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1211W. College Ave.  
Santa Rosa, Ca. 95401

# Redwood Empire Coin Club

Volume 67, Issue 10, Meeting #780. September 9, 2015

Next Meeting: November 11, 2015

## OKTOBERFEST!

Well, the October meeting of the RECC was another great success. We had lots of members and guests, plus the best wurst in town courtesy of the great chefs at G&G Market. And thanks to all the members who brought something to go with the wieners. You can always tell when there is plenty of good food for all at a meeting, because the entire club is sitting down eating and talking and having a good time.

Instead of the regular auction, we had our 16th Annual Helen and Roy Roberts Memorial Auction. Members donated 44 items to the auction, with proceeds going to the club to help pay for rent, mailing, etc. It is a great way to remember those two past club members. Helen was our trustworthy Treasurer for decades, and managed every single penny we brought in and spent. Roy was a past club president, then ran the monthly auction for years. This is back when we met at Coddington and could squeeze sometimes 30 or even 40 people in the little room. This year's auction generated \$465 for the club!

### COIN SHOW NEWS

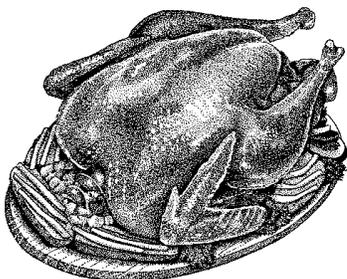
Plans for the February 12-13 2016 coin show are progressing nicely. Merle has already sold 13 tables, with many more to be taken up soon. At the meeting he handed out Gold Coin Drawing tickets for members to sell. This is one of our main sources of income for the show, so it is really encouraged for all of you to try to sell these tickets. They sell for \$1 each or 6 for \$5. A book of 120 tickets costs \$100.

The sponsor of the tickets changed this year, as Round Table Pizza is undergoing changes, so to speak. So there will be coupons with the tickets for money off of pizzas at the Union Hotel Restaurants in Santa Rosa.

There will also be gold coin prizes for the 3 members who sell the most gold drawing tickets. And there will be a 4th gold coin from a member pulled from the remaining ticket sellers.

The Gold Drawing itself will feature a \$20 St. Gaudens coin, a \$5 Liberty Head Half Eagle, and seven Mexican 2-1/2 peso gold coins.

If you thought October was good, wait until November when we have our annual THANKSGIVING FEAST! For **only \$5** we will have delicious turkey, gravy, mashed potatoes and stuffing again courtesy of G&G Market. **PLEASE bring a side dish or dessert** to go with the turkey dinner— thanks!



## COLLECTING 1804 DOLLARS

Imagine owning an 1804 Dollar. The King of Coins, a fabulous rarity, a desired beauty. But what would you do with it? Stick it in a vault, wait for it to gain value over several years, then auction it off? Maybe display it somewhere (heavily insured and guarded, presumably)? Unless you are in the “1 %”, odds are you will never even own one. Personally I really don't even care to own one. Sure it would be nice to have an investment piece. But I may be the only numismatist who doesn't really like these coins. Just about all collectors are interested in coins by date, mint mark, variety, etc. The problem with the 1804 dollar is that it was not minted in 1804. Can you imagine our mint getting away with something like that now? It would be required to put a tiny “copy” on the coin somewhere. The Austrian mint has gotten away with minting Maria Theresa thalers dated 1780 for centuries, but they are only worth their weight in silver. China is probably minting U.S. 1804 dollars now, but that is a different story. The 1804 Dollars were minted in 1834, and 1857, and are worth millions. They technically are fantasy issues. So what gives?

On Nov. 11, 1834, orders were placed with the Mint by the State Department for two sets of “specimens of each kind now in use, whether of gold, silver or copper” for presentation to the King of Siam (modern Thailand) and the Imam of Muscat. Proof strikes of every denomination that year were included, but no silver dollars had been minted since 1804. Mint records show a total of 19,570 silver dollars were struck in 1804; however it is believed they were all dated 1802 or 1803 from leftover dies. So when the mint wanted to complete the presentation sets with a silver dollar, it just decided to make up a few more- with the date of 1804. Besides the two presentation coins, six others were also produced by the mint and were used to trade with collectors for pieces desired for the Mint's coin cabinet.

Numismatists became aware of these 1804 dollars around 1842 after one was illustrated in an article published by two mint employees. In response to numismatic demand, several more examples were surreptitiously produced by Mint officials sometime in the 1850s or later. And the rest is history. But there are a couple 1804 dollars that *were* minted in 1804 and are readily collectible. And these also have historical interest. But first, a bit of historical perspective.

If you go back in American history, the first ‘dollars’ were most likely the Dutch leeuwendaalder or ‘lion thaler’, first minted in 1575. These dollar-sized coins circulated as legal tender in the colonies. Lion thalers featured a ‘rampant lion’ on the reverse, as can be seen in this image. Real worn out coins were referred to as ‘dog dollars’. In 1804, Netherlands did mint a Rijksdaalder, and Prussia minted an 1804 thaler as well.



Going back even farther, the very first thaler was minted in 1518. “Thal” is the German word for valley, and a “thaler” is a person or thing from the valley. The coin was a “Joachimsthaler”, a silver coin minted from metal mined near the city of Joachimsthal (St. Joachim's Valley) in Bohemia, now the Czech Republic. Joachim, the father of the Virgin Mary, was portrayed on the coin. Soon coins were being minted from mines in other valleys, with different names; they eventually all became known as thalers, and the name spread to other countries like the Netherlands. The term ‘dollar’ was the anglicized term for these coins, and the term was commonly in use in the colonies.

Getting back to 1804 dollars though, there are two in particular that are relatively easy to collect. Many of us were taught about George Washington crossing the Delaware River during the Revolutionary War. The story goes that he threw a silver dollar across the river to see if it was frozen or not. The trouble with this story is that we (the United States) did not even have dollars minted until 1794. Coins from several countries were legal tender in the colonies, and the most common one (and most likely thrown by Washington, if he did such a thing), was a Spanish Milled or "Pillar Dollar", an 8 Reale coin. And those were minted in the Americas, in Mexico, in 1804. The obverse portrays Carlos III, and the reverse shows the Pillars of Gibraltar surrounding a crowned shield.



In 1793, our new coinage law gave legal tender status to the Spanish 'dollar' and large silver coins of France. By 1830, approximately one in every four coins in circulation was made in one of the numerous Spanish colonial mints. This legal status was to be temporary until the Philadelphia mint could meet the demand for coins. The law was renewed six times, until foreign coins were finally demonetized in 1857. And when Congress finally passed the Coinage Act of 1857, the mint agreed to accept any Spanish or Mexican coins in exchange at the rate of 25 cents for the 2 reales, 12-1/2 cents for the 1 reale, and 6-1/4 cents for the 1/2 reale. The catch was that these worn silver coins could be exchanged for only 2 years, and only for new 1857 or 1858 Flying Eagle cents! The mint made and sold over 75,000,000 cents and recoined over two million dollars' worth of Spanish coins into American dimes and quarters. The seigniorage profit on this venture paid for the entire operation of the mint for 1858. Interestingly, the wording of the act specified the exchange rate for the above-mentioned smaller denomination coins. It outlawed all larger denomination foreign silver and gold but did not specify exchange rates or if it was to be in cents- that could have been more problematic for the dollar-sized coins. The coinage act of 1857 also eliminated the heavy large cent and half cent pieces, authorizing the smaller Flying Eagle cents instead. This was convenient for exchanging foreign silver with more affordable copper-nickel cents.

There is one other 1804 dollar coin worth collecting: the Bank of England Dollar token. In England toward the end of the 18th century, after a number of years of silver shortage, a large number of captured Spanish American 8 reale coins (Spanish milled dollars) became available- most originating from Mexico and Peru. It was therefore decided to countermark the obverse with an oval stamp bearing the head of King George III stamped over the face of Spanish King Charles III or VIII. These were issued in 1797 with a value of 4 shillings and 9 pence (5 shillings equals a crown). A few French silver ecus and even fewer American dollars were also counter stamped. There was a lot of satirical comment about these coins depicting "the head of a fool on the head of an ass", and "Two kings' heads are not worth a crown". Records show that 3,744,583 foreign dollars were counter stamped.

It soon became apparent that a large number of forged countermarks were in circulation, so the stamp was changed to an octagonal shape- which also became a target for forgers. In 1804 it was decided that Spanish dollars should be completely overstruck with new dies. They were to be called “Bank of England Dollars”, and there were a number of die varieties. Coins showing a little of the under type, particularly the date, are more valuable. And the coins were also minted in 1810 and 1811, but still with the 1804 date. So it is possible to find a 1804 Bank of England Dollar with a hint of a later date from the underlying Spanish coin on it! But the strength of the striking was so good that most completely obliterated the underlying coin.



To enhance public acceptance, the reverse featured a new design of seated Britannia, the first time it appeared on any British coin. She was flanked by a beehive (a symbol of industriousness) and a cornucopia (standing for abundance or prosperity). They may not be as appealing as the U.S. 1804 dollar to you, but these other ‘dollars’ still hold an interesting place in numismatic history.



The topic of the October Kids Corner meeting seemed intriguing (see next page for details), so here are some examples I was able to find to help illustrate what Rich spoke about.



## CLASSIFIED ADS

Classified ads may be placed by any club member, up to 2 per month. They run for two months. Buy—Sell—Trade—Want Lists OK. Notify Charlie at each meeting (or mail to club P.O. Box, or even call) to get your ad in

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**Over 700,000 Coin Inventory!** I can't bring them all! Text me what you need and, if I have it, I'll bring it to the next club meeting. Specializing in US coinage, especially BU from 1960 to date.

Jeff Brody, (707)666-5963

P.S. I also stock numismatic books and supplies (2X2s, coin tubes, silica gel, loupes, etc.). All at 20% off retail. What do you need? I order monthly.

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**Beautiful Franklin Halves!** Stop by my table and check out dozens of fresh, mainly BU coins. This is a set you can easily assemble in Choice condition. Let me help you— Jeff Brody

### **Kids Corner**

The October meeting was attended by Carson, Celina, Giulia, and Jasmine. We looked at on line pictures of coins re-engraved into Halloween coins. These coins take the Hobo nickel to a much higher and scarier level. I did my best to explain how the hobo nickel came about but I will bring up the subject at a later adult meeting for other member input.

In the mean time, Google search for hobo quarters and hobo halves. Click on "View Images" for a whole new world of coin art and collecting. One video shows in detail how the coins are re-engraved.

At the November meeting, we will discuss the Kennedy half dollar. I will bring a roll from the bank to search and share.

See you at 6:15. Rich W

Volunteers for **refreshments** for November are all of us bringing a side dish or dessert to go with the Thanksgiving dinner— thanks!

## DRAWING WINNERS:

**Membership:** Berry P, Larry M, Cayson K, Bob K, and Frank V

**50:50** pot of \$ \$82 was split with Charlie C.

**Raffle:** Matt A, Jack H (twice), Mike B, Tyler, David V (twice), Giulia, Jon Maria, Irene, and Lucky Larry

**August Members Present:** 57+

**New Members:** none

**Guests:** Larry C, President of the Diablo Coin Club in Concord

**Auction:** 44 exciting items

**Adjournment was at 9:00 p.m. sharp!**

### Sunnyvale Coin Show

November 13 and 14 is the South Bay / Sunnyvale Coin Show at the Domain Hotel, 1085 East El Camino Real. A lucky Northern California coin club member will win both a two peso gold coin and a PCGS MS 63 Franklin half dollar. Need not be present to win. Just fill out a registration card and show proof of your club affiliation. And all three registration prizes at this show will be gold: tenth ounce Eagle, Canadian gold 50 cent, one gram gold ingot. So you will have a number of opportunities to win valuable numismatic items

The Redwood Empire Coin Club meets on the second Wednesday of every 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 PM sharp.

R.E.C.C.

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Santa Rosa, Ca. 95401



#### UPCOMING SHOWS & EVENTS

**November 1, 2015. Peninsula Coin Club's 36th Annual Coins and Collectibles Show.**  
Napredak Hall, 770 Montague Expressway,  
San Jose

**FEBRUARY 12-13, 2016. Redwood Coin Club 48th Annual Coin Show.** Sonoma County Fair-  
grounds' Finley Hall, Santa Rosa

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

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

**newsletter@Redwoodempirecoinclub.com**

Or call me— 707-573-1252

See you November 11— Charlie

