

Numismatic Thanksgiving

*Hobbyists appreciate the many resources
that make collecting more accessible.*

THANKSGIVING always has been my favorite holiday. It's a time to celebrate the things that enrich our lives: family and friends, health and happiness. It's also a good occasion to think about our hobby, and what we have to be thankful for in numismatics. There's really never been a better time to be a numismatist, and here are some of the reasons why.

Monetary variety. As a collector, I glance at every coin that comes my way. Sometimes this confuses cashiers, who think I believe I've been shortchanged. Of course, my motivation is not mathematics, but numismatics, because today's circulating coinage is more varied than ever.

The pace of change in our hobby has quickened dramatically: five state quarters are released annually, recent Jefferson nickels bear multiple obverses and reverses, and the Sacagawea dollar's design and composition are unprecedented. Paper money also has been modified with dramatic and colorful alterations. This circulating cornucopia is not only an outstanding opportunity to collect from circulation, but also a tremendous boost to the hobby and a great way to introduce others (including those inquiring cashiers) to numismatics.

Books. Coin collectors always have had access to high-quality numismatic literature, but in recent years there's been a prolific outpouring of publications. Today, there are books about most American coin types, as well as various facets of paper money, medals, tokens and world coins, that cover every area of the hobby. Browse a local bookstore or specialized outlet, like the ANA MoneyMarket (www.money.org),

and you're sure to find a general guide or a specific area that interests you.

Every few months, I find myself absorbed in some wonderful, new book. Recent reads include the comprehensive *History of the United States Mint and Its Coinage* by David Lange and an overview of Mexican Revolutionary money, *iViva La Revolución!* by Don Bailey and Joe Flores. The numismatic advice "buy the book before the coin" is



▲ Collectors have a wealth of reasons to be grateful.

easier to follow and more rewarding than ever—and my bookshelves are feeling the strain!

Coin shows. Today's coin show calendar is as full as it's ever been. The ANA's National Money Show™ and World's Fair of Money® always are highlights, and other events of various sizes occur regularly across the country. For seeing abundant material in a concentrated area, there's nothing like a coin show. When I enter, I'm excited about the possibilities before me, and I always leave with new treasures and

fond memories of my experiences acquiring them. You can find listings of show dates and locations in this and other hobby publications, on the ANA website, or via an Internet search of "coin shows."

The Internet. It's amazing to consider the changes wrought by the Internet. A decade ago, "surfing" was something to do at the beach, and "@" was just a little-used symbol on the keyboard. More important, obtaining information was far slower and far more passive than it is today. The era of instant information has benefited numismatics tremendously, with countless webpages by individuals, clubs and dealers presenting interesting and accessible knowledge. Start at a site like www.coinsite.com, or explore the Internet using your favorite search engine. Whatever path you take, you're sure to find many pages and links of interest.

E-mail. The ability to "talk" with others electronically has greatly expanded personal communication. I've recently used e-mail to arrange purchases from dealers on four continents, solicit advice about coin shops in another country, and discuss coinage history with another collector. These exchanges may have been feasible without e-mail, but I doubt it. Using today's technology, collectors have amazing and unprecedented possibilities for numismatic commerce and communication.

In every area of the hobby, whether acquiring or studying coins, today's hobbyists are fortunate to have resources and opportunities unlike those of any previous era. It's a great time to be a numismatist; for that, and for many other reasons, I am truly thankful.

sanders@money.org