

## PCNS Minutes for August 23, 2023

The board meeting for August 23, 2023, was called to order via Zoom at 7:15 PM by President Jason Macario. In attendance were Secretary Charlie Catlett, Treasurer Stephen Huston, Governors Bob Somers, Mike McDaniel and Ed Treuting, and members Michael Wehner and Dean Ristenpart.

The minutes for the July meeting were approved.

Financial report: the report was sent to board members prior to the meeting and was discussed.

In-person December 27 meeting: a room is reserved, with two issues: 1- the price is for non-profits (which we are by California law) but a 501(c) number is needed, which we do not have. 2- Liability insurance is also required, which we also do not have. Jason will work on satisfying those two issues and report back in September.

We may still need a speaker for October and are waiting to hear from one.

New business- none

Adjournment 7:25 PM

At 7:31 PM, general meeting #1288 was called to order. Present in addition to the members from the board meeting via Zoom were Charlie Ludvic, Herb Miles, Scott Safe, Doug Ward, John Duff, and Jeff Pritchard.

We may need a speaker for October and do need speakers for 2024. Please let Jason and/or Stephen know if you are willing.

Featured Speaker: Douglas Ward  
"Half Unions, Half Measures & Hidden Treasures"  
A US coin topic including Patterns and the California Gold Rush

Doug wove a tangled tale about two unique gold \$50 "half unions" now residing in the Smithsonian collection. The only half unions struck at Philadelphia, they were designed by Charles Barber.

This well-documented story originated during the California gold rush when a huge surge in population of 300,000 people caused a strain on coinage. Fifteen establishments made gold coins until the establishment of a State Assay Office in 1850; most failed by 1851. Moffat & Co remained in business, being awarded a state assay contract in 1850. Augustus Humbert was appointed State Assayer in 1850 and arrived in San Francisco in 1851. A \$50 octagonal "slug" was produced, but most of those were shipped back east; many ended up in European mints to be melted for local coinage. Coins that size had little practical use, and smaller gold and silver denominations were lacking.

The assay office closed 12/14/1853, and the San Francisco branch mint opened 4/15/1854, but it didn't solve the coin shortage right away. It was around that time that there was a proposal for \$100, \$50, and \$25 gold coins (a union, half union, and quarter union). But they weren't designed until twenty-three years later by Charles Barber.

This is where the tale gets much more complicated, with patterns being made clandestinely by the mint, and traded/sold in various manners. For full details, please see the recording of this interesting talk on the Society's Videos webpage.

Member Exhibits:

Stephen talked about "Coins I Published (Papers on) 40 Years Ago". 1- San Francisco Mint restrikes of the 1898 Mexican Peso, struck in 1949-1950. He presented irrefutable evidence that some examples survived. 2- Coinage of the Siege of Landau in the summer of 1713, with gold and silver denominations struck on cut plate sections.

Michael showed a photo of himself and Bill Hyder receiving special Medal Collectors of America medals at the TAMS meeting during the ANA convention in Pittsburg last month. Michel received the Georgia Stamm Chamberlain Award, a bronze medal, for articles he has written. Bill received the Carlson Award, a nickel-plated medal- a lifetime achievement award. Congratulations to both!

Bob showed us his 1974 Customhouse U.S. Customs medal, 34mm silver (300 struck). The minting was listed in mint records that year. He received it at a PCNS drawing! He also showed his 1992 U.S. Mint Bicentennial medal with an unusual antique patina. It was likely a special finish produced only for mint employees, based on the insert in the package.

The general meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM. The next meeting will be September 27, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlie Catlett, Secretary PCNS