

Welcome to the C.N.A. E-Bulletin Vol. 3, No. 24 – April 13, 2007

An electronic publication of the Canadian Numismatic Association
Copyright © 2007, the Canadian Numismatic Association

INTRODUCTION

I wonder what numismatic items exist that would cause thousands of people to storm a coin show, like in the following report?

A crowd of thousands waiting to buy purportedly magical Jatukam Ramathep amulets erupted into a stampede that killed one woman and injured dozens, police said.

More than 10,000 people had camped overnight by a school in Nakhom Si Thammarat province in Thailand to buy the amulets. The victim was trampled when the crowd rushed the school gates.

Maybe if we lay in some additional security at the 2007 C.N.A. Convention, we can promote the fact that one of the dealers has a magical amulet for sale.

WE HAVE MAIL

From Nick Cowan: (Re last Tuesday's special C.N.A. E-Bulletin re Lottery Scams) "How comforting it must be to Conrad Black, that U.S. District Court Judge Amy St. Eve has rendered decisions regarding lottery scams and has been able to freeze funds where required. Maybe his legal team could have picked a different Judge. Not that I am offering any opinions as to the guilt or innocence of Mr. Black, I just find it a little humorous." – Maybe Black's legal team figured that Judge St. Eve has reached her quota for this year of freezing funds. Just the opposite of the cops that issue parking tickets at month end to achieve the quota that everyone denies they are judged by.

From Doug Andrews: "In last weeks C.N.A. E-Bulletin, John said in his introduction: "Now, what I can't figure out, without increased education, definitely without increased salary and with very limited increased experience, how come I am so lucky as to be blessed with a messy office?" Doug responds: Because you're an organized 'nu-mess-matist.' Neat." – I think that my wife would question your use of the word "organized."

From Tony Hine: "Last week slabbed slipped through as slabed. Don't funeral parlours slab 'em? You stab 'em, We slab 'em." - My proofreader is not a numismatist and wouldn't know slabbed from slabed if I slapped her.

From Nick Cowan: "Methinks that you are not being equitable to all the "Scammers" out there. Have you not noticed a proliferation of UK based Lottery scams as of late. They probably have not reached the proportions that other countries are experiencing, but they are just persuasive and ever increasing. Having said all that, I make my point by noting yet another one where OUR name was picked from only 23,000 email addresses. I will explain the OUR in a minute. This time, we have won a paltry 1,000,000 Pounds Sterling. This is not a one shot deal, no sir. This is an annual payment for life. Now comes the OUR part. I host the North York Coin Club e-mail address, and it was the NYCC who received this e-mail. Therefore, at the next meeting, I will have to ask all members what do they want to do. This is probably better anyway, this way it takes the pressure off me to handle all these funds. I retired from the corporate world a few years ago, believing that I would not have to worry about these large financial decisions on a daily basis anymore. Wrong again. Maybe the NYCC could build or even buy, mortgage free, a

new club building, lease out space to the CNA, then you could clean up your basement, making Monina much happier and you would not have to keep borrowing my spare 'green bins' to clear out all your outdated materials. What a deal for both of us. All this for just responding to an e-mail. However, I think we should pass. With all the other lotteries, 'new' found Nigerian banker friends who only want my help, Chinese offers of being their corporate intermediary in the processing of cheques and other instruments, I really don't have time anymore." - Well, I don't respond to the European lotteries because generally the Nigerians are much more generous. Although the Canadians have learned a lot from the Nigerians, we still have to increase the amounts we are offering. I think I'll just sit back and wait until the amounts from my fellow Canadians increases. Then I might just be able to walk down the street to pick up my millions in person, in winnings in a draw that I didn't even have to enter. Hey, Nick, don't you live down the street from me? Maybe you can respond and when you receive the millions, I can indeed "walk down the street" to pick it up!

HISTORY OF WOODEN COINS IN CANADA

Wood you believe that Canada used wooden money once? The following appears at The Togue:

The world often makes fun of Canadian money, and why not, the colorful currency is reminiscent of the silly paper tender associated with a popular board game. But Canada's funny money wasn't always such. Interestingly enough, before Canada established a negotiable printed tender, they used wooden money to assist trade in their fledgling Northern nation.

Early Canadian traders, burdened with cumbersome animal pelts, horns, and ivories, were unable to trade efficiently because their sleds, canoes, and portage carts were always weighed down with their heavy trade items. They needed a monetary solution that would make their trekking slightly less harsh.

The first wooden coins were bulky and awkward, up to 12-inches thick and seven feet in diameter, made from the sawed cross-sections of maple trees, and etched with rough caricatures of the King of England on one side and a beaver on the other. These crude national symbols of money were bulky, but still much lighter than a rack of damp bearskins.

Unfortunately, the first generation of wooden coins was easy to counterfeit. Bandits, thieves, and crooked lumberjacks could reproduce the money using common saws, crude wood burning irons, and simple chiseling tools. In fact, several counterfeit rings were broken up when several illicit moneymaking sawmills were discovered outside Fort Langley in 1849. The term "counterfeit ring" referred to the altering of rings in the layers of the wood.

Next came the hand-carved tokens, which were used until the mid 1800s. These were often made of cedar, lighter than the maple slabs, and more manageable for busy fur traders on the go. Denominations were made in five and ten cent amounts, which was, like now, a lot of money back then.

These coins were discontinued as they had a tendency to wear out, or they would be used inappropriately in salmon smoking processes. For two years, Members of The First Nations Bank refused to accept the cedar money, and tried to persuade government that strands of beads would be a more efficient form of legal tender.

Later on came the "hard" currency, wooden coins made of ash, oak, and petrified fir. These were the first coins to be embossed, using iron presses and coated with a basic lacquer, the

same finish French Canadians often used as a maple syrup substitute. When traders purchased items at dry goods stores, the clerk would always ask "ash or check?" (The word "cash" actually comes from the Algonquin term "ka'ash" meaning chips of wood.)

Canada didn't introduce metal coins until 1867, after the Canadian Coin Treasury burned down to the ground. The story goes that a Canadian treasury employee accidentally started the blaze by rubbing two nickels together, destroying the entire wooden reserve. The treasury was later nicknamed "The Mint" because of the sweet menthol smoke that permeated the air during the fire.

After that incident, government officials decided it would be more prudent to develop metal coins, and chose copper, nickel, and silver, because they feared if the coins were made of aluminum, they could still melt in catastrophic Mint fires.

Nowadays, the Canadian Mint will still produce commemorative wooden coins, but more often than not, they are mistaken for drink coasters and carpet protectors.

Now isn't that a much more interesting history than what you normally read about Canada's early currency? Too bad it was published on April 1. If you want to see a couple of the illustrations that accompanied this spoof, go to The Toque's Website at www.thetoque.com:80/canadiana/a_history_of_wooden_coins_in_canada_20070407.

The Toque claims to be the world leader in Canadian Humour, Parody, and Satire.

DARWIN AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Peter Becker made us aware of the most recent list of Darwin Award recipients. Although they have nothing whatsoever to do with numismatics, you know by now that I like to hear about stupid criminals or ordinary folks that are more stupid than I am.

The Darwins are awarded every year to the persons who died in the most stupid manner, thereby removing themselves from the gene pool. This year's nominees are:

Nominee No. 1: [San Jose Mercury News]: An unidentified man, using a shotgun like a club to break a former girlfriend's windshield, accidentally shot himself to death when the gun discharged, blowing a hole in his gut.

Nominee No. 2: [Kalamazoo Gazette]: James Burns, 34, (a mechanic) of Alamo, MI, was killed in March as he was trying to repair what police describe as a "farm-type truck." Burns got a friend to drive the truck on a highway while Burns hung underneath so that he could ascertain the source of a troubling noise. Burns' clothes caught on something, however, and the other man found Burns "wrapped in the drive shaft!"

Nominee No. 3: [Hickory Daily Record]: Ken Charles Barger, 47, accidentally shot himself to death in December in Newton, NC. Awakening to the sound of a ringing telephone beside his bed, he reached for the phone but grabbed instead a Smith & Wesson 38 Special, which discharged when he drew it to his ear.

Nominee No. 4: [UPI, Toronto]: Police said a lawyer demonstrating the safety of windows in a downtown Toronto skyscraper crashed through a pane with his shoulder and plunged 24 floors to his death. A police spokesman said Garry Hoy, 39, fell into the courtyard of the Toronto Dominion Bank Tower early Friday evening as he was explaining the strength of the building's windows to visiting law students. Hoy previously has conducted demonstrations of window

strength according to police reports. Peter Lawson, managing partner of the firm Holden Day Wilson, told the Toronto Sun newspaper that Hoy was "one of the best and brightest" members of the 200-man association.

Nominee No. 5: [Bloomberg News Service]: A terrible diet and a room with no ventilation are being blamed for the death of a man who was killed by his own gas emissions. There was no mark on his body, and an autopsy showed large amounts of methane gas in his system. His diet had consisted primarily of beans and cabbage (and a couple of other things). It was just the right combination of foods. It appears that the man died in his sleep from breathing the poisonous cloud that was hanging over his bed. Had he been outside or had his windows been opened, it wouldn't have been fatal. But the man was shut up in his nearly-airtight bedroom. According to the article, "He was a big man with a huge capacity for creating "this deadly gas." Three of the rescuers got sick, and one was hospitalized.

Nominee No. 6: [The News of the Weird]: Michael Anderson Godwin made News of the Weird posthumously. He had spent several years awaiting South Carolina 's electric chair on a murder conviction before having his sentence reduced to life in prison. While sitting on a metal toilet in his cell attempting to fix his small TV set, he bit into a wire and was electrocuted.

Nominee No. 7: [The Indianapolis Star]: A cigarette lighter may have triggered a fatal explosion in Dunkirk, IN. A Jay County man, using a cigarette lighter to check the barrel of a muzzle loader, was killed Monday night when the weapon discharged in his face, sheriff's investigators said. Gregory David Pryor, 19, died in his parents' rural Dunkirk home at about 11:30 PM. Investigators said Pryor was cleaning a 54-caliber muzzle-loader that had not been firing properly. He was using the lighter to look into the barrel when the gunpowder ignited.

AND THE WINNER [Arkansas Democrat Gazette]: Two local men were injured when their pickup truck left the road and struck a tree near Cotton Patch on State Highway 38 early Monday. Woodruff County deputy Dovey Snyder reported the accident shortly after midnight Monday. Thurston Poole, 33, of Des Arc, and Billy Ray Wallis, 38, of Little Rock, were returning to Des Arc after a frog gigging trip. On an overcast Sunday night, Poole 's pickup truck headlights malfunctioned. The two men concluded that the headlight fuse on the older-model truck had burned out. As a replacement fuse was not available, Wallis noticed that the .22 caliber bullet from his pistol fit perfectly into the fuse box next to the steering-wheel column. Upon inserting the bullet the headlights again began to operate properly, and the two men proceeded on eastbound toward the White River Bridge. After traveling approximately 20 miles, and just before crossing the river, the bullet apparently overheated, discharged, and struck Poole in the testicles. The vehicle swerved sharply right, exiting the pavement, and striking a tree. Poole suffered only minor cuts and abrasions from the accident, but will require extensive surgery the bullet caused, to repair the damage to him (ouch!), which will never operate as intended. Wallis sustained a broken clavicle and was treated and released. "Thank goodness we weren't on that bridge when Thurston shot off certain parts of his body or we might both be dead," stated Wallis. Snyder stated: "I've been a trooper for 10 years in this part of the world, but this is a first for me. I can't believe that those two would admit how this accident happened." Upon being notified of the wreck, Lavinia (Poole's wife) asked how many frogs the boys had caught and did anyone get them from the truck???

Though Poole and Wallis did not die as a result of their misadventure as normally required by Darwin Award Official Rules, it can be argued that Poole DID, in fact, effectively remove himself from the gene pool due to the freak accident in losing his reproductive system.

(I would like to point out that these all involved men, not women –C.N.A. E-Bulletin Proofreader.)

NEARLY 400 CHARGES LAID IN FAKE CHARITY SCAM

A Toronto man faces 378 charges after hundreds of people were defrauded by a door-to-door canvasser raising money for a fake charity, Violence Against Kids, police say. George Grdich, 40, faces fraud and related charges.

What I can't figure out is how the police managed to find 378 people willing to admit that they got scammed. That's a lot of legwork for the cops

CANADA'S MOST WANTED

Here is more proof that you don't have to deal with Nigerians in check cashing frauds. Also more proof that we resourceful Canadians are second only to the Nigerians.

A new Rogers Cable television show is being credited with the arrest of a 30-year old Ajax man wanted for fraud in Ontario and Quebec. The man turned himself in to police last week after being featured in a Feb. 18 episode of the show, "GTA's Most Wanted." GTA stands for Greater Toronto Area.

The show appeals to the public to solve unsolved cases in Toronto, Peel, York and Durham regions of Ontario. Police allege the man convinced people to cash fraudulent cheques and give him back some cash. He is also suspected in counterfeit and stolen check incidents in Ajax last year.

Michael Salwonchuk, also known as Michael Perry, faces two counts of fraud under \$2,000 and other charges.

COINSTAR CHANGE COUNTING MACHINES

A while ago, the Royal Canadian Mint partnered with Coinstar to encourage Canadians to cash in their loose change. I recently contacted Alex Reeves, Manager of Communications at the Mint, asking him how successful the program has been in getting people to take their change out of drawers and jars and take them to a Coinstar Centre? Here is his response:

"Recycling coins is a cost effective and efficient way for the Mint to provide coins to the marketplace. When Canadians turn in the coins they have been saving, not only do they get cash back, they also help the Mint put these coins back into circulation. Coinstar machines are easy to use...no sorting, counting, no rolling. There are currently over 200 Coinstar Centres across Ontario with some 15 kiosks in the Ottawa region and more than 135 in the Greater Toronto Area. There is a convenience fee paid by the consumer to cover the costs associated with processing the coin and operating the service. The host retailer also receives a portion of the fee. The Mint rewraps and recycles these coins. It is more cost effective for the Mint to recycle coins than it is to produce new ones."

Coinstar has been in operation in the U.S. since 1992, in Canada since 1998. Since that time, they have processed over \$13 billion in change. Their surveys show that on average, a U.S. family has more than \$99 in loose change hanging around the house. Coinstar offers the convenience of sorting, counting and rolling the coins for busy people...and you do not have to carry them to the bank.

I found out recently that it was time to do something with my change when the bottom of the drawer of my nightstand dropped out from the weight of the cents I threw in every evening...and I have the new reinforcing nails to prove it! As a collector, however, I did my own counting because I wanted to examine each coin before it got wrapped.

Coinstar recently announced that there is no charge if, instead of cash payout, you obtain gift cards or e-Certificates that are good at Starbucks, Amazon, iTunes, Circuit City, Old Navy, AMC, Borders, Pier 1 and others. This is bound to make the service even more popular.

Since the free gift card exchange program is not mentioned on their Canadian web pages, I contacted Marcie Maule at Coinstar's headquarters in Bellevue, WA. She confirmed that the free gift card exchange program is only available in the U.S. at this time. "No plans are in the works at this time to introduce it in Canada," I was told by her, "but there is always a possibility that it will happen sometime in the future."

For full details, go to www.coinstar.com. If you wish to locate machines in Canada, go to www.coinstarinc.ca

HBC \$1 MILLION NOTE

It's a good thing that the \$1 million note in a full-page advertisement in the Toronto Star that Tony Hine sent me was marked "Advertisement – Not Legal Tender" or I might have cut it out and tried to deposit it in the bank, just like I might do once I acquire some of those \$1 million dollar coins from the Royal Canadian Mint. The difference is that the paper the ad appeared in cost Tony 75 cents, a bit less than the gold coin will set me back if and when it is issued.

CLEANING COINS

When Tony Hine sent me the sheet containing the above, I noticed that there was another article on the same page entitled "Treating scuffs" and I wonder if Tony wanted me to publish that column since it makes recommendations similar to what we published a number of bulletins ago. We identified a website that had people recommending that you clean your numismatic material with steel wool, steel brush and other horrible ways. One of the recommendations was to use a pencil eraser on your coins. And it wasn't even April 1!

The column forwarded by Tony suggests that you can eliminate scuffs on leather furniture by rubbing gently with a pencil eraser. If that works on both coins and leather, why not also the following: "Minimize scuffs on your wooden furniture by rubbing the damaged spot with the meat of a walnut or pecan. The oil in the nut will make marks less visible." Hey isn't that what we want, to make marks less visible?

Don't blame me if you actually try it and find out the hard way it doesn't work. I know that the steel wool will indeed rub off any grime you find on your coins, and the pencil eraser also gets rid of that nasty writing that bank tellers are known to scribble on notes, but I make no claim on the nuts.

Golly, I could have used that on April 1!

ANA NEWS

Deadline Extended: Andy Dickes of the ANA advises us that the deadline for grading service proposals has been extended to April 26 for proposals from qualified third party grading services to serve as the ANA's "Grading Service of Choice" due on April 13 but due to a technical

problem in delivery of the requests to grading services. If you are a recognized grading service, go to www.money.org for full details.

ANA extends new membership offer: Gail Baker has made us aware that the successful two-years-for-the-price-of-one membership recruitment program is being extended through mid-August. New ANA members save \$36 (US) on their initial dues in the program funded by Rare Coin Wholesalers of Dana Point, California. The company is paying the second year of dues when new members apply for a one year ANA membership. More than 800 people have taken advantage of these savings to become new members of the ANA since the program was launched last May, and each one received their second year of membership free through this recruitment program. Steven L. Contursi, President of Rare Coin Wholesalers, told the ANA Board of Governors he happily will extend the funding of the program. This program is for people who have not been ANA members. It is not available for renewing or lapsed members of the ANA. To obtain the free second year of ANA membership, simply download a special ANA membership application form available either from the ANA web site at www.money.org or the Rare Coin Wholesalers web site at www.RCW1.com.

Collections Manager Position Available: When I first read that the ANA is looking for someone to fill its Collections Manager position, we thought they wanted someone in the credit & collection department. But the available position sounds a lot more exciting. They are seeking a candidate with "a familiarity of museum operations, including accessioning and cataloging procedures and artifact care" whose regular duties include "administering the museum's donation and loan programs, conducting regular inventories, responding to inquiries concerning the museum's collection, assisting in all aspects of museum exhibition, writing text for departmental publications" and much more. For full details, go to www.money.org, select "ANA Job Board" from the "Featured Links" menu, then select "Job Seekers."

C.N.A. MEMBERSHIP

Just another reminder that Paul Johnson, C.N.A. Executive Secretary, is waiting to hear from. You can either go to www.canadian-numismatic.org and find out about the benefits of membership, or you can drop him a note at cnainfo@rogers.com for a sample Journal.

CONCLUSION

The most recent issue of Timber Talk, official publication of the Canadian Association of Wooden Money Collectors (CAWMC), published the names of their original 45 charter members. Taking into account the fact that a number of them have passed away and a number of them are still members, about 50 percent of the original ones alive have dropped out. Considering the age of CAWMC, I bet a plugged wooden nickel, as the expression goes, that most numismatic organizations would love to have that kind of retention. We would love to hear from you about your club's retention rate since its founding.

John Regitko
Your C.N.A. E-Bulletin Editor
Canadian Numismatic Association

The Canadian Numismatic Association is a not for profit organization devoted to serving those who enjoy coin collecting/numismatics by promoting fellowship, communication, education and providing advocacy and leadership for the hobby.

If you have a comment to make, or would like to submit an item for publication, email:

cnanews@look.ca

To subscribe to the E-Bulletin email:

cnanews@look.ca

Back-issues of the C.N.A. E-Bulletin are available from the C.N.A. Website at
<http://www.canadian-numismatic.org/ebulletin.php>

If you have questions about our privacy policy, email:

privacyissues@canadiannumismatic.org

To learn about the benefits of membership or to join the C.N.A. visit our website at:

www.canadian-numismatic.org

For a complimentary copy of The CN Journal, email your name and mailing address to:

cnainfo@look.ca

Any submissions, comments or information sent to us will be shared with subscribers unless indicated otherwise. We reserve the right to edit submissions for publication.