

ANA OFFICIALLY DISCONTINUES AUTHENTICATION SERVICE

The American Numismatic Association Authentication Bureau (ANAAB) is no longer accepting submissions for authentication.

The American Numismatic Association Board of Governors voted at a meeting in New York City to discontinue ANAAB after reviewing a report that suggested the cost of employing a full-time authenticator outweighed the benefits to the membership. All recent submissions have been returned.

"After a careful examination of ANA's authentication services and recognizing the declining demand for them over the years, the Board had to make a fiscal decision," says Lawrence J. Lee, ANA Museum curator who oversaw the ANA Authentication Bureau (ANAAB) during the past year. "The ANA began authenticating coins 30 years ago as a way to reduce counterfeiting of collector coins. We were very successful in that area. In addition, the ANA has offered classes in counterfeit detection over the years, and scores of people have taken them and are doing well to preserve the integrity of the hobby.

"However, most of the coin-grading firms now are offering authentication services to collectors."

The ANA first offered coin authentication in 1972. Coin grading was added six years later, and both services were offered until July 31, 1990, when the Association sold its grading service to Amos Press Inc., publisher of Coin World. The following October, ANAAB began operations, providing reference attributions, if available, and diagnostic reports of any coin, token, medal or primitive money in any condition determined to be counterfeit.

Lee noted that support both for and against retaining the authentication service was strong from the ANA Museum Committee. However, the number of submissions did not generate the necessary revenue. According to the report provided the Board of Governors, the ANA would have to budget between \$150,000 and \$200,000 a year for two full-time authenticators, at least four authentication and grading seminars, and other services needed to expand ANAAB's role and increase submissions.

"We even looked into the possibility of utilizing volunteers to authenticate material, but decided such a program was not feasible." Lee says. "Even though the ANA has discontinued its authentication service, this does not mean we will not be looking at material from time to time. The ANA remains committed to eliminating counterfeits from the numismatic field, and we will continue to offer Counterfeit Coin Bulletin, published in conjunction with the International Association of Professional Numismatists (IAPN)."

Over the next year, the ANA will be re-evaluating its ability to provide authentication services and may, after further study, reinstate ANAAB or another authentication program.

For more information about Counterfeit Coin Bulletin or other services offered by the ANA, contact the American Numismatic Association, 818 N. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, CO

80903-3279; telephone 719/632-2646; fax 719/634-4085; E-mail ana@money.org; or visit the ANA web site at www.money.org.

The American Numismatic Association is a congressionally chartered nonprofit educational organization dedicated to encouraging people to study and collect money and related items. The ANA helps its 28,000 members and the public discover and explore the world of money through its vast array of education and outreach programs, as well as its museum, library, publications, conventions and seminars. For more information, call 719-632-2646 or go to www.money.org.