

Cumberland Coins

The Volunteer Coin Club Newsletter

April, 2012

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Volunteer Coin Club will be held Tuesday April 10 starting at 6:30. The meeting is still being held at the 127 Senior Center on Highway 127 (Main Street) South of town. Doors open at 6:00.

The main order of business at this meeting will be the election of officers for the coming year. The nominating committee was unable to find any new candidates willing to be an officer, so the incumbent office holders are the only nominees from the committee. They are Mike Puhl (President), Franc Connor (VP), Sonna Young (Secretary), and Mike Swanson (Treasurer). If there is anyone else who wants to run for one of these offices, we will accept nominations from the floor immediately before the election.

Coin Lore

CONTEMPORARY COUNTERFEIT HALF DOLLAR by Bill Groom

Here's a curious item that I long ago picked out of a dealer's odds-n-ends box at a coin show. I then thought it to be a good study piece for the purpose of promoting collector awareness. It's an item that I would occasionally show and discuss at coin club meetings ... definitely, a conversation piece!



First off, the color looks wrong. It's somewhat brassy, yet it's not particularly unusual to see an old coin, having such discoloration. Generally speaking, old coins tend to be worn, and from a distance, this item surely fits that bill. It has a rim ding, too, which further suggests that this was a well-circulated coin. A novice collector might initially regard this as a genuine coin. Next stop ... a coin book!

The Guide Book of U.S. Coins lists this type as a Liberty Seated half dollar. This design was minted from 1839-91. Yet, notice that the date is 1833 and is flanked by arrows. Further study of these type coins reveals that for only two years, 1854 and 1855, were these half dollars struck with arrows at the date; and, lacking either rays or the In God We Trust ribbon above the eagle's head. How can this be? The date is clearly 1833! Was this a mint error or a pattern, an early trial piece, one might ask?

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In 1853, arrows were added, alongside the date, to indicate a change in the weight of this design. The half dollar's weight was reduced that year from 13.36 grams to 12.44. It's interesting that the individual who created this counterfeit knew about the weight change, adding an arrow, but he didn't give any thought to the date being 1833 - a date that would only appear on the earlier type Capped Bust half dollars! He used the arrows in order to have his underweight half appear more genuine; this, in 1853 or later. Perhaps, with his product having such a worn appearance, the counterfeiter felt obliged to date it some twenty years earlier? If this was the case, ironically, his doing so was, in effect, his undoing!

In all likelihood, this counterfeit was struck in the 1850's, prior to the Civil War and contemporary for this type. In those days, a half dollar then constituted a day's wage for many a worker. At that time, many folks were illiterate and just as used to seeing Spanish coins in circulation as U.S. coins. Many of the earlier type Capped Bust halves were counterfeited and freely circulated; ahhh, but that's another story

COINfucious Says: *"Bright coins, like bright people ... better appreciated when not kept in dark."*

Area Coin Shows

- May 5, 2011 **Knoxville Coin Show**, Rothchild Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike
(I-40 exit #378)
- May 18-19, 2011 **Gallatin Coin & Currency Show**, Civic Center, 210 Albert Gallatin Ave.
- June 2, 2011 **Knoxville Coin Show**, Rothchild Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike
(I-40 exit #378)

For more information on any of these shows see <http://www.tsns.org/Tennessee Club Shows.html>

This Month's Raffle Prizes

| | | Est. Grade |
|--------|---------------------|------------|
| 1919 | Lincoln Cent | Unc |
| 1922-D | Lincoln Cent | VF |
| 1891 | Seated Liberty Dime | F |
| 1955 | Jefferson Nickel | Gem Proof |
| 1962 | Washington Quarter | Gem Proof |

The Door Prize will be a slabbed 1944-D Lincoln cent graded MS-65 by ANACS.