

Welcome to the C.N.A. E-Bulletin Vol. 3, No. 25 – April 24, 2007

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INTRODUCTION

The reason you didn't receive a bulletin this past Friday, only the second time one wasn't issued since we started to publish them weekly, is because I was held captive by Tom Rogers (President of the Ontario Numismatic Association) and Ted Leitch (Chairman of the 2007 ONA Convention) and his committee from the host club, the London Numismatic Society. They put on a fantastic show that was run my style: plenty of fun & fellowship, lots of activities for both collectors and spouses, a well-stocked hospitality suite to throw your feet up whenever you wished, the usual friendly group of dealers, and a welcome committee that greeted you as soon as you entered the convention foyer.

Security was excellent, provided by the good professionals at Frontier Security. Not only do they know how to do their job, they are as friendly as can be. They assist dealers during set-up and tear-down and "keep their eye on things" at all times in all the right places. No wonder they are the preferred choice of most major coin shows in Ontario, including the 2006 and 2007 C.N.A. Conventions!

The C.N.A. had a good presence. President Charles Moore came up from California. First V.P. Michael Walsh from British Columbia and 2nd V.P. Dan Gosling from Alberta were there, as were C.N.A. Area Directors from many parts of Canada and the U.S. Executive Secretary Paul Johnson was there. Club Services Chairman Bill Waychison traveled down from the Far North, as us Torontonians like to call anyone living north of here.

Members of the 2007 C.N.A. Convention Committee also took the opportunity to make their presence felt. The General Chairman manned the Information Table to promote the upcoming Convention in Niagara Falls on July 11 to 15. Cathy Dunn, Hospitality Chair, scheduled a meeting of her committee to toss around ideas of what to serve during the open hours of the Hospitality Suite and at the 4 (or are we up to 5 now?) receptions. Michael Walsh, Chairman of the C.N.A. Education Committee, finalized plans for the two-day Educational Symposium scheduled for the Convention with Dan Gosling, Assistant Chair of the Symposium and President Chuck Moore. Monina Regitko, Convention Treasurer and the Registration & Daily Admission Chair, also assisted at the Convention Information Table.

Wow, with dedicated volunteers like that, what a Convention it will be!

WE HAVE MAIL

From Peter Degraaf: "When you do your next letter on Nigerian scams, you might consider advising your readers of something that I do whenever I get one of these requests (I get about 5 per day). I forward them to the Ontario Provincial Police at wafi@phonebusters.com." - Good idea. They must get thousands daily. In the U.S., you can file an online complaint with the Internet Crime complaint Center (a joint project of the FBI and National White Collar Crime Center) at www.ic3.gov.

From Tom DeLorey: "That history of wooden money in Canada appeared in The Toque, not The Togue, eh?" - Our C.N.A. E-Bulletin readers are so observant and knowledgeable. Nothing gets past them! I think my problem is the same as for the award: I can never figure out the difference between plague and plaque. Thanks for the correction. I also note that you used "eh" even

though you are American. Does that mean us Canucks have lost the exclusive copyright on that?

DARWIN 2006 AWARDS RECIPIENTS

Elliot Bassin writes: "The Darwin Awards in your most recent newsletter are actually old ones. If you enjoyed those then check out this website: www.darwinawards.com. It's unbelievable the things that people will do. Also, a note to your proofreader: many of these involve members of the fairer sex." The same column also caused Colin Bruce to send us the following release:

2006 DARWIN AWARDS – AKA MORONS

Yes, it's again that magical time of the year when the 2006 Darwin Awards are bestowed, honoring the least evolved among us.

And this year's glorious Winner is:

1. When his 38-caliber revolver failed to fire at his intended victim during a hold-up in Long Beach, California, would-be robber James Elliot did something that can only inspire wonder. He peered down the barrel and tried the trigger again. This time it worked.

And now, the Honorable Mentions:

2. The chef at a hotel in Switzerland lost a finger in a meat-cutting machine and submitted a claim to his insurance company. The company, suspecting negligence, sent out one of its men to have a look for himself. He tried the machine and he also lost a finger. The chef's claim was approved.
3. A man who shoveled snow for an hour to clear a space for his car during a blizzard in Chicago returned with his vehicle to find a woman had taken the space. Understandably, he shot her.
4. After stopping for drinks at an illegal bar, a Zimbabwean bus driver found that the 20 mental patients he was supposed to be transporting from Harare to Bulawayo had escaped. Not wanting to admit his incompetence, the driver went to a nearby bus stop and offered everyone waiting there a free ride. He then delivered the passengers to the mental hospital, telling the staff that the patients were very excitable and prone to bizarre fantasies. The deception wasn't discovered for 3 days.
5. A Texas teenager was in the hospital recovering from serious head wounds received from an oncoming train. When asked how he received the injuries, the lad told police that he was simply trying to see how close he could get his head to a moving train before he was hit.
6. A man walked into a Louisiana Circle-K, put a \$20 bill on the counter, and asked for change. When the clerk opened the cash drawer, the man pulled a gun and asked for all the cash in the register, which the clerk promptly provided. The man took the cash from the clerk and fled, leaving the \$20 bill on the counter. The total amount of cash he got from the drawer: \$15. (If someone points a gun at you and gives you money, what is the crime?)
7. Seems an Arkansas guy wanted some beer pretty badly. He decided that he'd just throw a cinderblock through a liquor store window, grab some booze, and run. So he lifted the cinderblock and heaved it over his head at the window. The cinderblock bounced back and hit the would-be thief on the head, knocking him unconscious. The liquor store window was made of Plexiglas. The whole event was caught on videotape.
8. As a female shopper exited a New York convenience store, a man grabbed her purse and ran. The clerk called 911 immediately, and the woman was able to give them a detailed description of the snatcher. Within minutes, the police apprehended the snatcher. They put him in the car and drove back to the store. The thief was then taken

out of the car and told to stand there for a positive ID. To which he replied, "Yes, officer, that's her. That's the lady I stole the purse from."

9. The Ann Arbor Michigan News crime column reported that a man walked into a Burger King in Ypsilanti, Michigan, at 5 a.m., flashed a gun, and demanded cash. The clerk turned him down because he said he couldn't open the cash register without a food order. When the man ordered onion rings, the clerk said they weren't available for breakfast. The man, frustrated, walked away.

And the 5-Star Stupidity Award winner:

10. When a man attempted to siphon gasoline from a motor home parked on a Seattle street, he got much more than he bargained for. Police arrived at the scene to find a very sick man curled up next to a motor home near spilled sewage. A police spokesman said that the man admitted to trying to steal gasoline and plugged his siphon hose into the motor home's sewage tank by mistake. The owner of the vehicle declined to press charges, saying that it was the best laugh he'd had in a very long time.

In the interest of bettering human kind please share these with your friends and family . Unless of course one of these 10 individuals by chance is a distant relative or long lost friend. In that case be glad they are distant and hope they remain lost.

CLEANING COINS

In previous bulletins, we directed you to web pages that had some unusual...and idiotic...ways of cleaning your coins. Steve Woodland sent us the following: "Here is some more advice about cleaning your coins on the WikiHow website at www.wikihow.com/Clean-Coins. Interestingly, the first step is "First, make sure the coin is not valuable."

The first thing the website asks you to do is think twice before cleaning your coins: "If the coins are collectible or valuable, cleaning will almost always reduce their value - sometimes by as much as 90% - and cleaning won't improve their grading (the standards used by coin collectors and dealers to evaluate a coin) so you should usually let them be."

Rather than stopping there, though, they go on and tell you to use various methods to clean your coins...after they point out in Step 1: "Verify that the coin is not valuable. You can look the coin up in a coin price guide. If you can't tell if the coin is valuable, check with a coin dealer before cleaning."

They suggest washing the coin under running water, soaking it for anywhere from a few hours to a few days, soaking in distilled water (the minerals in tap water can further taint the coin's surface if soaking for a long time) or olive oil up to several weeks, soaking in white vinegar or lemon juice, lightly scrubbing the coin with a soft toothbrush and dish soap (yea, you better confirm that the coin is not valuable), and using a small, sharp implement such as a toothpick, precision screwdriver, or dental tools. For the last one, they suggest that you "try not to scratch the surface of the coin." Good luck!

They also provide tips such as using soft cloth since more abrasive cloths may scratch the coin, that abrasive powders and household cleaners may ruin a coin, but it's okay to use a pencil eraser to add shine. What? They warn you to be aware that these methods can reduce a coin's value just as easily as other cleaning methods, especially if you don't know what you're doing. Why not simply state: "Don't clean your coins!" especially since they say that..."Collectors value coins with attractive patinas, and the patina actually serves to protect the surface of the coin, so it's usually better not to remove tarnish or try to make the coin look as shiny as possible."

Here is another one they propose: "If coin is not valuable you can use taco sauce from Taco Bell to burn the dirt off, to some extent. If coin is not valuable you can also use Pepsi or Coke, it'll be shiny in an hour. A soft vinyl eraser is worth a try too, to remove patina. Vinyl erasers do not contain abrasive particles, compared to the 'normal' erasers. Do not mix types of coins when soaking. Copper especially will sometimes discolor other coins."

But they don't stop there: "Nothing reduces the value of a coin faster than cleaning it. A pleasant toning, or patina, on a coin can actually add value to a coin, but cleaning will damage this unique coloration that has taken years (sometimes hundreds!) to develop. Don't use household cleaners or strong chemicals on coins. At best, they are generally no more effective than other methods. At worst, they can quickly ruin a coin beyond all recognition." After I read that, I decided to continue my life-long practice of NOT cleaning my coins!

SWCS REWARDS CHARTER MEMBERS

The South Wellington Coin Society celebrated their 10th Anniversary meeting earlier this month. Paul Johnson, C.N.A. Executive Secretary presented a special C.N.A. certificate to them honoring the occasion. Cake was served. Charter Member #3, Mike Hollingshead, served as M.C. All the past presidents were in attendance, which included the founding president, Scott Douglas (1997-2000), as well as Robert Zmija (2000-2002), Gordon Parker (2002-2004) and the current president, Art Stephenson (2004-2007).

Robert Zmija was credited as the driving force behind the founding of the club. He also designed the 3 medals the club has issued. His sons and grandsons are a normal fixture at meetings, assisting as auction runners.

One of the completely unexpected surprises for me was that I was handed a booklet detailing the history of the club (which was created/edited by Scott Douglas). I was also presented with a medal designed specifically for the meeting (also designed by Robert Zmija). It was given to chartered members that were still members 10 years later. The obverse features the club's crest, while the reverse is engraved "SWCS / 1997-2007 / John Regitko / No. 30." Two special woods, one issued by the club and another by their current President, Art Stephenson, were distributed at the meeting.

Let me know at cnanews@look.ca what your club has done for special occasions.

GLOBAL FRAUDSTER FACES NEW CHARGES

Here is another stupid, greedy criminal who doesn't know when to stop making money.

Salim Damji pleaded guilty five years ago to defrauding up to 6,000 investors around the globe of some \$78 million by conning them into believing he owned the rights to a tooth-whitening spray that would make them millionaires. He told investors he owned a tooth-whitening product called "Instant White" and that he was about to sell the rights to the giant Colgate Palmolive Corp. Damji promised \$20 back on every dollar invested, a 2,000 percent return. It was called an affinity fraud because his targets were exclusively members of his religious community.

Damji claimed that the mob was after him. His lawyer told the court he was "forced" to buy nine luxury cars worth \$500,000 just to show he was successful while funnelling millions from investors to organized crime lords in Costa Rica and Jamaica. He spent about \$4 million on property, including an \$800,000 waterfront condominium, paid for in cash, two houses in Markham and a small strip mall in midtown Toronto, worth over \$2 million. For a crime that's

considered one of the largest single frauds in Canadian history, Damji was sentenced to six years and three months in prison.

Last week, the same Toronto investigator who arrested him in 2002 charged him again. But this time it was for allegedly committing a crime on a much smaller scale: cheque fraud. Det. Jeff Thompson of the fraud squad charged Damji, now 38, with one count of fraud over \$5,000, uttering a forged document and conspiracy to commit an indictable offence for allegedly arranging deposit of a stolen cheque made out for \$8,000 into someone's bank account.

Thompson believes if he's stooping to cheque fraud, it's likely he doesn't have the stash of cash that many suspected. "Gambling has been a problem for him and appears it could be at the root of the problem now," he said. The parole board recently stated that Damji now admits the fraud was fuelled by his gambling addiction. He bet up to \$500,000 at a time.

CONDOLENCES: BRUCE BRACE: 1932-2007

"Bruce Brace passed away quietly on April 21. He fought that oral cancer with courage and grace and died at home amidst his family. I know that we will all miss him terribly, but he is in a better place now."

With those words, Dorte Brace made her friends in the numismatic world aware of his passing. James R. Bakes, former editor of "The Journal of the Classical and Medieval Numismatic Society," sent us Bruce's biography, the highlights of which follow:

Bruce Brace, noted Canadian numismatist and collector, passed away at his home in Hamilton, Ontario on Saturday, April 21, 2007. He had fought a long battle with cancer for over 4 years.

Bruce began with world coins, but soon developed an interest in the ancient world and traded his foreign collection for a collection of Roman coins "somewhere about 1954."

Bruce was a founding member of the Hamilton Coin Club, and in 1954 co-founded the Chedoke Numismatic Society. This society is still very active and is about to hold its 400th monthly meeting at members' homes across Southern Ontario. He was a governor of the J. Douglas Ferguson Historical Research Society for many years. With William H. McDonald of Toronto, he founded the Classical and Medieval Numismatic Society in 1990, and was president from its inception.

Bruce was a member of the Canadian Numismatic Association since its founding in 1950, the American Numismatic Association for over 50 years and the Royal Numismatic Society for almost as long. He was an active member of the Canadian Numismatic Research Society.

While Bruce's entertaining and informative articles were a mainstay of the Classical and Medieval Numismatic Society publications, he also wrote articles for the *Celator*, the *C.N.A. Journal* and *Canadian Coin News*.

Bruce received his BA from McMaster in Hamilton and his M.Ed. from Niagara University. He became a teacher, and eventually, Supervisor of Technological Studies for the Hamilton Board of Education, from which he retired in 1986. For over 20 years he served, first as Assistant Honorary Curator and later as Honorary Curator of the Numismatic Collection of the McMaster University Museum of Art, a position Bruce held until his death.

He has presented numerous papers based on Roman Republic coins from his collection to groups all over North America. He continued to do so until the latest in a series of cancer surgeries cost him his ability to speak.

Bruce's wife Dorte shared his interest in ancient numismatics, although her focus is the Byzantine series (and coins of her native Denmark). There was always a degree of good natured competition in the Brace household; displays in the annual C.N.A. Convention in competition with one another often produced 1-2 finishes (Bruce would have agreed he was often in the #2 spot).

His death on April 21st, the ancient Roman holiday Parilia, was the 2,760th anniversary of the founding of the city whose history he knew and loved so well. He was fond of ending letters and notes with the salutation "Cicero lives!"

And so does Bruce!

CONCLUSION

After that touching eulogy, I cannot think of anything else to say to end this bulletin.

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.

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