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Celebrating our 75th
Anniversary in 2024!



5850 Commerce Blvd, Suite 100
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Redwood Empire Coin Club

Volume 77, Issue 6, Meeting #883, June 12, 2024

Next Meeting July 10, 2024

REMARKABLE ENGRAVERS

Merle and I had a bet. We came up with a new idea for a meeting topic, but one of us (ahem) didn't think enough people would do the work to find a favorite engraver and come up with a talk about him or her. Thanks to those who came through, Merle now owes me a wooden nickel. A PCGS slabbed example would be nice, but I would accept NGC 😊. There were awesome engravers/designers presented along with their coins and medals- hopefully the report that follows does them justice.

Bill Green spoke about two upcoming shows of his. One is soon on June 28-29 in Concord. The second one is in Reno July 19-20, in conjunction with the Reno Coin Club. There will be an all-gold drawing, with only 500 tickets available at \$5 each. The club bought ten tickets, and- if we win- expect another gold piece in a drawing or raffle.

For the **July** meeting, we will have **BBQ hot dogs for \$2!** Jerry St. G has graciously volunteered to grill them on site, so they will be hot and tasty. There will be beans, potato salad, green salad, and beverages as well.

The topic for **July: Any Numismatic Item with Stars or Stripes**. Since it will be right after July 4th, this expands on our usual patriotic theme. Bring in your item(s), give a talk, and get 4 free raffle tickets! As usual, if you send in photos to our website ahead of time, they can be shown to the club during the meeting. Send photos to newsletter@redwoodempirecoinclub.com, and it will get routed to me for showing at the meeting. We will also have Zoom available if you are unable to be there in person (info below).



ENGRAVERS/DESIGNERS

○ Steve E started the evening's topic by telling us about Elizabeth Jones. She went to school in the U.S., then spent twenty years in Italy working in art. It was only upon meeting Renato Signorini, a well-known medalist in Italy, that she even decided to become a medalist. She became one



of the leading medalists in the world. When Frank Gasparro became ill and retired, Ronald Reagan appointed her as the first woman chief engraver of the U.S. Mint- at age 46! She retained that position for ten years. Among her designs were the 1982 George Washington Commemorative half dollar obverse and the 1983 Olympic dollar.

- Wendell B: showed us an English crown coin with a reverse designed by Benedetto Pistrucci (1783-1855) that features St. George and the Dragon. The design first appeared on a British coin in 1817 and has been used ever since. The design remains timeless.



- Tom M talked about the engraver who started it all in ancient Greece. Kimon was the first engraver to elevate the art on Greek coinage to another level, around 400 BC. He increased the dimensionality of coins, and was first to use a full-face image, rather than more simple profiles. He would travel from mint to mint as a professional to engrave dies. Some of them have his full name inscribed on the obverse and reverse. His designs are considered among the most beautiful of the ancient Greek Coins.
- Charlie C (that's me) chimed in because that was the same engraver I wanted to talk about. The close-up photos show Kimon's name- one on the headband of the top coin, one on a dolphin below the reverse portrait on the lower coin. These decadrachms are big coins- a little larger than a U.S. silver dollar but weighing ~43 grams (compared to 26.7 grams for a silver dollar). They were used mostly for military payments, and most were melted down in ancient times. They are all rare and pricy: the lower profile image coin sold a week ago for \$180,000, and one like the top coin reached \$3 million at auction earlier this year! Kimon engraved these under the rule of King Dionysius I of Syracuse (on Sicily). Dionysios married two women- *on the same day*, who were likely what these portraits were based on. The top coin (with a more youthful full-face image) was on only two obverse and two reverse dies. The lower coin with a slightly more mature profile image was on many more dies and is more common- so we know who the more powerful female persona in that family was. We know the names of at least twenty ancient Greek engravers, as they left their names or initials on many coins. Collecting by engraver is challenging due to the popularity and cost of these. And as an aside, for the Roman Republic, we know the names of virtually every mint director- over a century of names of people responsible for designing and minting coins each year.



- Helm J showed us this medal commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge. It was designed by local San Francisco sculptor and medalist Spero Anargyros (1915-2004), who also designed the 9' Hills Brothers mascot sculpture in San Francisco in 1992- among *many* other items. The 1.5" medal is in bronze, and a few ~3" medals were made in silver. The 1962 25th bridge anniversary is also the year Helm was born. His first date with wife Deanna was the year of the 50th anniversary! Anargyros was not fond of abstract modern sculpture designs. In a 1964 interview he said "There is enough beauty around us to copy. Why try to improve on it by imagining things?"



- Bill R is fond of Morgan dollars and their namesake designer George T. Morgan (1845-1925). Morgan was born in Birmingham, England and was a die engraver for the British Royal Mint. He was unable to advance to chief engraver there because of a family of engravers that held the positions for generations. When U.S. Mint Director H.R. Linderman recognized that our chief engraver and his son (William and Charles Barber) were too busy with private work (done on government property at the mint, no less), he arranged for Morgan to come to work at the U.S. Mint. The Barbers weren't happy, there was competition, but Morgan's design for a new dollar coin won. He was eventually promoted to be the 7th chief engraver for the mint. Anna Willis Williams, a Philadelphia school teacher, reluctantly agreed to be the model for the obverse. It was kept secret but eventually a newspaper reported the fact. Her reluctance had been justified as she lost her teaching job (models were considered scandalous), but she did find another teaching position. George Morgan also designed a \$100 Union gold coin, but it was never released to the public.
- Mike C mentioned two engravers he was fond of: Adolph Weinman, particularly his Walking Liberty Half Dollar, and Augustus Saint Gaudens and his \$20 double eagle. He discussed the motto "In God We Trust" being added to the gold piece and to other coin and currency denominations.
- Bob K loves the Saint Gaudens \$10 gold. While trying to collect the series he ran up against the cost of the key date, which led him to switching to his type book. With type coins, you have a lot of dates to choose from (usually) which makes them generally much more affordable.

- Dave G talked about Joseph Alexis Bailly, born in Paris in 1823 and died in Philadelphia in 1883. In 1848 he was a member of the Garde Mobile unit in France when he shot his captain and was forced to flee and settled in America's French Quarter of New Orleans. Bailly created many works including plaques, portraits, and statues of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Ulysses S. Grant. Dave likes Trade Dollars and Bailly's work for several reasons. First, he was responsible for only the reverse of the coin and was not well known in American numismatics. Secondly, Dave likes Trade Dollars for their size, limited years of production, simple design, and that they state 420 GRAINS .900 FINE, a fact that is not on many coins from the past. Dave is working on a complete Trade Dollar collection.



- Mike M talked about John Reich. John Reich was responsible for some major designs of early US coinage. Born in Furth, Bavaria (Germany) in 1768, his father Johann Christian Reich taught him how to engrave medals. He moved to the United States in 1800 where his work caught the eye of President Thomas Jefferson. In 1801, Reich was recommended by Jefferson to become an engraver at the U.S. Mint. Although recommended, Reich did not get the full-time position, but instead received another smaller job at the mint. After almost deciding to return to Europe because of only having menial jobs for so long, he was promoted to assistant engraver (aka 'Second Engraver') in 1807. 62-year-old Chief Engraver Scot had failing sight and approved. Reich was tasked with redesigning many of the currently circulating coins (designed by Scot). Reich updated Scot's early draped bust coins with a new design- the Capped Bust (Liberty Cap coins). The first coins designed were the two most popular commercial denominations- the half dollar and \$5 half eagle. The half dollar had liberty facing to the right with 13 stars on the obverse. Liberty wore a cap on her head with the inscription "LIBERTY". The reverse had a heraldic eagle holding three arrows and an olive branch, representing strength and peace. Above the eagle shows the inscription "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" and the bottom has the denomination "50 C." This coin also has a lettered edge with the words "FIFTY CENTS OR HALF A DOLLAR". Reich went on to produce a capped bust design for the other circulating denominations. A new practice took place under Reich- gold and silver coins finally had a denomination printed on them. Circulating denominations now had a unified obverse image. The inspiration for Liberty on the coin was not known, but one writer claimed it was "Reich's fat German mistress"- pure speculation. John Reich resigned from the mint in 1817 after 10 years of work without any promotion or raise in pay. He received little praise from Chief Engraver Scot likely from bitterness/jealousy



of the capped bust replacing the prior designs. Reich retired and lived in Albany New York until he passed away in 1833. None of Robert Scot's designs would last as long as the 29-year legacy and popularity of the capped bust coins that Reich designed.



Gary C (Zooming in from Peralta NM!) talked about three designers on two coins dated 2015. The British £1 gold coin shown features the same Benedetto Pistrucci design mentioned earlier by Wendell. St. George is riding his steed bareback, wearing nothing but a cape, helmet, and sandals. It doesn't sound very comfortable, but heroes will do what heroes do. The obverse features the fourth of five chronologically changing portraits of Queen Elizabeth II. It was designed by the only one of the three designers who is still living: Ian Rank-Broadly, born in Surry, England in 1952. Gary may have been near Rank-Broadly when at his grandparents' home in Epsom in 1970 and 1973. Rank-Broadly was at the Epsom School of Art from 1970-1974, by Jove! Rank-Broadly's portrait of QE II was also used on the obverse of a series of coins featuring reverses by our own local famous designer Charles M Schulz. These are from the island nation of Niue (pronounced nee-oo-ay, meaning "behold the coconut") and valued at two dollars (New Zealand dollars). The coins are 1 troy ounce silver, 0.999 pure, and the reverse featuring Snoopy includes the inscription "Beagle. Best Friend. Flying Ace." There were likely many people in the room with some personal contact with Charles Schulz and we are glad to have had him in Sonoma County.

- Merle began his talk by showing these two half dollar images to make a point. The Liberty Seated design by Christian Gobrecht was on the half dime through the dollar denominations from 1837-1891. The Charles Barber design was on the dime through half dollar denominations from 1892-1916. That was a long time with the same design (with very minor modifications) on so many denominations. That all changed with three new designs in 1916: Adolph Weinman's Winged Liberty Head ("Mercury") dime and Walking Liberty half dollar, and Hermon MacNeil's Standing Liberty quarter- all beautiful and innovative designs.



Some other design changes enriched our numismatic legacy. The Trade Dollar designed by Charles Barber featured a fresh look at Liberty from 1873-1885. Bob K's favorite, the \$10 Saint-Gaudens Indian Head, introduced a new high standard of art in U.S. coins in 1907. And the \$20 Saint-Gaudens coin introduced that same year is considered by many to be the most beautiful U.S. coin- particularly the high relief version like this one pictured. Merle thinks it was awesome that these new designs came out.



Charlie added that Saint-Gaudens was dying of cancer when his 1907 designs were made, and they were completed just in time, with encouragement from President Theodore Roosevelt. But Saint-Gaudens is also well known for other sculptural work. The equestrian statue of General William Tecumseh Sherman accompanied by the allegorical figure of Victory was made in 1902 and can be seen at Grand Army Plaza in New York City. Pictured below that is the 1884 Saint-Gaudens Shaw Memorial for the 54th Massachusetts Regiment.



It is in the National Gallery of Art and is 17' wide by 12' high. Another copy is at Boston Common in Boston. It was the first civic monument to pay homage to the heroism of African American soldiers.



Each of the soldiers is *life size*, and they are marching four deep. It has amazing detail, and it further displays his artistic genius. There are many women and men who were incredibly talented artists and contributed to our numismatic heritage. Thanks to everyone who shared a talk.

Join RECC Zoom Meeting in July!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89448922926?pwd=ZHaJHASXKap7WAr6bGXDgiCzi8awZP.1>

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DRAWING WINNERS

Membership: John B, Ron S, Rusty D, Barbara D, and Charlie C

50:50 pot of \$94 was split with Bill S

Raffle: Bill R, Jim H, George C, Bill S (twice), Joel M (twice), Joyce B, David Y, David B, and David G

June Attendance: 55+

New Members: None this month... yet

Guests: yes, there were some

Auction: 35 exciting items.

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



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UPCOMING SHOWS AND EVENTS

June 28-29, 2024. East Bay Concord Show. Concord Plaza Hotel, 45 John Glenn Dr., Concord

July 19-20, 2024. Reno Coin Show. J Resort, 345 North Arlington Avenue, Reno, NV

August 11, 2024. Fairfield Coin & Collectible Show. Elks Lodge #2638, 302 Parker Street, Vacaville

October 11-13, 2024. Diablo Numismatic Society's Contra Costa Coin & Collectibles Show. Walnut Creek Elk's Lodge, 1475 Creekside Drive, Walnut Creek

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.

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

Thanks for reading. Corrections? Additions? Questions? E-mail us at: newsletter@Redwoodempirecoinclub.com.
See you at the Vets Building "Dinner Room" July 10, 2024— Charlie