THE JOHN C. LIGHTHOUSE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL

Thanks again to Bill Coe for his work on the medal committee. Pick up your medal at a meeting or add $3 for postage to your dues payment to have it mailed.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome everyone!

Being the new President, I would like to introduce myself. First of all, my name is Sharon Miller and I’m originally from the Finger Lakes area known as Seneca County.

I came to Rochester to attend business school and then worked at several companies, the last one being where I met my husband. I have always had an interest in coins since the age of 12 when I went thru pocket change looking for that 1909-S VDB cent. That’s the way you collected back then.

After marrying and raising a family, my interest never waned, just the cash to purchase a coin. I continued to look for coins for my collection. In 1978, I found a job at a local bank and still continued to pursue my hobby. When asked by (2) members of the RNA to come to a meeting, after retiring I finally attended a meeting, and later joined the RNA. I have no regrets, but I should have joined years earlier. Being a member of the RNA I have learned a lot and made new friends, but most importantly is the camaraderie I have with others.

I try to introduce the RNA to some of my friends. They come as guests and some return. Won’t you ask a friend to join you at one of our meetings? What do they have to lose? Everybody can relate to money, either coin or currency, and pretty soon they get to thinking they have coins stored away from Aunt Tilda. What are they worth? Bring them in—there are members here who can help you. And from there it just starts to escalate—maybe do a talk about the coin or write about a past president. We’d love to hear about it!

And lastly, the American Numismatic Association Chicago World’s Fair of Money takes place August 5th thru 9th In Rosemont, IL. Are you going? I am! I can’t wait to see a show of this magnitude. Maybe I’ll see you there!

Until next time, Sharon Miller

RNA Banquet Highlights

RNA President Sharon Miller provided RNA News with highlights from the RNA Banquet:

The RNA Banquet held on May 16th was a success. With an attendance of 45 people, delicious food, great fellowship, honored guests, and a Numismatist of the Year Award made for a wonderful evening. A felt finish and gold foil accents certificate presentation cover was given to each of our 50-year Member Anniversaries – Harris Rusitzky, Nicholas Graver, and Earl Gurell. Congratulations! Also, we couldn’t forget our (17) speaker and writer award medals. All topics spoken and articles written for our newsletter were very interesting.

The next award given was our Numismatist of the Year, an award not given every year but given to a person who truly advances the science of numismatics, and promotes interest and growth in numismatics. Through various venues over several years, including the ANA, RNA and Irondequoit schools, this honoree met all the requirements of the award. This year’s award was presented to Susie Scoppa. Congratulations, Susie!

What banquet wouldn’t be complete without “roasting” the Past President, John Lighthouse, and the presentation of his Presidential medal? Everyone looks forward to this part of the program each year.

If you would like to be an Officer of the RNA Board and go thru the steps to become President, then you would have your very own medal. Remember, every medal is unique like every President is unique.

So, if you missed this year’s banquet, plan on attending next year. I don’t think you’ll be disappointed!

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Speaking of... RNA members attending the World’s Fair of Money will hold a club meeting in Room 42 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center between 10:00 and 11:00 on Friday, Aug. 8th.
Two Wrongs and a Numismatic Right: Laura Gardin Fraser, Artist Extraordinaire

By Gerald Vaccarella, RNA Member

Many of the first designers and producers of United States coins were like the first Chief Engraver of the United States Mint, Robert Scott (1744-1823). Scott was a watch smith, silversmith, printer and designer. He was chiefly known for the "draped bust" design of early U.S. coinage. For over a century United States coins were engineered this way until President Theodore Roosevelt took office. President Roosevelt was a naturalist, historian, author and the list of interests goes on, including the fine arts. The President was very critical of US coinage design and had particular contempt for the Barbers: William Barber, Chief Engraver from 1869 until his death and Charles Barber, who succeeded his father as Chief Engraver in 1879. Roosevelt's famous remarks to Augustus St. Gaudens about Barber were the start of a new mentality about US coins. President Roosevelt surmised that sculptors/artists would be likely candidates to design great coins. This opened the door a bit wider for the fine arts.

Women did not get the right to vote until 1920 and their second class citizenship was no more apparent than the fine arts. The late 19th and early 20th century found few women who were recognized as artists or designers of any great note. Among women, Mary Cassat was an American artist of faint fame but she gained more notoriety in France where she lived much of her adult life. In 1893, the first recognition of American women artists was trumpeted through the famous "White Rabbits" (named by Fair Director of Works, Charles Burnham) group of sculptors found at the 1893 Worlds Fair. Women sculptors became acceptable because of their accidental inclusion as designers and sculptors during the 1893 Columbian Exposition "White Rabbits" incident. These women's skills and fame suddenly jumped to make monumental marks in the art world. They paved the way for recognition of other women in the fine arts.

James Earle Fraser was a noted sculptor of the early twentieth century. In his online description today, his wife is mentioned in an obscure sentence. It's incredible, but even now Laura Gardin Fraser is given the short end of the stick. Laura Gardin was born in 1889 in Morton Park, a suburb of Chicago, a generation after the "White Rabbits" but benefited from their pioneering efforts in some respects. She was immensely talented, sometimes recognized but often not. She won many contests, prizes, and scholarships. She went to Columbia and attended the Art Students League in New York City. At the Art Students League she won the coveted St. Gaudens Prize. Eventually, Laura Gardin worked under the director of the sculpture department, James Earle Fraser, as an Instructor from 1910-1912. They married on Thanksgiving Day, 1913 and settled in Westport, Connecticut.

The Frasers never had any children. They worked through the years, individually, and only collaborated on one project, the Oregon Trail Centennial medal. Laura had a tremendous body of work during her lifetime. The Frasers had a standing wager as to how

(Continued on page 5)
The competition. She was chosen by the Washington Bicentennial Committee including President Hoover and, more importantly, by the US Commission of Fine Arts. The fifty cent piece had declined in use and before Fraser's design could be struck (replacing the Walking Liberty half dollar) the depression gripping the country intervened. In February, 1931, Congressman Randolph Perkins proposed that the standing liberty quarter be replaced with Fraser's design since the use of the half dollar had diminished (none were produced from 1930-1933) as a result of the depression. On March 4, 1931, the legislation for the new Washington quarter passed. The Chairman of the Commission on Fine Arts, Charles Moore, was also a supporter of the Laura Fraser design. Assistant Mint director Mary M. O'Reilly wrote to Moore asking his advice on the design competition for the new Washington quarter! Secretary Moore replied that Fraser had won the original completion for the medal and fifty cent piece. Fraser's design should simply be adapted for the quarter, he stated. Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon replied to Moore stating that the present US Treasury Department had not been party to the earlier design agreement and would not follow or be bound to it. The Treasury proceeded to hold its own competition. The US Fine Arts Commission and the US Bicentennial Commission met to consider newly submitted designs in an advisory role. It again selected Laura Gardin Fraser's designs. Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon chose John Flanagan's design. US Fine Arts commission members Charles Moore and Adolph Weinman (designer of the Mercury dime and Walking Liberty half dollar) attempted to change Mellon's mind but got him only to agree on resubmission of all designs.

On January 20, 1932, following re-submissions, the US Fine Arts Commission once more affirmed its support of Laura Gardin Fraser's designs. On Feb.12, 1932 Andrew Mellon resigned and was succeeded by Ogden L. Mills as Treasury Secretary. Moore and the US Fine Arts Commission wrote a letter deprecating Flanagan's design and urging the new treasurer to embrace Fraser's design. Treasury Secretary Mills stated he would not override Mellon's decision. It had been found that Andrew Mellon was aware all along of who submitted which designs. He was accused at that time of discriminating against Fraser because she was a woman. Andrew Mellon denied the sexist allegations.

Since 1932 there have been arguments back and forth by numismatists Breen, Bowers and others about the veracity of this discrimination. In a world where
(Fraser, from page 5) history is often revised years later to fit people's beliefs, even the noted numismatist Q. David Bowers has called Fraser's discrimination because she was a woman "modern numismatic fiction." It's clear to me, however, that Laura G. Fraser was selected to design many important coins, medals and sculpture in her life but her design of a major circulating coin never came to fruition because she was a woman. John Flanagan was mainly an academician, not a designer of anything. I believe both the Laura Gardin Fraser reverse and obverse were superior to his coin that's still being struck today. Flanagan's Washington quarter was his only piece of work ever selected to grace a coin.

Laura Gardin Fraser died in 1966 but in 1999 her design work was used by the United States Mint for a commemorative half eagle issued 200 years after Washington's death. The demise of her 1930 design of the Washington quarter was resurrected, in a way, in 1999. Perhaps it gives some atonement for the blatant discrimination and lack of renown Laura Gardin Fraser should have enjoyed then and now.

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Club News and Notes

Since the May-June issue of RNA News, two new members have joined RNA: We welcome Peter P. Romeo and Janet R. Pawlyk, both of Rochester, NY.

Member Survey: Enclosed with the newsletter this month is a short Member Survey. Your Board of Directors would appreciate your feedback on a variety of general topics. The comments section enables you to expand on subjects of particular interest. Your participation is appreciated.

**THE ANNUAL PICNIC - AN RNA TRADITION**

Mark your calendar for the annual RNA Picnic on Sunday August 4 from 1-4~ at White Brook Nature Park (Perinton). Take Ayrault Road east to Aldrich Road, or take Route 31 east (just past Lollypop Farm) and turn north on Aldrich Road (about 4/10 mile, entrance on right). The fun starts at 1PM; board meeting at noon :-) This year we guarantee good weather (the lodge is air-conditioned). This year Dr. Steve (Eisinger) promises a dry nature hike, which will begin at a trail a short distance from the lodge. If you didn't sign up at a June meeting, call or email Sharon Miller (see below). The cost is $10 per person (please bring a dish to pass and an item for the white elephant auction). Sharon is furnishing ice cream for dessert this year. Please join us - you won't be disappointed!

The club will also provide, along with hot dogs and hamburgers: rolls, cheese, chicken, condiments (mustard, relish, and ketchup), cups, plates, utensils, garbage bags, salt/pepper, ice, soda, tools (flipper, scraper, tongs), napkins, warming trays, matches for the charcoal, and disposable utensils. There will even be corn on the cob, roasted over the charcoal.

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RNA Coin Show and Sale

It’s time to start planning your RNA Coin Show Exhibit for November 8 & 9, 2014. Use more than one display case, if necessary. Each case size is 32 X 20 X 1.75 inches. Let’s see some great displays!
Q - What U. S. branch mint was farthest West?
A - Manila, Philippines

Q - Whose design is used on the Barber Dime reverse?
A - James B. Longacre

Q - Who was the first historical figure to appear on a U.S. coin?
A - Columbus 1892 Columbian Half Dollar (1893 Isabella 25c)
The RNA Calendar July - August 2014

Sunday, August 24: Annual Picnic: 1-4 PM, White Brook Nature Area Park (Perinton); enjoy a wonderful picnic with numismatic friends and guests in an a/c building complete with stove, oven, refrigerator, running water, and clean rest rooms. Board meeting at noon. A great place to spend the afternoon! Bring an item for the white elephant auction!

Thursday, September 4: 8 PM - RNA Meeting: What I did this summer in Numismatics

Saturday & Sunday, November 8 & 9: 42nd Annual RNA Coin Show and Sale

Rochester Area Coin Expo: July 20, 2014, 10-3, Double Tree Hotel, 1111 Jefferson Road.

The Ontario County Coin Club meets at 2 pm on the first Sunday of every month at the Canandaigua Elks Club, 19 Niagara Street. Doors open at 1 pm.


Rochester Numismatic Association
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