Susan B. Anthony and Eisenhower dollars, as well as the reverse of the Kennedy half dollar and the Lincoln Memorial reverse of the cent. He also designed presidential medals and others, including the popular John Wayne gold medal. In his lifetime over 100 billion Lincoln Memorial cents were minted with his design on them.
- o Bill H tells about how he was randomly collecting coins around age 11 or 12 when a family friend noted it and told him she would bring him a coin. On her next visit she gave him an 1878-S trade dollar! She stoked his interest in coins and was his numismatic hero.

- o Bob K picked out a meaningful coin because the heroes would be Wilbur and Orville Wright. The 2003 centennial silver dollar and gold ten dollar coins featured the Wright brothers in profile on the obverse and the first flight on the reverse. The obverse of the centennial half dollar features the monument at Wight Brothers National Memorial in Kill Devil Hills. Kill Devil Hill was the massive shifting sand dune four miles south of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, where the Wright brothers did their testing- and it has been stabilized into a park. Bob was born exactly 50 years after their first flight, on 12/17/1953, so it is easy to remember that first flight at Kitty Hawk. He read a good book about the Wright brothers and feels they were heroes.



- o Riley R thanked Merle and Charlie for keeping the club going during the time of Covid. You are welcome!

- o Helmut J always looks up to the Silver Queen of Virginia City. Literally, he looks up to her whenever he goes there. She is a fifteen foot tall, eight foot wide image made with 3,261 silver dollars in her dress and the frame, which is a nod to the depth of the



Combination Shaft in one of Virginia City's old mines. Not all the dollar coins were minted in Carson City. Her belt was made of twenty-eight \$20 gold pieces, and her necklace and bracelets are made of Mercury dimes. The postcard here shows the two owners in the 1960s, and this is a copper token from the casino. Helmut thinks there is also a silver token but does not have one. Yet.

○ Erik S feels President Theodore Roosevelt is his hero for his role in creating some of the most beautiful coins we have minted, in collaboration with Augustus St. Gaudens. He is also the only man to win the Congressional Medal of Honor and the Nobel Peace Prize. Roosevelt first met with St. Gaudens in 1904 to work on an inaugural medal. Erik showed us several coins: the Presidential dollar coin; the Theodore Roosevelt National Park (North Dakota) quarter; an encapsulated 1908 St. Gaudens \$20 no motto gold piece from the Rough Rider Hoard (this photo is similar to the one he showed- couldn't get a good enough screen shot of his); and the \$10 Indian Head gold (which is also Bob K's favorite). The "Rough Rider Hoard" was a group of hundreds of 1907 and 1908 no motto St. Gaudens \$20 coins found in Europe which came on the market together and were slabbed with a special label by PCGS, in honor of the Rough Riders of Roosevelt's wild days.



○ Frank V showed us his copper 1865 3 cent pattern in Proof 65RB. He is putting together a set of nickel three cent pieces in Proof 65 or 66. There are over 500 of the nickel proofs from 1865, but only 33 known copper proof patterns. And the pattern was more affordable than the regular proof would be! Frank was also wearing a cap during the meeting from the USS Enterprise, from when he was on in it in 1967 while working at the Naval Shipyard at Hunters Point, helping to install a missile defense system.



○ John B had three coins for three very special groups of heroes. The first was the WWI and WWII Code Talkers 2016 proof coin pictured here and the series of congressional medals (starting in 2008) for all the tribes involved with the code talkers. The Navajo Nation was first to be awarded a Congressional Gold Medal in 2001, and the Code Talkers Recognition Act of 2008 recognized all the tribes involved. "Code talkers" refers to those Native Americans who used their tribal languages as a means of secret communication during wartime. It began in 1915-1916 with the Choctaw Tribe tasked with putting together a code the Germans would not be able to understand. In WWII the Navajo Marines began developing code, and even needed to invent words to describe things that weren't in their native language (a battle tank was called a turtle, for instance). The code talkers replaced runners who would have to literally run to headquarters with information (and likely half never made it). The code talkers could relay info almost instantly- it saved a lot of lives. A gold medal was made for each of those tribes; silver medals were made for the code talkers or their next of kin or personal representative; bronze medals were minted for sale to the public.



- John's next group of heroes was the Tuskegee Airmen. They were a black outfit (with a few other minority groups like Latino, Trinidad, and Haitian). They were trained in the states and essentially considered expendable. They were given planes that were damaged and sent out on missions as decoys to draw enemy planes away from a main group of planes. However, they developed into the best pilots we had. They eventually got to fly P-51s which led and protected bombing missions and were involved in bombing German factories, railroads, etc. Sixty six died and twenty six ended up missing out of the Tuskegee Airmen, who were very belatedly honored with this Congressional Gold Medal.
- The final group of heroes were the Nisei Soldiers of WWII of the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team. These were second generation Japanese Americans, all of them had families interred in a camp somewhere around the country. The motto of the 442nd was "Go For Broke", and they were responsible for helping us take Italy in WWII, then Germany and France as well. They were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 2010. Those three courageous groups of men are big heroes to John. And unfortunately, they returned from the war to face the same unjust prejudice that they faced prior to the war.



- Mike C has a favorite numismatic hero in Adolph Weinman. He designed the Winged Liberty 'Mercury' Dime and the Walking Liberty Half Dollar, along with a number of other medals.
- Merle has three numismatic heroes, which he described in the following specific order:
 - #3-Walt Ostromecki: He was ANA president from 2013-2015 and came to a number of our shows. He loved to help kids learn about coins. Willie Quarante used to pick him up at the San Francisco Airport, often with 100-200 pounds of coins to give away to kids at the show. He is now an ANA governor and remains active in the collecting world. When Merle was in Colorado Springs visiting the ANA Headquarters and museum, he saw Walt there--- and Walt gave him a personal tour of the fabulous museum collection.
 - #2-Cliff Mishler: He is also a past ANA president, and worked a long time for Krause Publishing. He lives in Iola, Wisconsin, and came out to our coin show twice. Cliff became RECC Life Member # 39 in 2004. He also collects sticker dollars and helped get Merle interested in further collecting those. He had silver tokens made (silver dollar sized, shown here) and if he liked what you did for a club, show, etc, he would give you one. Merle is honored to have received this piece.



#1-Charles Kappen came up with the first California Token book ("single handedly with Stephen Album's help, though they split up at a certain point"). There are 754 pages of California 'Good For' tokens! It took him thousands of hours for people to tell him about various tokens and then to list them in a logical order in this reference book, published by TAMS. For instance, there were about 3000 tokens listed just for San Francisco in the book. It was an amazing feat.

- Finally, Charlie (that's me!) talked about a different kind of hero. As a kid it was fun to read Greek myths, and Hercules was always one of the big heroes in ancient times. And there are a lot of ancient coins that feature Hercules, naturally. As an infant the goddess Hera sent two snakes to kill him, but he strangled the snakes, as depicted on coins. As an adult he is usually depicted with a big club and the pelt of the Nemean lion. That was a beast which ravaged the countryside and had a skin impervious to arrows and spears, but Hercules is able to stun it with his club and strangle it. He skinned it and wore the impervious coat as a cape. One other coin here shows Hercules fighting the Hydra. And there are coins depicting just about all of his twelve labors. Plus, Alexander the Great is always depicted as Hercules with the lion skin over his head on the big tetradrachms.



MEMBERSHIP DRAWING: a 1917-S Mercury Dime in G-06 went to Deanna, and a 1950-D cent in PCGS MS64 Red went to John B!

APRIL TOPIC: What Numismatic Item Have You Purchased During the Covid Crisis.....
or.....What Item Got Away? Did you have some spare Covid cash to spend, or get some Covid
cravings for coins? Show us at the next meeting! Here is the info:

Time: Apr 14, 2021 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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Check out our newsletter at: **Redwoodempirecoinclub.com**

Thanks for reading. Corrections? Additions? Questions? E-mail us at:

newsletter@Redwoodempirecoinclub.com. See you (hopefully!) April 14, 2021— Charlie

The Redwood Empire Coin Club meets on the second Wednesday of each month. The Club's meeting location is the **Veterans Memorial Building, 1351 Maple Avenue, Santa Rosa** (opposite the County Fairgrounds across from Highway 12), in the "**Dinner Room**" on the east side of the building, at 7:00 p.m. sharp.