

## "The Bulletin" July, 1998

### President's Message

Here we are on our summer schedule with meetings moved to the third Wednesday for the next couple of months. Remember our meeting on **August 19**.

This is our last meeting before the CNA Convention. Harvey Farrow will be our Club Delegate and will fill us in on events at the August meeting.

I mentioned at the last meeting that one of our first tasks in hosting the ONA 2000 Convention should be to decide on a design for a medal. This design will also become the logo of the event and will be used on our letterhead and in all promotion and advertising. I have suggested that we hold a medal design contest, open to all North York Coin Club members. First, you must decide on a theme. Will it be the 40th anniversary of our Club, the year 2000, something of wide historic interest in the North York or Greater Toronto region, or do you have other ideas? Details of the contest and the choosing of a winner with an appropriate prize will have to be discussed and decided, but you can start mulling over the possibilities right away.

While at the ONA meeting a few weeks ago, I picked up a bit of clarifying information. This bulletin incorrectly reported a \$894.74 loss for the ONA in 1997. In

## "It's New to You"

The next meeting of the North York Coin Club will be held on **Wednesday, July 15, 1998**, at the Edithvale Community Centre, 7 Edithvale Drive.

Here it is, summertime. The speed of life slows down a bit, perhaps you have a rest from your regular work and half of what is offered on television seems to be re-runs. They use the "It's New to You" slogan to prompt you to tune in and perhaps catch some show you missed the first time around. We're using it to establish the theme for our next meeting. Let's hear about your most recent and current collecting news... tell us all about it or bring something along for show and tell, but only if "It's New to You." We will have some summertime refreshments for break time, so join us for a laid-back and relaxed meeting.

### Coming Events

**Hamilton Coin and Collectable Show**  
July 11 at the Royal Canadian Legion, 1180 Barton St. E., (opposite Centre Mall). 45 Tables, free parking, door prizes. Family admission \$2, seniors \$1 Contact George Smith, (905) 385-6945.

**Woodstock Collectibles Show** July 19, 10:30am-4pm at the Oxford Audito-

rium, Fairgrounds, 875 Nellis Street. \$2 admission. Contact Ian Ward (519) 426-8875

**1998 CNA Convention** July 29-August 1, Edmonton, Alberta at the Convention Inn.

**Southwestern Ontario Numismatics Coin and Collectibles Show** August 9, 9am-5pm at the Paris Fairgrounds, 139 Silver St. 40 tables \$1 admission. Contact Ted Bailey (519) 442-3474

**Tillsonburg Collectibles Show and Sale** August 23, 10:30am-3pm at the Tillsonburg Community Centre, 45 Hardy Ave. 65 tables \$2 admission. Contact Ian Ward (519) 426-8875

fact, this was a decrease in the ONA's General Account only. There was actually a \$442.45 increase in the balance for the ONA during 1997.

Need to reach the President? Phone calls are welcome at **416-745-3067** (leave a voice mail message if you can't get through in person) and e-mail may be sent to [patchp@ican.net](mailto:patchp@ican.net).

**Next Meeting:  
July 15**

## Meeting News from the June 16 Meeting

The 430th Meeting of the NYCC was held on Tues. June 16, 1998 at the Edithvale Community Centre, 7 Edithvale Dr. Willowdale, Ont.

The President, Paul Petch, opened the meeting at 8:10 p.m. and welcomed 17 members.

While the President was reaching for a name for the On Time Attendance Draw, Lyan See was heard to remark that she had never won. Well, that's no longer the case, and she went away with the \$2 pot.

The minutes of the May 26 meeting were read by the Secretary and approved by the chair.

The Chair advised the club that a favourable presentation was made to the ONA Executive and announced we will be hosting the 2000 ONA Convention. Paul stated we will require a theme and suggested a club competition might provide some creative ideas.

Ted Boxall reported he just received the Community Centre's application for next year's meetings and that the selected summer dates look okay.

Another belated Lifetime Membership Certificate was presented to Basil Latham based on his 25 years of continuous membership recognized at the February meeting.

Paul Petch presented the programme for the evening. It consisted of a preview viewing of 50 slides covering the sets of CNA Convention Medals from 1954 to 1997. As the commentary was very lengthy Paul had pre-recorded it and will contribute the recording to the CNA.



The 38th slide in the set features our own Club medal. The commentary reads, "In 1986, the 33rd annual convention came back to central Canada to the Westbury Hotel, Toronto. The convention was hosted by the North York Coin Club and the reverse of the 1986 medal featured the North York Memorial Community Hall. The Hall had been

the home of the North York Coin Club for twenty-five years. The obverse features the CNA logo. There were 250 bronze and 100 silver medals struck. There were one hundred and nine award medals including the one Best of Show gold medal."

Even though the presentation was a little long, it was worthwhile and it was a great pleasure to see the medals in all their glory. The members showed their appreciation to Paul for all of his efforts with a sincere round of applause.

For the coffee break we extend many thanks to Roger Fox for preparing coffee for the evening as well as other cold drinks and cookies.

The Lucky Draw was run by Paul Petch and the winners were: Ted Boxall, Paul Petch(2), Lucille Colson(2), Basil Latham, Ron Zelk, Pamel Heifetz, Harvey Farrow and Jim Heifetz. Many thanks to Brian See for his donations. Paul reports that the lottery ticket he selected as a draw prize won \$4.

There was no auction.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:30 p.m.

## Question of the Month

Over the 2,700 some-odd years during which coins have been struck, the practice of dating coins based on the Roman Catholic calendar as A.D. (*anno Domini*, "in the year of the Lord") is a relatively recent innovation. For the July question we ask, "In which year and from which area did the first A.D.-dated coin have its origin?"

For the June question of the month we asked you to identify some of the "mint" errors in the CNA medal series.

The most significant incident was with the 1955 medal. Brian Cornwell's book on CNA Medals and Awards tells us that "Unfortunately the medals were struck from clashed dies and a cracked obverse die." It then goes on to relate that there was a plan to create four presentation pieces by overstriking using Mexican 8-Reales or "piece of eight" as the planchet. This plan could not be carried out "due to the deteriorated condition of the die... so that the two that were actually struck are considered to be trial strikes."

The notes accompanying the CNA



Medals slide set supply extra detail by stating that "The die for the Ottawa medal was cracked before the striking commenced, and the break became worse as the striking proceeded." In respect to the two trial strikes it states that "the die, which was damaged before the striking of any pieces commenced, broke down completely." The remains of the reverse die have been lost while the obverse die is in the possession of Pritchard-Andrews Co., who originally struck the medal.

## Small Change--Big Deal by Jay Teitel

**CHANGE HAS CHANGED** in Canada over the past 11 years, with the introduction of the photogenic "loonie" (one dollar coin) in 1987, and the equally striking "twonie" (two dollar coin) a few years ago. The fact is, change isn't change anymore in this country, not in the North American sense: It's now change in the European/Asian sense, which is something else altogether. Indeed in the global coin picture we're still neophytes. At least a dozen countries outside this continent have coins worth \$5 and up; the current leader is the Japanese 500 yen coin, today worth a whopping \$6 Canadian. Regard less, when countries move to higher denomination coins, they usually do it for two reasons: to satisfy demands from major coin users, i.e. transit authorities, the vending industry (try paying for a \$3 tuna sandwich with quarters); and to save money (the twonie will save the taxpayer \$250-million over the next 20 years). What they often fail to anticipate is the revolutionary effect the new change can have at the grassroots level of out monetary culture.

Any Canadian knows that change warps a pocket. In the past, it was easy to shell out a dollar or two--doing so made our pockets and purses lighter. Nowadays a few coins equals a lot of money. At the same time, what once cost 75 cents in a vending machine now costs a dollar, and what once cost \$1.50 has gone up to \$2. Caroline Manton, Executive Director of CAMA, the Canadian Automatic Merchandising Association, admits that vending machine prices have risen, but maintains that the rises have coincided with an increase in the size of the product. while it's true that Coca Cola did increase its can size from 280 ml to 355 ml around the time of the loonie's introduction, and the standard potato chip bag swelled by about 20 percent, the advantages are largely mythical. And then there is the "Panhandling Windfall". A busker who's been play-

ing classical guitar at a Toronto subway stop near my house for the past six years claims that in the 30-day period from the introduction of the twonie in February 1996, he tripled his daily take. It's not surprising. Two years ago, dropping a two dollar bill into a guitar case would have been regarded as the height of philanthropy; today dropping a twonie can seem almost stingy. One photographer friend of mine recently estimated that he'd given the same homeless person more than \$400 in a single year without realizing it. Meanwhile, the "squeegee kids" swarming the intersections of Canada's larger cities regularly take in \$100 over a four-hour period providing unsolicited car windshield-washing.

But what about the advantages of large denomination coins to the non-panhandling citizen? If you're a waiter, you don't have to ask. Because most tips that are left in Canadian restaurants are rendered in change, the natural instinct is to leave a bigger pile of coins to make up for the fact that no paper is included--a naked loonie just isn't as impressive as a dollar bill.

Like the metric system, the big coins differentiate us from the Americans, who failed dismally at introducing their own dollar coin, the Susan B. Anthony, in the early 1980s. In the same national-pride vein, a recent episode of TV's "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine" featured a coin collecting character whose prize possession was not a Susan B. Anthony dollar, but a "lucky loonie," an ancient Canadian coin from the distant past.

For every year except one during the '90s, average personal savings account deposits increased from the beginning of the year to the end. The one exception was 1996, the year in which the twonie was introduced and in which the average deposit had dropped significantly by year's end. "Serious grown-up piggy-bank use is way up," says Caroline Manton.

But in the end, the most important effect of the new coins circles back to the nature of change itself. Change is ultimately the province of children; in their universe, pocket money is meaningful, or at least it should be. The other day I told my son that when I was 13 and got a quarter for allowance I could buy a chocolate bar and a coke and still have enough left over for a comic book.

"Well for a twonie I can get the first two," he said. "And I can always hit your jacket pocket for the rest."

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### A couple of thoughts...

This article has referred to our \$2 coin with the spelling "twonie." Does that spelling look a little odd to you? It may, since the word-play that brings us the name is based on "loonie" and other spellings include "toonie" and "twoonie." That's what happens when verbal puns have to be put to print!

Our Canadian dollar has been taking a beating compared to the U.S. Dollar over these last few weeks, holding on as best it can at the 68¢ level. This has been the topic of a few political cartoons. Perhaps you've seen a few. I liked the sombrero-wearing loon in the Sun. Another had a "loonie" where the "bottom has fallen out of the dollar." The loon was on the ground, the water had all drained from the lake and the islands were sitting high and dry on the remaining mud flats. Let's hope our poor loon recovers soon.

## It's About Time

The year 1996 was referred to as a "leap year" because it had a "leap day" to make the length 366 days rather than the usual 365 days. The official name of the "leap day" is an *intercalary* day (with the accent on the second syllable). Intercalary is the adjective form of the verb to intercalate, which means to insert. This practice began with the introduction of the Julian calendar that was put into use by Julius Caesar in 45 B.C.

He realized that a *tropical* year, the interval of time between successive beginnings of spring, is about  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days. Since agriculture was the main occupation of most people in the world until 200 years ago, adjusting the calendar year to fit the seasons seemed the most reasonable way to form a calendar. The best one can do is to make the average length of a year  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days by having 366 days in every fourth year. In 533 A.D., when the monk Dionysius Exiguus determined the year of Christ's birth and began the numbering system for years A.D., it worked out conveniently that years evenly divisible by four were leap years.

Unfortunately,  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days is not the exact length of a tropical year. The time between successive instants of the beginning of spring is 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46.02 seconds. While this makes the Julian year only 11 minutes and 13.92 seconds longer than a tropical year, it amounts to spring beginning one day earlier after about 128 years. The seasons were slowly moving backward through the year under the Julian calendar.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII was informed by his astronomer, Christopher Clavius, that the first day of spring had fallen on March 10 of that year, not on March 21 as it should. Gregory felt it was important to put the seasons back in the same places in the calendar. He therefore declared that the next day after October 4, 1582, was October 15, 1582. He also adopted a revision in the calendar which resulted in the average length of a year being closer to the length of a

tropical year. This calendar, which we now use, is called the Gregorian calendar. It differs from the Julian calendar by letting century years, such as 1600, 1700, 1800, etc., be leap years *only* if they are evenly divisible by 400. Thus, 1600 was a leap year, and 2000 will be, too, but 1700, 1800, and 1900 were not leap years.

The average length of our Gregorian year is 365 days, 5 hours, 49 minutes, and 12 seconds, still about 26 seconds longer than a tropical year. However, more than 3000 years must now pass for the seasons to move back by one day. A suggested modification to the Gregorian calendar is to eliminate as leap years those years which are evenly divisible

by 400. This would result in the length of a year, averaged over 4000 years, being only 4 seconds longer than a tropical year. Fortunately, we still have a couple thousand years before we need to give serious thought to this modification.

*Would you like to know more about calendar systems used by different cultures and especially more about the Gregorian calendar as background for the coins you collect? There will be a few copies of a 23-page paper on calendars available at the July and August Club meetings.*

## Club Members Enjoy Mint Tour



This photo of President/Editor Paul Petch was taken by Club member John Regitko in the Press Room of the Royal Canadian Mint, Ottawa. It was during a tour of the mint facilities on April 20 which was conducted by Mr. Stephen Hops, Director of the Ottawa Plant. Also attending the tour were other presenters of the CNA/NESA Classroom Course including Dr. Marvin Kay, Chris Boyer, Brian Cornwell and Susan Maltby and their spouses. About 70 of the total 160-member staff of the Mint took part in the course on April 20/21 to gain a better understanding of our hobby. The coin being struck is a 125th Anniversary RCMP proof dollar. While it was a unique experience, the resulting coin was heading straight for the melting pot. Paul's hands were not gloved and, as a guest, the striking was not an official one, so it didn't meet the Mint's quality control standards.