



Founded March 26, 1949

Celebrating our 75th
Anniversary in 2024!



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

Redwood Empire Coin Club

Volume 77, Issue 5, Meeting #882, May 8, 2024

Next Meeting June 12, 2024

MAY NEWS

We had another great meeting in May. It was mostly members talking about coins- but first here's the business. Mike M is going to place an order for **2025** Red Books for the club just one time this year. There will be no Mega Red this year, but everything else is available at 45% off MSRP. The prices are listed here. There is a \$1 shipping cost per book (no tax). Mike will be placing the order on **May 24th**, so **call or text** him at **(707) 318-7096** with your order soon. Books will be brought to the next meeting.



Prices:

Spiral bound- \$9.88
Hardcover- \$10.98
Hidden Spiral- \$13.73
Large Print- \$16.48

Speaking of Mike, it was close to his birthday, so we brought in a big birthday cake, and everybody sang "Happy Birthday" to him.



Merle gave a presentation on design changes to the Seated Liberty coinage from 1853-1855. In 1853, a new reduction in weight was indicated by arrows at the date of half dimes through half dollars. For the quarter and half dollar, rays were added to the reverse of the coins as well: there was supposedly a rule that if there was a design change on one side, then there would also have to be a design change on the other side. Dimes and half dimes were too small apparently for the rays on the reverse. Curiously, rays were *removed* from the reverse after just one year, yet arrows continued through 1855. In 1856, arrows were removed yet the weight did not change. And more change occurred later in the series as well.

Why were the rays removed after just one year? Apparently, they caused the dies to wear out a lot faster, which was problematic for the mint. Merle told the entire story of the people involved with the decisions to make the design changes.



MY FAVORITE HALF

- Nolen A started off the discussions with this beauty. He had been saving for a year to hopefully get a 1795 half dollar. 299,680 total were made, but we don't know how many still exist. He likes the design, how old it is, its rarity- he thought it was a cool coin and is very happy he could buy it.

- Joel M talked about two coins. First was the 1918 Lincoln Commemorative half, which was the year his grandfather was born. This is a photo from the internet- he has a couple in high grade condition. It isn't the most

beautiful coin, but it reminds him of his grandfather- and when he sees a nice one, he buys it! The other coin he likes is the bust half dollar- particularly the good strike on an 1826 example. To him it appears the portrait has a smiling face- like Mona Lisa.

- Joel's son Guilliano really likes the Bay Bridge commemorative- the one his dad bought for him at the meeting from the Witter Coin table. It has a cool bear on it.
- Jim F shared that his California Diamond Jubilee half dollar (this example) is from his wife's grandfather's collection. It was minted in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the admission of California into the Union. He loves it because he was born in California and has lived here his whole life, and he likes grizzly bears. His wife's grandfather was also in the Bear Flag Party. Next year will be our state's 175th anniversary. The bear on his half dollar is very similar to the one on our club medal.



- Wendell B shared this 1873 half eagle- about the only gold piece he could afford to buy at the time. It is the 'closed 3' variety. Apparently, officials felt the 3 looked too much like an 8, so an 'open 3' variety was later produced.

- David B shared photos of eight 1854 half dimes, where the date appears to be crunched into the base of the seated Liberty to fit on the coin. Here is a photo of one of his coins. He saw it first on eBay, and thought it was a neat design. So, every time he saw one, he bought it! He now owns about fifteen of them!





o Bill R likes his 1936 San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge commemorative. 100,055 were struck at the San Francisco Mint in November 1936. Many were sold for \$1.50 at the toll booths. But 28,631 were melted down. Some banks gave these out to customers opening bank accounts at the time. This was a high school graduation present to him forty years ago from his aunt. She had received it when opening a bank account at Bank of America in Oakland in 1937. She lived to be 107, and the coin holds special meaning to Bill.

- o Tom M shared his recent acquisition of this coin from the Seleucid Empire, of Seleukos II (246-226 BC), minted in Susa (now in Iran). He admitted that it looks like it came out of the south end of a north-bound horse. It is extremely rare, with only one other listed on Coin Archives (a great resource for ancient coins). He bought it and worked on it to get rid of a lot of the ancient crud which had accumulated, resulting in a nice example for this kind of coin. It is a half-denomination of a larger coin which is unpublished- and he owns that one too!

- o Ember S gave two talks. First was for her son Aaron, who could not make it to the meeting. His favorite is a "half-dime"- a 1937-D three-legged Buffalo nickel! It is a favorite because of the memory of how he got it. His "very wealthy" uncle gave it to him for a Bar Mitzvah present in 2022 and used to talk about looking for one as a kid himself long ago. Aaron contemplated the value of the coin but realized that happiness in life comes from the memories associated with material items, not necessarily from the items themselves. Ember herself had two favorite halves to talk about. First was the 1938-S Oregon Trail half dollar. Her great-great-great-grandmother came to Oregon at age five in 1864 via the Oregon Trail- to escape the Civil War. That coin and a patchwork quilt by the same person (done later) are a special memory. Second was a 1986 Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island half dollar. She had family that came to the U.S. (from Germany) via Ellis Island during the Civil War. Two older half-brother relatives were conscripted right there from the docks into the Union Army because of a need for manpower.

Those two half dollars are part of a topical collection that has much meaning- something she discussed at the Junior meeting earlier in the evening. These images are examples from the internet.



3 Legs Buffalo

4 Legs Buffalo



- o Bob K's story begins a long time ago when he fell in love with gold coins. Then "Merle tried to trick me and said it is much more fun to do a type set". Sure enough, he was talked into collecting type coins. And he had so much fun! Instead of collecting a lot of one coin type, you could collect one of each. The first coin in the book was an 1804 half cent. He didn't

have one, but Merle had a really nice one. He kept trying to convince Merle to upgrade *his* example so he could have Merle's- and eventually they did just that. Who wouldn't want a fun coin like that? Here is one (also from the internet).

- Another example is this beautiful 1835 half cent with rainbow toning which Brian B talked about from his type set. As a kid he collected coins with his dad, which is how they bonded. Dad was an engineer, something he did not want to go into, but they shared coin collecting interests. Every week they would go to Riverside (CA) Stamps and Coins, owned by "Mel". The shop had a 'bid board' and everything typical for coin shops in those days, and occasionally brought in another dealer. One lady dealer happened to have this half cent he really wanted. At age twelve, he made a deal to buy this coin on 'time', where Mel fronted the money to the lady dealer and held onto the coin, while Dave would need to bring in a payment every week when he visited the shop with his dad. It took 6-7 months of bringing in his paper route earnings before he paid it off and could take the coin home.
- Mike M went through all the foreign coins he has collected over the years, all donated to him- a couple thousand of them! He just likes kangaroos, like the one on this 1943 Australian half penny. Mike talked about the Australian engravers, who were very prolific.



Australia Half Penny
1943



- Erik S talked about his most recent edition, this 1845 Seated Liberty half dollar. As a key date for the type, it is very affordable.
- In 1990, gold was at a reasonable price, so Merle decided to put together several sets of gold pieces at the time. This set of \$2-1/2 Indian Head gold pieces was one of two sets he had put together, along with two sets each of many other gold series (except the \$4 gold stellas)- one set for each son. The Indian Head quarter eagle is a short set with only one real rarity- the 1911-D; the rest of them are relatively affordable.



- Finally, Charlie went back in time to before coins were invented (which was around 650 BC). For thousands of years, the main means of exchange in financial transactions was silver. Used mostly for purchasing precious commodities, a set amount (weight) of silver would be agreed upon for a purchase price; a balance scale was used, and a weight in the agreed amount would be placed in one scale pan. Silver was commonly cut into pieces of various size (called 'hacksilber'), and silver pieces would be placed in the other scale pan until there was a balance in the weight- to be used as the payment. Each region of the ancient world had its own weight standard set for the value of silver. There were over a dozen regions that used the name shekel for their weights (shekel literally means 'to weigh'). Scales go back to at least 3000 BC in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Scale weights from those regions are well known from ~ 1500 BC on, starting off as cubes, then becoming rounded with a flat end to keep from rolling off the scale pan. Soon spindle-shaped (also called 'sphendonoid') weights were common, as well as animal shaped weights: ducks, scorpions, fish, lions, birds, and other shapes were used. They were either stone- like hematite and limestone, or bronze. The weights of each region corresponded with the weight standard which the region's ruler set up. But most of these did not have a marking indicating the weight- there are only about thirty known of the earliest weights with the weight amount inscribed on them. I have one shaped like a sphynx- the inscription was faint enough that it wasn't even noted prior to when I received it from an auction and photographed the base! In the Holy Land, from ~800-600 BC, there was a system of weights that all had the inscribed amount on each weight. And that is the first part of my favorite "halves". The balance scale pictured above consists of two ancient Roman scale pans, both dating to the first century AD. At the meeting, I placed an ancient, inscribed limestone weight of ½ shekel, also called a Beqa, on the right scale pan. I then placed three chunks of ancient hacksilber (dating from ~1200-800 BC) on the left scale pan, and the two pans balanced! The inscribed weight is pictured here.



My second favorite "half" is this tiny silver Hemiobol (half obol) from Judea ~ 350-330 BC when the Persians ruled the area but let the locals mint coins. The obverse shows a lily of Jerusalem, a precursor to the fleur-de-lis. The reverse has the Hebrew word for Judea to the left of the falcon. My third favorite half is the half shekel from Tyre, in Phoenicia, shown with a full shekel- both dating 76 BC. The half shekel was the annual temple tax which Jews had to pay in Jerusalem. The full shekel is probably what one of the 30 pieces of silver paid to Judas looked like.

Finally, Alan S from Witter Coin talked about what the San Francisco shop did for coin week. They hid eleven S-mint coins in eleven locations around San Francisco for a treasure hunt, with values from ~\$250 to ~\$2500 each! Clues to the locations were given on the Witter Coin Instagram page. Wow.

The topic for June: MY FAVORITE COIN DESIGNER OR COIN ENGRAVER- of any numismatic item. This is a bit more than we usually ask of you, because it means you may need to do a little homework. This isn't just about a pretty or interesting coin/medal/token, it is also about **who designed it**. Everybody has heard about Morgan, Barber, VDB, St. Gaudens. There are many others, including some women who did fantastic designs. Talk about someone (and bring in the coin or medal if you have it) and get four free raffle tickets. Merle and I have a bet going on about how many of you will give a talk- so don't let me down!

In Memorium: longtime member Lee Dysart passed away on April 15, 2024. Until the last few years, Lee had been a regular attendee.

My apologies for omitting Art Maybrun's brother- fellow RECC member Ed- in our condolences on Art's passing last month.



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DRAWING WINNERS

Membership: Jim H, George C, Ogden S, Bill Van V, Bob K

50:50 pot of \$56 was split with Glenn M

Raffle: Glenn M (twice), Stephen K, Bill R (twice), David B, Sally P, Brandon E, Joyce B (twice)

May Attendance: 50+

New Members: Regina M #1040; Earl P #1041; Mike O'T #1042; Hans P #1043J; and Sean H # 1044J-
WELCOME ALL!

Guests: yes there were several

Auction: 29 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" June 12, 2024— Charlie