



The Curious Collector by Len Augsburger, LSCC #1271

ANA Convention Preview

The ANA summer convention returns this year after a one-year hiatus due to the pandemic. I had a streak of 19 consecutive ANAs going into 2020, so now do I have to start all over? I think not. I'll call this one my "20th consecutive ANA" and be happy to be there. This year's event takes place in Rosemont, which is almost Chicago but not quite. Dealers generally like this location since it is minutes away from the airport, and almost all mid-size or large cities in the country are connected to Chicago via a direct flight. I'm not thrilled about Rosemont, as it's not terribly walkable or integrated into the downtown area. This is where Baltimore, Philadelphia, and other locations come out ahead. Nevertheless, ANA convention site selection is always a thankless job, and, by definition, it is impossible to make everyone happy on this point. And once you get inside the show, does it really matter? You've got four walls, hundreds of dealers, and business to do. At that point it's all good, regardless of what city you are in.

On exhibit this year will be selections from the Tyrant Collection, including the well-known King of Siam set that was presented by the U.S. to the King of Siam in 1836 as a diplomatic gift. Most notably the set includes a class I 1804 dollar. (This reminds your correspondent of the somewhat satirical "Queen of Sheba" set displayed many years ago, I believe by Kevin Lipton. It consisted of all the same coins in the King of Siam set, except different examples.) The Tyrant collector has graciously exhibited portions of the collection in recent years, with one notable presentation including a set of U.S. \$10 gold pieces.

Also on exhibit will be recovered artifacts from the SS Central America, including the ship's bell. The bell will be rung periodically throughout the show, so if you hear a loud gong on the bourse floor you'll know what happened. The SS Central America continues to fascinate as the site is explored, with the most recent recovery involving a good number of Liberty Seated silver coins. Bob Evans, Chief Scientist for the SS Central America recovery, will also be on hand, ready to answer whatever he can about the coins. The salvors have been refreshingly transparent about their "conservation" of coins that have been soaking in salt water for over 150 years, and this alone is a great topic.

The auctions have a slightly different format this year, with viewing happening at the ANA and the actual auctions happening a few days later. Heritage and Stack's Bowers have the usual selection of goodies lined up, with the star of the show perhaps being the Childs/Pogue (finest known) 1804 dollar. Even if not buying, auction lot viewing is a near-compulsory exercise for serious collectors. It's important to look at what the services are putting into holders these days, and you simply can't train your eye without looking at thousands of coins. Lot viewing is a non-rushed situation with excellent lighting for examining coins. If you collect Liberty Seated half dimes, look at all the half dimes in the auctions. Which ones are nice, and which are not? Compare your notes with the results at the sale, and engage your feedback mechanism.

An important development related to this year's ANA is the advent of live streaming. Many of the events will be available online, live, via the ANA Facebook page (facebook.com/numismatics).

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It's not as good as being there in person, but, if you can't travel, this is a great way to connect with the event. We also intend to stream the LSCC general meeting at 9am Central Time on Thursday, August 12. We'll be separately forwarding directions for this to the E-Gobrecht mailing list. The technology to do a live broadcast via the Internet is becoming ever more inexpensive and accessible to even technologically impaired people like me. We're going to give it a try and see how it goes.

LSCC Meeting Link: <https://vimeo.com/event/1171342>

LSCC will have a Club table at this show, situated in the club area, table #6. If attending, feel free to "hang out" or take a break at the LSCC table, where everyone is sure to be exhibiting new purchases and recounting war stories from previous shows. I can't guarantee it will make your concession stand food taste better, but, if you are going to eat that stuff anyway, it will be more palatable in the company of like-minded collectors. This will be the first big show for most attendees since the pandemic and I'm looking forward to seeing everyone after way too long of a break.

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