

Redwood Empire Coin Club

Volume 69, Issue 10, Meeting #803. November 8, 2017

Next Meeting: December 13, 2017

Out of the Ashes: Santa Rosa Strong

For the first time in the known history of the Redwood Empire Coin Club, our meeting was cancelled last month due to the tragic fire affecting Santa Rosa and the surrounding area. The Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building, which has been the home to our meeting for years, was used as an evacuation shelter for countless people who lost their homes. So it was great to gather again for the November meeting and share stories and give thanks for all we still have.

The meeting was our annual Thanksgiving Meeting, with plenty of turkey, stuffing, gravy, PLUS wonderful side dishes provided by members (thanks!). Thanks to the generosity of the club and to Riley R for covering the cost of the meal to those who lost homes in the fire. There are at least four members known to have lost homes, and including Curtis and Ramona S and Charlie C- who were at the meeting. We also gave thanks to all the club members who have served in the military since Veteran's Day is coming up—and there were many of you to whom we are grateful.

Merle gave an update on the upcoming coin show Friday February 16 and Saturday February 17. 15 of 66 dealer tables have already been sold, and Merle is working hard to get the rest of them filled. Gold Coin drawing tickets were also given out. They are \$1 each, 6 for \$5. And once again we will have the same great gold pieces in the drawing: seven 2-1/2 peso gold pieces, a \$5 Liberty gold piece, and a \$20 St. Gaudens gold piece.

REMEMBERING THE FIRE

Curtis and Ramona S were one of the RECC families to lose a home in the October fire, and Curtis was gracious in sharing his story. On the night of October 8 he received a call from a neighbor that he would need to evacuate. Having worked in a fire department, he decided to get in his car and look around. He remembered the 1964 Fountaingrove fire (when there were few homes; it burned almost the same area as this year's fire), and knew what it could do—but it didn't seem necessary to evacuate right away. Later that night he saw what was coming and did evacuate, taking Ramona, his meds, and his.....saxophone.

He was able to return the next day while his house was still burning, and everything else was just ashes. In anguish he got to his knees and pounded the ground, asking God "why"? In a short while a calm came over him as he realized the Lord works in mysterious ways, and he realized he *did* have fifty years to enjoy the home and appreciated that (it took Ramona several more days to come to grips with the loss). They have had lots of calls and support from friends, family, and the Red Cross.

Curtis did have a fire-proof safe. Fortunately it did survive the fire, with the contents at the bottom of the safe being intact. With the intensity of the heat with this unusual kind of firestorm, most fire safes did not work.

The entire club appreciated Curtis sharing his story, and shared it's support for everyone who lost a home and was affected by the fire. It is good to be alive!



MORE FIRE STORIES

Charlie C (yours truly) also lost a home in the fire. I happened to be in San Francisco visiting my girlfriend Susan, and knew nothing of the fire until heading back to San Francisco at 7 AM Monday. There was smoke in the air, but it wasn't clear where it was coming from. While driving on Van Ness Blvd in San Francisco, my cell phone went off with a message from Kaiser (they must think I still work there, after retiring 2 months earlier). It said the clinics were closed, and the hospital was being evacuated! So I pulled over, made a call, heard Santa Rosa was burning down, and turned back.....and am now living in San Francisco (thank you Susan!). A few hours later that Monday morning a Santa Rosa neighbor let me know my home was gone..

After the initial shock, I just felt relief to be alive (with my dog) in a new home. And there was concern if anything would survive the fire, especially a fire safe I had purchased in the last year. Security was tight trying to view the property the next day and police would not let me into the Coffee Park neighborhood. Two days later I was able to get by a National Guard checkpoint (with batteries to deliver to a neighbor across the street whose house survived but was without electricity), and I could view the devastation and could see the fire safe, on its side, and slightly bulging at the sides—not a good sign. Due to previously planned travel, it was a week before I could actually get in and try to recover anything.

There were three things I needed to look for in the ashes: the new fire safe, an old Sentry fire safe in a different part of the house, and coins stored on shelves in my office (as well as other jewelry and items in the house). Merle lent me his metal detector, and club member Glen M volunteered to help looking. He also brought his metal detector, but it was not helpful as there was too much scrap metal and debris. But he did have a sifter, and ended up getting a two pound coffee can and a large beer stein filled with miscellaneous coins and tokens (including the silver and prestige proof coins, minus the burned off holders, which I had stored on a shelf). Those still need to be washed off to see if anything can be salvaged- even for silver bullion value.

The Sentry safe was laying on it's side where I expected to find it. The door pulled open in my hand, and all my Dansco-like albums of Lincoln and Indian cents, Buffalo nickels, Mercury dimes, and Morgan dollars were charcoal black ash, with a shiny coating on most of the coins I glanced at. They were placed in a shoe box, and it will take some time to see if any remain in the XF-AU condition they originally were in. The Sentry safe was purchased many years ago, and had a one hour fire rating. Many safes were incinerated in the recent fires, so this was at least partially effective.

The new fire safe had a two hour fire rating. An employee from Don Rinkor's shop (where I purchased it) came out and opened the safe on site. The outer steel layer was cut out; a crow bar was used to break out a 3" layer of cement; and an inner steel layer was cut out. Most of the contents survived, though there was damage. I was told it was only the third of ten similar safes to even survive the fire! The bottom of the safe contained a corrugated cardboard box with all my slabs, and every one was bubbled somewhat. Capital plastics holders were also warped. I will need to open them all up and see how the coins look, and re-submit them (if possible).

On a second shelf of the safe were four boxes of my most important coins, all in 2X2 cardboard holders—and all are in excellent shape (though they smell of smoke)! On a third shelf was a wooden display box for medals and ancient's too big to put in a 2X2; most had some smoke/heat damage. And on top of it was a birth certificate and passport- singed but otherwise intact!

There are several things I learned from this fire. First and foremost--- they are all just things. People cannot be replaced, many of the other things can be. It was nice being at the November meeting and having the support of the club- many thanks. And it is worth protecting your collection. A two hour rated fire safe has less room inside, but it clearly can make a difference. My safe was bolted to the floor, and that little opening where the bolt was probably caused the heat damage in the lower part of the safe; something to keep in mind. My safe was packed full, will little space for air so none of the papers actually burned. And finally, I do have coin collection insurance from the ANA-recommended agency. Once I assess what has truly been lost, I will get back to you with how well it helped.

One other loss from the fire was my computer (with all of my data), as well as all my numismatic books and all the archives of the RECC. There were newsletters going back 25 or so years, photos, awards, etc. Thank goodness, some archives are on our web page, and they will be placed there in the future as well. This newsletter is in a new format that is taking time to get used to, so please pardon any errors.

Riley R had fire near his property, and an 85 year old neighbor used a hose to put out hot spots while the fire department was working on it. It saved his property. Rose F said neighbors woke her a couple times (Claude just slept), and she hosed down the fence and roof. Claude's job was to drive the get-away car, if needed.

Figuring out how to position photos with this new Mac computer will take a while, and I haven't figured out how to do captions...yet. You may not recognize Glen M in the dust mask, but can see the coins he recovered from sifting. Also pictured are the Sentry safe with shoe box of burned albums/coins, and the newer safe being cut open and how it looked inside. Finally, my two story home.....



DRAWING WINNERS

Membership: Bill R, Ron S, Jon Maria M, Guy S, and Steven H

50:50 pot of \$96 was split with Erika G

Raffle: Harold R, Glen M, Helmut J, Mike B, Deanna J, Ron S, Bill C, Larry M, Bill R, Dan C

Gold Coin raffle: 1/10 ounce gold coin won by Bob K!

November Attendance:

New Members:

Guests: yes, there were several

Auction: 45 exciting items

Adjournment was at 9:00 p.m. sharp!

KIDS CORNER

At the November meeting, Aaron and Carson selected from coins and bills donated that night. Many nice items were brought in.

In December, we will join the other tables in the flea market with one exception, as always, items are free to juniors. See you at 6:15- Rich

Volunteers for **refreshments** are for **all of us** to bring desserts for the Holiday Dessert Night- thanks!

The Redwood Empire Coin Club meets on the second Wednesday of each month. The Club's meeting location is the **Veterans Memorial Building, 1351 Maple Avenue, Santa Rosa** (opposite the County Fairgrounds across from Highway 12), in the "**Dinner Room**" on the east side of the building, at 7:00 p.m. sharp.

R.E.C.C.
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UPCOMING SHOWS & EVENTS

January 26-28, 2018. San Jose Coin Club's 50th Annual Coins and Collectibles Show. Doubletree Hotel, 2050 Gateway Place, San Jose

February 10-11, 2018. San Francisco Area Coin, Stamp, and Collectibles Show. Conference Center, 255 S. Airport Blvd, South San Francisco

February 16-17, 2018. Redwood Coin Club's 50th Annual Coin Show. Sonoma County Fairgrounds' Finley Hall, Santa Rosa

February 18, 2018. Cupertino Coin Club's 46th Annual Coin Show. Napredak Hall, 770 Montague Expressway, San Jose

April 20-22, 2018. Coin Expo: Santa Clara Coin, Currency, Stamp, and Sports Collectibles Show. Santa Clara Convention Center, 5001 Great America Parkway, Santa Clara

May 6, 2018. Vallejo Numismatic Society 46th Annual Show. Florence Douglas Senior Center, 333 Amador (between Georgia and Florida), Vallejo

Check out our newsletter at: **Redwoodempirecoinclub.com**

Thanks for reading. Corrections? Additions? Questions? E-mail us at:

newsletter@Redwoodempirecoinclub.com Or call me— 707-303-6032. See you December 13— Charlie