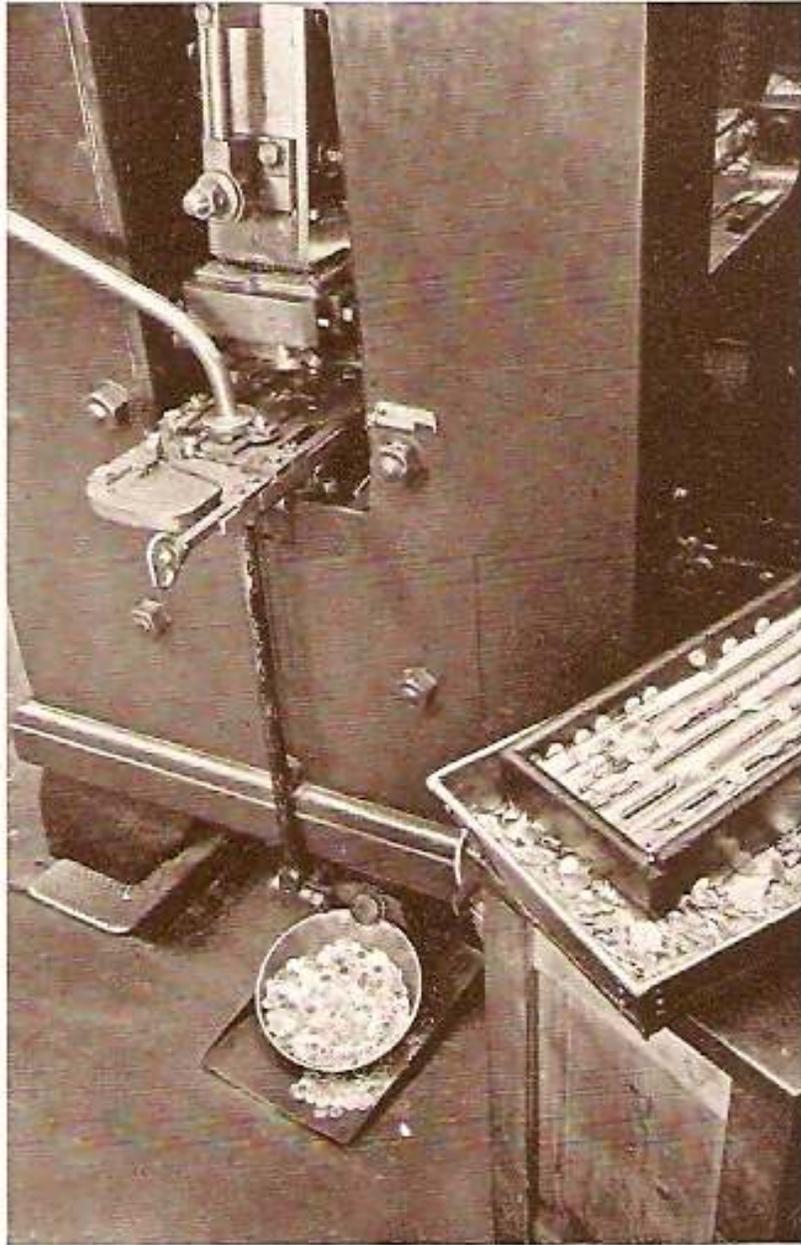


RNA



News

The official journal of the Rochester Numismatic Association

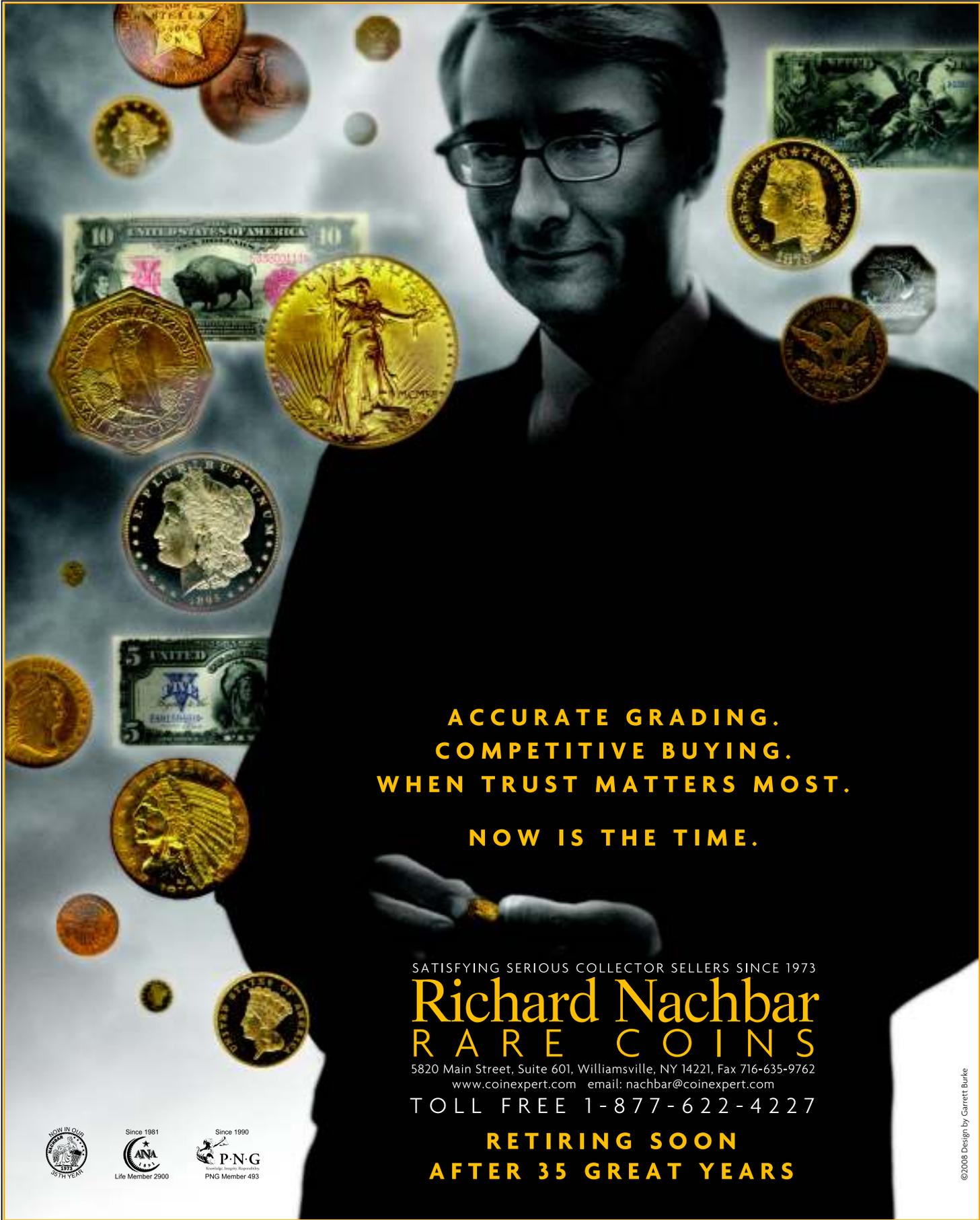


LONDON. THE ROYAL MINT—A COINING PRESS.

Postcards from the British Mint

PLUS: Stephens Roasts Lanzafame • Baltimore ANA

September-October 2008



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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Looking back at summer's end

The days are getting shorter. The air is getting crispier as the local traffic becomes more congested with college students returning to start the new school year. Just as the students are eager to learn, I am sure many of you cannot wait to start the new RNA season. What did you do this summer? Did you find that elusive coin you were looking for? What little nugget of numismatic information did you find to share? Maybe you did not do all that much, but instead relaxed. We hope everyone is now ready to renew old friendships, or perhaps make new friends.

The coin market is still strong, and many dealers are having trouble finding quality coins for their tables. As a result, the prices of higher-grade materials are still surging. Some of you may think the market is overpriced.

Looking back on my 45 years of coin collecting, I suspect there will be some downturns, but on the whole, the coin market will continue to be strong. I am sure that those of you who went to the ANA convention in Baltimore at the end of July and beginning of August will testify to that fact.

My philosophy for collecting coins is to pick your areas of interest and buy the best coins you can afford. I remember when I was a young man (a few moons ago). Just before starting pharmacy school, I purchased three Seated Liberty Dollars for \$300. I remember my sweaty palms and beating heart when I paid the dealer his money, wondering if I made the right decision. Today the same dealer teases me by offering to buy back those silver dollars. We laugh because now each one is worth more than the original \$300 I paid.

My perception is further reinforced by a 1961 Red Book I purchased at a flea market for 25 cents. The 1793 large cent in fine condition was listed for about \$140, and most uncirculated bust halves were valued at under \$50.

While the catalog value of your collections may be a source of

satisfaction, in my opinion, it is secondary to the thrill of the hunt, the knowledge gained and the enjoyment of the aesthetic and artistic value of your collection. Jim Sanders and his collection of fruit labels taught many of us to enjoy the lesser, more mundane materials as well as the more expensive esoteric items in our collections. In the words of the 1960s, "Let your freak flag fly." My personal collection of apothecary weights combined my numismatic and professional interests and is now a great source of satisfaction.

Your officers have been busy. Our vice president, Steve Eisinger, has been setting up the meeting schedule and arranging the speaker program. He has also been coordinating the refreshments.

Please be mindful of the meeting dates because there are going to be several exceptions to the first and third Thursday rule this year. This is due in part to New Year's Day falling on the first Thursday of January in 2009, but mostly because of conflicts in the Rochester Museum & Science Center's schedule. Scott and Lisa Fybush, already busy with their new bundle of joy, will post the meeting dates in the *RNA News*.

Mike Luck, our assistant curator, has been busy valuating the RNA collection. He hopes to have it done soon. Peter Blaisdell has been cleaning and reorganizing the RNA library just in time for the new season. Most importantly, Bill Coe is checking his list once, then checking it twice, making sure all members are accounted for. Later this fall he will be checking another list in preparation for the annual RNA coin show, another thing we all look forward to in the fall.

All these activities are carefully watched over by our treasurer, George Irwin, and secretary, Chip Scoppa.

So let the fun begin, and tell us what you did this summer.

John Stephens

British Mint captured in 1900s postcards

by Richard Jozefiak

At the turn of the 20th century, picture postcard collecting in Great Britain was the rage (Duval & Monaham, p. 23). Photography was not yet easy to do and still expensive. People who visited places would buy picture postcards as souvenirs of their visits.

People of all stations in Britian collected picture postcards, both mailed and not. Picture postcards were put in albums to display and stored in boxes (Duval & Monaham, p. 21).

Most public places sold picture postcards as souvenirs and for collectors. The British Royal Mint in London, England was no exception. The mint was a very popular tourist attraction. It was open for tours and had sold souvenirs.

Picture postcards had been sold by the British Royal Mint in different time periods, documenting changes in technology used. This article is on the British Royal Mint postcard set circa 1910. The time period estimate of this set is based on photos and descriptions in *A New History of The Royal Mint* (Challis, pages 528, 539-542, 574-575) and *The Royal Mint, An Illustrated History* (Dyer, pages 32-37).

Around 1910, the head messenger of the British Royal Mint issued a set of 12 pictorial postcards. The postcards showed the coin production at the royal mint. The front of each postcard has a nice gray tone picture, and the back of each postcard has a short description of the mint activity.

Each picture postcard measures 140 mm x 39 mm (5.5 in x 3.5 in). This size standard was set by the British Postal Authority on November 1, 1899 (Duval, p. 19).

The set of picture postcards was sold to help raise funds for the Royal Mint Provident Society. In Challis' *New History of the Royal Mint* (p. 553), he states, "The funds of the society were usefully supplemented, with the consent of the deputy master, by a share in the profits arising from the sale of cases for Maundy money and of postcards to visitors."

The society was created in March of 1900, and lasted until 1938 (Challis, p. 554). The society was a mutual aid group that provided payments to members who left the mint by choice, retirement or death (Challis, p. 553).

The set of picture postcards was sold for one shilling per set. One British shilling was about the same size and contained the same amount of silver as a U.S. quarter-dollar. With 12 picture postcards in a set, each postcard would be one penny each (12 pence equals 1 shilling).

There is no printer identification on the postcards. It is unknown how many of the sets were manufactured and sold.

Many sets of postcards were sold based on the number of individual picture postcards of this set that have been offered for sale on eBay. But a complete set of picture postcards in nice condition is hard to find. It's likely that most people who bought the set of postcards did not keep the outer envelope.

The outer envelope that holds the set of postcards has the following written on it:



The envelope in which the postcards were sold

- Twelve Pictorial Post Cards
- The Royal Mint, Price One Shilling
- Sold By The Head Messenger For The Benefit Of The Royal Mint Provident Society

Eight of the 12 picture postcards included in the set are shown on page 5; a ninth is on the cover of this

issue of *RNA News*.

In summary, the picture postcard set circa 1910 was sold to the visiting public for a nominal price. Many sets were sold, but few sets survive intact today. The picture postcards provide an interesting historical record of the coin production and operations of the BRM around 1910.

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LONDON. THE ROYAL MINT. FAÇADE.



LONDON. THE ROYAL MINT—SILVER MELTING HOUSE.



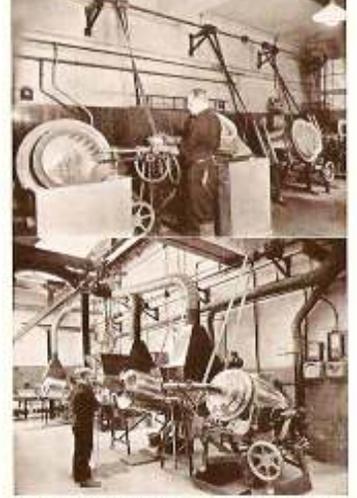
LONDON. THE ROYAL MINT—PYX OFFICE.



LONDON. THE ROYAL MINT—DIE SINKING ROOM.



LONDON. THE ROYAL MINT—CUTTING ROOM.



LONDON. THE ROYAL MINT. BLANCHING OR PICKLING ROOM AND DRYING ROOM.



LONDON. THE ROYAL MINT—ROLLING ROOM No. 1.



LONDON. THE ROYAL MINT—COINING PRESS ROOM.

Top to bottom, left to right. THE ROYAL MINT-FAÇADE. The Royal Mint, which had been for many centuries within the precincts of the Tower of London, was, in 1810, removed to its present site on Tower Hill. The buildings were erected from the designs of Sir Robert Smirke. **SILVER MELTING HOUSE. THE FURNACES.** Silver, in the form of ingots or worn coin, is melted with the specified alloys and poured into moulds to form bars for rolling into strips. The furnaces are gas fired. **PYX OFFICE. THE CHANCELLOR BULLION BALANCE.** Checkweighing ingots of silver as received from the bullion merchant. They weigh about one thousand troy ounces each, and are ready for melting after a mint assay has been made of them. **DIE SINKING ROOM. ONE OF THE DIE PRESSES.** The coinage and medal dies are formed under this press by forcing a punch, on which is the required design, into specially prepared steel die blanks. **CUTTING ROOM. THE CUTTING-OUT PRESSES.** Coin blanks of a specified weight are cut out from the rolled strips. The blanks are also edge-marked in the room. **BLANCHING OR PICKLING ROOM. THE ROTARY EARTHENWARE BARRELS (TOP VIEW).** The blanks, after annealing, are given a suitable acid treatment in these barrels, until the surfaces of the blanks are quite bright. **DRYING ROOM. THE ROTARY HOT-AIR DRYERS.** After acid treatment, the blanks are dried by revolving them in drums through which hot air is circulated. **ROLLING ROOM No. 1. THE ROLLING MILLS.** The gold or silver bars of appropriate width, prepared in the Melting House, are rolled down into strips of the thickness of the coins to be manufactured. **COINING PRESS ROOM. SOME OF THE PRESSES.** The coining presses, of various sizes, are capable of striking coins of any denomination at the rate of one hundred to one hundred and twenty per minute. **On the cover: COINING PRESS ROOM. CLOSE-UP VIEW OF A COINING PRESS.** The blanks are placed automatically in a collar between the top and bottom dies of the press, so that the obverse and reverse impressions and the edge are obtained at one blow. *Not shown here.* **ANNEALING ROOM; WEIGHING ROOM; TELLING ROOM.**

The essence of Joe

By John R. Stephens

Editors' note: John's send-up of Joe Lanzafame at his presidential banquet was so funny, we asked him to share it with all of you.

It was my responsibility to arrange a speaker for the banquet. However, after the disaster last year with the squealing microphone, it was impossible to get anyone to give a speech, especially Randy or Ursula. Since everyone else took two steps back during the call for volunteers, and the fact I am used to squeals in my ears from my hearing aid, I decided to give the speech.

So here it goes: Who is Joseph M. Lanzafame? Who is this person who looks a little bit like Buddha and a lot like President Eisenhower? Who is this giggler who seems to find humor in the most unexpected places? Who is this person who was our leader and past president of the RNA? Who the heck is Steve Joe?

Okay, I will get to the point, as I am beginning to sound like the theme song from *CSI*.

Joe is like an onion. There are many layers to his personality. To approach him directly to get personal information is like pulling teeth.

However, if you Google his name, his life is literally an open book. He has many friends that he chats with on the Internet. When you Google Joseph M. Lanzafame, you will find he is a best-selling author of the book *When Dream and Day Unite*. Well, maybe it is not a bestseller, but I did obtain a copy of his book on Amazon...for five dollars.

I have to admit, the book has changed my life. When my wife, Chris, read the first line in the book, which reads, "Make love to me, she purred, leaning back on the bearskin rug," she immediately grabbed the book and read it for herself. When she finished the book, she said, "I can do better than that." After I gave her my version of Joe's full-hearted laugh, Chris started pecking away at the computer and has been at it ever since. It seems she has developed quite a following of her own online. Personally, I am only halfway through the book because I would always get interrupted by my wife repeating at least part of that first sentence. Thanks Joe...I think.

In the "about the author" section, it is written, "The author is a physical chemist who lives in Rochester, N.Y., where he studies Buddhist philosophy when he's not playing with his lasers." I can imagine Joe playing with lasers. In fact, Joe got so good at playing with lasers he got his doctorate in laser physics from the University of Rochester. So you gotta give him some respect.

Currently Joe is teaching chemistry at RIT. That is his mundane day job. Online he is ChemGod! Go to www.ChemGod.com and you can view his domain. By the way, Joe, I hope you meet your financial goal of getting a dollar from everyone who logs onto your site. Other areas on

the Web site reveal the personal side of Joe. He has posted pictures of his love, Wallace.

Wallace is a large dog of the Great Pyrenees breed and is named after the main character in Joe's favorite movie, *Braveheart*. One picture showed Joe standing eye to eye with his dog, practically kissing. Other pictures show Wallace eating road apples at Mendon Ponds Park. Now Joe, in what order were these pictures taken? Evidence of his love for Wallace is apparent with the dog hairs on Joe's sweaters when he attends the RNA meetings.

Now, I am not sure about Joe's romantic life, even though he wrote another book, *The Pier*. According to Joe, this is an attempt "to fictionally rewrite the horror out of my love life." I am afraid to get this book after the influence of his first book on my own life.

Another glimpse of Joe's life is a book *My Vacation With A Cardboard Head*, showing his nontravelogue using a cardboard box as a substitute for his brother, John. Joe, you are going to have to explain that one to me.

On the numismatic side, Joe has written a humorous satire in *The Numismatist* titled "Joe the Obscure" on commemorative coins, where he states the Joe Lanzafame dollar will be out in the year 2136. Of course, the date is pending his demise. I contend they already minted them back in the 1970s, and we should have used them in place of the Lanzafame RNA medal being issued today.

His deep interest in philosophy and Eastern mysticism is reflected in his catholic taste in coins. While he finds the early U.S. coin designs boring, he is interested in all coins of the world, including Tibetan coins.

As president of the RNA, Joe was a fearless leader seeking fiscal responsibility and accountability of the library and RNA collections. He risked the same demise as his hero Wallace (being drawn and quartered) when he proposed deaccessing the RNA coin collection to increase the RNA's fiscal viability. The force of his leadership led to better oversight of the RNA assets. He sure made Bill Coe more protective of the RNA collection. No, seriously, he laid down the groundwork for future RNA presidents by forming committees and increasing oversight.

Joe continues to contribute to the RNA by mentoring the RJNA. He brings his wide numismatic interest, his teaching experience and his warped sense of humor to bear while warping, I mean molding, the young minds of the junior club members.

Whether or not you agree with Joe's ideas or suggestions, we owe him a heartfelt thank you for giving us food for thought concerning the future of the RNA. I'm sure we will continue to hear his giggles when we are too serious in RNA matters. He deserves a round of applause.

POSTSCRIPT: At the present time, my wife and Joe are plotting their revenge.



Club News and Notes

Steve Eisinger, the RNA vice president and the person responsible for arranging the speakers' schedule, notes that five spots for speakers remain open. He hopes to fill them with volunteers at the first September meeting. In particular, he would like to encourage first-time speakers to participate. "It is a lot of work preparing a talk," Steve says, "but it has many rewards. You learn a great deal about your subject, of course, knowledge that is passed along to a grateful club membership. But in addition, it is a way to find others in the club who share your interests." Also, there is a very cool medal for speakers.

Topics are numerous – whatever excites your passion about coins. Officers and senior members will be delighted to help a newer member refine a topic for presentation. Steve will be around at the meeting on September 4th with the sign-up sheet.

• • •

The RNA coin show coordinators urge members to consider putting together displays for the show November 1st and 2nd. Even though it's summer, now is a good time to get exhibits organized. The inside dimensions of the RNA cases are 32 by 20 inches. Interested members may call **Gerry Muhl** at 336-9459 with any questions.

• • •



The RNA's summer picnic moved to a new location this year, and the August 3 event at Mendon Ponds Park was well attended by members old and young (**David Gottfried's** newborn son **Samuel** made his inaugural RNA appearance.)

Who was that big blond guy sitting at the table? **Jason Childers**, sporting a new dye job that has something to do with one of his other hobbies, rooting for the local outdoor lacrosse team, the Rochester Rattlers.

• • •

This year's picnic fell on the closing weekend of the ANA's World's Fair of Money, and the Baltimore Convention Center was full of Rochesterians. Your editor spotted **Richard Jozefiak, Gerry Muhl, John Bailey, John Zabel, Richard Nachbar, Ira Stein, Lysle Young** and **Don Shilling** on the floor, and we know a few others were there, too, including **Wayne and Pat Scheible** and **Charles Ricard**.

And young **Ariel Fybush** had a great time at the show, making the rounds of world mints to fill up her passport, getting to engrave and print her own "100,000 Princess" note at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing booth, and getting to hold an actual sheet of \$100,000 bills. (Yes, Daddy got to hold them, too.)

What did you do this summer? Bring your souvenirs to the first RNA meeting of the year Sept. 4 and show them off!

• • •



In Memoriam: Arthur J. Cohen, RNA member number 49, died August 11 at age 95. Cohen joined the RNA Sept. 10, 1991, and remained a frequent attendee at club meetings well into his nineties.

Cohen founded Rochester's Artco Industrial Laundries, and was often referred to within the club as "the Artco Art Cohen" to differentiate him from past president and board member **Arthur D. Cohen**.

Cohen's wife, Shaney, died earlier this year. He is survived by two children, seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



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The Calendar **September-October**

- **Thursday, September 4 - 8 PM - RNA Meeting** It's the first meeting back, and time for our traditional first-meeting topic: "What I Did This Summer." Bring the coins you bought, pictures of your summer travels, or anything else you'd like to share with your fellow club members – and bring a friend, too!
- **Thursday, September 18 - 8 PM - RNA Meeting** Nick Graver will present a talk on "My Lucky Penny."
- **Thursday, October 2 - 8 PM - RNA Meeting** Dan White will be the speaker. Subject to be announced.
- **Thursday, October 16 - 8 PM - RNA Meeting** Chip Scoppa will be the speaker. Subject to be announced.
- **Saturday & Sunday, November 1-2 - 36th Annual RNA Coin Show and Sale** It's never too early to start thinking about an exhibit.
- **Additional 2008 meetings: November 6, November 20, December 4, December 18**

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.

Dates in RNA History

Compiled by Gerard Muhl

September 9, 1933: Club members discuss their trip to the Century of Progress Expo in Chicago.

September 2, 1941: George Bauer asks ANA for a show in Rochester. It goes to Cincinnati.

September 16, 1941: RNA will have "dealer nights" twice a year. Everyone can be a dealer, allotting a sales commission to the RNA. Members post want lists at the meeting before dealer night. Auctions are now limited to 10 items.

September 21, 1948: RNA strikes one copy of George Bauer's store token in gold and gives it to him.

September 21, 1951: RNA holds a joint meeting with Buffalo Coin Club at a hotel in Batavia. This was an annual event in the 1940s and 1950s.

September 16, 1952: George Bauer is robbed of his best ancient coins, modern gold and his 50-year ANA medal.

September 1, 1953: Ed Quagliana applies to RNA. He would later become a life member.

September 2, 1955: RNA member Thomas Jensen shows 1944 no-mint-mark counterfeit nickel.

October 10, 1933: Members are asked to submit drawings of proposed designs for RNA's 500th meeting medal.

October 23, 1934: Joint meeting in Syracuse at Onondaga Hotel with Syracuse, Utica and Cortland coin clubs. A token was issued for the event. (Can anyone find a copy of that token?)

October 10, 1936: Third Central New York Coin Meet is held at the Hotel Rochester, with a dinner, auction and card playing.

October 21, 1939: Central New York Coin Meet takes place in Rochester.

October 19, 1943: RNA urged to dispose of duplicate coins in its collection.

October 6, 1945: John Pittman moves that RNA restrike club silver presidential medals. Jack Cohen urges that restrikes be marked as such.

October 16, 1945: RNA cashes World War II war bond to strike bronze club medals that were made in plastic during the war.

October 1, 1946: Members Eichorn, Kolb, Bauer, Newell, Pittenger, McGowen and Parker are thanked for donating coins to club's collection.

October 19, 1946: I.B. Bernstein made RNA honorary member.

October 4, 1947: Clarince Moore elected RNA honorary member.

October 4, 1949: RNA programs asked members to bring a coin to discuss at length. Here's what came in: 1837 silver and gold proof set; 1802 ½ dime; 1846 proof dollar; medal of Roman emperor Commodus; Pan Pacific \$50 gold; uncirculated 1916 quarter; 1859 pattern 50-cent coin; Pin and Oak Tree shilling; a fused silver dollar from the huge Sibley store fire.

October 21, 1950: RNA sets up a budget committee.

October 2, 1954: RNA has second picnic of the year at Ed Gilroy's house at Canandaigua Lake.

October 18, 1954: RJNA has 58 boys in attendance.