

PCNS Minutes for May 22, 2024

The board meeting for May 22, 2024, was called to order via Zoom at 7:16PM by President Jason Macario. In attendance were Vice President Bill Hyder, Treasurer Stephen Huston, Secretary Charlie Catlett, Governors Bob Somers, Ed Treuting, and Mike McDaniel, and past president Dan Hipple.

The minutes for the April meeting were approved.

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

The summer BBQ will be Saturday, June 22 in Berkeley. The cost is \$15. Ticket purchase information from our website was sent in May and will be re-sent as a reminder.

We need speakers for August and thereafter.

New business: none.

Adjournment 7:26 PM.

At 7:35 PM, general meeting #1297 was called to order. Present in addition to the members from the board meeting via Zoom were Charlie Ludvic, Doug Ward, Herb Miles, Greg Burns, Paul Turner, Scott Safe, Jeff Pritchard, John Duff, Michael Wehner, Federico Castillo, and Toti Paliza.

The summer BBQ meeting has been finalized: it will be Saturday June 22 in Berkeley, with a cost of \$15. Ticket purchase information from our website was sent in May and will be re-sent as a reminder.

Speakers are still needed for August through December.

Devin Jennings of Martinez, CA officially became a member as of this meeting.

"Medals of the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute"
By Michael Wehner

Michael has been collecting medals of the Mechanics' Institute for a long time. The PCNS has held some meetings at the Mechanics' Institute building in San Francisco, and Michael discussed the origins of the Institute and the medals it produced.

Mechanics' Institutes first appeared in Great Britain and then developed in the U.S. They were broadly aimed at helping people learn skills but also offered cultural activities- a library, a place to play board games, and more. They were open to all people regardless of race, etc.- (supposedly). The San Francisco Mechanics' Institute was formed in 1854, as unskilled miners were "coming out of the woods". As easy pickings from early in the gold rush were gone, miners returned to civilization in San Francisco where business still mostly revolved around selling gold. The institute's intent was to transform those workers with skills needed for a developing city.

The San Francisco Mechanics' Institute sponsored thirty-one fairs from 1857 to 1899 for fundraising purposes and to show off San Francisco. Michael described the progression of the various fair building designs, all meant as temporary buildings. He also talked about the four types of medals produced and their dates and designs, with mintage numbers when available. In 1913 local businessmen invested to revive the fair but didn't last beyond that one attempt.

There was lively discussion after the presentation. To view his presentation and all the medals he discussed, please see the recording which will be available for viewing on the Society's Videos webpage.

Member Exhibits

Bill H started the exhibits with his 1871 Mechanics' Institute medal in its original box

Stephen showed us the first expo medal he owned, an 1878 Paris Expo medal by Oudine, known for his medals and also his French coin design. Stephen talked about the Paris Expo, and how he learned more about the medal in a day preparing for this talk than he had known in the decades he owned it!

Doug showed a recent purchase from Heritage of an 1863 Civil War Token with a beehive/Industry on the obverse, Not One Cent on the reverse.

Federico showed a Golden Gate International Exposition medal from the Peruvian Pavilion (39mm) that recently arrived. He ordered it from Colombia, but it took two months to arrive from South America. He purchased it for a very reasonable price- well worth the wait.

Michael W mentioned his talk on Piccolomini which he presented at a PCNS meeting at the Mechanics' Institute Building in San Francisco. His article on the subject has now been published. He showed a square token from Terrace Garden, a 1904 establishment, good for a domestic beer. It is a maverick token, likely found in a dumpster after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. It is possible to date the apparently fire-damaged token by the manufacturer's name on the token (which was changed after 1906 to a different engraving).

The general meeting adjourned at 8:53PM. The next meeting will be the BBQ on June 22, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlie Catlett, Secretary PCNS