

RNA News



The official journal of the Rochester Numismatic Association



Money of the Netherlands Antilles

November 2003

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RNA News

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Newsletter Editor: Scott Fybush
manews@fybush.com

2003-2004 Officers:

President: David Gottfried
585-738-0908
dag@rochester.rr.com

Vice President: Edith Coe
585-865-7992
billcoe@juno.com

Secretary: Steve Lanzafame
585-288-1932
unpub@aol.com

Treasurer: Tom Kraus
585-241-3807
tkraus1@rochester.rr.com

Curator: John Zabel
Librarian: John Tokoli
Historian: Robert Doty

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P.O. Box 10056
Rochester NY 14610-0056

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Heading for an exciting winter

A few items to cover this month. First and foremost, the Augustus Saint Gaudens exhibit coming to Rochester from February to April. Earlier this year I had discussed with a few folks that it would be an excellent extra-curricular activity for RNA members to offer the opportunity to go to this exhibit at the Memorial Art Gallery.

If you've been collecting coins for any amount of time, you know rather intimately St. Gaudens' \$20 gold piece. But you might not be aware of the other works of art created by this great man. Therefore, the RNA will offer a tour of this exhibit when it comes to town, date to be determined. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to me at dag@rochester.rr.com or at 738-0908. Be sure to leave me a message!

(Editor's Note: Please make a note of Dave's new phone number and e-mail address!)

Secondly, as many of you might recall, several members of the RNA have gotten together to have lunch at various times, just as a way to further the camaraderie among the group as well as enjoy a fabulous meal! It's been a while since we've hosted one of these lunches, therefore we've scheduled a lunch for Wednesday, November 19th at NOON at Beale Street Café. If you've never been to Beale Street before, I highly recommend it. It's Rochester's OTHER great barbecue spot in

town. As I like to say, "If you don't want to wait 2 hours, but you want something as good as Dinosaur, be sure to go to Beale Street Café!" If you've attended either of the last two (that's the last two OFFICIAL) RNA picnics, you know what I'm talking about. If not, here's your

opportunity to enjoy what the rest of us have known for years! Again, if you'd like to attend, please RSVP to me at either of the methods listed above.

Third, I'd like to thank Edie Coe and the rest of the Board for doing an excellent job in my stead at the last regularly scheduled meeting of the

RNA. Unfortunately, I was unable to be there that night, but from all accounts, Edie did an excellent job. Hey, it's just practice for when she takes over next year!

Finally, this newsletter will arrive in your mailboxes just before the RNA's annual coin show, which I'm sure will be a thrilling success.

As you may be aware, I really want to spend some time reorganizing the club's library, and hopefully, Jason Childers and I will have had some time over the course of the coin show to accomplish some of that goal! Stop downstairs in the library and lend a hand if you have a moment.

David A. Gottfried

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A Midwinter Night's Daydream: The Coinage and Currency of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba

by Scott Fybush

As you shiver through another gray, snowy Rochester winter (or sit in Florida or the Carolinas being grateful you're not shivering through another gray, snowy Rochester winter), take a moment to think about the coinage and currency of some warmer parts of the world.

Take, for instance, the Dutch West Indies.

Six islands make up the Dutch part of the Caribbean, arrayed in two clusters hundreds of miles apart.

Curacao, off the South American coast, was discovered in 1499 and settled by Spain in 1527 along with neighboring Aruba and Bonaire. The Dutch West Indies company took these islands in 1634 and administered them until 1787, when they were ceded to the crown of the United Netherlands.

To the north, Dutch St. Maarten shares an island east of the Virgin Islands with the French *department* of Saint Martin. It's the hub of a group of islands that also includes tiny Saba and St. Eustatius ("Statia").

Under Dutch control, the islands were little noticed in the world until the middle of the 20th century, when the oil produced on Curacao and Aruba became vital to the war effort. 60 percent of the oil used by the Allied forces in World War II was refined on Curacao, which came under U.S. protection after the Netherlands mainland fell to the Germans.

The Dutch regained control of the islands after the war, and the petroleum industry slowly began to give way to tourism on many of the islands.

A Separate Coinage

The postwar era also marked the true start of a separate currency for the Netherlands Antilles. Before the war, the minimal currency needs of the islands were satisfied by importing Dutch circulating coinage from the Mint in Utrecht. With that flow of coinage halted by the war, the U.S. Mint stepped in and struck 1941, 1942 and 1943 coins at Philadelphia in denominations from 1 cent to 2 ½ gulden, using the same designs as the prewar Dutch coinage.

In 1944, the first coinage to bear separate legends for the islands (with the exception of 300,000 1/10 G silver coins minted for Curacao in 1901) was minted in Denver: 1 and 2 ½ cent, 1/10, ¼, 1 and 2 ½ gulden coins marked "Munt van Curacao," or "mint of Curacao."

With the reopening of the Utrecht mint after the war, coinage production shifted there in 1947. In 1947 and 1948, Utrecht minted coinage in bronze (1 and 2 ½ cents), nickel (5 cents), .640 silver (1/10 and ¼ gulden) and .720 silver (1 guilder) for Curacao, continuing to use the pre-war designs even as the Netherlands themselves adopted new designs for their postwar coinage.

The five-cent coin was particularly noticeable, retaining the square shape of its Dutch predecessor even as the Netherlands themselves shifted to all-round coinage. It was minted in especially large numbers and became a popular souvenir for visitors to the islands.

In 1952, the legends on the coins changed again, as "Munt van Curacao" was



Curacao and Netherlands Antilles coinage from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s: Curacao ¼ G (top left), 5c with Curacao, Netherlands Antilles legends (top center), 1 cent with Netherlands Antilles legends (right), 2 ½ c (bottom center right), 1964 1 G (bottom center left), ¼ G with Netherlands Antilles legends (bottom left)

replaced by "Nederlandse Antillen," the prelude to the 1954 political shift that gave the islands some autonomy from the mainland in domestic political matters.

A .720 silver 2 ½ G coin was minted in 1964 to mark the tenth anniversary of this limited form of independence.

From Silver to Nickel

As world mints moved away from circulating silver coinage in the sixties, the Netherlands Antilles were no exception. In 1969, the Utrecht Mint issued a proof set (with only 200 examples struck) to demonstrate the new designs and metals that would go into circulation the next year. The 1 and 2 ½ cent coins remained in bronze, but changed to a new smaller size (and with a smooth edge instead of the unusual reeded edge that had been in use on the bronze coinage.)

The old 1/10 and ¼ G denominations were consigned to the history books, replaced by 10 cent and 25 cent coins of the

same size, though minted in nickel.

The 1 G coin was downsized as well, eventually to be joined in 1978 by a downsized nickel 2 ½ G; the square 5 cent coin alone escaped any change in size or composition.

The minor coinage underwent a design change along with the composition change.

Gone were the ornate wreath and lion designs of the bronze coinage, the elaborate borders and scallops of the 5 cent coin and the simple denomination-only reverse designs of the other minor coinage. In their place was a straightforward design, shown at right, that featured the coat of arms

of the Netherlands Antilles on the obverse of the 1, 2 ½, 5 and 10 cent coins. Queen Juliana on the obverse of the larger coins, and a reverse design showing the denomination and six stars, one for each island. (The 1 G coin kept a modified version of its old coat-of-arms design.)

The 1969 proof coinage included one variety that differed from the circulation coins: the 5 cent coin featured legends in a straight line, instead of curving around the shield as in the 1970 circulating coinage.

In 1979, aluminum replaced bronze in the 1 and 2 ½ cent coins, a nod to the rising price of copper.

Queen Beatrix replaced Queen

Juliana in 1980, an occasion marked by gold 5, 10 and 300 G and silver 50 G coins, among a series of occasional commemoratives issued first by the Franklin Mint in the seventies, then by Utrecht beginning in 1978.

New Series

Beginning in 1989, the old coinage that had circulated for decades was replaced by a new series of coins. Until then, it was not uncommon for pocket change on the islands to include everything from pre-war Dutch minor coins to Munt van Curacao silver issues to the then-current nickel coinage, which was minted for the last time in 1985.

A uniform series of designs in new shapes and sizes was introduced, drawing its inspiration from the pre-1970 5 cent coin. All coinage from the 1 cent (reduced to a tiny aluminum pellet) to the 25 cent coin featured the same design (shown on the cover) with a floral obverse and scallops surrounding the denomination on the reverse. The 5 cent coin's square era finally came to an end, with a small aluminum version replacing it. The 10 and 25 cent coins kept their existing size but were changed to nickel-bonded steel.

A new 50-cent coin in aureate steel was introduced to maintain the tradition of square coinage. The 1 G and 2 ½ G coins kept their existing designs but were downsized and also

changed to nickel-bonded steel, with the 2 ½ G coin taking on a Susan B. Anthony-esque shape featuring an eight-sided inner rim.

Those designs remain in circulation today, though many transactions – especially in tourist zones – are carried out with

U.S. dollars instead, the guilder trading at a fixed exchange rate of approximately \$0.63 US.

(Because the 10 and 25 cent coins kept their old sizes, it's not uncommon to see pre-1989 coins in those denominations still in use; guilders in nickel likewise mix with their aureate steel successors. The 1 cent coin doesn't see daily use in circulation,

though it's available at banks; the banks I visited didn't even have any circulating 2 ½ G coins!)

Aruba

In 1986, Aruba attained "status aparte," becoming its own state under the Dutch crown. With the separation from the Netherlands Antilles came new coinage and a new basic denomination.

The Aruba florin (Afl) is equal in value to the Netherlands Antilles guilder, but the coins (below) are of different sizes and shapes, beginning with round 5, 10 and 25 cent coins. A square 50 cent coin is a nod to the old 5 cent coin, while the round 1Afl coin is the basic unit of

circulation. A square 5 Afl coin exists but doesn't circulate. All Aruban coins feature similar geometric designs inspired by contemporary Dutch coinage.

Bank notes

The bank notes most commonly seen in the islands are black, white and green and bear a U.S. Federal Reserve seal. But local transactions are carried out with bank notes in gulden and florin denominations. The gulden notes, issued in denominations as low as 5 G, bear similar designs to the beautiful modern Dutch notes of the pre-Euro era; the florin notes, beginning at 10 Afl, have similarly modern designs.

Casino tokens

No discussion of Dutch West Indies coinage would be complete without mentioning the tokens from the many casinos that now dot the tourist centers of the major islands. Like the coinage and bank notes, the casino tokens (page 6) are often found in less-than-spectacular circulated condition; because they're destined for tourist use, all the casino tokens are denominated in U.S. dollars.

Collecting these series

The coinage of the Dutch West Indies is not often discussed in collector circles; at best, it's often represented by one or two

continued on page 6



Netherlands Antilles and Aruba

continued from page 5

square 5-cent coins in a dealer's junk box. There are no great rarities in the series, with mintages for most circulating issues ranging from 250,000 to 4,000,000.

There are also no coin dealers (at least, none that I found) on the islands. The occasional older coin – mainly the square 5 cent – shows up as a souvenir for sale in a tourist trap, but beyond that I have no idea how collectors on the islands might obtain older coins. I suspect there's a market for them in the Netherlands, but I've never been there to be certain.

Annual proof sets have been issued since the 1950s, with some dates in that decade represented solely by proofs in mintages as low as 100 (in 1952). Contemporary proof sets are sold by the Dutch Mint in Utrecht as part of their collector offerings.



My collection of Curacao, Netherlands Antilles and Aruba coinage came from circulation; my grandparents vacationed on Aruba for many years in the sixties and seventies (with me joining them as a toddler) and brought back pocket change. As late as 1976, that circulating change included the silver coins seen on page 4.

In 1996, Lisa and I returned to Aruba for part of our honeymoon, continuing on to Curacao, Bonaire and St. Maarten. Among the highlights of the trip was a visit to the coinage and currency museum of the Netherlands Antilles, in Curacao's capital city, Willemstad.

If you're interested in collecting this modest series of coinage, there's really only one way to do it: book yourself on the next KLM flight to Aruba or Curacao and start sifting through *your* pocket change.

*(This article was originally presented to the club's January 28, 2003 meeting. Why not turn one of **your** presentations into an RNA News article? Contact editor Scott Fybush for more information!)*

Enjoyed the Coin Show? Come to an RNA Meeting!

This issue of the RNA News is reaching beyond the usual circulation of our members – it's being distributed on the welcome table of the 31st annual Coin Show as well. And if you picked it up at the coin show and want to learn more about coins, notes and collecting from a knowledgeable, interesting group of collectors and dealers of all experience levels, we hope you'll join us at an Rochester Numismatic Association meeting.

Our meetings begin at 8 PM on the first and third Thursdays of each month except July and August (there's no meeting Jan. 1, 2004, either), and they're held in the very same building as the coin show – the Eisenhart Auditorium. Enter through the neighboring Gannett School and follow the signs to our downstairs meeting room. Get there a little early so we can introduce ourselves to you.

What can you expect at a meeting? After a little bit of club business, each meeting includes a show-and-tell, so bring something special from *your* collection. We have refreshments, and then it's the meat of each meeting: a 15-20 minute presentation from a member or guest on a topic that interests them. Take a look at the back cover for an idea of some of the topics we've covered; nothing is too esoteric or too common to be discussed. After the presentation, we hold a brief auction of items consigned by members. There's no commission, and everyone's welcome to place a bid, member or not. (There are often some great bargains to be had!)

Becoming a member is easy: just attend three meetings, after which we vote on admitting you as a member. (Never fear; it's a formality!) Dues are \$20 a year, which gets you refreshments at meetings, a year of the *RNA News* and a bronze presidential medal (part of a series that's continued uninterrupted since 1912.)

Too young to join the RNA? Collectors aged 11-17 are welcome to attend the Rochester Junior Numismatic Association, the oldest junior coin club in the nation. The RJNA meets on the third Friday of every month except July and August; see the back cover of the *RNA News* for all the details!

We look forward to greeting you soon at an RNA or RJNA meeting.

The Odd Page

News and notes from all over

Out of Africa: Past president Spencer Radnich checked in by e-mail from Kenya at the end of September with some news on his activities there.

Spence turned 65 on September 30th; he's still working for Daystar University, the largest Christian liberal arts college in Africa. His current project is trying to bring some order to the registrar's office, coordinating which courses will be taught and when.

Wife Gayle is involved with AIDS/HIV education at schools and orphanages in Kenya; she recently attended an international HIV/AIDS conference held in Nairobi.

Drop Spence a line at sradnich@wananachi.com!



More Good, More Welfare: Past president Bob Ogg hasn't been able to make it to meetings lately as he continues to recover from hip surgery he underwent in the spring. He says he's doing fine, but is bored – and would love to hear from club members! Give Bob a call at 585-225-0648.



TV Guide: That attractive actress is named **Susan Gibney**, and she's one of the stars of a new NBC sitcom called "Happy Family" (it also stars **John Larroquette** and **Christine Baranski**.) What's she doing in the august pages of

the *RNA News*? Her brother is none other than our own **Dan White**!

So tune in, Tuesday nights at 8:30 on NBC...



Still more arcane RNA trivia: **Gerry Muhl** just keeps digging through the archives, and now he's discovered that the RNA held a joint coin show in 1934 with the Syracuse, Utica and Cortland clubs. Gerry even turned up a drawing of a medal that was issued for the joint convention; no copy of that medal exists in the club collection, alas.



Last-minute Coin Show action: With any luck, you're receiving this newsletter a few days before the big Coin Show (#31, by the way; your editor had Bill Coe on the brain when he put "33rd" on the cover of last month's issue – good thing nobody noticed!)

And that means we can let you know about a few more items that were too late for inclusion in the October newsletter: first, Bill tells us that Krause Publications is providing two items for a door prize drawing – a half-year subscription to *Numismatic News* and a year subscription to *Stamp Collector*.

Bill also suggests that this year's program booklet may itself become a collectible: the back cover features a tribute to our Member #1 and Farran Zerbe Award honoree, Charlie Ricard.



Club history goes national: October's *Numismatist* carried a letter from frequent letter-writer **Bill Coe**, sharing with the world our story of how all five 1913 Liberty nickels were displayed at a 1920 meeting of the RNA. Way to go, Bill!



The New \$20: That multi-million dollar publicity campaign the BEP launched for the new multicolored \$20 bill certainly wasn't needed to reach RNA members.

After all, while the rest of the world got its first look at the new bill in wallets and ATMs last month, the RNA members who visited the Buffalo Fed on our tour last spring had a chance to see and even hold the new note (though not, alas, to sneak one out of the building...)



Contribute! Your editor is having a grand old time putting together the spiffy new magazine-style *RNA News* – but I need your help!

Sure, I can count on president **Dave Gottfried** to come through with a few hundred words every month (after several nagging phone calls!), and a few of you (thanks, Gerry!) are regular contributors. But what about the rest of you?

Presenting a speech at the club? Why not write up your notes and let me borrow your slides – and, presto, instant *RNA News* cover article! (Where do you think this month's issue came from?)

Even if it's just a short anecdote, a trivia question or a meeting notice for another regional club, drop it my way (rnaneews@fybush.com). The deadline for each issue is the second meeting of the preceding month.

I can fix grammar. I can fix spelling. I can't fix six blank pages every month – so get those keyboards going and help out, won't you?

The Odd Page is compiled by Scott Fybush, who promises to go easy on baby pictures after this issue...

The Calendar **November-December**

- **Saturday-Sunday November 1-2 – 31st Annual Coin Show and Sale**
- **Thursday November 6 – 8 PM – Alec Ollies** speaks on “Maundy Sets,” those little bitty silver British coins issued every year for centuries. No foot washing required...
- **Wednesday November 19 – Noon – Social Lunch** at Beale Street Cafe, 689 South Ave. RSVP to Dave Gottfried, 738-0908 or dag@rochester.rr.com.
- **Thursday November 20 – 8 PM – John Bixler** speaks on “Australian Decimal Coinage: Regular Issues and Circulating Commemoratives.” John was just in Australia not long ago, so this should be interesting!
- **Friday November 21 – 7:30 PM – Rochester Junior Numismatic Association** Come see what the juniors are up to – and brace yourself for a lightning round of “Stump the Advisor.”
- **Thursday December 4 – 8 PM – Scott Fybush** begs and pleads for volunteers to write articles for the *RNA News*. Or something. I need to come up with a topic, don't I?
- **Thursday December 18 – 8 PM – Holiday Auction** Look for lists of exciting auction items in your December *RNA News* – and if you're selling something, please get your lists to me by November 20 so they can be included in the next issue!

Regular RNA meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays of every month except July and August at the Eisenhart Auditorium of the Rochester Museum & Science Center, 657 East Avenue. Enter through the Eisenhart or Gannett School doors and follow the signs downstairs to our lower-level meeting room. All are welcome! Call Dave Gottfried at 738-0908 if you need a ride or directions.

RJNA meetings are held in either the ballroom of the Eisenhart Auditorium building or an upstairs classroom at the Gannett School; follow the signs posted on the building's doors or call Steve Lanzafame at 288-1932 for more information.

The Calendar welcomes meeting notices from other area clubs. Send them to rnanews@fybush.com or PO Box 10056, Rochester NY 14610.

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Rochester Numismatic Association

PO Box 10056

Rochester NY 14610-0056