



IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 12, 2005

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Collectors Rush to San Francisco for World's Fair of Money

114th Anniversary Convention lures hobbyists to the home of
California gold.

[SAN FRANCISCO CA] On July 27-31, San Francisco opened its golden gates to the American Numismatic Association (ANA) and its 2005 World's Fair of Money®. The 114th Anniversary Convention of the national hobby organization attracted nearly 15,000 people to Moscone West Convention Center, ensuring the success of the ANA's first gathering in the "City by the Bay" since 1949. The show's economic impact on area was substantial, with local hotels, restaurants and merchants realizing millions of dollars in revenue.

The convention was hosted by the San Jose Coin Club, San Francisco Coin Club, Liberty Coin Club and Pacific Coast Numismatic Society. Legend Numismatics, Richard Nachbar Rare Coins and Numismatic Guaranty Corporation supported the event as title sponsors, with 19 firms serving as secondary sponsors: American Heritage Minting, American Numismatic Rarities, Angel Dee's, Delaware Valley Rare Coin Company, eBay®, Heritage Galleries & Auctioneers, Kagin's, Kevin Lipton Rare Coins, Lee Minshull Rare Coins, National Gold Exchange, Professional Numismatists Guild, Rare Coin Wholesalers, Spectrum Numismatics, Superior Galleries, J.J. Teaparty, Anthony Terranova, Scott Travers Rare Coin Galleries, U.S. Coins and Fred Weinberg & Company. Underwriting the banquet and related special events were Delaware Valley Rare Coin Company, Mid-

American Rare Coin Gallery, California Coin and Bullion Merchants Association, and the French Mint.

On hand for the opening ceremonies on Wednesday, July 27, were U.S. Treasurer Anna Escobedo Cabral, Jim Lazarus (representing California Senator Diane Feinstein), host club officials, world mint representatives, and ANA officers and staff.

The public was drawn by the show's non-competitive displays of legendary coins and documents, including

- "Legends of the Granite Lady: The Second San Francisco Mint and the Spectacular Coins of 1870," a joint exhibit by Legend Numismatics and the ANA Money Museum that featured the unique 1870-S \$3 gold piece from the Bass Collection, the 1870-S half dime from the Law Collection and the finest known 1870-S dollar from the James Stack/Legend Collection.
- A unique 1787 Brasher doubloon with Ephraim Brasher's "EB" punchmark on the eagle's breast—the first gold coin struck in the United States—owned by Steven L. Contursi and Donald Kagin.
- An exhibit of Early Americana presented by Monaco Financial and Brian Hendelson, with a July 17, 1776, broadside print of the Declaration of Independence; an early printing of the U.S. Constitution; seven spoons made by Paul Revere; a 1776 Continental dollar in pewter; a 1793 Wreath cent; a 1795 "Large Eagle" \$5 gold piece; and an 1800 \$10 gold piece.
- The Neil/Carter/Contursi silver-plug 1794 dollar, believed by some to be the first dollar struck by the United States Mint.

In addition, the U.S. Mint exhibited a collection of unique, historical artifacts, many on public display for the first time. Among these were vintage photographs documenting the aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, and early annual reports, ledgers and die books. A second display chronicled the history of the Jefferson nickel, complete with original correspondence, photos and sketches. The U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing demonstrated its antique "spider press" and showcased its new \$50 bill and popular "Billion Dollar Display," with Series 1934 \$100,000 notes and 12-note face plates for Series 1934 \$500 and \$10,000 currency.

Treasurer Cabral held an open forum on Wednesday, July 27, in which she discussed Treasury Department affairs and responded to questions. The United States Mint held a press conference on Thursday, July 28, led by Associate Director for Sales and Marketing Gloria Eskridge and Mint Engraver John Mercanti. The two focused on

the impending return of Monticello to the reverse of the Jefferson nickel and the Mint's efforts to reproduce the image as it was intended by designer Felix Schlag.

At other press briefings, representatives from the mints of France, Japan and Singapore talked about their products, including the soon-to-be-released French gold and silver coins observing the 2006 tercentenary of Benjamin Franklin's birth. (The new issues are particularly noteworthy because of ANA Governor M. Remy Bourne's personal involvement in the design selection.) On behalf of the British Royal Mint, Deputy Master Gerald Sheehan and Director of Collector Coin Alan Wallace presented one of 1,000 three-piece commemorative sets (comprised of a Seated Britannia 50-pence coin, a California state quarter and a medal specially struck for the show by the mint) to ANA President Gary E. Lewis.

Mitch Sanders, chairman of the U.S. Mint's Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee, held an open meeting in which committee members reviewed designs of upcoming coinage. At the completion of business, the floor was opened to questions from the audience.

The official ANA auction, conducted by Heritage Numismatic Auctions and offering several thousand lots of high-quality material, realized more than \$20 million. The jewel of the sale was the very first six-piece commemorative gold coin and medal set made for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, which brought \$368,000 (including buyer's fees).

On Wednesday evening, July 27, bourse dealers enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and refreshments courtesy of eBay®, the popular online auction service. Coinstar®, manufacturer of self-service machines that turn loose change into hard cash, also had a strong presence at the show. The firm provided free coin-counting for registrants on Saturday, July 30, redeeming almost \$10,000.

During the show, ANA officials and organizers of the Las Vegas Coin, Stamp and Collectibles Show announced the creation of the ANA Coin, Stamp and Collectibles Show, with the first to be held October 28-30 at Las Vegas' Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino Convention Center. Sponsored by Numismatic Guaranty Corporation, the semi-annual event will feature educational exhibits and programs, on-site coin grading, and auctions by Teletrade and Bowers and Merena.

The educational highlight of the week was the inaugural symposium of the Maynard Sundman/Littleton Coin Company Lecture Series on Thursday, July 28. Keynote speaker Q. David Bowers discussed "Great Collectors and Their Collections," and presenters Erik J. Heikkinen, Peter Huntoon, Douglas Mudd, Chris Pilliod, P. Scott Rubin and Wendell Wolka explored various aspects of America's colorful numismatic history. The ANA plans to publish the lectures at a future date.

In addition, the ANA's Numismatic Outreach Department presented more than 50 hours of free programming, sponsored by Heritage Numismatic Galleries and Auctions. Hundreds of young visitors played the popular "Treasure Trivia Game," sponsored by National Gold Exchange. Participants uncovered answers to numismatic questions at various bourse tables and earned numismatic treasures. The winner of the grand prize in the Treasure Trivia drawing, a Spanish silver pillar dollar, was Xander Escobar of Walnut Creek, California.

More than 100 people took advantage of the Association's "Coin Collecting Basics" program, which introduced beginners to the various aspects of coin collecting, from state quarters and paper money to ancient and world coins. On Saturday, July 30, Heritage Numismatic Galleries and Auctioneers sponsored the Young Numismatist (YN) Awards Breakfast, as well as the YN auction on Sunday. Also on Saturday, Boy and Girl Scouts participated in a coin-collecting badge workshop co-sponsored by Kevin Lipton Rare Coins and J.J. Teaparty.

The ANA presented 56 competitive exhibit awards at the show. Fifty-five exhibitors of all ages and experience levels mounted 82 exhibits, while 11 non-competitive exhibitors were responsible for 13 displays.

Earning the Howland Wood Memorial Award for Best-in-Show Exhibit was Steven J. D'Ippolito for "The 'Little Gray Coins': Russia's Experiment with Circulating Platinum Coinage, 1828-1845." First runner-up was Roland W. Finner for "The 1925 Norse-American Centennial Medals," and second runner-up was Steve Cox for "The History of the Japanese Yen."

Michael Wehner won the Thos. H. Law Award for First-Time Exhibitors for his exhibit "A Complete Collection of Pacific Coast Numismatic Society Exonumia." The Rodger E. Hershey Memorial People's Choice Exhibit Award, selected by those attending the show,

was given to William H. Cowburn Jr. for "A Half Dollar for the President."

The Derek Pobjoy Award for Best Exhibit of Modern World Commemorative Coins was presented to Gerald L. Kochel for "A Study of the Kentucky Cent and the First Fifteen Statehood Quarters." Sixteen-year-old Max Spiegel won the Charles H. Wolfe Sr. Memorial Award for YN Best-in-Show Exhibit for "Coins of Colonial New York, 1700-1750."

Honored at the Membership Reception on Friday, July 29, was Numismatist of the Year Adna G. Wilde Jr. Currently serving the Association as treasurer and parliamentarian, Wilde is an ANA past president and former executive vice president. At the Saturday evening banquet, ANA Chief Judge Joseph E. Boling received the Association's highest honor, the Farran Zerbe Memorial Award for Distinguished Service, while author and ANA Past President Q. David Bowers and ANA National Volunteer Paul Whitnah were presented the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Exemplary Service Awards were bestowed on Chester L. Krause, ANA patron and pioneer in numismatic publishing; and Federal Express and Zone Security Manager Stan Macchione (Southwest Region). Garrett Burke, designer of the California quarter and the official medal for the ANA's San Francisco convention, earned the Numismatic Art Award for Excellence in Medallion Sculpture, and collector and ANA patron J. Roy Pennell Jr. was recognized for his 60 years of continuous ANA membership.

For the first time in many years, banquet attendees—more than 380 in all—were captured in a group photograph. Full-color images can be purchased for \$19.95 postpaid from the ANA MoneyMarket Store, phone 719-482-9870 or e-mail enterprise@money.org.

To learn about the ANA's upcoming Las Vegas shows and 2006 conventions in Atlanta and Denver, contact ANA Meeting Services Director Brenda Bishop at 719-482-9868, or visit www.money.org (click on "Numismatic Events").