



Bulletin of the
PACIFIC COAST NUMISMATIC SOCIETY
MAY, 2024

1297th Monthly Meeting
Medals of the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute
Michael Wehner

Wednesday, May 22, 2024, 7:30 PM PDT
Online

One by-product of the Industrial Revolution was the formation of Mechanics' Institutes around the English-speaking world. They existed to provide, among other things, libraries and other educational opportunities for the working-class cogs of Industry. Many, including the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute, held annual expositions at which medals were awarded

On May 22, Michael Wehner will tell us about some of these medals. Plan to exhibit your own favorite Exposition tokens, or one of your recent acquisitions. So that everyone may participate, please take pictures of your exhibits to facilitate viewing on Zoom.



APRIL MEETING RECAP

Doug Ward planned a family trip to visit his son in Omaha, Nebraska. By chance he saw an official 1898 Trans-Mississippi International Exposition medal, so-called dollar SH 10-1. He described how the obverse image was obtained from a composite photo of the most beautiful women of the region (determined from various competitions). The reverse was designed by the expo's chief architect, depicting a Native American hunting bison. A date on the reverse of 1848 was for the 50th anniversary of the westward rush for gold.

Doug then went on to describe his search for the origins of the expo, showing maps and photos and determining the exact site where it existed. Nothing remains of the fair today. He did show some bronze and gilt awards medals from the fair. He also found an image of an 1857 Western Exchange bank note with an image very similar to the expo medal- it probably served as the basis for the medal's reverse design. Doug also showed some other so-called dollars from the expo.

The next coincidence with the visit to Omaha was the Durham Museum there, which houses the Byron Reed collection. Byron Reed moved to the area in 1855 and became one of Omaha's most prominent citizens. He collected books, documents, and coins, and he bequeathed his fabulous huge coin collection to the city. The collection includes the 1877 \$50 half union, an 1804 dollar, and a 1792 half dime.

The final coincidence of Doug's Omaha trip was a visit to the Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum nearby. One exhibit there was of the 1922 silver dollar poison pin. It was a Peace Dollar in a bezel that contained a pin coated in curare, offered to pilots before missions and to be used in case of enemy capture. Francis Gary Powers was piloting a U-2 spy plane which was shot down, but because of his beliefs against suicide he threw away the dollar before he landed with his parachute.

You can view Doug's presentation on the [PCNS YouTube channel](#).

IT'S BBQ TIME!

Our 2024 Summer BBQ will take place on **Saturday, June 22** in Berkeley. Cost per person is \$15 payable in advance by PayPal. Deadline for ticket purchases is Friday, June 14. Please visit the [PCNS website](#) to get your tickets today!

PCNS MEETINGS

PCNS meetings take place at 7:30 pm Pacific Time on the fourth Wednesday of most months. Currently, meetings are held online using the Zoom platform, thereby allowing members, presenters, and guests to attend no matter where they are located. Everyone with an interest in numismatics is welcome to attend. A meeting code/invitation link will be emailed to all members separately the day before the meeting; non-members can request a link by emailing webmaster@pcns.org.

Special occasions, such as the annual BBQ, will continue to occur in person.

PCNS CALENDAR FOR 2024

May 22, 2024	Michael Wehner, <i>Medals of the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute</i>
June 22, 2024.....	PCNS Summer BBQ
July 24, 2024	Jeff Pritchard, <i>Mystery of the Maiden of Holland's Freedom Hat</i>
August 28, 2024	<i>Speaker and Topic TBA*</i>

SPEAK UP!

There are always opportunities for **you** to make a presentation. Thanks to Zoom, you don't even need to be in San Francisco. Your topic can even be something about which you have submitted or plan to submit a *Paper*. Please email webmaster@pcns.org to sign up.

APRIL MEMBER EXHIBITS

Charlie C showed a bronze Trans-Mississippi souvenir medal. It is a 24mm medal encased in an ornate bronze laurel wreath with a loop and was probably a less expensive souvenir than the large official medal.

Bill showed us four recent eBay purchases: (1) A Fredericksburg Lodge medal by Isaac Ward; (2) A 1986 medal designed by Marika Somogy for the Society of Medalists, "What is on the Other Side of the Mirror"; and (3) Two galvanos: one by Davison & Sons in Philadelphia and one by Chester Beach for the Hudson Fulton Celebration in New York, with the corresponding medals made from the galvanos.

Mike M showed us his Mexican Revolution finds during a family vacation in Arizona, from a coin dealer in Carefree, Az. They were three different varieties of rare and unusual lead one centavo coins from Estado de Durango, 1915. They did circulate and had nice details for being made of lead. They had come from the collection of Jonathan Bowman.

As a final exhibit, **Bill** pulled up a photo of a Santa Barbara token of his: a French Colonies piece counterstamped as a personal token and made by Jonathan Bowman, the same collector who originally owned Mike's new pieces!

NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

As announced at the April meeting, we have received a new member application from **Devin Jennings** of Martinez, CA. Per PCNS bylaws, Devin will become an Active Member at the **May 22** meeting.

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