



Founded March 26, 1949

**Celebrating our 75th
Anniversary in 2024!**



5850 Commerce Blvd, Suite 100
Rohnert Park, Ca. 94928

Redwood Empire Coin Club

Volume 77, Issue 11, Meeting #888, November 13, 2024

Next Meeting December 11, 2024

NOVEMBER NEWS

We had a great turnout for the November meeting, with very interesting presentations. But first of all- because the meeting was two days after Veterans Day- a big thank you to all our Veteran members past and present who have served our country!

Merle brought us up to date about our February 14-15, 2025 coin show. Applications have been sent out, and within a week we already had eight tables sold. There will be a concurrent tokens show again in 2025, giving us all even more chances to go shopping for the item(s) we need or want in our collection, and likely for other things just too good to pass up. SET UP for the show will be on Wednesday February 12 prior to our meeting, with a pizza dinner for all those who volunteer. Bob Kosten is again coordinating the volunteers for the show- for setup and take down- and we will be soliciting volunteers to work 2-hour shifts on the two show days as well. Merle handed out books of tickets for our gold coin drawing. Tickets sell for \$1 each, or 6 for \$5; a full book of 120 tickets is \$100. If you can, please try to sell these ahead of the show. The proceeds from these sales helps pay for the room rental and other costs. It ain't cheap to run a good coin show, and we aim to have the best one around. Plus, someone will win one of the five Mexican 2-peso gold coins or the \$5 and \$10 Liberty Head gold coins.

The **DECEMBER** meeting will be in the **main auditorium** of the Veterans Building. We will have a **FLEA MARKET** from **6-7:30 PM**, with tables free for anyone who wants to set up (numismatic items only) to buy/sell/trade. It would help to bring a lamp and extension cord as lighting may not be the greatest there.

It will be **DESSERT NIGHT!** Please bring a dessert to share with the club if you can. This is one of the tastiest meetings of the year. And **SANTA MERLE** will return once again with presents for everyone there, including those on Zoom. **One of the presents will be a gold piece!** You must be present to get a present. Plus, we will have a raffle drawing for a gold coin as well!

Finally, we will have nominations of officers for the RECC Board followed by an election. All the current officers are willing to run for another year in office. But any adult member can run for office as well, so don't be shy if you really want to take over the reins of president or VP, be our treasurer, or take meeting minutes and write this newsletter as secretary- its fun!

BIGGEST and **SMALLEST**

- Phil A started out the talks with the smallest sized silver coin produced by the US Mint- the 3¢ silver coin, also known as a trime. They were 14mm in diameter and weighed 0.75 grams. His 1861 coin was a Type 3 variety with a single line around the star- and was minted when Lincoln was president. When these coins were first produced in 1851, California had been a state for only a year. New Orleans minted them only in 1851, while Philadelphia produced them from 1851-1873. The denomination was intended to help purchase postal stamps.



- Deanna J came up with the biggest coin- a ~10" jigsaw puzzle of *the* very first silver dollar produced by the US Mint in 1794. This particular coin and a copper trial piece from the same die are the finest known examples and likely among the first strikes made.
- Bill H talked about his 1-gram silver round- his smallest coin. It was engraved "Merry Christmas". It was found at a coin show, after he had finished all his shopping, and he decided to buy it for \$2.
- Helm brought in his largest coin, a *half-pound* silver eagle, gold plated- minted by the Washington Mint in 1993. Wow.



- Ember S brought in two tiny ancient coins. The one on the left has a man standing on the obverse, an eagle on the reverse. The other is a Roman coin with a nice portrait. They're corroded, but they're ancient after all. Then she talked about her biggest item, the copper (or maybe bronze?) medal with the California State Seal on the obverse and engraving to Robert H. Finch with his past government positions. It was sitting at a dealer table, looking lonely since nobody wanted it- so she bought it for a very good price! She shows it to kids as a teaching tool, something interesting and educational beyond just regular mint issued coins.
- Tom M specializes in collecting bronze coins of the ancient Seleucid Empire, which was named after Seleukos- a general under Alexander the Great who ended up with the eastern part of Alexander's empire (around modern Syria) upon his death. He showed the largest coin of the entire Seleucid era, about 80 grams (2.8 oz) of bronze featuring Zeus. It was minted for Antiochus IV, the real-life bad guy in the Chanukkah story. Tom also had the smallest denomination of the Seleucid coin series, 0.7 grams, minted for Antiochus I.



ANTIOCHUS I
ANTIOCH
VF+GG 270 PLAIN 7/2
280 261
OBS. APOLLO HEAD RT. LAUREATE.
DOTTED BORDER.
R. ARROWHEAD, POINT DOWN.
BA TO RIGHT AND AN TO LEFT.
CSE PLATE COIN
SC 326
WSM 756 BN 415 V6-BMC-
CSE 27* SPAR 217 COP. LIL-ABC-

- Rich H brought in his bronze Leonardo Da Vinci medal produced by the Paris Mint in 1968. He bought it in a small antiques shop in Majorca. It was engraved by Raymond Joly, weighing 259 gr (9.1 ounces) and 81 mm (3.2"). Rich talked about Joly- a medalist, sculptor, and coin engraver who started his craft at a young age and eventually became engraver general for the Paris Mint. The Roman numerals on the medal indicate it was for the 500th anniversary (1452-1952) of Da Vinci's birth.



- Rich W brought the largest coin produced for circulation in Britain. The 1813 three pence token was privately minted in Birmingham and weighed 66 grams/2.3 ounces (compared to the British Mint's largest coin- the two pence coin at 56 grams). It pictures the Birmingham Workhouse, which looks like a prison (or church) but was more likely called a 'hospital' at the time- that is the name for buildings housing orphans (and making them work!). There are 240 pence to one pound sterling, so 3 pence = 1/80 pound, explaining the reverse inscription. The other coins he talked about are what are known as "Widow's Mites". [Note: He got one

from a dealer, but I think it was misidentified as it had unusual writing and was not circulating in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus. The two shown here are typical examples are from my collection- Charlie]. A parable in the New Testament talks about a poor widow who

donated her last two coins, the tiniest coins around, to the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus saw this, as well as wealthy people donating large sums. But he said she donated more, as the others donated out of abundance, but she donated *all* that she had. The two tiny coins were possibly called leptons and were likely the coins shown here: coins of Alexander Jannaeus (104-76 BC- sorry I misquoted an earlier date at the meeting), produced in huge quantities and still circulating over 100 years later. The term "mite" was first mentioned during the production of the Tyndale Bible in 1525 and popularized by the King James Bible in the 1600s- initially as a term meaning "minute". There was a Dutch "mijt", meaning small copper coin, issued in the 1400s.



- Mike M showed large and small gold coins: One is his slabbed 1885 British gold sovereign of Queen Victoria. The other was from a gold coin drawing two months ago, with 2 coins to choose from- he chose this one. It is a 2009 British gold 1/4 sovereign featuring Queen Elizabeth II. So, his initial gold sovereign now had a little brother (sister, actually). The reverse is Pistrucci's famous engraving of St. George and the dragon. The sovereign weighs 8 grams, the quarter sovereign is 2 grams.

- Merle has an 1865 Mexican traditional wedding token. This was one of the first gold coins he ever owned and is his smallest gold piece. It is 10mm in size (about the size of small fingernail), weighing 1/50 ounce. The obverse features Emperor Maximilian, the reverse features the Mexican Eagle, year, and motto "Mexican Empire". Digging a bit further for information took a while, but here are some additional tidbits. The word "arras" in Spanish means "earnest money" or "deposits". "Las Arras Matrimoniales" or wedding coins are a tradition likely originating in Spain and spreading into Latin America and other parts of the world as Spain conquered those lands. They are thirteen coins (all the same size) gifted from the wedding godparents and given by the groom to the bride after the exchange of wedding rings as a symbol of commitment to each other. Traditionally they served as a dowry, and later became a promise of prosperity and a promise to protect each other's wealth. Traditionally twelve of the coins were gold, representing the wealth the newlyweds would share each month of the year, and one was platinum to share with the less fortunate. Lots of these were made, and in more recent years the gold content decreased, to where many now are simply gold-plated.



- Finally, Charlie C (that's me!) talked about some *really* big ancient coins. Olbia was the largest Greek colony on the northern shore of the Black Sea (and about the farthest colony as well)- in modern day Ukraine. Starting around 550 BC Olbia started producing small bronze cast arrowheads (considered 'proto-money') to be used as a value in trade.



Twenty-five years later they started making small dolphin-shaped cast bronze pieces, around 1" in size. Another fifty years later, around 470 BC, Olbia decided to produce its first real bronze *coins*. These were cast rather than being struck. At the time (470 BC or ~ 2500 years ago) 1 gram of silver was of equal value to 144 grams of copper or bronze and the top denomination aimed to be that amount of bronze, though the weight varied from 95-140 grams. The obverse features Apollo and a dolphin (the city's symbol), the reverse a wheel with four spokes and the letters $\text{PA}\Lambda\Sigma$ = RALS, likely the moneyer at the time. The hole on top of Apollo's helmet is a blank space where the metal did not flow while being cast, *not* an intentional hole. There were medium and small denominations with the same design. And about thirty-five years later they changed the design to show a gorgonian (like Medusa) on the obverse and an eagle clutching a fish on the reverse. Both coins are about 2-2/3" in diameter and weigh 4.2 and 3.5 ounces, respectively.



- But wait, coins got bigger! Rome was late to the party in producing its own coins. It had other cities mint coins for it initially. Up until 289 BC, Rome was producing chunks of bronze of various sizes to be used in trade, based on the value of the bronze. In 289 BC Rome starting casting coins in bronze. These large coins are called Aes Grave, meaning large bronze. How big? The largest denomination was called an **as** and was the equivalent of one Roman *pound*- twelve Roman ounces. Sure enough, this early example is ~ 2-2/3" and weighs 330 grams- 11.6 ounces! Both sides feature the likeness of Apollo. This is a coin where the metal content/weight was the same as the value. Around 225 BC the Romans realized their original **as** denomination coin was too big, so it was reduced a bit to ~260 grams (9 ounces). This was at a time when Rome had a huge victory and was starting to gain power. The new denomination featured the Roman god Janus on one side and the prow of a ship on the other for this largest denomination. The vertical I above the ship on the reverse indicated the denomination of 1 **as**. It was also around this time that Romans captured territory with an abundant supply of silver, so Rome started minting its first silver denarius coins- also featuring the god Janus. And about ten years later, around 214 BC, Rome reduced the size of the **as** coin to ~64 grams or 2.2 ounces, 1-1/2". The design remained the same as did the "I" mark for this largest denomination bronze coin. Rome finally stopped producing cast coins in 210 BC and commenced striking coins. Eventually the **as** was reduced to ~30 grams (1 ounce) and an inch or so in diameter- also with the same design and denomination mark- for another 180 years.



Sicily minted this 30mm, 20-gram coin circa 42-38 BC. But instead of using the image of the god Janus, the image of Pompey the great was used back-to-back. That style of image is called "janiform".



Join the December Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87858393777?pwd=gzLlCny0W5w6XFtJNghkWe9CIC8QX.1>

Meeting ID: 878 5839 3777

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DRAWING WINNERS

Membership: Paul C, David Y, Alan S, Cayson K, Dave G

50:50 pot of \$70 was split with Cayson K

Raffle: Otto O (twice), David P, Kim S (three times), Bill R (three times), David B, Bill S Sr, and Paul C

GOLD Raffle for a 2-peso Mexican gold piece: Sean H!

November Attendance: 60+

New Members: Robert B (#1048), Orion S (#1049J), and David P (# 1050)- **WELCOME ALL!**

Guests: yes

Auction: 35 exciting items.

Adjournment was at 8:58 p.m. sharp!



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UPCOMING SHOWS AND EVENTS

January 17-18, 2025. East Bay/Concord Coin Show. The Concord Plaza Hotel, 45 John Glenn Dr., Concord

February 14-15, 2025. Redwood Empire Coin Club's 55th Annual Coin Show.
E.L. Finley Building, Sonoma County Fairgrounds, 1350. Bennett Valley Road,
Santa Rosa

March 21-2, 2025. South bay/Sunnyvale Coin Show. Domain Hotel, 1085 East El Camino Real,
Sunnyvale

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. In December we meet in the main auditorium.

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

Thanks for reading. Corrections? Additions? Questions? E-mail us at: newsletter@Redwoodempirecoinclub.com.
See you at the Vets Building **Main Auditorium** **December 11, 2024**— Charlie