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# The MCA Advisory

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*The Newsletter of Medal Collectors of America*

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Annual Meeting August 7, 2009 Los Angeles

**What's New on Our Website!**

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE EVERY MONTH**



## From the Editor

Charles Bushnell was a passionate collector of Americana. Most of us are familiar with the man and the 1882 sale of his monumental collection via an auction catalogue written by the Chapman Brothers. Only readers of George Kolbe's January sale will be familiar with another very special Bushnell landmark.

The first two studies of United States medals were authored by James Mease, M.D. (1834) and Francis J. Fisher (1837). Bushnell clipped these two listings out of the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Then he bound them together, suitably ornamented, adding in pencil his own holdings, the names of engravers and other useful information.

Alongside the entry for the de Fleury medal, the collector notes: "gold—Robt L. Stuart." As was noted in *COMITIA AMERICANA* by Adams and Bentley, Fleury requested that, in addition to the silver medal awarded by Congress, he also wanted a specimen in gold. He had deposited money with the engraver (DuVivier) to fund the request.

The authors of *COMITIA* concluded that it was very unlikely that Franklin had countenanced a gold medal. Now, along comes Bushnell's notation making it highly likely, in our opinion, that such a piece was indeed made. The point is this: if someone offers you a de Fleury in gold, don't raise your eyebrows but reach for your wallet.

# *MCA Launches Medal Interviews As Oral History on Its Web Site;*

## Actual Voices of Medal Authorities Can Be Accessed by Anyone on Web

MCA MEMBERS INVITED TO CONDUCT  
OWN INTERVIEWS, GOAL IS TO COMPILE  
RESEARCH DATA, PRESERVE VOICES.

*By D. WAYNE JOHNSON*

**Boston** (March 2009)—In what may prove to be one of the most important services of the Medal Collectors of America, the national collector organization has officially launched interviews of prominent people in the medal field and placed this audio on its web site.

After more than six months planning – choosing a conference call service provider and early testing – the first full-length interview has been conducted with Alan M. Stahl, curator, author, and medal organization official. He was interviewed by Dick Johnson on November 21st.



The concept for such a feature originated among MCA board members in the summer of 2008. Board members Bob Fritsch and John Sallay favored the idea and agreed to pursue it further.

"The idea generated immediate support" wrote Sallay in an early report. "It took on a new urgency with the recent passing of a few very prominent long-time collectors and medalists."

Sallay contacted Mark Schellphorst at the suggestion of Johnson. Mark—a recent MCA

member--is active in the high-tech field and immediately knew what was needed. He agreed to source a conference service. After a thorough search he identified AccuConference as the ideal provider.

**Author-Curator Alan M. Stahl  
First To Have Been Interviewed.**

**The interviewer** serves as the conference moderator. Both he and the person to be interviewed call a phone number and log on to MCA's exclusive account. Both parties' telephone conversation is recorded digitally. The moderator controls when the voice recording starts and stops.

AccuConference has a term for this process of one interviewer and one person interviewed. They call such an exchange "Conference Lite."

MCA is billed for only the actual time of the recording. An average hour of such recorded voices is about \$6. MCA President John Adams and other board members considered this a favorable cost to document such vital data in the medallic field.

Collectors, dealers, curators, artists, medal manufacturers, medal issuers and perhaps even U.S. Mint personnel will be considered for interviewing. All are potential subjects to provide insight and data in the medallic field that might otherwise not be saved for present or future use. The goal is to obtain information in which the party interviewed has intimate knowledge.



**Oral history conference in Boston: MCA board member John Sallay (left) discusses planning for the projected recording of medal experts with Mark Schlepphorst (center), who will administer the project and writer Dick Johnson, an experienced interviewer of authorities in the past, has agreed to conduct several interviews for MCA.**

Those potential interviewees who are senior in age, or long-time active in the field, will be the first to be interviewed, as Sallay suggested. However, any MCA member may conduct an interview, or suggest someone to be interviewed.

The goal is to record and document every aspect of the medallic field, from artists' original creations to the housing, storing and arranging of a

medal collection. Topical collector interests will be explored as well as historical and technical content, how medals are made, for example.

The length of an interview is immaterial. It can range from a dozen questions, answered in, say, twenty to thirty minutes, to interviews lasting more than two hours, perhaps even multiple interviews of

the same authority. Long interviews, however, can best be offered in shorter segments.

This is in contrast to other fields. For example art biographer Paul Cummings once interviewed modern artist Roy Gussow – he prepared one medallic object in our medal field – for eight hours at one time in February 1968. This was for the Archives of American Art, whose tapes are now in the Smithsonian Institution, available for scholarly study.

**The advantage** of the conference call recording program is that there are no tapes or tape recorders to contend with. It is all digitally stored and placed on the organization’s web site.

MCA’s web site is managed by Ben Weiss, a retired educator, who states “this novel project will constitute an important new addition to our body of knowledge of the History of the Medallic Field. The internet is uniquely suited for this project for it allows rapid and readily accessible dissemination of information.”

Weiss is a long-time medal collector who has cataloged his collection and has placed over 400 illustrations and data on his own web site. It can be found at [www.historicalartmedals.com/](http://www.historicalartmedals.com/)

MCA’s web site – where the oral interviews are available – is full of information for the medal collector. Basic information plus advanced data for the medal specialist and all in attractive arrangement by webmaster Weiss.

**The MCA oral history** program is administered, at least for its early phases, by Mark Schlepphorst. He coordinates all interviews, edits the sound recording and passes the final version to Weiss who places it on MCA’s web site.



**Ben Weiss, MCA Webmaster**

For the present, Mark retains all the signed releases. Each interviewee signs a release assigning all rights to MCA. At some time in the future these interviews will be transcribed and placed in MCA archives for future researchers. For the present, however, anyone can listen to the recording on the web.

Mark’s editing can take out unwanted sounds – a cough, or the dropping of a book – or an extra long pause; it cannot add new sound. Or either party can choose to eliminate an unwanted statement.

**On the pages below** can be found the actual questions asked of Alan Stahl during this first interview. Also added is the interviewer’s notes – why he asked a question, the type of question, or why he omitted that prepared question.

This is done with the thought that it might serve as a guide for anyone who is preparing for an interview. Preparing questions in advance is mandatory. The interviewer must have a list prepared ahead of time, it is difficult to think of a next question while listening to an answer the interviewee is giving.

Any attempt to improvise during the call results in conversation, rather than in fact-gathering results.

For someone compiling potential questions, think of what information you would like to know, or what data the person possesses. Personal experiences are excellent questions, as are observations. Be as specific as possible. You are gathering facts.

Don't interject yourself too frequently. "I am aware you ..." is permitted a time or two. But don't try to impress the interviewee with your knowledge. Remember you are gathering his knowledge, his experiences.

If you want to impress the interviewee, do it with well-researched and well-worded questions. Use correct medallic terms and pronounce them correctly.

If you would like to emulate an experienced interviewer, a favorite of the author's is James Lipton on the TV program *Inside the Actors Studio* on cable's Bravo. Stay away from the Charlie Rose's or any of the "gotcha" interviewers. We are gathering facts among friends, not providing contentious entertainment.

There are some guidelines in telephone inter-viewing. Both parties should be in a quiet room, telephones pick up extraneous noise. Use land lines not cell phones. Don't worry about misstatements or long pauses; these can be edited out.

**The choice** of Alan M. Stahl for the first interview was more than beneficial. He has been active in the medallic field since 1982 when he was named curator of medals in addition to being named curator of medieval numismatics at New York's American Numismatic Society.

He served as president for four years of the medallic artists group, American Medallic Sculptures Association, and later was named to the

board of the National Sculpture Society, predominately composed of figurative sculptors, many of whom have prepared medallic art.

As an instructor of both undergraduate and university graduate level, Stahl is accustomed to speaking without notes. He has written extensively for thirty years in the numismatic field, with eleven books and 79 articles to his credit.

"It was an ideal telephone interview," according to Johnson. "I did not have to prompt Alan at any time," He can talk at length on most every subject of medal interest. We recorded an hour and fifty minutes. "It was a dream to interview him. I would like to do a second interview with him."

It is hoped the same can be experienced by other MCA members as they choose some medal expert they would like to interview. It is as easy as talking on the telephone.

Remember this: Everyone is an expert on themselves and their work or their collecting. All you have to do is ask them to tell you.

*Now you are in for a rare treat. The Stahl interview is in four segments of about 30 minutes each. The questions are listed below. Kindly log on to MCA web site at: [www.medalcollectors.org/](http://www.medalcollectors.org/) click on **Oral History** then listen to audio of Alan Stahl's four interviews with authentic and knowledgeable replies. As a medal enthusiast I learned a lot from his comments, I am certain you will too.*

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### **Tips For Conducting Interviews**

Below are two sites which can be useful to aid anyone conducting interviews. The first is from the Regional Oral History Office at the UC Berkeley Library. Click on:

<http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/resources/rohotips.html>

The second is telephone conference call tips compiled for conference callers. It is a little more general and somewhat more lengthy. Its General Call Etiquette is excellent. You'll find it at:

[http://www.fullcirc.com/community/telephon\\_efacilitation.html](http://www.fullcirc.com/community/telephon_efacilitation.html)

## National Commemorative Medals are a Category of United States Mint Medals (By Donald Scarinci)

The publication of two books on the subject of *national commemorative medals (NCM)*, separately researched and written by different authors without knowledge of the other, has created some confusion and a misconception that needs to be clarified. The two books present three different numbering systems and there are some differences in the medals included and excluded in both. The central misconception is that these medals can be cataloged separately and independently from the body of United States Mint Medals, which is what they are.<sup>i</sup>

Both books, *National Commemorative Medals of the United States Mint*, by John T. Dean, published privately, 2008 and *National Commemorative Medals of the United States Mint Since 1873* by William Swoger, published privately, 2008 are excellent pieces of scholarship and contain important information about this category of United States Mint medals

The two books substantially confirm each other's research and contain consistent information with respect to mintage figures, the circumstances of each medals issuance, and most of the details about each medal. However, where the two books differ is far more fundamental and highlights the core problem: Exactly what are *national commemorative medals*?

Dean and Swoger do not agree on the definition of a *national commemorative medal*. Dean defers to Turner for his definition. His book is intended as an update of Turner's research. Turner's information was previously available only in articles from the *Numismatist*. Thanks to Dean this information is now

available in a single book updated to the present.

Turner requires an act of Congress to give a medal the status of a *national commemorative medal*. Swoger does not, as long as it was made after 1874. Turner requires that the medal be struck at the United States Mint, not merely designed or engraved there. Swoger does not, it need not be struck at the U.S. Mint but it must be engraved or designed by U.S. Mint employees. Furthermore, Turner requires that a *national commemorative medal* must be listed and sold as such by the medals' sponsor or at the event for which it was made but "not over the counter at any US Mint facility. Swoger does not, but Swoger creates other limitations to the definition of "commemorative."<sup>ii</sup>

Swoger cites to a law passed in 1874<sup>iii</sup> giving authority to strike medals "of a national character" to the Superintendent of the U.S. Mint, subject only to the approval of the Director of the Mint.<sup>iv</sup> Swoger interprets this law as sufficient to confer national status to commemorative medals that are produced at the discretion of the Mint Director and Secretary of the Treasury without an act of Congress. He also uses this law to grant support U.S. Mint status for medals not struck at the U.S. Mint.

Swoger then defines a *national commemorative medal* as one that marks an important current event or significant anniversary of an event of national consequence that is "struck for a limited time." He uses this definition to select the medals he includes, but he admits to bending his definition in the later sections of his book. These later sections include medals to help raise money for commemorative events, maintain memorials; or to help raise money for private organizations.<sup>v</sup>

The first medal listed by Turner is the 1940 Greenwich, Connecticut Tercentennial

medal. The first medal listed in Swoger's book is the 1875 Centennial of the Battle of Lexington, which is listed in Julian as CN-24. Swoger also lists the 1875 Mecklenburg Declaration, CN-28, the 1876 Nevada Dollar, CN-36; the 1882 Founding of Pennsylvania, CN-40 & CN-41 and other late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century medals issued by the U.S. Mint without specific Congressional enabling legislation.

Swoger's application of the 1874 law to the definition of a *national commemorative medal* creates a confusing and unsettled distinction between this new category of the *national commemorative medal* and the existing category by Julian of *commemorative medals*. If Swoger's logic were followed a persuasive argument can be made for many other *commemorative medals* listed in Julian to receive the designation of *national commemorative medal*. The distinction between the two categories would depend on a subjective determination whether a medal made after 1874 without specific Congressional enabling legislation is "Commemorative" or not. There is simply no need for this duplication, debate and confusion.

The logic of Turners position that a *national commemorative medal (NCM)* requires a specific act of Congress to be categorized as such is far more compelling. The fact that Congress passes a law with a majority vote of its members and that law is signed by the President of the United States, is de facto proof of the subject's "National character" If the medal also commemorates persons places or things, then the medal should be categorized as a *national commemorative medal (NCM)*.

Clearly the trend at the U.S. Mint for the last half century at least has been against producing medals without congressional authority. The *national commemorative medal (NCM)* is a legitimate and necessary new

category for these medals. Julian's category of *commemorative medal (CM)* should continue to be used to catalog those late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and 20<sup>th</sup> century commemorative medals that do not have specific congressional enabling legislation.

Swoger is correct to abandon Turners artificial starting point of 1940 for *national commemorative medals*. Turner begins his list of "national commemorative medals" with the 1940 Greenwich, Connecticut Tercentennial because, according to Dean, he viewed these medals as "filling the gap for specialty collectors" following the discontinuation of the United States commemorative coinage program in 1954. In the preface to his book, Swoger relates a conversation he had with Turner pointing out that there are U.S. Mint made commemorative medals authorized by specific acts of Congress before the 1940 Greenwich, Connecticut issue and that Turner said he was simply unaware of them.

Whatever reason Turner had for choosing to begin the category of *national commemorative medal* in 1940, that reason appears to be arbitrary and unjustifiable. If Turner's thinking were to be followed, approximately 11 medal types from the 1884 World's Industrial & Cotton Centennial Exposition to the 1925 Norse American Centennial which otherwise meet Turners core criteria as a *national commemorative medal* would not be cataloged as such.<sup>vi</sup>

Swoger is also correct to include as *national commemorative medals* those medals engraved or coordinated by the United States Mint personnel pursuant to the terms of the Congressional enabling legislation even though these medals were struck at a private mint.<sup>vii</sup> Government can and often should subcontract its work to private entities that can perform more cost effectively or produce a product that government might not be best equipped to produce. Well patinated, high relief medals

lend themselves especially to subcontracting by the Mint. They are no less than full U.S. Mint products because they are subcontracted any more than the printed leaflets and packaging they are sold with.

While revisions and updates are always needed, it is unnecessary to revisit Julian's categories and Julian's numbering system. They have stood the test of time and many collectors are invested in this system. What is necessary is a comprehensive catalog of U.S. Mint medals beginning where Julian stops, about 1893.<sup>viii</sup>

When the 20<sup>th</sup> century catalog is prepared, Julian's categories and numbering system should be preserved and expanded. In addition to *national commemorative medals (NCM)* other new categories will be necessary such as a category for *Congressional Gold Medals (CG)*, *Mint Director medals (MD)*, *Secretary of the Treasury medals (ST)*, and *national series 1—First Spouse medals (NS1)*, allowing for other National Series medals in the future as Congress may determine.

There is a category of *Commemorative Medals (CM)* created by Julian and that should be continued along with many other of his categories—*Presidential Medals (PR)*, *Personal Medals (PE)*, etc. If a medal is commemorative but it is not authorized by an act of congress then it should be placed in Julian's category as a *commemorative medal (CM)* and sequentially numbered as such with its earlier struck brethren.

The subject of a numbering system for United States Mint medals is not as daunting as the task ahead for the researchers working on the so-called dollar update. United States Mint products are definable and subject to public disclosure by law. There is reason to believe that the current Director of the United States Mint will welcome and even assist in a cataloging project. With the extensive research already conducted by three fine numismatists,

Turner, Dean and Swoger, it should be possible to create a simple, Julianic numbering system beginning with NCM-1.

Auction catalogers, grading services and writers should not be encouraged to use any of the current numbering systems for *national commemorative medals*. The Medal Collectors of America needs to act quickly to encourage and even actively create and coordinate a research group charged with the mission to define the *national commemorative medal*; to agree on the medals that should be included in that category; and to agree on numbers for them. A dialog also needs to begin on the parent project—*A Comprehensive Catalog of Medals of the United States Mint, Volume 2*.

(see end notes page 20)

**[This seems like an eminently worthy project. Who is willing to help out?—Ed.]**

## **Ron Dutton Receives 2009 Saltus Award** (By Donald Scarinci)

Ron Dutton, a sculptor and prolific medalist in the United Kingdom was awarded the prestigious J. Sanford Saltus award in February by the American Numismatic Society for his lifetime of achievement in the art of the medal.

Dutton became the 53<sup>rd</sup> artist to receive the award since it was created in 1919 and awarded that year to James Earl Frazer. Dutton joins a short list of the most important medallic artists in the world, with only 14 other international artists receiving the award since the scope of the award was expanded internationally in 1983.



Dutton is a pioneer of contemporary art medals in the United Kingdom. He produced his first medals in 1974. These early medals were experiments in relief and experimentation with sculptural landscapes. Yet, even with these first medals, Ron Dutton's medals were hand held poetry in bronze expressing otherwise simple images in abstract and profound ways.

Terrance Mullaly, an important London art critic, picked Ron Dutton's *Apple Tree Ladder* (uniface bronze, 78mm, ed. 20, 1975) as one of the twenty (20) best medals of the second half of the twentieth century. He said, "The poets of England are among her glories, and in an early work, his *Apple Tree Ladder*, Dutton gave us a medal that stands with their achievement." --*The Medal*, no.36, 2000

From 1961 to 1984, Ron Dutton taught sculpture at Sunderland and Wolverhampton Colleges. He has been a full time artist since 1985 and has exhibited extensively in solo and group exhibitions in the UK and abroad. He was one of the small group of international artists that John Cook brought to the important Pennsylvania State University medallic art workshop in 1983 which was a milestone for the development of the American art medal.



Apple Tree Ladder

One of the medals found in John Cook's personal collection, recently sold by Mashiko at the Rack & Hamper Gallery in New York City, was Dutton's *Sheep Storm*, (bronze 100mm ed. 20, 1982). Like John Cook's own work, the artist's process is apparent on this medal as the distinctions between the object of creation and the created object blur. The sheep and the storm form the landscape and provoke an emotional response from the viewer.



Sheep Storm, obverse



Sheep Storm, reverse

In 1982, Ron Dutton became one of the founders of the British Art Medal Society (BAMS) which helped and encouraged most of the great medallic artists working in the United Kingdom today. The Medal magazine, issued twice a year, is the world's most important journal of medallic art. Francis Simmons writes of Ron Dutton's importance to the creation of BAMS, "Ron is one of the people responsible for its existence as his little plaquettes, mainly landscapes, drew the attention of a curator at the British Museum, Mark Jones, and they joined with others to found the society for the promotion of medallic art in the UK."

Ron Dutton's most recent medals like *Cloud Driver* (bronze & silver wire, 150x120mm Edition 25, 2007). In *Cloud Driver*, he continues to express ideas about landscape, nature and flight that he has spent a lifetime experimenting with. Here, Dutton uses mixed materials of bronze and silver wire to allow the mind of the viewer to participate directly and understand the symmetry of nature in all of its purity. The distinction between the organic bird and the inorganic forces of nature

are blurred by the creative power of the human mind itself, which also finds expression here in bronze and silver.



Cloud Driver, reverse



Cloud Driver, obverse

A selection of Ron Dutton's medals was exhibited in the FIDEM parallel exhibit, FIDEM at 70 in Colorado Springs in September, 2007. That exhibit honored artists who are over 70 years old.

Ron Dutton's work and the work of other great artists from the United Kingdom is currently on Display at the Rack and Hamper Gallery, 325 W 38 Street, New York, New York at an exhibition supported by the British Art Medal Society and the Royal Coin Cabinet, Stockholm, Sweden. The exhibit was curated by Philip Attwood. Mashiko has prepared one of her wonderful catalogs to accompany this exhibit.

Another exhibit of Ron Dutton's work is currently at the gallery of the American Numismatic Society (ANS) at their new location on 75 Varick Street, 11th floor, New York, NY. This exhibit displays highlights of Ron Dutton's work along with a representative sample of some of the finest medals produced for the British Art Medal Society (BAMS) since it was formed in 1982. Many of the BAMS medals on display at the ANS were made by previous winners of the Saltus award. It is a fitting tribute to Ron Dutton that so many of the artists he has helped have received a Saltus award and that now he is among them.

## **Eureka! The Horse's Mouth**

(by Katie Jaeger)

**[Katie Jaeger found this contemporary report on the infamous Huey Long medal]**

Well, as close to the horse's mouth as a journalist writing a week after the event can be.

TIME Magazine has posted an online article archive, and pre-copyright articles are free.

Below is the Washroom Warrior story from all angles, dateline September 11, 1933:

"It is not news when a loud-mouthed roughneck gets a black eye. But it is news when a U. S. Senator in his cups commits a nuisance on the trouser leg of a guest at a Long Island party.

That fact accounted for the columns and columns of space the Press of the country gave last week to the bruise which Huey Pierce Long, Louisiana's tousel-headed, button-nosed "Kingfish," received on his left eye in the washroom of the Sands Point Bath Club a fortnight ago.

The club was giving a Saturday night charity show at \$6.60 per plate. Some 600 guests attended, among them Senator Long. His host was Songwriter Gene Buck. The Senator had been drinking before he arrived at the club. His strident voice rang out louder than usual as he barged around among the other diners. He sat down with strangers, made himself objectionable with vulgar greetings. Spotting a plump girl with a full plate before her, he marched to her table, snatched the plate from her, yapped: "You're too fat already. I'll eat this." He danced just once-until his partner's husband took the lady away. He thrust himself behind the bar, shoved its tender aside, loudly proclaimed that he would show the world how they mix and shake them in Louisiana. The Sands Point Bath Club is not noted for decorum on Saturday nights but Senator Long's behavior was far over its mark.

When about midnight the lights went down for the amateur floor show, Huey Long went shuffling off to the washroom. There were others there. The raucous Senator was impatient of any delay. Imperiously he ordered a young man to stand aside for the "Kingfish of Louisiana." "Take it easy-take it easy," replied the young man. Unable or unwilling to restrain himself, Senator Long proceeded to commit a gross indignity upon the young man. When he felt what was happening to his leg the young man wheeled around, drove his knuckles with all his might into the offender's face. The Senator staggered back groggily, brought up against the washbasins. Blood streamed down his face from a cut over his left eye. Attendants and friends put him back on his feet, iced his

eye, buttoned him up, ushered him from the club.

He was put into a taxicab, sent back to his Manhattan hotel where a house physician patched him.

It was 36 hours before the Manhattan Press got wind of the Sands Point fracas. By that time Senator Long was in Milwaukee to address the convening Veterans of Foreign Wars. When a New York Sun reporter called the Senator by long distance telephone for his version of what happened, an angry splutter of unprintable profanity came over the wire. Finally from his Milwaukee hotel the Louisiana "Kingfish" issued a statement. Excerpts:

"... I walked into the washroom. Just as I faced the basin and the wall someone struck me from behind and upon my turning three or four men covered me. I saw one strike at my head with a knife or something sharp and I ducked just so that it grazed my forehead. One man was blocking the door but I stumbled low through him and managed to wriggle clear. I felt blood coming down my face. . . . We have tried to find out the persons who did the ganging. ... I have been repeatedly threatened. I was lucky to have escaped and am grateful."

Senator Long's version of the battle of the washroom was ridiculed by the club's guests, including Edward Pierce Mulrooney, onetime New York Police Commissioner, now head of the State Beer Board. Mr. Mulrooney, who knows many a gangster by sight, saw none at the club. Neither did Chief of Police Steven Webber of Port Washington. The club's board of governors found that Senator Long had been hit by "a gentleman not a member of the club."

Exploded Head Waiter Krull: "Senator Long is just a pig! I never saw a person conduct himself so boorishly. He should not be permitted to associate with ladies and gentlemen."

Who it was that had blacked Louisiana's Long's eye was made the subject of a wide

guessing contest. Some thought it was Flyer Al Williams. Others believed it was Police Chief Webber. Both denied the distinction. The Chicago Defender, Negro weekly, declared it was Dallas Turner, Negro musician at the club show, who resented the Senator's calling him "nigger," "coon" and "shine."

The young man who really did the deed is the son of a famed naval architect.

Long Island sentiment was ready to make him a national hero. Owen P. White, a Collier's editor, Texas-born, started a fund with which to strike off a special gold medal. Its design: a fist rampant; a Kingfish couchant at a washbasin."

## Letters to the Editor

Hi Wayne (Homren)

I thought your E-Sylum readers might be interested in this: As some of the readers of E-Sylum may know, the Medal Collectors of America (MCA) has recently begun a series of Oral Histories of Medallion Art where we record extensive interviews of prominent members of the community in the field of medallion Art. The latest such interview was done by MCA President John Adams and MCA Vice-President John Sallay who interviewed Eric P. Newman, longtime collector and author specializing in Early American numismatics. In this hour-long interview (in two parts) Eric discusses his early years as a collector, his relationship with Burdette G. Johnson, their purchase of much of the Col. Edward H.R. Green collection, and his more recent activities with his numismatic foundation and museum.

This oral interview as well as others are posted on the MCA website and can be reached at:

<http://www.medalcollectors.org/ORAL%20history/page%201.html>

Best wishes,

Ben Weiss

**[This interview is absolutely vintage stuff—  
Ed.]**

Hi John,

I have an idea for the MCA Advisory (since the "Top 100" sort of fizzled out). How about a monthly column called something like "I Shoulda Been in Betts!" The idea is to list a different medal (or medals) each month, unlisted in Betts, and also traditionally not considered to be an associated Colonial American medal. The more obscure the better. Maybe a rule will be it can't be any of those seen in LaRiviere or Ford's Betts collections, and maybe also exclude the Adams list of John Law medals, and the treaty medals listed by Menchell. The point is those medals have already been discussed and associated with Colonial America, and we want to add to that list.

Whoever makes submissions to the column must also have a picture or graphic of their medal and must explain the medals historic(al) connection to colonial North America prior to 1783.

I know that there are many who know Betts needs to be rewritten and updated, and this column will add to the group of medals that should be considered, making the ultimate task perhaps less daunting, plus there appears to be a lot of interest in Betts medals among MCA members, so hopefully the membership will participate and contribute. Barry, John, and David, any thoughts?

Best,

Tony Lopez

Hi all,

A great idea. However, instead of being restrictive, given the collective talent of our membership, why not take the bull by the horns and use such a monthly column to begin the monumental task of updating Betts? To do justice to such an undertaking we could start with the obscure, but should not ignore the known medals similarly worthy of inclusion.

Best,

Barry Tayman

Hi Tony,

You are one of the best numismatic thinkers I know! The Top 100 was a good idea and at some point maybe we can talk about why the recent initiative didn't get traction, and what it would take to build some momentum. I also like your idea of cataloguing all the medals that should have been in Betts. Most of all, though, I really love your idea of producing a 21<sup>st</sup> century version of Betts. I talked to John Adams about this once and he feels that the compendium that Betts produced was artificial, which is why he is attacking a similar idea by writing on individual series individually and sequentially. I don't actually think it's as big a challenge as you might think, though, if it were done online rather than in published form (MCA Advisory or otherwise).

I don't want this to sound like my beating my own drum, but using NeoCollect would be the best way to do it. You may recall that I've built in a feature for exactly this purpose called the "Shared Catalog" feature. Once a number of people have created NeoCollect collections (like you and Skyler and I have done for our Betts medals), we can each contribute selected item records from our collections to a shared catalogue. This catalogue can be built over time, edited,

reorganized and then eventually published in book form. It's also possible to control the nature/degree of each contributor's kind of contribution (permissions). That way, everything is always in one place and is a living, growing "organism" rather than a bunch of disjointed little articles spread over years' worth of magazines. Watch the video about this feature at:

<http://www.neocollect.com/help/video/catalog/>

In fact, you, Skyler and I could start this project today, since some of our stuff is already listed on NeoCollect! If we could get Barry and Dave to set up collections and contribute via NeoCollect, we might be able to con John Adams into participating. I have volunteered to do the photography for him and help him with the listing, as I did with Alan Weinberg's fabulous medal collection (see <http://www.neocollect.com/user/alanvweinberg/>). Then, we could approach Stack's and see if they would let us convert the electronic records they have from the Ford sales (#13 and #14) into this same format and put that into our catalogue. The capability to do this upload already exists. Before long, we would have rewritten Betts. We could also decide along the way what to throw out, like the Jernegan Cistern medal if that's how folks feel about it.

Just building on your EXCELLENT ideas!!

Best,

John Sallay

Hi John --

We're co-organizing an exhibition with the Concord Free Library to mark the 50th anniversary of the Minute Man National Park and are using our ANS Revere sesquicentennial medal in it. I'm attaching some shots of ours, which was cast by Medallion Art and silver-

plated. Bob Hoge sent me this data about it from the ANS magazine:

*United States. American Numismatic Society, AE, Paul Revere's Ride: Sesquicentennial Commemoration medal, 1925, by Anthony de Francisci (ANS 1985.81.15, gift of Daniel M. Friedenberg) 63mm.*

*When the 150th anniversary of Paul Revere's ride took place in 1925, Anthony de Francisci, the designer of the "Peace Dollar" and the "Maine Centennial Half-Dollar," was commissioned to create a commemorative medal. Unfortunately, there was little interest among subscribers and the piece turned out to be a financial failure. The reverse design was also criticized for its depiction of Paul Revere mounting his horse from the wrong flank.*

*The last medal to be produced by the Society in this period was to commemorate the tercentenary of the purchase of Manhattan Island from its Native inhabitants, a celebration originally planned for 1923, but postponed to 1926 after it was discovered that European settlement could not be historically proven prior to 1626. The medal, designed by Hermon A. MacNeil, depicts the purchase on the obverse and on the reverse illustrates the idea of the progress that had taken place on the Island through the use of allegorical personifications of "commercial progress" and "intellectual life."*

*Unfortunately, despite the added support of the New-York Historical Society, this piece did not enjoy financial success. Thirteen years would pass before the ANS issued another medal.*

I'm thinking to insure it for \$150--does that sound reasonable to you?

You'll be hearing from our digital team tomorrow...they want to confirm details of your image order in re the broadside.

Anne Bentley



Dear John

What a bumper edition of the MCA Advisory, the February 2009 issue is proving to be.

Margaret Hofer's penetrating analysis of the Schuyler medal deals with so many varied issues and is a wonderful piece of research. It also demonstrates how easy it is to dismiss an engraved medal of this nature as being a later concoction. The proliferation of late 19th and early 20th century reproductions of silver engraved British regimental medals, purporting to be from the late 1790s and early 1800s, have certainly done us no favours and stand as a legacy that we could have well done without.

Lev Tsitrin is also to be congratulated for his piece on Cheron's Cortona medal, not only in correcting my own mis-attribution of the Virgin of the Zodiac, to be found on its reverse side, but also in presenting an interesting slant on this fascinating medal, which, like the Schuyler, poses a great many questions.

What I think both these papers demonstrate in their own entirely different ways is the wealth of information that one single medal can yield, and it is no doubt for this reason alone that many of us are drawn to this unfailingly fascinating and challenging subject.

With all good wishes,

Chris Eimer

John-

The following note appeared in the January, 1921 Numismatist. Has anyone seen these pieces recently?

"There have recently come into the custody of the Massachusetts Historical Society two wooden bowls of a certain historical as well as numismatic interest. They are perhaps six inches in diameter, and have let into their bases to form the bottom the terra-cotta medallion of Franklin by Nini and the "Libertas Americana" Medal, the inscriptions of which were supplied by Franklin. The back of the bowl with the "Libertas Americana" Medal is covered with cuttings from a French newspaper of 1782 containing references to the circumstances under which the medal was struck. These bowls were presented by Franklin to his friend the grandfather of the lady by whom they are now deposited with the Society. --Malcolm Storer."

Regards,

Len Augsberger

[I'll bet Anne has.—Ed.]

## Help Please

John,

I have attached scans of Kienast 318 - the obverse showing what they call in the trade as a "tasteful nude male figure" When I went on the internet to see what I could find on this medal virtually all of the pictures of Kienast 318 were that of what I call Kienast 318(a) a "tasteful clothed male figure". I can find no discussion of this second die nor any story as to how it came about.

I would appreciate hearing from anyone who can enlighten me. Thanks.

Joe Levine





## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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### QUESTIONNAIRE

**How did you learn about the MCA?**

**What are your collecting interests?**

**What would you see highlighted in MCA publications?**

**For volunteers: I am willing to devote time to the following MCA projects:**

**DUES: \$20.00 PER CALENDAR YEAR (Includes a subscription to monthly publications of the MCA advisory)**

Please send completed application and payment to:

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c/o Barry Tayman  
3115 Nestling Pine Court  
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Or email completed form to: [bdtayman@verizon.net](mailto:bdtayman@verizon.net)  
MCA WEBSITE: <http://www.medalcollectors.org>

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<sup>i</sup> All three authors present *national commemorative medals* as a wholly separate series unconnected to the more vast body of United States Mint medals. The medals these authors call *national commemorative medals* are a series within a series. They can be and are collected separately just like Peace medals, Presidential medals, naval medals, etc, but they relate to the greater class of medals produced by the United States Mint. *National commemorative medals* are not like so called dollars, which have size criteria or like Betts medals which have theme criteria. Their primary common element is that they are all “products’ of the United States Mint. They are part of this broader category of medals with close and important ties to our nation’s coinage and a long historical collecting tradition. They need to be cataloged with deference to what they are and with deference to that tradition.

<sup>ii</sup> Swoger often injects his fairly strong personal opinions into his definitions such as his view that anniversaries must be divisible by 25 or that “we should not tolerated the commemoration of any sports events.”

<sup>iii</sup> Forty-Second Congress. Session 111. 17 Stat. 424, Chapt. CXXX1. 17 Stat. 432; 31 USC 368: “That dies of a national character may be executed by the engraver, and national and other medals struck by the coiner of the mint at Philadelphia, under such regulations as the superintendent, with the approval of the director of the mint may prescribe: Provided, that such work will not interfere with the regular coinage operations, and that no private medal dies shall be prepared at said mint, or the machinery or apparatus thereof be used for that purpose.”

<sup>iv</sup> As Swoger indicates, Congress revised this law in 1983 by requiring the authority of the Secretary of the Treasury to authorize a medal instead of the Director of the Mint. P.L. 97-2258; 96 Stat.877, 1983

<sup>v</sup> The division of Swoger’s book into separate sections takes the medals out of chronological order and makes them difficult to locate. The divisions also add to the confusion of his complex and unusable numbering system. However, the medals he selects for inclusion in these final sections of his book all qualify under any definition to be listed as *national commemorative medals*.

<sup>vi</sup> The NCM major types include: 1884-85 World’s industrial & Cotton Centennial Exposition (NCM-1,2,3); 1894 Cotton States (NCM-4); 1894 Tennessee Centennial Exposition (NCM-5); 1898 Trans Mississippi and International Exposition (NCM-9—16); 1901 Pan-American Exposition (NCM-17, 18); 1903 Centenary of the Death of George Washington (NCM-19—26); 1903 Thomas Jefferson Memorial (NCM-27);1905 Lewis & Clark Centennial Exposition (NCM-28, 29, 30); 1906 Pike’s Peak Centennial (NCM-31 —40); 1907 Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition (NCM-31 —44); 1909 Alaska-Yukon Pacific Exposition (NCM-45—50); 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition (NCM-50—55); and the 1925 Norse-American Centennial (NCM-?). Specifically which medals should be assigned a number is beyond the scope of this article and better left to a group of people who are more knowledgeable about these medals. I have inserted approximate numbers in this footnote to demonstrate approximately how many individual medals are involved with these 11 major types excluded by Turner.

For some reason, Turner did not include the 1950 Washington DC Sesquicentennial but he did include the 1954 Albany, NY 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary notwithstanding that only the committee and not the medals appear to have been authorized by Congress. Either this inclusion was an error or other medals arising from similar congressionally appointed committees need to be included such as the 1893 Worlds Columbian Exposition, the 1900 Centennial of the Establishment of the National Capital at Washington D.C., the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, and the 1926 U.S. Sesquicentennial International Exposition.

As to some of the other post-1940 medals, Swoger did not include the 1962 MacArthur Memorial Foundation. Dean has advised that he unintentionally omitted the 1970 U.S. Weather Service.

<sup>vii</sup> A clause in the 1873 law, 31 USC 368 provides that “no private medal dies shall be prepared at said mint, or the machinery or apparatus thereof be used for that purpose.” This can certainly be interpreted to mean that any die that is prepared at the U.S. Mint is the property of the U.S. Mint and if it is used to strike medals outside of the U.S. Mint with proper authority, the medals so produced are the property and product of the U.S. Mint.

<sup>viii</sup> It should be noted that the medals for the 1876 United States Centennial International Exposition were specifically authorized by Congress. Accordingly, a strong argument is made here that they be re-cataloged as *national commemorative medals*. However, as new information becomes available there may be other medals in this and in other sections of Julian’s book which need to be re-catalogued as well. A decision to renumber any series that has been collected for a long time should never be taken lightly, and to do so is not without implications and consequences that could be unforeseen and

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unintended. Therefore it might be more prudent to take the position that all new categories created in *Medals of the United States Mint, Volume 2* begin with medals not otherwise listed in volume 1. Text could be added to each section that provides information and refers to medals in volume 1 if necessary.

Again, a decision about the 1876 United States Centennial International Exposition medal is best left to people more knowledgeable about these medals. This is precisely why it is so important that researchers and collectors join together and attempt to achieve a consensus opinion. The Medal Collectors of America should facilitate this gathering and support and encourage its progress.