



North York Coin Club

Founded 1960

MONTHLY MEETINGS 4TH Tuesday 7:30 P.M. AT
Edithvale Community Centre, 7 Edithvale Drive, North York
MAIL ADDRESS: NORTH YORK COIN CLUB, P.O.BOX 10005
R.P.O. Yonge & Finch, 5576 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, M2N 0B6

Web site: www.northyorkcoinclub.ca

Contact the Club :

E-mail: northyorkcoinclub@rogers.com
Phone: 647-222-9995

Member :

Canadian Numismatic Association
Ontario Numismatic Association

PresidentNick Cowan
1st Vice PresidentBill O'Brien
2nd Vice PresidentShawn Hamilton
SecretaryTony Hine
TreasurerLen Kuenzig
Past PresidentRobert Wilson

Executive Committee

DirectorTony Hine
DirectorRoger Fox
DirectorVince Chiappino
Junior Director
AuctioneerBob Porter
Auction ManagerMark Argentino
Co-EditorsPaul Petch/Tony Hine

Receptionist
Draw PrizesBill O'Brien
Social ConvenorBill O'Brien
LibrarianRobert Wilson
Program Planning

THE BULLETIN FOR NOVEMBER 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi again, fellow members:

Well, unfortunate as it was, we have cancelled the Christmas dinner at the Legion. Therefore, as an alternative, I presume that you wish to resume the past practice of having Swiss Chalet, potluck and Bingo at Edithvale. We will discuss this at the November meeting, so please come ready to commit if this is what you wish to do for this year.

Now, onto the NYCC elections. Nominations are open and some positions are available to be filled by you, the members.

The following Members have agreed to continue in their present positions:

David Quinlan
Roger Fox
Mark Argentino
Bill O'Brien
Vince Chiappino
Paul Petch

Tony Hine has agreed to remain in his present position, however, should another

member wish to step up and fill the position, and then Tony will step down.

Len Kuenzig, our Treasurer for the last few years, will be stepping down.

Your President, being me, is at the point of being totally undecided. To that end, I will announce my intentions at the November meeting.

2009 will be upon us sooner than we think. As we go into winter, I had a thought.

What would you say if we dropped the January and or February meetings in favour of keeping the July and August meetings? We

NEXT MEETING - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25

We start gathering at 7:00 p.m. with meeting start scheduled for 7:30 p.m.

There is no feature speaker scheduled for this meeting, so this will be a member participation evening. This is your chance to tell other members about recent acquisitions, your particular collecting interests or anything that is current or topical, so please prepare and participate.

Our supply of draw prize material is very low and we appreciate all donations.
Remember to bring some items for the auction!

have had far too many foul evenings that make it hard to drive, too much snow while the meeting is on and then the drive home on crummy roads.

Think about it, the worst thing that could happen is that we get home safely, which really is the only important part of the day.

This meeting will set the tone for 2009, so, as we end the year, please voice your opinions and tell your Executive what it is that you really want from your Club.

Thank you, I will see you next week.

Nick

COMING EVENTS FOR FALL 2008 & WINTER 2009

NOV. 22, Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls Coin Club Show, Our Lady of Peace Hall, 6944 Stanley Ave. Hours: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Admission \$2 includes free draw. For more information, contact Todd Hume, (905) 871-2451.

JAN. 23 - 25, 2009, Hamilton, CAND Show, Sheraton Hotel, 116 King St. More details to follow. Sponsor/Affiliate: Canadian Association of Numismatic Dealers. For more information contact CAND, (905) 643-4988, e-mail: cand@cogeco.ca.

FEB. 1, 2009, Paris, S.W.O.N., Special Events Building, 139 Silver St. (Fairgrounds). Hours: 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission: \$2, (includes ticket for gold coin draw). More than 55 tables of coins, paper money, jewelry, nostalgia items, and more. Food and drinks available at show. Free appraisals. For more information, contact Ted Bailey 1-866-747-2646 or e-mail: tedscollectables@bellnet.ca. Website: <http://tedscollectables.com>.

FEB. 7, 2009, Oshawa, Oshawa and District Coin Club Coin-a-Rama, Five Points Mall, 285 Taunton Rd. E. Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free dealer, public, and membership draws. Free admission. Featuring paper, coins, tokens, medals and many other items. For more information, contact Sharon (905) 728-1352, e-mail: papman@idirect.com.
FEB. 21 & 22, 2009, Toronto, Torex - Canada's National Coin Show, Hilton Toronto Airport Hotel, 5875 Airport Road, Mississauga Ballroom.

Listings are courtesy of Canadian Coin News Coming Events

MEETING NEWS OF THE OCTOBER 2008 MEETING

The 540th meeting of the North York Coin Club was held on October, 2008 at the Edithvale Community Centre, 7 Edithvale Drive in Room 123.

President Nick Cowan lowered the gavel at 7:30 p.m. to declare a two-minute warning. With twenty-five members and two guests present, the meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m.

The on-time attendance draw of \$2 was won by Paul Johnson, so the pot stays at \$2 for the next meeting.

Secretary Tony Hine moved that the minutes of the September 23rd meeting as pub-

lished in the October bulletin be approved. Seconded by Marvin Kay. Carried. Our Treasurer, Len Kuenzig presented a financial report.

The program for the evening was a PowerPoint presentation from Rick Craig of St. Mary's, Ontario on "Notes to Early Toronto Exhibition Medals," ably assisted by Tom Rogers. The presentation, prepared originally for the London Numismatic Society, was accompanied by a table of medals on display that included most of the medals in the presentation. Notes on the presentation are to be presented in the November bulletin.

Vice President Bill O'Brien generously provided refreshments for a coffee break.

An auction was called by Robert Porter and managed by Mark Argentino with Marvin Kay kindly serving as runner.

Door prizes were awarded to David Bawcutt, Italo Villella, Avner Bar-Moshe, Bob Velensky, Tony Hine, Rick Craig and David Quinlan (2).

Door prize draw tickets raised \$33.00 for the club while auction commissions and donation items raised \$22.17

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

NOTES TO EARLY TORONTO EXHIBITION MEDALS North York Coin Club October meeting presentation by Rick Craig

The speaker for the North York Coin Club's October meeting was Rick Craig who presented a London Numismatic Society presentation "Notes to Early Toronto Exhibition Medals." Rick gave an overview of the history of the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE). The grounds on which the Exhibition now takes place was the scene of the Battle of York during the War of 1812.

As early as 1792 the Niagara Agricultural Society became the first such organization to hold shows. In 1820 a "cattle show" was held in York which led to the creation of other local associations and shows elsewhere, with the Provincial Agricultural association and Board of Agriculture for Canada West being created in 1846. From 1847 to 1878 fairs were held at rotating locations with the host cities including Hamilton, Cobourg, Kingston, London, as well as numerous others. Due to the fair's increasing size it was recognized that a permanent home was necessary. The Toronto City Council leased 51 3/4 acres on the current site to the show and on March 11, 1879 the Industrial Exhibition Association of Toronto was incorporated.



This medal was struck to recognize the importance of the Imperial penny postage rate (2 cents per half ounce) introduced in 1897. The obverse shows a postman standing before the Imperial penny stamp from Christmas of 1898. The reverse depicts four medallions representing the arts, horticulture, agriculture and industry surrounding the Arms of the City of Toronto with its motto.

Shown twice actual size.

The first exhibition of the new association opened on September 3rd, 1879 and ran for 3 weeks with over 100,000 visitors attending to view 8,234 exhibits. Rick indicated that he had found a small difference in records of the opening date for the first official exposition, noting that September 3, 1879 is used but that the date on the medals is September 5th. The difference may possibly be due to the official opening occurring

two days after the actual start of the fair. In 1904 the name of the event was officially changed to the Canadian National Exhibition, to reflect the national stature it had attained.

Rick went on to outline a large number of the different medals issued, showing that there were two basic types, Award Medals and Souvenirs. The British firm of Elkington

made a few of the earliest ones, but many of the medals were made by P.W. Ellis & Co. of Toronto. This firm was established as jewellers and medalists in 1852, and after being acquired by Philip W. and Mathew C. Ellis in 1877, it went on to become the prominent medal maker in Canada. All the specimens illustrated were made by P.W. Ellis & Co.

The medals outlined in the talk included some from the earliest years of the exhibition through to the 1970's, and Rick finished his presentation with the comment that CNE medals are quite varied in design with numerous types, making it a very large series that can be both challenging and gratifying to collect.

The medals illustrated are from Rick Craig's collection and we thank him for sharing them with us.



This medal marks the ascension of Edward VII to the throne and the obverse shows the new King with the Royal Arms in the background. It repeats the obverse design of the 1899 medal. Shown at 1½ actual size.



This medal marks the 1903 Dominion of Canada Industrial Exhibition. The obverse shows the crowned Arms of the Dominion with maple leaves. The reverse depicts the Arms and motto of the City of Toronto and features a blacksmith on the right and a farmer on the left as supporters. Shown at 1½ actual size.



This award plaquette-style medal of 1917 shows the Duke of Devonshire, Governor General of Canada at the time, on the obverse. The reverse features a rather crude depiction of the design on the 1867 Confederation medal with space for the engraving of the recipient's name. Shown at 1½ actual size.

ELECTROTYPES

BY DICK JOHNSON

FROM THE NUMISMATIC BIBLIOMANIA SOCIETY'S ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER, E-SYLUM

A topic came up for discussion where Mr. Jonathan Brecher asked for information about his “negative-image (incuse and reversed) electro-somethings of the Pistrucci Waterloo medal.”

What Jonathan Brecher has is an **electro-galvanic** mold. I am delighted to furnish him the following information on his electrogalvanic item.

Jonathan was particularly concerned about the wax coating on this piece. He said “I’ve shown these to several people, and nobody seems to know what to make of them.” This is understandable. **Electroforming**, the **electrolysis process**, and even **electrotypes** are one of the least understood concepts of all numismatics. This is why I have joined with numismatist John Kraljevich in the preparation of a monograph on the subject, *Electrogalvanic Casting In Numismatics*. This has been mentioned previously in E-Sylum (vol 9, no 44, article 19, October 29, 2006).

This was mentioned prior to the publication of one of the few (and best!) articles on the subject. Red Book guru Kenneth Bressett wrote “The Nature and Use of Electrotypes Reproductions” which appeared in the now defunct ANA Journal, spring issue 2007. Well worth obtaining that issue for reading that article alone.

An **electrogalvanic mold** is the pattern for casting **electrotypes** or **galvanos**. The pattern can be most any composition. The U.S. Mint was using iron in the 1850s; the British Royal Mint was using iron as late as 1886. But the pattern can be plaster, any other metal, or even carved wood (the later has to be specially treated to close all the tiny pores in the wood). A **wax pattern** is usually cast in plaster before it is used in the electrogalvanic process.

The pattern must be specially prepared:

- (1) the surface to be reproduced is coated with **bronze power** to make it electrically conductive—this also acts as a **release agent** to remove the casting afterwards;
- (2) it is wired, two copper wires are attached to the pattern’s surface to carry the elec-

tric current to a **bus bar** above the tank where the electrolysis takes place, these also support the pattern and its galvanic casting while it is in the tank; and

- (3) the area where no deposition is to take place is coated with wax, this is a **stop-off** (the British call this a **resist**).

The wax on Jonathan’s electroform is this resistant material still intact. It covers the entire back, and the portion of the front, the **flange**, where no metal is to be deposited. If this were not done the metal would deposit on both sides, all around and entomb the desired electroform.

The wired and prepared pattern is immersed in an **electrolyte solution** in the tank. This solution is slightly acidic but also contains **cyanide**. Electrotypers have experimented for decades to replace the deadly cyanide, but found it is best to use in electrolysis. The solution must also contain **ions** of the metal to be deposited. Most metals can be electroformed. In numismatics it is the same as coinage metals, **gold, silver, copper**. The process is the same as goldplating, silverplating, copperplating. (Other metals are plated in the jewelry field, or even chromium plating in industry.)

A tank large enough to contain the suspended pattern contains the electrolyte solution. It also must have **anodes** present. If you are creating a copper electrotype, you must have several pure copper anodes suspended in the solution as well. Separate tanks for each metal. The anodes are **sacrificial**—they wear away like a bar of soap—ions of the copper in the anode pass into the solution and deposit on the pattern’s treated surface, this is the **cathode**, when the electric current is turned on.

The current must be a **low voltage direct current** and must form a complete circuit. A **rectifier** converts AC current to DC and is wired to bars from which the anodes are suspended. The current passes into the anodes then into the solution, onto the cathode pattern, up the copper wires to the bus bar and back to the rectifier. Circuit completed.

It is fun to watch gold or silverplating. It changes the color of the anodic metal in about 15 seconds. But usually it requires

about three days to **deposit enough medal**, say a 1/16th inch, to give the electroform enough strength so it won’t malform. This form is also called a **galvano**. After that time the ensemble of pattern and electroform are removed from the tank.

They are **separated**. If any opening is found a screwdriver is inserted between the mold and the cast galvano. It is pried open a little more. The electrotypers’ trick of the trade is applied. Compressed air is blown into this opening and the two snap apart.

Jonathan’s electroform is negative. As a negative mold it makes a positive cast. (Casting always **reverses polarity**.) His photo shows a hanger. This was not used in the electrolysis process; it was intended to hang on a wall. How much more realistic to have the original two copper wires intact.

If Jonathan can prove the provenance of this piece back to Pinches, it may have been the original one Pinches used in 1849 to make the first Waterloo Medals. However, once you have one of these medals anyone with electroforming equipment and the required skill could copy it by creating the pattern for casting these medals anew. Unlike foundry casts, however, subsequent **electroformed castings do not shrink**, they are the exact same size as the original, so size is not a diagnostic.

Operating a successful electrolysis is not easy. There are a many variables, chemical composition, pH, temperature, placement of the pattern in relation to the anodes, the electric circuit, the ionic balance. It takes considerable skill. That is why you will not find many electroformed copies.

Possibly Jonathan’s pattern could have been made in the United States. It could have been made by one of the New England silverware firms (1850s) or by New York City electrotyper Samuel H. Black as early as 1859. Or by a specialized electroforming firm as early as 1884. We have a list of a dozen American electrotypers and are compiling the known electrotypes they made.

The most important thing you should remember about electroforming—it replicates **minute detail**. In comparison with other methods of making numismatic items:

foundry casting reproduces detail down to 1/100 of an inch, **die striking** reproduces detail down to 1/1000th of an inch, but **electroforming** reproduces detail down to the width of an atom!

Medal makers have a saying about this: “If it is in the model, it is in the medal.” Here are some highlights in the history of electroforming:

- In 1791 Italian **Luigi Galvani** (1737–1798), for whom “galvano” is named after, first observed electric current.
- In 1800 another Italian, **Alessandro Volta** (1745–1827)—“volt” is named after him—created the first voltaic pile, a battery. Batteries were the source of the electric current until **Thomas Edison** developed electric generation.
- In 1805 a third Italian, **Luigi Brugnatelli** performed the first electroplating, on two medals!
- In 1837 a German **Moritz Herman Jacobi** (1801–1874) first developed the electrolysis process, which he called “galvanoplasty.”
- In 1840 two British cousins **George and Henry Elkington** learned of Jacobi’s process and patented it in England for the manufacture of silverware.
- In 1844 **Scovill Manufacturing** in Waterbury is first to use electrolysis in America.
- In 1847 the **Rogers Brothers** imported Elkington’s process for silverplating utensils in America and created their famed 1847 trademark.
- In 1849 the world’s most famous electrotype medal was made for the 1815 Battle of Waterloo after medallist **Benedetto Pistrucci** (1784–1855) had taken three decades to model it. Pinches had to electrolytically cast it because it was too large to strike with a pair of dies.
- In 1851 **William E. DuBois** (1810–1881) begins using electrolysis at the U.S. Mint according to Kenneth Bressett.
- In 1860 **DuBois** replicated the 1804 dollar by electrolysis.

There is more to the electrolysis story, but we have covered the period near the time of Pinches creating the Waterloo Medal of 1849.

Jonathan Brecher then responds:

Fabulous! That makes a LOT of sense. Given that there are at least two different

types of wax, I wonder if that means these molds were actually used in production over a longish time period, where the wax would need to be touched up from time to time.

I wish I could prove the provenance back to Pinches. Unfortunately, this came from an estate sale. Whatever the previous owner knew, it’s been lost.

I’ll definitely try to track down a copy of that ANA Journal. I’m not actually collecting electrotypes, but I’ve picked up a few that I like, and I definitely don’t know as much as I could. Thanks, Dick!

Dick Johnson then adds:

You have made a correct assumption. The evidence of two kinds (or colors) of wax could very well indicate it was cast at two different times. This could be decades apart! Electrotypers generally only keep one kind of wax on hand. In fact, you could have this done now.

If you would like to see this process in action—or if you would like to have a positive made from your mold—I recommend you bring your mold to the following firm to

have this work done, they are the America’s most expert medallic electrotypers:

Greco Industries, Inc.
 Ricky Greco, VP
 Francis J. Clarke Industrial Park
 14 Trowbridge Drive
 Bethel, CT 06801
 Phone: (203) 798–7804
 Email: grec086@aol.co

This firm is in a brand new \$3 million plant. It was founded by Hugo Greco, former head of the finishing department at Medallic Art Co in New York City. He just celebrated his 50th year in the field. The Greco family brings a great deal of Italian craftsmanship to their work.

As I have mentioned in a recent article in MCA Advisor, foundry casting can reproduce detail down to 1/100th of an inch, die striking can reproduce detail down to 1/1000th of an inch, but electrogalvanic casting can reproduce detail to the width of an atom!! It is far more detailed.



MORE ON CLEANING

by Mike Thorne, Coins Magazine

In my last column, I continued talking about coin cleaning and said that in this column I would discuss methods of storing coins. Since I wrote the previous column, I've had an exchange of e-mails with chemist and numismatist Weimar White in which he's suggested that I say a few more things about coin cleaning before leaving the topic entirely. Because I think his points need to be made, I'm happy to include them here.

In an earlier column, I included White's belief that toning is bad for coins, which he expressed in the title of one of the articles reprinted in his book *Coin Chemistry*: "Toning is to Silver What Rust is to Iron: Bad News." As he puts it in one of his e-mails:

"Collectors in general do not realize that toning is basically a form of corrosion. Toning/corrosion etches the surface of a coin through oxidation, and it can destroy the radial corrugations that are responsible for giving an uncirculated coin its mint bloom. Frequently cleaning is blamed for the loss of mint lustre on an uncirculated coin, but in reality most often it was the tarnish, toning, corrosion, that reduced or destroyed the original mint bloom."

What White is saying is that if a coin loses its mint bloom following careful dipping, it's because the toning/corrosion that was removed had already destroyed the tiny lines responsible for that mint lustre.

It wasn't caused by the dip removing "tiny flow lines on a coin's surface that are imparted during the minting process," as I wrote in an earlier column. I had gotten this idea from Scott Travers' *Coin Collector's Survival Manual* and had cited a "pair of scanning electron microscopy photographs of the surface of a coin before and after 15-second dipping" as evidence for the point.

White describes a simple experiment to prove that the dip removes the toning/tarnish, not the metal of the coin. He writes:

"Weigh a heavily tarnished coin to the nearest 0.1 milligram. Then dip the coin, dry it, and weigh it again. With a silver dollar, you will see that several milligrams of surface tarnish has been removed. This contains mostly oxidized silver.

"Then dip the silver dollar again, dry it,

and weigh it again, and you will see that very little if any weight loss has occurred. This proves that it was not the dip, as a general statement, that had etched the surfaces of the coin, but rather the tarnish or corrosion. The weight loss experiment shows that most of the atomic silver removed from the coin [with the first dip] was caused by the toning process."

It occurred to me that I had inadvertently performed White's experiment myself years ago in a very crude way. At the time, I had an Extremely Fine 1864-L Indian Head cent that was completely black, as though it had been in a fire. Eventually I decided to see if I could improve its appearance by cleaning it. I did manage to get a good bit of the blackness off, but when the blackness departed, so did the tiny "L."

In other words, the fire-caused corrosion included many of the surface features of the coin. Removing the corrosion deleted the surface features as well.

The bottom line on this discussion of toning, tarnish, and dipping is that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. If you like (and are willing pay for) toned/tarnished coins that many in the numismatic community consider attractive, then more power to you. Personally, I like uncirculated coins with full mint lustre and little if any toning.

I've had a remarkably difficult time finding Professional Coin Grading Service-certified silver Washington quarters in Mint State-64 to -67 with full mint lustre and no toning.

Now to the issue of storage: The central question is how best to house your coins to protect them from the ravages of the environment. According to J. P. Martin's chapter on coin storage in Bill Fivaz's *Helpful Hints for Enjoying Coin Collecting*, the best thing you can do for your coins is to move to Arizona. That's fine if you already happen to live in Arizona (or some other extremely arid environment).

But what's a person living in Florida or Mississippi or some other place with high humidity supposed to do?

If you've ever done appraisals of coin collections, as I have, then you've encountered



many different storage methods, some decidedly better than others. One method that should definitely be avoided involves long-term storage of coins in PVC (polyvinyl chloride) holders. These are usually clear plastic 2-by-2 flips that are nice and pliable, with no hard edges to hurt your fingers.

I once had an album made entirely of this material. It seemed really great, as each coin was nice and visible, edges included, and the album didn't have any sulphur-containing paper or cardboard to tarnish my coins. Unfortunately, I live in a warm, humid environment, and, as Martin puts it, "High temperatures can cause a deterioration of the plastics in some of the coin holders commonly in use today with resultant damage to the coins in them."

Such PVC damage is signalled by a greenish tinge to the coins. When I saw this on my collection of Barber quarters, I knew I had to take my coins out of the album, remove the green slime, and put the coins in a better holder.

To remove the PVC, Martin suggests the use of "a solvent such as acetone, following the instructions on the container. Do not remove the coins from the holder until you are ready to bathe them, as the [PVC slime] may dry out and become harder to remove."

Of course, the same thing can happen to any coins in PVC holders if you leave them in the holders for too long a period and they're exposed to elevated temperatures. You'll find that a lot of dealers use these holders because they're inexpensive, widely available, easy to handle, and are OK for short-term storage. Just be sure to remove the coins when you get home and put them in better holders for long-term storage.

DORA DE PÉDERY-HUNT MEMORIAL

by Paul R. Petch

A memorial service was held at the historic Arts and Letters Club in Toronto between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Sunday, November 16, 2008, on what would have been Dora de Pédery-Hunt's 95th birthday, to celebrate her life and her accomplishments.

There was a turn-out of over 150 friends for the event, many of whom spoke of special experiences and memories. They recalled Dora's energy, her talent for creating and appreciating art medals and her gentle way of sometimes coercing people to become involved and help with her causes.

The event included a display of many of her works, both medals and sculptures, from her personal collection. Some of the attendees kept their hands behind their backs as they stared at the medals, but others, remembering Dora's advice on how best to appreciate an art medal, picked them up and explored and fully experienced each piece.

During the proceedings there was a very special champagne toast to her life and, because it was a party after all, the gathering concluded with cake.

A web site, <http://www.doradepederyhunt.ca/>, has been established to commemorate her life and work.



BUYERS BEWARE: NOT ALL COINS ARE MONEY

by Richard Giedroyc, World Coin News

Members of the Federation Internationale de la Medal (FIDEM) have discussed for years the question regarding where to draw the fine line between when a free standing art medal is no longer a medal, but becomes a piece of sculpture.

Perhaps a similar question should be asked regarding some non-circulating legal tender commemorative coins. Most collectors understand that not all coins are money in the sense that regardless of if the country of issue insists it will honour them as cash or not the bottom line is that most commemorative issues are not meant to circulate.

But, when does the envelope get pushed too far? World coin dealer Joel Anderson of Grover Beach, California is a good source for some of the strangest recently issued “coins” in the world that perhaps in some cases may be more novelty than anything else, coins that are simply over the top. Some of these issues are coins only because the issue names the country through which they were authorized, a denomination, and a date. Let’s face it. Many of these issues are produced for a very specialized market of collectors or for the uninitiated general public that doesn’t understand coin collecting but likes the issue due to the subject matter appearing on the coins.

Anderson’s recent Fall-Winter 2008 fixed price list has a section titled “Unusual Coins.” This may be an understatement. The 2008 Palau Pearl of the Sea \$5 coin is composed of .925 fine silver. The coin has a genuine pearl imbedded in it on the obverse. Struck in Proof the coin mercifully has a mintage of 2,500 coins.

An unnamed privately owned mint has released 2004- to 2006-dated \$10 gold-on-silver Wildlife Jewelled Eyes coins in the name of Liberia. Liberia is a favourite country in whose name many NCLT coins are

struck by privately owned mints since the Liberian government will allow these mints to pay a fee for the rights to use the name Liberia on virtually any commemorative coin these mints which to issue.

According to Anderson, “The animals’ eyes [on these coins are] set in with bright, sparkling crystals, producing stunning effect.” I would doubt any of these coins have ever been in Liberia.

The coins struck in the name of Palau and Liberia are conservative compared to recent issues struck in the name of the Cook Islands and Somalia. The 2006 Cook Islands Valencia Cathedral \$5 coin is a gold-on-silver composition issue shaped like a cathedral, making it ridiculous to ever consider for circulation. It was likely issued as a souvenir targeting the general public. The coin commemorates Pope Benedict XVI’s visit to Valencia, Spain, which has nothing to do with the Cook Islands. The coin has seven Swarovski crystal jewels where the stained glass windows would appear in the cathedral, making the coin an interesting numismatic item, but hardly anything that could circulate even by accident.

Somalia may be a land of many things, but it is doubtful guitars or grizzly bears are part of its culture. Nonetheless some private mint or mints decided to solicit the Somalian government for permission (Perhaps I am assuming too much?) to strike NCLT dollar coins in the name of that African nation. The 2008-dated North American Wildlife dollar coins not only depict a polar bear, wolf, buffalo, moose, mountain lion, or grizzly bear, but that side of each coin is in color and the “coins” are in the shape of each animal. I doubt any bank in The Federal Republic of Somalia will want to sell these coins by the roll.

Also recently issued in the name of the Somali Republic are sets of six 2004-dated

dollar denominated coins in the shapes of guitars. Anderson wryly states, “though they never actually circulated in Somalia.”

Now, common Joel! You meant to tell me Gibson guitars aren’t popular in Somalia? Incidentally, these “coins” are available either in gold- or silver-plate, adding to the bells and whistles to attract buyers.

Don’t blame the governments of the Cook Islands, Liberia, or Somalia for allowing privately owned mints to issue coins in their names. So-called recently issued coins likely destined to be catalogued in some future edition of Colin Bruce’s book *Unusual World Coins* include the 2008 1/2 and 1 cauri of the Kingdom of Kabousse (located in southern Senegal), 2008 Syppo 2 cauri (also in southern Senegal), and the 2008 25-cent coins of Westartica Territories. At least the coins of Kabousse and Syppo are round. The four-coin set of Westartica are triangular and fit together to form a square.

According to Anderson, “Westartica was created by a gentleman who made a claim to a large, desolate, uninhabited, and previously unclaimed section of Western Antarctica.”

Well, at least this is better than the coins of the Kingdom of Bermania issued by coin dealer Allen G. Berman of Connecticut. Bermania exists (No offense intended, Allen.) in Allen’s mind, although the kingdom does reach reality when the kingdom’s royal family hosts receptions at certain world coin conventions.

All right, maybe I am too much of a purist, insisting coins be something that actually can or have been used as money. Regardless, it is always interesting to see what technology is available for use on coins, regardless of if it is circulating currency or not. There have been innovations in which new technologies have later been adopted for use on circulating coins.

Joel Anderson has a web site. Visit him at <http://www.joelscoins.com/oops.htm>

