

RNA News

The official journal of the Rochester Numismatic Association



The Class of 1912

**Gerry Muhl looks back on the earliest days of
the RNA and the first ANA convention here**

• • •

**PLUS: Alec Ollies' big stone coin • Members check in from
Florida and Tucson • Gerry's Numismatic Almanac**

April 2005

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The official journal of the
Rochester Numismatic Association
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clubs

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Life Club #8

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Visit the RNA Web site:
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Signs of Spring

In my last letter I wished you all a
"Happy Spring – Soon, I hope." Well, I
have talked to several friends who
believe **it will come soon!** I saw a
robin this week myself!

Spring always brings work and I
know for a fact that our Club's
committees are doing just that. The
nominating committee has our slate
of officers almost filled. We do need
a secretary and I am hoping a
member will step forward and
volunteer for this job. It is a very
important position and I don't deny
that it is work. But remember, you
are preserving our Club's history for
our future membership. Bob Doty,
our historian, has worked
uncountable hours putting our
minutes in chronological order in
notebooks for preservation. They are
in our cabinets in our library for you
to peruse. Don't you want to be a
part of preserving the history of this
Club?

(If you're willing to help out, you
can reach nominating committee
chair David Gottfried at 738-0908 or
dag@rochester.rr.com.)

Our Vice President, Tom Kraus,
has done a great job scheduling our
speakers. If you haven't been
attending the meetings lately, you
have missed some very educational
and entertaining speakers. It always
amazes me at the knowledge our
members have and give us in their
talks.

Speaking of programs, I want to
encourage our Junior Club members
to participate in the Meinhart
Speaking Contest on May 19. I
always look forward to these young
junior members educating me in
their field of interest. My daughter
was the first girl to participate in the
Meinhart Contest several years ago,
so I have a special interest in this
project.

The bylaw review committee has
the bylaws almost ready to have the
board approve them. They will be

sent to the membership in time to be
reviewed before the Annual Meeting
where they will be voted on. The old
wording has been hash marked out
and the new wording is in bold and
underlined so you can easily see and
understand the changes. Please take
the time to read them through and
be prepared to vote.

The Annual Meeting on June 2 is a
very important meeting, so be sure
to put it on your calendar now! We
will be voting on the slate of officers
and directors as listed in last month's
RNA News, two inspectors of
election for 2006 (Jim Kemp and
Richard Imburgia), one member is
up for Honorary Life Membership
(Charlie Ricard), and of course
voting on the bylaws.

I would like to encourage all
applicants for membership that we
have on file to attend the remaining
meetings needed to complete their
membership requirement and be
voted into membership this year so
they can vote at the Annual Meeting.
Remember, if you become a member
before the Annual Meeting on June
2, 2005, you are eligible to receive
the medal in 2006 for this year's
president— that should be a great
incentive in itself!

Mark your calendars for the
Annual Banquet to be held May 27
at the Green Lantern Inn in
Fairport, and for the Summer Picnic
on July 17 at Powder Mills Park in
Perinton.

And please note that the Year-End
Auction takes place at the June 16
meeting. Get your listings in to the
RNA News by the final meeting in
May to be included in the June issue!

Edie Coe

Board Meeting

**The RNA will hold a Board Meeting at 7
PM on Tuesday, April 26 at the home of
Bill and Edie Coe, 101 Oakbriar Drive. All
members are welcome – call Bill and Edie
at 865-7992 for directions!**

The Class of 1912: The Earliest Days of the RNA



by Gerard Muhl
Assistant RNA Curator

It is interesting to discover how the Rochester Numismatic Association came into being in 1912. We know that before that date many numismatists called Rochester their home. Names such as Lighthouse, Woodbury, and Cutler were well known for their extensive coin collections well before 1912. But, it wasn't until 1911 when George P. French visited the A.N.A. Chicago convention that the idea for a coin club in Rochester came to mind. A.N.A. President Judson Brenner asked French if Rochester would be willing to host the following year's convention.

Quoting George French, "I told Brenner that I did not think the time was right to hold the convention in this city as we had no organization to receive you (A.N.A.) and we wanted to do things properly when you came. On my return (to Rochester) I spoke to some of my numismatic friends and suggested that we form a local organization. They were all in perfect accord with the

suggestion. I had a notice inserted in the newspapers and asked everyone who collected coins to meet me at Hotel Rochester on a certain evening, and early in January of this year (1912) we formed the Rochester Numismatic Association. We are young, but like the leader of the Bull Moose Party, Theodore Roosevelt, we have our hat in the ring, and we are going to keep it there."

The American Numismatic Association did come to Rochester August 26 through 28, 1912, and by all accounts, their convention was the best yet. The Chapmans were there from Philadelphia; Professor of Numismatics, Jeremiah Zimmerman arrived from Syracuse University; Lee Clarke trained in from LeRoy; and Howard Newcomb came

"The ANA did come to Rochester...and by all accounts, their convention was the best yet."

from Detroit. Newcomb would become famous for his revision of Frank Andrew's 1883 book dealing with U.S. large cents. Perhaps it was George French's display of large cents at the Rochester 1912 A.N.A. Convention that inspired Newcomb to write his 1940 tome on large cents that would become the standard

reference on that series for many years.

Let's see what Dr. French had in the second coin show ever held in Rochester (the first coin show was in 1848). According to A.N.A. records, "The exhibition of the French large cent collection was a real treat to the expert and advanced collector of this series, for no one questions that it is the best that has ever been assembled (up to 1912)."

To begin, French showed sixteen specimens of 1793, twelve of which were un-circulated. One of these was a chain cent showing the original red.

He had a Crosby's 9-G wreath also in original red. His next display case held fifty-five different varieties of 1794 cents, most of which were extremely fine or un-circulated. Of his six different 1795 cents, one was red un-circulated while another was proof! For the series 1796 through 1799, the good doctor exhibited sixty different varieties, many red un-circulated. Every date through the end of the series was represented by multiple varieties with no cent in the collection being below the condition of very fine, while most were un-circulated. Don't we all wish we could see his collection today?



"The prettiness of Miss Ruth Merritt, the young daughter of F. E. Merritt of the Rochester Entertainment Committee, so noticeable to all who were privileged to meet her, attracted the attention of August G. Heaton, who promptly made a sketch of her, which we take pleasure in reproducing above. Mr. Heaton, we understand, has promised to paint her portrait, which we are sure will be an especially fine one, and we are also positive that he will never have a more attractive and charming sitter."

Competing in the large cent category with Dr. French was Frank Andrews who brought the 400 cents that served as the basis for his 1883 book.

Also exhibited in Rochester were R.N.A. member Louis Amberg's complete date and mint set of half dollars of 1794 to 1912. A.N.A. President Judson Brenner brought a near complete set of every U.S. pattern coin issued. This collection was used in the writing of J. Hewitt Judd's 1959 volume and standard reference on U.S. Pattern Coins.

Carl Wurtzback of Lee, Massachusetts showed 40 different varieties of New England silver coins. He also had a complete set of proof gold dollars, three "Fugio" Dollars and an un-circulated Martha Washington 1/2 dime.

The list of exhibits could go on from over 800 gold pieces (three \$4, one hundred fifty \$3, one 1833 \$5 un-circulated.), a complete set of fractional currency, and many rare foreign and ancient coins. Needless to say, the Rochester A.N.A.

Convention was a success, which laid a solid foundation for the Rochester Numismatic Association. The R.N.A. would host two more A.N.A. shows, in 1917 and 1928, and has invited the A.N.A. back to our city in 2012.

An Early Piece of Numismatic Advice

Perhaps the 1912 Rochester A.N.A. Convention was the first place the advice to collectors to "buy the book before the coin" was given in print. The following quote is from Augustus G. Heaton's paper read before the delegates in Rochester:

"Knowledge is necessary to enlighten and guide in all human effort. Books contain the recorded knowledge of the past, and it is only by reading the printed page that man can come into possession of this inheritance. It is thus seen that there is an important place for the study of books in the forming of a collection."

It is also of interest to note that at the 1912 A.N.A. Convention (group photo, opposite) that Harry Yawger of Rochester was named A.N.A. Librarian and that the A.N.A. library moved to Rochester. (Harry Yawger was to become an R.N.A. president, Mayor of Rochester, and grandfather to late R.N.A. president Frank VanZandt.)

The Odd Page

News and Notes from All Over

The Dotys Recover

The Florida hurricanes of the past winter caused some big problems for RNA archivist **Bob Doty** and his wife, **Sharon**.

Their home in Sebastian, Florida suffered some pretty severe damage, and it was just recently that they were able to move back to the property, though not into the house itself. (They've pulled their motorhome into the driveway after 47 nights in a campground, and they're living there for the moment.)

Bob and Sharon report they're now coping with mold problems in the walls, and it may be a while yet before they can move back in. (We'll be pulling for them...)

Meanwhile, from the Arizona branch...

Not all of the exiles from the Rochester winter are in Florida. **Wayne** and **Pat Scheible** are in Tucson, Arizona, where Pat reports that they're enjoying meetings of the Tucson Coin Club (where the "extra leaf" Wisconsin quarters discovered locally have been a big deal.)

And **John Bixler** was also wintering in Tucson, where he not only visited with the Scheibles at their new house, but also snapped some tower pictures for your editor, including this one, of "a green 'tower' used exclusively by woodpeckers, wrens and Indian fruit-gatherers - nothing broadcast except millions of seeds." (Thanks, Ralph!)



Missing from the Library

Dan White writes: *It has been brought to the attention of the Club librarian that Volumes 1 and 2 of Q. David Bowers "Silver Dollars and Trade Dollars of the United States, a Complete Encyclopedia" are missing and unaccounted for. These books and many others represent a substantial investment by the club, and should not be borrowed without proper notification to the Club Librarian. Any member in possession of either of these books should notify Club Librarian Michael Luck or return them to the club at the earliest possible date.*

Found in the junk box

You really never know what you'll find at McLeod Stamp and Coin – and if you don't believe us, ask Rick Essom of East Rochester. He bought a bag of mixed silver coins from Ursula Loose and found a 1916-D Winged Liberty Head dime inside. ANACS graded it G-6, and that's worth \$900 to Essom (and some *Coin World* ink for Ursula...)

Meanwhile, the final word (for now, at least) on the 1792 no-silver-center cent that came to the attention of the numismatic world by way of McLeod's own Randy Jones: the coin, which belonged to the family of Oliver Wolcott, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, sold for \$437,000 at the Ira & Larry Goldberg Pre-Long Beach sale in February. (And Randy still hasn't seen it...)

Speaking of coin shops

RNA member **Ron Winter**, who's been doing business on the web at ronwintercoins.com, has opened a storefront in Lyons with his wife Melody. Winter Coins & Gifts is open 11-5 every day except Sunday and Monday at 7440 Route 31 in Lyons; call (315)946-0043 to say hello.

You won't find *these* at the coin shop

When **Alec Ollies** spoke at the club's March 3 meeting on the coins of the Micronesian island of Yap, it's a good bet that nobody was expecting to see actual examples of the world's largest coins.

And while Alec didn't have a actual example of that large holed stone "coinage" to show off, he'd spent the weekend putting together a nifty



paper-mache replica of one – complete with a "COPY" stamp on the back!



Where to put such an item? Why, in a giant 2x2 holder,

which Alec had also created.

(We're hoping Alec will put this unusual collection on display at the coin show this fall...maybe by then, he'll have gotten the thing slabbed, too!)

Gerry Muhl's Numismatic Almanac for April

April 1 All Fools Day – a bad day to buy coins. – **April 3** Nixon raises official U.S. gold rate from \$35 to \$38 an ounce in 1972. What will it be this time next year? – **April 13** Happy Birthday Thomas Jefferson – 262 years old today. Where would the five-cent piece be without him? – **April 17** In 1835, the first coinage of half eagles takes place in Dahlonega, Georgia. – **April 22** In 1864, the U.S. authorized the first coin with the motto "*In God We Trust*" on it. What was that coin? (Here's a tough one: what U.S. 20th Century coins were struck without that motto? **Hint:** There are seven regular mint issues! Answers in May.)

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The Calendar **April-May**

- **Thursday April 7 – 8 PM – Jason Childers** speaks on “Chuck E. Cheese Tokens.” Also on **April 7**, Nick Graver passes along word that the Archaeological Institute will have a talk on “Phrygian Coins,” at 7:30 in the Memorial Art Gallery auditorium on University Avenue.
- **April 8-10 – ANA National Money Show, Kansas City, Missouri** Everything’s up to date in Kansas City...including the nearest ANA show to the East Coast for 2005.
- **April 16-17 – Buffalo Numismatic Association (Checopex) Coin and Stamp Show.** Over 65 tables. Doors open at 10 a.m. both days. Knights of Columbus Hall, 2735 Union Road, Cheektowaga (Thruway exit 52A). Free admission.
- **Thursday April 21 – 8 PM – Ted Vaccarella** speaks on “Canadian Cents.”
- **Friday April 22 – 7:30 PM – Rochester Junior Numismatic Association** Open to anyone 17 or younger – adult members welcome, too! Contact Junior Club advisor Steve Lanzafame at 288-1932 or unpub@aol.com for information.
- **Tuesday April 26 – 7 PM – Board Meeting** Details on page 3 – all are welcome!
- **Tuesday May 5 – 8 PM – John Zabel** speaks on a subject yet to be disclosed.
- **Tuesday May 19 – 7:30 PM – Meinhart Speaking Competition** Check out the May *RNA News* for a reprise of last year’s award-winning talks by RJNA members.
- **Friday May 27 – Annual Banquet** honoring past president David Gottfried, at the Green Lantern Inn in Fairport. More details in May’s *RNA News!*

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.

RNA News

Rochester Numismatic Association

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