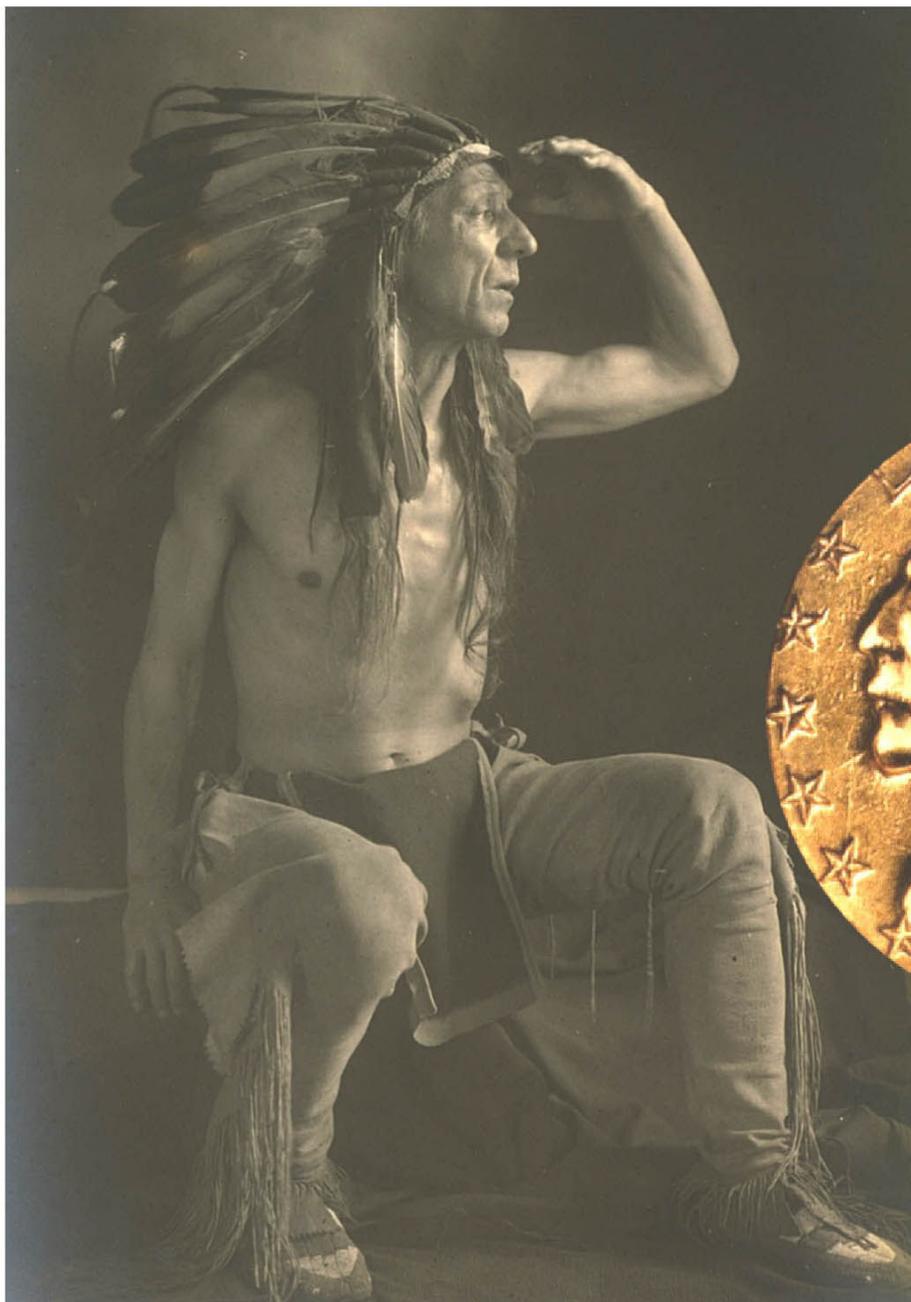


RNA



News

The official journal of the Rochester Numismatic Association



Finding Chief Thundercloud



Gerry Muhl uncovers
the RNA's connection
to the Indian Head
quarter- and half-
eagles

PLUS: Your Dues are Due • Building a Better Slab

November-December 2010

Richard,

Kathy and I felt compelled to send a follow up letter regarding our rare coin liquidation last year when you converted our life long holding of rare numismatic coins into American Gold Eagles. To be honest with you, at the time we liquidated our coins, we truly struggled with the idea of selling our rare coins and converting the proceeds into American Gold Eagles. It made perfect sense logically, but was an emotionally difficult concept to get comfortable with.

However, when we considered the ongoing real estate collapse, declining world economic situation, growing unemployment, lack luster investment opportunities, and relentless debasement of fiat currencies, it became painfully obvious that our long-term wealth plan via rare coin investment was compromised. We also realized that the depth of the 2008 economic downturn would severely limit future buyers for our rare coins. If that wasn't bad enough, prolific counterfeiting of rare United States coins and the existence of counterfeit third party certified holders from China would be the final blow to the value of our rare coin holdings. These factors made it painfully obvious that our largest personal asset of rare numismatic coins was at grave risk!

Having followed your ads for years in Coin World, we became convinced that ownership of gold and silver bullion, the ultimate form of secure wealth, was the only way to go. We chose your firm, Richard Nachbar Rare Coins, to help us accomplish this task due to your stellar reputation in the rare coin industry and your customer service.

We're happy to report, a little over a year later, that we sleep very well at night knowing our family's future is now secure. With your help, we've made significantly more money with our investment in American Gold Eagles. (Most of our former numismatic holdings have been flat to lower this past year, while our Gold Eagles have increased 27.4% !) Gold and silver are in an unparalleled bull market, and bullion ownership during these uncertain economic times has given us true peace-of-mind.

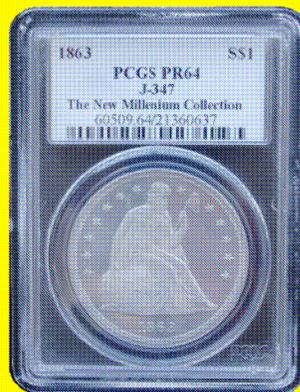
Anyone with the desire to secure their future should seriously consider converting their numismatic assets into Gold and Silver American Eagles with Richard Nachbar. Please feel free to use us as a personal reference. We'd be pleased to speak with any clients regarding our personal experience with your firm.

Best regards,

Kathy and Bill D.

Upstate, NY

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RNA News

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Numismatic Association
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ANA Branch #2
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Speak up, bring snacks

While I am justifiably concerned that fully half the members on the roster have yet to pay their dues, I recognize that tough times may well make it difficult, for some at least, to justify the cost. This month's newsletter will include a reminder that you only have until December to bring your dues up to date, after which we'll have no choice but to drop your name from the rolls.

Your being a member is an asset to the RNA, and we would certainly miss having you with us, so we hope all of you will be able to do so.

Thank you to all those who signed up at the October 21st meeting to provide refreshments at our meetings through the end of the year. You may have noticed that the signup process is a little different this year.

Rather than asking members to provide refreshments for both meetings in a given month, the signup request is for one meeting only. We have 20 meetings a year.

At one of those, the second meeting in May, during which we hold the RJNA Meinhart speakers contest, the club officers order pizza for everyone.

Based on an average attendance of 40 members at each meeting, each member would only need to bring refreshments once every two years. Please remember that the club does reimburse for whatever expense is incurred, so the cost doesn't come out of anyone's pocket unless they choose to donate it. At the next meetings Chip will circulate the signup sheet, or I will if he's out of town. Please consider taking your turn.

We have programs lined up through the first meeting of 2011, but the second January meeting and both February meetings remain open. Please try to come up with some suggestions for programs even if you can't do one yourself, and let Chip know.

Peter Blaisdell

Dues Notice

There are several members who have not paid their dues for the 2010-11 year. Please look at the following form if you are one of them.

NOTICE: Dues were payable July 1; if not paid by 12/31, your membership will lapse.

Dues: (Family or individual, **maximum** \$25, life member none) \$ 25

Please mail my Presidential Medal (add \$3) _____

Donation* _____

2012 Fund _____

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

* RNA is a tax exempt organization under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code

Please make checks payable to RNA; mail to RNA, PO Box 10056, Rochester, NY 14610-0056

Is this the face on the half-eagle?

By Gerard Muhl

In 1908 the U.S. Mint released newly designed Indian head \$2.50 and \$5 gold pieces designed by Bela Lyon Pratt. For the first time, U.S. circulating coinage showed the image of a real person – Chief Thundercloud. While recently digging into a collection of old drawings and photographs left to the RNA by Alphonse Kolb, I found six very rare photographs of the chief.

For years the identity of Pratt's model was unknown. Walter Breen's *Complete Encyclopedia of Coins* states that the name of the Indian was unknown. But with research help from the Rochester Museum & Science Center and the Rochester Historical Society, we now can piece together the story of this Rochester resident.

Thundercloud was a Blackfoot Indian born in northwest Canada in 1857, the son of a French father and an Indian mother. At age 15 he enlisted in the U.S. Army as a scout. Until age 19, he served under General David Stanley during the Indian Wars, and was present when Lakota leader Red Cloud was captured.

Thundercloud started a touring theatrical company and traveled the country for four years in the production *The*

Prairie Wave. He met Buffalo Bill in Rochester and signed with him to tour Europe in the *Wild West Show*. He played to large crowds, including one performance for Queen Victoria.

In 1896 the chief married a New York City artist for whom he was modeling. He then began a full-time career as an artist's model. Frederic Remington, John Singer Sargent and Frederick MacMonnies are just a few of the American artists for whom he posed.

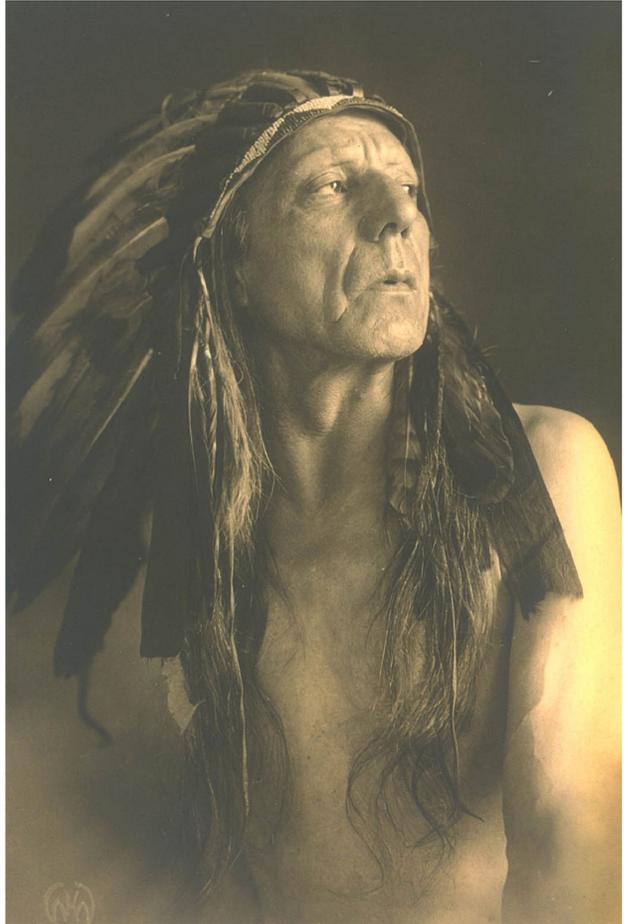
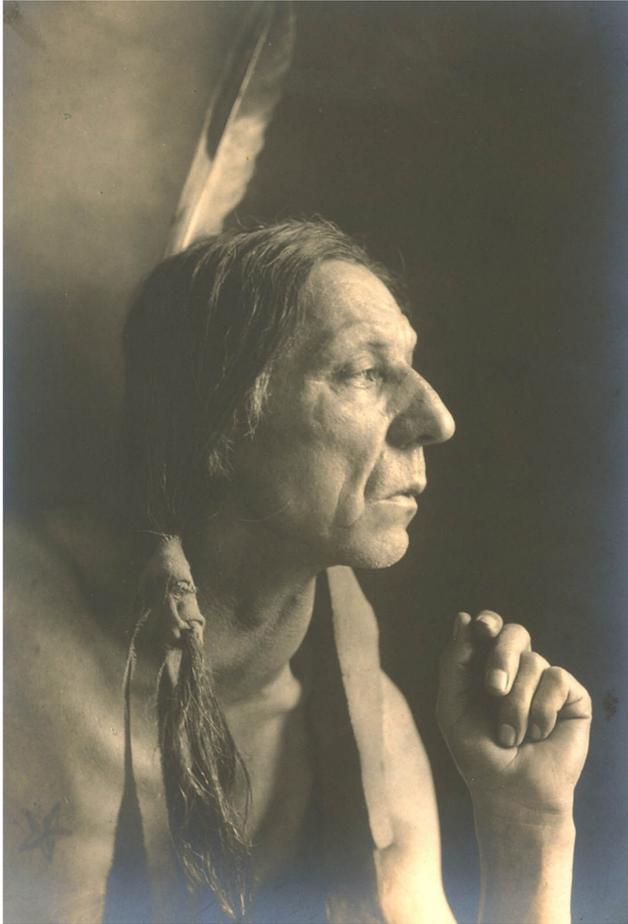
Between 1900 and 1916 Thundercloud worked on and off for the art school at the Rochester Mechanics Institute (now RIT), interrupting his time there to pose for Pratt.

Just a few years after posing for the gold coins in 1908, the chief was diagnosed with tuberculosis. That disease claimed his life on March 10, 1916. His estranged wife claimed his body, which was buried at Dingman's Ferry in Pike County, Pennsylvania.

The photos in the RNA collection are undated, but must be within eight years of his death. The headdress he wears is the same one he wears on the gold pieces (which is a bit stylized by Pratt).

Come to the next RNA meeting to see these rare photos up close, and bring some gold pieces to show.





Why isn't slab production better?

By David Gottfried

Just to get this out of the way – I've been thinking about starting a new business for a long time, probably the past three or four years. It occurred to me one day while getting into a clean-room suit at work that there's got to be a high-end alternative to the traditional slabs offered by professional coin grading services. There should also be one for generic "slab" holders – something that can provide a reliable, foolproof, long-term coin storage solution.

Granted, you can send your best coins off to a grading service, get a nice slab back, put that slab into an intercept shield box, then maybe store that in a safe deposit box that has additional conditioning added, such as desiccants. But I'm all about foolproof. I'm an Apple/iPhone kind of guy. If I have a coin, something in the \$5,000 to \$5,000,000 range, why would I even want to chance it? This brings me to the idea of hermetic sealing.

In searching the web for information about hermetically sealed coins, very little comes up. Apparently some patents were issued many years ago (though they're really worthless design patents that you could just work around). There are also some "technologies" that purport to provide an airtight seal. But to me, there's more to hermetic sealing than just keeping air out.

How about pumping the case full of inert gases to further decrease the likelihood that the surface of a coin will be negatively affected? At my place of business, we have a microsystems packaging facility. The term "packaging" often throws people for a loop and they start thinking corrugated cardboard, printed packages, bubble wrap. I'm talking about packaging that allows microscopic machines to interact with the outside world without dealing with things like, oh, atmosphere. For a long time now, I've thought, isn't there a market for high-end coins to be treated in the same way we treat an accelerometer in an airbag deployment system, or a Wii remote control? If I'm investing \$20,000 into a coin, why wouldn't I be willing to spend another \$750 to seal it in an attractive package that comes with long-term peace of mind? I've spent about the same amount to frame expensive artwork with museum-quality glass and non-reactive mattes.

I can't help but think that this is a good business opportunity, but truth be told, I haven't done the "voice of the customer" work yet. So what better opportunity than to gauge our membership? Some of you undoubtedly have "investment grade" coins; so let me ask you, would you pay a little more to guarantee it's safe from the environment? Drop me a note at davidg@javelin-group.com and let me know what you think!



YOUR AD HERE!

Reach RNA readers and visitors to the-rna.com, and support the club at the same time.

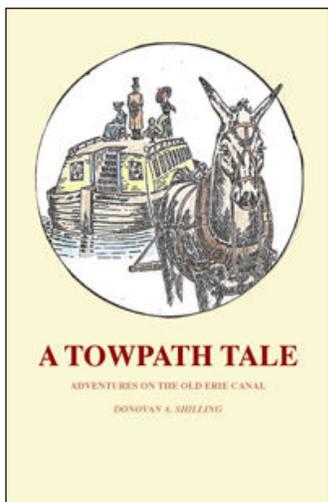
Contact Ted Vaccarella at tedvacc@yahoo.com

Club News and Notes

The RNA's own **Donovan Shilling** is already a published author many times over, but until now all his works on the history of Rochester and vicinity have been filed on the nonfiction shelves.

Now he's in the fiction section, too, with the release of *A Towpath Tale*, his new novel (complete with copious illustrations) about what life along the Erie Canal was like in the late 19th century, as seen through the eyes of 13-year-old Joshua Ford, a mule driver on the canal.

The book was featured in the *Democrat and Chronicle* on October 21. It's available from Pancoast Press, or you can ask Don for a copy at the next meeting!



• • •

The East Syracuse Coin Club will host the 4th annual Finger Lakes Joint Coin Club Meeting Sunday, November 14 at the VFW Hall in Waterloo. Any club member in good standing may attend.

The Bourse floor will be open from 9:30 a.m. until 3 p.m., except during the joint meeting from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

A buffet lunch will be served from 12 to 1 p.m., with a cash bar. An auction will follow lunch at 1 p.m. All club members may bring up to a 15-item lot.

The cost of the show will be divided equally amount all participating clubs. There will be donations and a 50/50 drawing to offset some expenses. Last year's drawing and donations brought in enough to cover all the expenses.

Dealers may purchase limited tables for a small fee. To reserve a spot, please call Mark at 315-461-9379.

The VFW Hall is located at 29 West Elisha Street, in the center of town behind the main village park.

• • •

The RNA is sad to report the death of **Salvatore "Sam" Villa** on October 4 at the age of 98.

Although Mr. Villa withdrew from the RNA several years ago for health reasons, he was an active club member for many years.

"He was always a jovial and friendly collector and pleasant to have at the meetings." Bill Coe recalls.

Community service was important to Mr. Villa, beginning with achieving the rank of Eagle Scout more than 80 years ago.

Mr. Villa was predeceased by his loving wife of 66 years, Nellie Villa. He is survived by his brother, Tony (Patricia) Villa of Florida; brother-in-law, Christopher Gullo; daughters Marie (Reginald) Hughes, Patricia Abram and Rosemary (Bill) Craig; four grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

The body of Mr. Villa was entombed at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be directed to St. Ann's Foundation, Annie's Angel Fund, 1500 Portland Avenue, Rochester 14621. To light a virtual candle in Sam's memory or send the family a condolence message, please visit www.harrisfuneralhome.com.

New Members Corner

Since the September/October issue of the RNA News, the following people have joined the RNA:

Andrew Mantione, Rochester NY
David Rusin, East Rochester NY

Joe Hanna, Rochester NY



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The Calendar **November-December**

- **Saturday, October 30-Sunday, October 31 – RNA’s 38th Annual Coin Show & Sale** At the Eisenhart Auditorium, of course – more details on page 6.
- **Thursday, November 4 – 8 PM – RNA Meeting** Howard Greenwald will discuss “Return of the Great Depression.”
- **Sunday, November 14 – 9:30 AM – 3 PM – Finger Lakes Joint Coin Club Meeting, Waterloo** Details on page 7
- **Thursday, November 18 – 8 PM – RNA Meeting** Jason Childers will share “Coins of My Travels.”
- **Friday, November 19 – 7 PM – RJNA Meeting** Come say hello to the numismatists of tomorrow!
- **Thursday, December 2 – 8 PM – RNA Meeting** Ira Stein will speak.
- **Sunday, December 12 – 10 AM-3 PM – RACE Coin will Show** DoubleTree Hotel, 1111 Jefferson Rd. @ I-390
- **Thursday, December 16– 8 PM – RNA Meeting** Come to our year-end auction!
- **Friday, December 17 – 7 PM – RJNA Meeting** The kids are all right!
- **Thursday, January 6, 2011 – 8 PM – RNA Meeting** Zane Dick presents “Deutscheist Die Saar.”

Additional 2011 Meetings: January 20, February 3, February 17, March 3, March 17, April 7, April 21, May 5, May 19, June 2, June 16

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 Joe 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.