

SVCC Meeting Minutes of June 26, 2024

Meeting was called to order at 6:59 PM. This meeting convened at our regular meeting spot, Swanston Community Center in Sacramento.

Gold: \$ 2,299.00 Silver: \$ 28.82

Club Officers in attendance:

Vice President – Troy Dinin

Assistant Treasurer, Nick Shel

Treasurer – Marlain Minardi

Recording Secretary - Patrick Carpenter

Filling in for President Bruce Williams, who was not in attendance at this meeting, was Rick Yadon a past president of the club. Rick did a great job and “hats off” to him! Also absent was our Corresponding Secretary, Mike Grieneisen.

Guests: We had no guests at the meeting.

Attendance – Forty-seven club members were in attendance.

New Club Members – There are now two new members of the SVCC! Voted in at this meeting are two new youth members, Afeef and Eshaal Khawaja. Welcome to our club!

Past Meeting Minutes - Minutes of our last regular club meeting on June 12, 2024, were provided to club members by email several days before the meeting. The reading of the minutes of our last meeting were waived and the minutes were approved.

Financial Report – Our trusty treasurer, Marlain Minardi, reported that our current bank account balance is \$16,744.63 and our savings account balance is \$6,001.63.

Upcoming Coin Show News – Bob Shanks reported that about a half dozen coin dealers have now paid for their tables and that the deadline for our past dealers to pay so as to secure their past table locations is August 1. One coin dealer who has not been at our show before also has sent in a check. He is first on the waiting list in case one of our past dealers has not paid by the August 1 deadline.

Bob Shanks also noted that tonight was the first night for members to purchase tickets for the Great Coin Giveaway that will happen at the close of the September coin show. Our treasurer, Marlain Minardi, announced that we have already sold about twenty books of tickets. Bob also noted that our grand prize this time is a \$20 gold piece – the most valuable grand prize we’ve offered in memory. We are off to a great start.

Patrick Carpenter reported that our club members had done a great job volunteering to assist with the coin show. Only four volunteer spots remained open and in just minutes all of those spots were filled. We now have a full compliment of folks to assist in making the coin show a success! Patrick also advised that six members have volunteered to do a coin exhibit and that there are two spots left for anyone who would like to show off a bit of their collection.

A Special Gift – Rick Yadon had bought a fistful of tickets for a raffle being conducted by the Livermore Coin Club and he gave two tickets to everyone in the meeting so they may have a chance to win a prize. Many thanks to Rick!

Educational Presentation - Rick Kelly and Nancy Oliver prepared a fascinating look at a robbery attempt at the U.S. Mint in San Francisco entitled “Tunneling to Treasure”. Nancy was not able to attend the meeting, so Rich did the presentation solo.

The “Old San Francisco Mint”, which is the second mint building in San Francisco, was constructed between 1869 and 1874. Its foundation included four-foot-deep perimeter trench foundations filled with concrete and rock. Walls are two and a half feet thick made of granite and brick. It was built so sturdily that it was one of the few buildings to survive the major 1906 earthquake – although it did slide two feet to the south.

In December 1901, the Mint Superintendent, Frank Leach, while at a theater, overheard men talking about a recent theft of 37 gold bars from the Selby Smelting Works in Contra Costa County by means of tunneling. The men said that the “same could happen at the Mint.” Leach ordered the guards in the Mint’s basement to pay particular attention to any sounds of tunneling. Sounds of muffled explosions were heard in the very early morning hours on several days in late December, 1901 and early January, 1902. On December 30th a shock resembling an earthquake was felt in the vicinity of one of the four vaults that stored silver and gold coinage in the Mint’s basement.

Superintendent Leach hired a private investigator to search the neighboring area for any signs of tunneling. He also had much of the silver and gold, in storage in the basement vaults, moved to the second floor of the Mint. Leach reviewed the Mint’s construction plans and found that two of the four basement vaults lacked the four-foot-thick concrete foundation as they were originally intended to be workrooms, rather than vaults. Their floors were just a 3/8-inch-thick steel plate – something much easier to drill through as compared to the portions of the mint intended to be super secure.

After the additional security measures were implemented - hiring extra guards, doing neighborhood searches, moving much of the silver and gold out of the basement – no more sounds of possible tunneling were heard.

In a history of the City entitled “This is San Francisco”, there is the story that someone tried to tunnel into the Old Mint under Mission Street, but his tunnel collapsed due to street traffic and he crawled out from a great hole “more dead than alive.”

Rich noted that this story and many others, including one about how the Mint’s Chief Clerk stole \$30,000 in \$20 gold pieces, are in new book that he and his wife, Nancy, have published. It is titled, “A Mighty Fortress, The Stories Behind the 2nd San Francisco Mint.” Rich signed a number of these books for interested club members who purchased them for just \$10.

The club members expressed their appreciation for Rich and Nancy’s work and for Rich for telling the tale so well.

Break – Started at 7:38 and concluded at 7:50 p.m.

Auction – The club auction commenced at 7:54 p.m. with John Degen once again doing a tip-top job of as our auctioneer. There were nine donations auctioned off followed by sixty-six lots of members’ items offered for bidding and purchase. The auction ended at 8:41 p.m.

Raffle – The top prize, a U.S. 1/10th-ounce gold bullion coin, was won by Steve Weaver. Congratulations to Steve – a lucky fellow.

Next Meeting – Our next club meeting will be in two weeks, July 10th. The meeting will include a Show and Tell with coins conform to the theme of “Freedom.” Of course, we will also enjoy an auction, our raffle, and other coin collecting fun.

The meeting concluded at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, June 28, 2024

Patrick Carpenter, Recording Secretary SVCC