



Bulletin of the
PACIFIC COAST NUMISMATIC SOCIETY
SEPTEMBER, 2023

1289th Monthly Meeting
The Numismatic Tourist Visits the
Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna

Michael Wehner

Wednesday, September 27, 2023, 7:30 PM PDT
Online

Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum (which translates to "Museum of Art History") is one of the world's great art museums. Its 600,000-piece coin collection is one of the five largest and most important in the world. It's not surprising, then, that the museum is on the must-see list of any numismatist who happens to be in the neighborhood.

PCNS member **Michael Wehner** was recently in just such a position.

Join us online on **Wednesday, September 27** when Michael will tell us all about his exiting visit to view some of the collection, sharing some of his favorite sights. Plan to exhibit your own favorite coins or your recent acquisitions. So that everyone may participate, please take pictures of your exhibits to facilitate viewing on Zoom.



AUGUST MEETING RECAP

Doug Ward wove a tangled tale about two unique gold \$50 "half unions" now residing in the Smithsonian collection. The only half unions struck at Philadelphia, they were designed by Charles Barber.

This well-documented story originated during the California gold rush when a huge surge in population of 300,000 people caused a strain on coinage. Fifteen establishments made gold coins until the establishment of a State Assay Office in 1850; most failed by 1851. Moffat & Co remained in business, being awarded a state assay contract in 1850. Augustus Humbert was appointed State Assayer in 1850 and arrived in San Francisco in 1851. A \$50 octagonal "slug" was produced, but most of those were shipped back east; many ended up in European mints to be melted for local coinage. Coins that size had little practical use, and smaller gold and silver denominations were lacking.

The assay office closed December 14, 1853, and the San Francisco branch mint opened April (continues...)

PCNS MEETINGS

PCNS meetings take place at 7:30 pm on the fourth Wednesday of most months. Currently, meetings are held online using the Zoom platform, thereby allowing members, presenters, and guests to attend no matter where they are located. Everyone with an interest in numismatics is welcome to attend. A meeting code/invitation link will be emailed to all members separately the day before the meeting; non-members can request a link by emailing webmaster@pcns.org.

Special occasions, such as the annual BBQ, will continue to occur in person.

PCNS CALENDAR FOR 2023

September 27, 2023 **Michael Wehner**, *The Numismatic Tourist Visits the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna*
October 25, 2023 *Speaker and Topic TBA**
November 29, 2023 **Matt Ruttle**, *JB Frener: Central America's Most Prolific Engraver*
December 27, 2023 **Annual Meeting** and **Election of Officers** for 2024, *Speaker and Topic TBA**

SPEAK UP!

There are always opportunities for **you** to make a presentation. Thanks to Zoom, you don't even need to be in San Francisco. Your topic can even be something about which you have submitted or plan to submit a *Paper*. Please email webmaster@pcns.org to sign up.

AUGUST MEETING RECAP (CONT'D)

15, 1854, but it didn't solve the coin shortage right away. It was around that time that there was a proposal for \$100, \$50, and \$25 gold coins (a union, half union, and quarter union). But they weren't designed until twenty-three years later by Charles Barber.

This is where the tale gets much more complicated—mind-bendingly so—with patterns being made clandestinely by the mint, and traded/sold in various manners.

We invite you to watch Doug's full presentation on the [PCNS YouTube channel](#).

AUGUST MEMBER EXHIBITS

Stephen shared two "Coins I Published (Papers on) 40 Years Ago". First, San Francisco Mint restrikes of the 1898 Mexican Peso, struck in 1949-1950. He

presented irrefutable evidence that the restrikes have survived. Second, Coinage of the Siege of Landau in the summer of 1713, with gold and silver denominations struck on cut plate sections.

Michael showed a photo of himself and Bill Hyder receiving special Medal Collectors of America medals at the TAMS meeting during the ANA convention in Pittsburg last month. Michel received the Georgia Stamm Chamberlain Award, a bronze medal, for articles he has written. Bill received the Carlson Award, a nickel-plated medal- a lifetime achievement award. Congratulations to both!

Bob showed us his 1974 Customhouse U.S. Customs medal, 34mm silver (300 struck). The minting was listed in mint records that year. He received it at a PCNS drawing! He also showed his 1992 U.S. Mint Bicentennial medal with an unusual antique patina. It was likely a special finish produced only for mint employees, based on the insert in the package.

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