

# RNA



# News

The official journal of the Rochester Numismatic Association



## Poland's Golden Age of Coinage

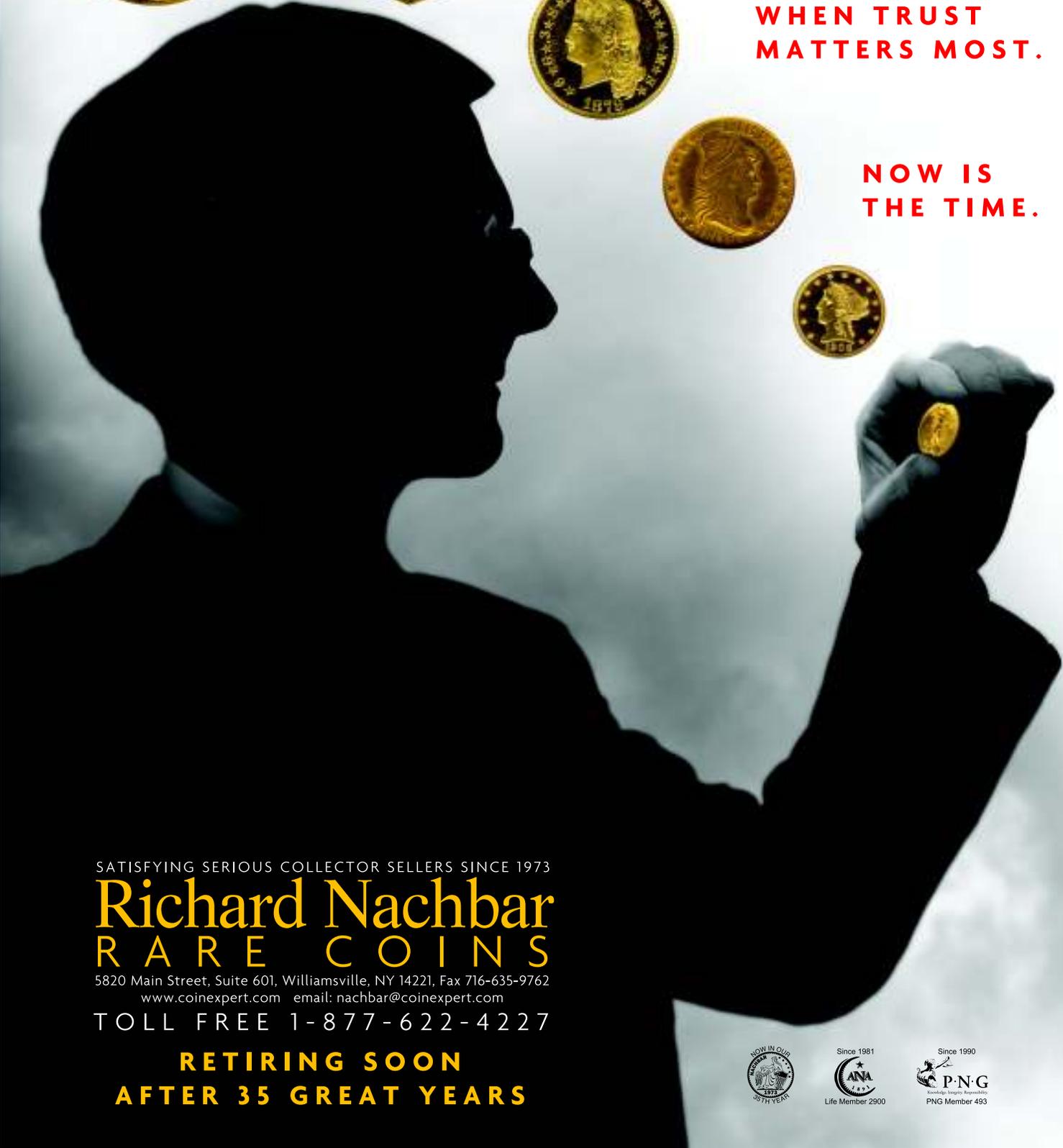
PLUS: Finner visits RNA • US 1792 Pattern Coinage

May-June 2008



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# RNA News

The official journal of the Rochester  
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Life Club #8

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

# Looking back and ahead

The year has passed very quickly; much has been accomplished but there is more to be done.

RNA is quite different from the typical "coin club." When I gave my talk on December 6<sup>th</sup>, we discussed some of what makes the "RNA difference." We're a nonprofit organization with a strong educational component, including numismatic talks and writing by our members. We have a library and collection to maintain, a tradition of striking medals and creating tokens, the unifying force of the *RNA News*, two meetings each month, the annual coin show and sale and an orderly movement of officers through the ranks. We also mentor the Rochester Junior Numismatic Association, whose members might join RNA at some time in the future.

In previous letters I reported on important changes in our By Laws, the development of mission statements for the RNA Collection and Library, committees such as Collection Use and Preservation, strengthening our relationship with the Rochester Museum & Science Center; the 2000<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Board of Directors and other matters. Speaking of RMSC, as I mentioned in the last letter, we hope to meet with museum representatives soon in regard to education and outreach, how RNA might be able to help RMSC and how our programs might work more closely together. We'll see what develops.

The Meinhart Speaking Contest will be held May 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. This opportunity for our junior club members to speak about their favorite numismatic topics deserves our full support and attention. The annual banquet on May 23<sup>rd</sup> will be our opportunity to honor last year's president, Joe Lanzafame, to reveal the latest president's medal and to present speakers and writers awards. The Board of Directors will meet at 7 p.m. prior to our regular meeting on May 1<sup>st</sup>, to consider a preliminary budget for 2008-09 and discuss the RNA

Collection and other matters. The RNA annual meeting will be held on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

It has been a rewarding experience for me this year, and it has been my honor to serve as your president. Whether listening to talks or "show and tell" presented at our meetings, reading articles in *RNA News*, conversing with fellow members about numismatics or enjoying the auction after our meeting, there is something for everyone in our organization. If you haven't been to a meeting recently, I hope you will take the time to do so soon and often, as there is nothing like being there in person. I sincerely appreciate the help so many of you have given to RNA through your participating in our many activities. Thanks for your donations of time and money to both RNA and RJNA. Thanks to each of you who have provided advice and assistance to me throughout this year. I will do all I can to assist our incoming president, John Stephens, and to further the objectives of our association in the future.

All the best to each of you.

*Ted Vaccarella*

## 2008-2009 Officer Slate Named

The RNA's Nominating Committee has named the following slate of officers and directors, to be approved by members at the annual meeting June 5:

**President – John Stephens**  
**Vice President – Steve Eisinger**  
**Treasurer – George Irwin**  
**Secretary – Chip Scoppa**

**Director (2008-11) – Grant Hobika**  
**Director (2008-11) – Arthur D. Cohen**

**Historian – Bob Doty**  
**Curator – John Zabel**  
**Librarian – Peter Blaisdell**

# The United States Pattern Coinage of 1792

By John Bailey

In 1792 the United States was getting ready to open its first mint to produce coins for our country in the city of Philadelphia. The land was purchased July 18, 1792 at 37-39 North Seventh Street. Renovation of the existing buildings began the next day, and the mint opened September 7, 1792. Mechanical equipment was imported from Europe to fabricate our first coins. That machinery included a horse-driven rolling mill, a planchet-cutting press, a screw coining press and a drawing machine used to equalize strips of metal from which planchets are cut.

The act of April 2, 1792 was a comprehensive law relating to the mint and its coinage. This act has 20 sections to it. The most interesting are Section 1) the mint shall have a Director, Assayer, Chief coiner, Engraver and Treasurer. Section 9) The authorization of the following coins, Eagle, Half Eagle, Quarter Eagle, Silver Dollar, Half Dollar, Quarter Eagle, Disme, Half Disme, cent and Half Cent. Then there is Section 19) Fixed the death penalty to any mint worker who debased the coinage for profit or embezzled any sum in coins or bullion left in his control.

The first Mint employees were Director David Rittenhouse, appointed in April 1792, Coiner Henry Voight, Assayer David Ott, Melter Refiner Joseph Cloud and Engraver Adam Eckfeldt. All they needed now was people to design the new pieces. After a long search at home and overseas, the mint settled on three men: Henry Voight, Robert Birch and Joseph Wright.

Most people consider these coins patterns or trial pieces, not coins meant for general circulation.

The Birch cent of 1792 was struck in pure copper and one coin in white metal. The cents were struck September 11, 1792. It is believed that the mintage was between 100 and 200 coins. It is not known how many survived; maybe 20. The obverse shows Miss Liberty with flowing hair, facing right. The obverse legend is LIBERTY PARENT OF SCIENCE & INDUSTRY, and the date 1792. The reverse has the legend UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, above a wreath that surrounds the words ONE CENT. At the very bottom is the fraction 1/100. Robert Birch designed the coin.

The Silver Center Cent of 1792 was struck in pure copper with a small silver plug in the center. This planchet started

out as pure copper, then a small hole was drilled in its center. A silver plug was inserted and then the coin was struck. The weight is 72 grains, diameter 23mm with a reeded edge. There are no mint records to tell us the number originally struck; however it is believed that about 20 exist today. Henry Voight designed it.

The Half Disme of 1792 was struck from an alloy of silver 89%, copper 11%. Also, one coin was struck in pure copper. The obverse legend reads LIB. PAR. OF SCIENCE + LIBERTY; the reverse legend UNI. STATES OF AMERICA. The eagle is very small with the words HALF DISME underneath it. The weight is 21 grains. The mintage in silver is 1500 to 2000. The number remaining today is

about 400. Robert Birch designed it. This is the only 1792 coin that John J. Pittman owned. He bought the coin at ANA 1948 in Boston from Malcolm Chellfrost for \$100. "He had it marked for \$150, but John talked him down." David Akers sold it for the family in October 1997 as lot #423, graded Gem Unc. Finest known, for \$308,000.

Disme of 1792 was struck in two metals; one in pure copper, the second in pure silver, or as close as metallurgy of the day would allow. The obverse legend is LIBERTY PARENT OF SCIENCE & INDUSTRY and the date, 1792. The reverse has the legend UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA, above a wreath that surrounds a very small eagle. DISME is below that. The weight falls in a wide range, 40-57 grains for the silver and 58 for the copper. There are no mint records to tell us the number originally struck; however, it is believed that less than 20 exist today Adam Eckfeldt designed the obverse; Birch, the reverse.

The Quarter Dollar of 1792 was struck in two metals, one in copper and one in a white metal. The white metal's weight is 400 grains. The edge of all coins is reeded. Only two are known in copper and four in white metal. The obverse design has Liberty facing right with the word LIBERTY above her head and the date, 1792, under the head. The reverse, designed by Joseph Wright, shows an eagle standing on top of a section of the globe with the words UNITED STATES OF AMERICA above the eagle. The border is made up of 87 very small stars.



Courtesy Q. David Bowers

Auction prices of 1792 coinage vary. I tried to find auction sales that had many different pieces included. The Garrett family collection was formed by T. Garrison Garrett, starting in 1860. Later his two sons, Robert and John Work Garrett, added to the collection. Many of the coins came from public auctions held by Elliot Woodward and Henry Chapman. Bowers and Ruddy sold the Garrett Collection in 1981.

**Lot #2347: Silver Center Cent, graded choice uncirculated, \$95,000.**

**Lot #2348: Copper Cent without silver plug, graded very fine, \$28,000.**

**Lot #2349: Birch Cent Lettered Edge, graded choice uncirculated, \$200,000.**

**Lot #2350: Birch Cent, white metal, graded choice uncirculated, \$90,000.**

**Lot #2351: Half Disme, silver, graded choice almost uncirculated, \$36,000.**

**Lot #2352: Disme, copper, reeded edge, graded choice almost uncirculated, \$54,000.**

**Lot #2353: Disme, copper, plain edge, graded choice almost uncirculated, \$45,000.**

**Lot #2354: Quarter Die trial, uniface, white metal, \$12,000.**

The second collection is that of John J. Roper. He was born in 1902 and died in 1983. The John J. Roper Collection was sold in 1983 by Stack's.

**Lot #425: Silver Center Cent, graded extremely fine, \$19,800.**

**Lot #426: Birch Cent, copper, lettered edge; graded fine- very fine, "withdrawn," reason unknown.**

**Lot #427: Half Disme, silver, reeded edge, graded extremely fine, \$7,700.**

**Lot #428: Half Disme, copper, plain edge, \$20,900.**

**Lot #429: Disme, copper, eagle faces right, \$19,800.**

The last, but far from least, was the Norweb family collection, formed by R. Henry Norweb Sr., Henry Norweb

Jr., Liberty Emery Holden, Albert Fairchild Holden and Emery Mary Holden Norweb. The collection was put together starting in the 1860s. Bowers and Merena sold the Norweb Collection in 1988.

**Lot #3389: Half Disme, silver, eagle faces left, graded almost uncirculated, \$48,400.**

**Lot #3390: Half Disme, silver, eagle faces right, graded extremely fine 40, \$28,600.**

**Lot #3391: Disme, copper, reeded edge, graded extremely fine 45, \$28,600.**

**Lot #3392: Silver Center Cent, graded mint state 60, \$143,000.**

**Lot #3393: Copper Cent, graded extremely fine 40, \$35,200.**

**Lot #3394: Birch Cent, copper lettered edge, graded fine 12- fine15, \$35,200.**

**Lot #3395: Birch Cent, copper, star edge, graded extremely fine 40, \$59,400.**

**Lot #3396: Quarter Wright Pattern, white metal, graded extremely fine 40, \$28,600.**

#### *Selected Bibliography:*

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*Taxay, Don.* The U.S. Mint and Coinage, An Illustrated History from 1776 to the Present. *ARCO Publishing, 1966.*

*Garrett, Jeff, and Guth, Ron.* 100 Greatest U.S. Coins. *Whitman Publishing, 2005.*

*Bowers and Ruddy,* The Garrett Collection, *March 1981.*

*Bowers and Merena,* The Norweb Collection, *November 1988.*

*Stacks,* The John J. Roper Collection, *December 1983.*

## In Memoriam for two longtime RNA members

### David C. Foster

David C. Foster, RNA Member #45, died on March 9.

Mr. Foster joined the RNA on June 11, 1985. Among other contributions, he chaired the committee for drawing ticket sales at the RNA Annual Coin Show. He was always a very friendly and likable member. His smile was contagious.

Mr. Foster was predeceased by his daughter-in-law, Traci. He is survived by his wife, Barbara; three sons, James K. (Bonnie), Daniel C. (Judy), Thomas D.; and grandsons Matthew, Brian, Mark and Richard. Mr. Foster was an Army Veteran of World War II, retired as a Master Sergeant after 30 years of service; he was also an active member of American Legion Post 1182 and an active member of Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word.

In lieu of flowers, memories may be directed to Disabled American Veterans, 100 Exchange Blvd., Rochester, NY



14614.

### Louis A. Gaudino

Louis A. Gaudino, RNA Member #7, died April 9.

Mr. Gaudino was born April 11, 1928. He joined the RNA on March 17, 1961. His brothers Joseph and Samuel and sister-in-law Grace joined at the same time.

Mr. Gaudino is predeceased by his wife, Teresa; son, Cosmo; brothers, Jake, Cosmo, and Sam; and sister, Carm Kelley. He is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth and Thomas Osinski; grandsons, Thomas, Jonathan and Zachary Osinski; brothers, Anthony (Joan), Joseph (Teresa); sisters, Mary Utter and Immaculate (Joseph) Uttaro; sisters-in-law, Grace Gaudino and Carm Bianchi; and several nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be directed to Visiting Nurse Foundation, 2180 Empire Blvd., Webster, NY 14580, in his memory.

**Save the date! The RNA's Summer Picnic is Sun. Aug. 3! More next issue...**

# Poland's golden age of coinage

By Gerard Muhl

The early history of Poland and its coinage recently came to mind as I dug through a small part of the Eastern European collection of the RNA.

Prince Boleslav I is credited with founding the kingdom of Poland by uniting various fiefs. He reigned from 992 to 1025 CE. Of Viking stock, he became known as "The Valiant." Prince Valiant! But keeping a kingdom together and even enlarging it proved a real problem, especially when its neighbors were jealous of every farm paying tribute tax to the king.

By the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Poland had become a pivotal player in the struggle for power in Eastern Europe. Its success in that struggle allowed Poland to enter a golden age that lasted 200 years.

In 1467, King Sigismund I took the Polish throne. Under his guidance, Renaissance culture, art and architecture entered the kingdom by way of France and Italy. Upon his death in 1548, after a long and fairly peaceful reign, his son Sigismund Augustus took over as Sigismund II. The son took as his new queen Barbara Radziwill (remember the Jackie Kennedy in-laws?)

In one of his first acts, Sigismund II attempted to reform the currency under one centralized standard. To defend his holdings, he began taxing the clergy for the first time. The money was needed to help defuse the threat of militant Islam to the south and to defeat ever-mounting Islamic raids on the borders. After the fall of Constantinople to Mehmet II, the threat to Poland intensified.

To the East, Poland's neighbor Livonia was invaded by the Muskovy Prince Ivan the Terrible in 1558. For Sigismund's help, Livonia became a fief of Poland in the same year. To further strengthen defenses against Ivan, Lithuania and Poland became one state in 1569. The two nations adopted one monetary system.

The Protestant Reformation was spreading into Poland from Germany. To help unite the nation and prevent religious warfare, Sigismund signed an edict allowing freedom of expression in matters of faith. He, however, remained a strong defender of the Catholic Church, and even invited the Jesuit order into the kingdom.

The forces of Ivan proved strong. The wars turned against Poland, and Sigismund was forced to pay trunks of silver coins to the budding kingdom of Russia. Hoards of coins were buried by Poles rather than turning them over to looting armies. Some of these hoards are just turning up.

To complicate the situation further, Sigismund died in 1572 without a male heir.

The nobles of Poland were now in power and sought a kingdom over which they might have some control. After delaying their search for a new king for nearly two years, they decided on the French Duke of Valois. He lasted four months then, upon the death of his brother, returned to France to become King Henry.

The next choice for king was Stephen Barhory of Transylvania. He married Sigismund's sister Anne, and thus could claim some royal legitimacy. One of his first acts was to set up courts and renounce his right to interfere in judicial decisions. To quell a revolt in Danzig, the new king loosened control over that area and gave them the right to issue their own coinage. Barthory died in 1586.

In 1587, Sigismund III was elected to the Polish throne. He was the son of the King of Sweden and of Catherine, the sister of Sigismund II. In 1592 he succeeded his father as King of Sweden, while also remaining the Polish monarch. His staunch Catholicism, however, brought him into conflict with his Swedish

uncle, who deposed him from that northern country.

Sigismund now made Warsaw his capital in 1596 and used it as a base from which to take action against Russia. In a series of cleverly fought battles, his armies drove deep into Russia, where Sigismund sought to be named Tsar of that country. As a Catholic, however, he would not convert to the Orthodox religion, and the Russian people rose up against him. Michael Romanov was elected Tsar instead, and by 1612, Sigismund II was driven out. He died in 1632.

We jump now 42 years, to the reign of John Sobieski in 1674. He became the king of Poland after defeating a mercenary army of Cossacks and Tartars in the pay of Mohammed II, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. In 1683, in league with Leopold I of Austria, he defeated the Ottoman Turks at Vienna. Islamic expansion into Europe was stopped cold. (It was at the battle for Vienna that Europe was introduced to the crescent roll.) Sobieski's victory is memorialized today by having a whole constellation of stars named after him – Sobieski's Shield.

Upon the death of Sobieski in 1696, Poland all but disappeared as a nation for more than 100 years. Its golden age of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, however, is remembered in its coinage. The RNA is fortunate to have an extensive collection of Polish and Lithuanian coins through a recent generous donation from member Phil Kates.



Photos by Ira Stein

## CLUB NEWS AND NOTES

# ANA VP Finner gives talk at RNA meeting

By Lisa Fybush

The Rochester Numismatic Association enjoyed an out-of-the-ordinary guest speaker at its April 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Wisconsin resident Patricia Finner, vice president of the American Numismatic Association, gave a talk about plans and programs for the ANA.

She began by quelling the rumor that the ANA will tear down its present building in Colorado Springs.

The association has plans to redesign its logo, and will allow its members to select the top five designs before the board makes the final choice.

The ANA currently has a deficit of \$1.8 million, with plans to reduce it to \$1.3 million. Finner, one of three members of the association's finance committee, said Larry Shepherd, the new ANA president, plans to balance the budget and eliminate the deficit.

Finner said the ANA believes in transparency, and that the association hopes to be finished with litigation by January of next year and return its focus to coin collecting.

Many RNA members wanted to know about the ANA show in 2012, but Finner said the main show coming to

Rochester "won't happen." She announced that the 2011 show would be in Indianapolis. The RNA hopes to host the show presented jointly by the ANA and the American Philatelic Society, and Finner gave the RNA some advice on becoming the host.

Finner stressed the advantages of becoming a life member of the ANA, including the ability to check out many of 40,000 books from its library. She also highlighted the ANA's programs and scholarships, many of which aren't well known. Some of the programs allow people to attend the annual workshops in Colorado Springs, and applications are available.

The biggest challenge to the hobby of numismatics, according to Finner, is taxes and secondhand licensing. Finner said the pawnbroker lobby wants coin dealers to be classified as secondhand dealers, which imposes requirements for identification, fingerprinting and holding items for 30 days.

Finner's husband, Rolland, also attended the meeting. The club presented the couple with an RNA mug and a slabbed New York quarter.



## Applications Corner

*The following applicant for membership was inadvertently left out of the last issue of the RNA News. RNA members with pertinent information about applicants are requested to contact the Membership Committee, in care of Bill Coe. If no objections are received within 45 days after publication, this applicant will become members of the RNA:*

**John P. Kellas III, Rochester, NY**

*The following people have been accepted as members in the RNA since the last issue of the RNA News:*

**Jeffrey Snyder, Fairport, NY**

**John Lighthouse, Rochester, NY**

**Roy Gallo, Rochester, NY**

**Ted Kraus, Rochester, NY**



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**MICHAEL OMELUCH, Professional Numismatist**

# The Calendar **May-June**

- **Thursday May 1 – 7 PM – RNA Board Meeting; 8 PM – RNA Meeting** Grant Hobika speaks on a topic to be announced
- **Thursday May 15 – 7:30 PM RNA Meeting** Meinhart Speaking Contest. Note early start!
- **Friday May 16 – 7:30 PM RJNA Meeting**
- **Friday May 23 – 6 PM RNA Banquet** at the Green Lantern Inn, Fairport.
- **Thursday June 5 – 8 PM RNA Meeting** Andy Harkness
- **Thursday June 19 – 8 PM RNA Meeting** Annual Year-End Auction – Bring your coins and money!
- **July 30 – August 3 – ANA World's Fair of Money, Baltimore** How many RNA members can we get together in Baltimore?
- **Sunday August 3 – RNA Picnic** Full details in the July-August *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](mailto:rnanews@fybush.com) or PO Box 10056, Rochester NY 14610.**

## Dates in RNA History

Compiled by Gerard Muhl

**May 5, 1942:** RNA presidential medal can't be struck in bronze due to World War II shortages. Plastic copies are made instead.

**May 19, 1942:** Mr. Sloan and RNA member Cady are appointed air raid wardens for meetings at museum, to direct members to safety if an air raid happens during a meeting.

**May 10, 1943:** For National Coin Week, members set up five coin displays around town and have radio broadcast on WSAY.

**May 4, 1948:** Franklin half dollars first seen at an RNA meeting. RNA sponsors RJNA essay contest about Australian coins. South Australia Coin Club offers prizes.

**May 2, 1950:** Floyd Newell made a fellow of the Rochester Museum in Numismatics.

**May 16, 1950:** Andy Hale applies for RNA membership.

**May 18, 1954:** Six RJNA members give talks at RNA meeting.

**May 3, 1955:** RJNA announces it will display a 1913 Liberty nickel at its next meeting.

**May 1, 1956:** RJNA President Art Cohn speaks at RNA about fractional currency.

**May 15, 1956:** John Pittman becomes Empire State Numismatic Association president.

**May 23, 1958:** RNA celebrates its 1000<sup>th</sup> meeting, issuing commemorative medals.

**June 15, 1942:** George Bauer and Mr. Plumb voted RNA honorary life members.

**June 20, 1942:** Members worry about gas rationing but have picnic at Powder Mills Park, with baseball game and horseshoe contest.

**June 4, 1946:** Curator reports more than 3,000 coins in collection. In 1946, 222 coins were donated.

**June 18, 1946:** George Bauer donates 80 Canadian tokens. Jack Cohen donates many badges.

**June 21, 1949:** John Pittman returns from multi-club meeting in Jamestown. He recommends forming an association of upstate coin clubs.

**June 6, 1950:** Summer RNA meetings at the museum are called off.

**June 5, 1955:** B. Max Mehl becomes RNA member #2.