

## PCNS Minutes for February 28, 2024

The board meeting for February 28, 2024, was called to order via Zoom at 7:15 PM by President Jason Macario. In attendance were Vice President Bill Hyder, Treasurer Stephen Huston, Secretary Charlie Catlett, past president Dan Hipple, and Governors Bob Somers and Mike McDaniel. Also in attendance was Michael Wehner.

The minutes for the January meeting were approved.

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

Speakers are needed for March and beyond, with Michael volunteering to present in May.

Summer BBQ: we agreed to ask Federico if he would like to host again this year, with one other possible back-up.

Annual Presentation Contest: Mike volunteered to be a judge, one more volunteer is needed.

2024 Papers Contest submissions are due April 24, Jason has arranged the judging.

New Business: none.

Adjournment 7:25 PM.

At 7:30 PM, general meeting #1294 was called to order. Present in addition to the members from the board meeting via Zoom were Charlie Ludvic, Scott Safe, Jeff Pritchard, Doug Ward, Toti Paliza, Herb Miles, Dean Neald, John Duff, Fred Truex, and Federico Castillo.

Speakers are still needed for March 2024 and beyond (except for May)- please let us know if you can give a presentation.

Jason asked for one more volunteer to be a judge for the Presentation Contest, judging eleven presentations from 2023.

Jason also announced that the deadline for our annual Papers Contest is by the end of the April 24 meeting.

The summer BBQ meeting has been finalized: it will be Saturday June 22 at the home of Federico Castillo.

Featured Speaker: John Duff  
"Tokens of the ABW Clubs of Mexicali, BC and Imperial County."

John grew up in El Centro, CA, close to Mexicali. He wrote an article about the ABW Clubs of Mexicali and Tijuana and of a token which came out two years before the ABW syndicate stopped at the end of Prohibition. He has updated information which he shared in his talk.

He began with Carl L. "Carlie" Wittington, the "King of Vice of Bakersfield". Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he had a saloon/bordello "The Owl" in Bakersfield. With the California Temperance movement approaching, a 1912 anti-prostitution law was to come first. Carlie saw the light- so to speak- and a syndicate was formed with Marvin Allen, Frank "Booze" Beyer, and Wittington- the AB&W Syndicate.

A 1911 meeting in Mexicali with Esteban Cantu, later a governor of Baja California, set up a lucrative deal to control red light districts of Mexicali, Tijuana, and one other town. The deal provided Cantu with funding for infrastructure, while The ABW Club (aka The Owl) became a large, organized syndicate eventually run by four "Border Barons" who ran different specific aspects of the business: gambling, prostitution, liquor. John showed photos and various items from The Owl (El Tecolote)- gambling chips, a menu, match book, and of course the token with the image of an owl.

John discussed the expansion of the business into Agua Caliente and the racetrack there in Tijuana. It was considered the Mexican Riviera and was visited by many famous people.

John also presented new information from the granddaughter of Esteban Cantu. There was an Owl Café in El Centro that he finally connected to the business- though it closed in 2010. He showed photos connecting El Centro to the Mexican border town- the business had ties to both sides of the border. The presentation was recorded- please see the recording on the Society's Videos webpage to hear the full story.

#### Member Exhibits:

Stephen showed a newly acquired 1810 Italian 5 Lira coin featuring Napoleon. The crown-sized coin was from the Venice mint.

Michael showed a Conder Token featuring Joseph Priestly, who "discovered" oxygen and had an interesting political career before fleeing to America.

Charlie showed three ancient Greek electrum coin denominations: 1/6, 1/48, and 1/96 staters.

Federico showed us his Mexicali tokens, one from the Chinese-Mexican Mercantile, the other from Mariano Ma. He also had an ABW token and an Anillo restrike of an ABW token.

Bill was at the Santa Rosa Token show, and he got the final Santa Barbara saloon token that was missing from his collection.

PCNS Archives Update: It has been two years since a van full of archives was moved up to Stephen's home in Woodland. Plaques, framed objects, and non-numismatic items are being photographed and will then be auctioned. Miscellaneous non-PCNS numismatic items will also be auctioned- once cataloged. Most of what is in the archives was given to us, though not necessarily directly related to society activity. Paper archives are to be digitized. The organization that takes the hard copy of the paper archives will also be offered dies, medals, etc.- to preferably keep all the items in the same physical archive location. Newman Numismatic Portal has agreed to digitize our papers. Stephen has done a tremendous amount of work on this, thankfully with the help of his wife. The end of his work is in sight.....

The general meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM. The next meeting will be March 27, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlie Catlett, Secretary PCNS