

Manhattan Coin Club Minutes

May 9, 2017

President Allan called the meeting to order at the American Legion. Treasurer Dave reported a club balance of \$2,531.76

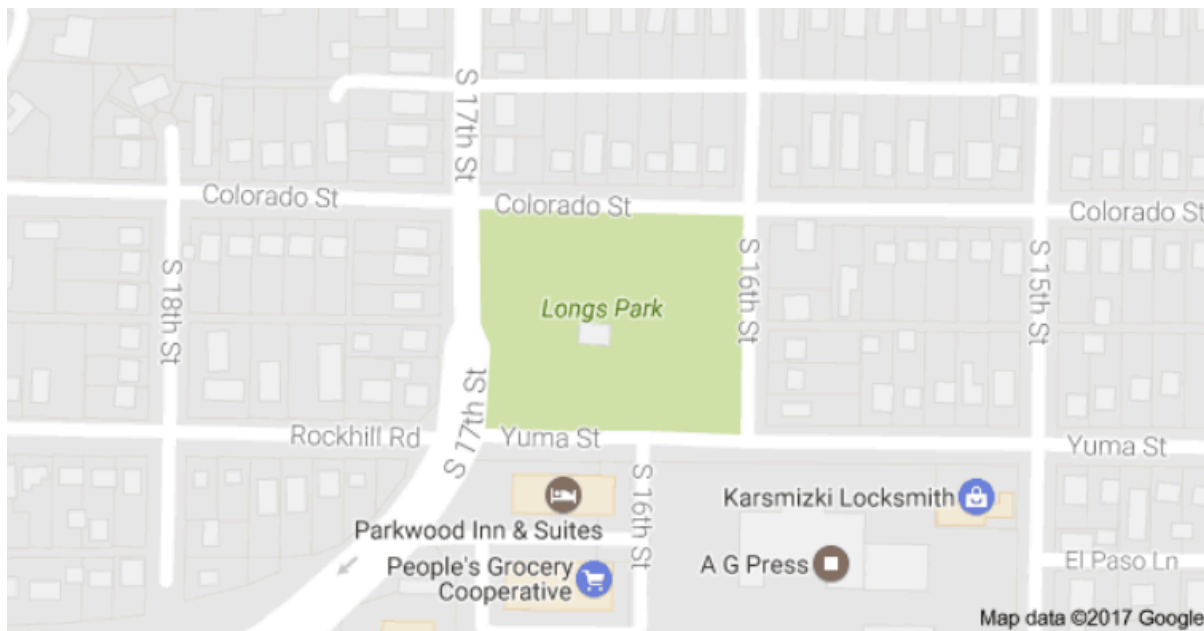
Old Business:

The discussion continued about having the coin show and what day, a Saturday or Sunday, the show should be held on. Chris said that the room at the Clarion costs us \$600 for a Sunday and if it were held on a Saturday the cost would be \$750. There was a discussion about when in March the show should be held. Many people commented on shows that were being held around the date we have selected and if it were to be moved we would most possibly lose attendance to other shows.

The day of the week was discussed and the impact of having it held on a Saturday. The question was if we would gain enough dealers, we would need to sell three additional tables, or if we would lose dealers who had stores or other commitments that would keep them away. Allan volunteered to do a phone survey of dealers and come back to the club with the results. At this time, the show will continue to be held on the 3rd Sunday in March.

Chris who has been the shows coordinator for many years suggested that Mat take the over. Matt agreed to that and a motion was made to elect Matt as the show coordinator. The motion passed without opposition. Chris has had the lead for organizing the show for many years and has done an outstanding job. His work has been very much appreciated.

New Business:



Longs Park, Manhattan, KS 66502

Allan reminded the club that the June meeting will be our annual picnic will be held in Longs Park at 17th and Yuma on June 14th starting at 6:00 pm and dinner at 6:30 pm. The club will provide chicken and drinks. Members should bring their own table service and a dish to share.

Allan also reported that made in China fake 1916 Standing Liberty Quarters are being sold on eBay. They are not marked as fakes. On the fakes, the design details are rough and ragged, with some raised lumps around the STA in STATES. The digits in the date have been hand-cut into the fake die, and the S Mint mark is the wrong style for a 1916-S Walking Liberty half dollar.

Hand-cut dates and Mintmarks are commonly seen on fake coins coming out of China. It allows the counterfeiter to use a common date genuine example as a model coin. Once all the main designs are transferred over to the fake dies, the date and Min mark can be altered on the counterfeit die, saving the expense of acquiring an expensive date in Mint State condition.



Another diagnostic is the shape of the coin. A genuine double-struck error should be much more distorted around the area of the second strike, since the off-center strike would be out-of-collared. This fake is nearly round, which is a red flag for any similar error coin. If you look at images of genuine double-struck errors online, you will see that the second strike usually forces metal outwards.

The counterfeiters did match the weight and composition of a genuine coin when they produced this fake, something that they do not always accomplish. We did not perform any type of in-depth surface analysis on this fake, since the visual diagnostics are completely convincing. I am certain, however, that specialized testing would reveal the source of the silver as modern — definitely not from mines in the Western United States in the early 1900s. These counterfeiters are not advanced enough to make blanks for their fakes from genuine coins, which would be the way to defeat advanced analysis techniques.

Matt told the group about the smart phone app PCGS Photograde that can be used to help with the grading of coins. It enables anyone from the novice to the expert to accurately grade their rare coins by allowing you to compare your coin with the app's photographs and determine the grade of your coin. You can grade 92 popular U.S. regular issue coin series and 43 Colonial coins accurately with 2,768 high-resolution images from the reference sets of the Professional Coin Grading Service.

Program:



The program was the "Mystery Grader. Thirteen coins and one bill were presented for examination. No one, except Dave and Mark, got all of the grading's right.

Tom K. won the door prize of a Benjamin Franklin commemorative coin. Following the silent auction the meeting was concluded.

Coin Grading Made Simple

Grade Your Collectible Coins in 3 Easy Steps

The primary purpose of grading a coin is to determine what the coin's market value is based on how well the coin was originally struck, how well the coin metal itself has been preserved, and how much wear and damage the coin has suffered since it was minted. For most practical purposes, especially for beginners, we're going to be concerned with how to tell how much wear the coin has had, and where it fits on the 70-point scale.

The 70-Point Coin Grading Scale

When coins are graded, they are assigned a numeric value on the Sheldon Scale. The Sheldon Scale ranges from a grade of Poor (P-1) to Perfect Mint State (MS-70.) Grades are usually assigned at key points on this scale, with the most commonly used points being:

- (P-1) Poor - Barely identifiable; must have date and mint mark, otherwise pretty thrashed.
- (FR-2) Fair - Worn almost smooth but lacking the damage Poor coins have.
- (G-4) Good - Heavily worn such that inscriptions merge into the rims in places; details are mostly gone.
- (VG-8) Very Good - Very worn, but all major design elements are clear, if faint. Little if any central detail.
- (F-12) Fine - Very worn, but wear is even and overall design elements stand out boldly. Almost fully-separated rims.
- (VF-20) Very Fine - Moderately worn, with some finer details remaining. All letters of LIBERTY, (if present,) should be readable. Full, clean rims.

- (EF-40) Extremely Fine - Lightly worn; all devices are clear, major devices bold.
- (AU-50) About Uncirculated - Slight traces of wear on high points; may have contact marks and little eye appeal.
- (AU-58) Very Choice About Uncirculated - Slightest hints of wear marks, no major contact marks, almost full luster, and positive eye appeal.

- (MS-60) Mint State Basal - Strictly uncirculated but that's all; ugly coin with no luster, obvious contact marks, etc.
- (MS-63) Mint State Acceptable - Uncirculated, but with contact marks and nicks, slightly impaired luster, overall basically appealing appearance. Strike is average to weak.
- (MS-65) Mint State Choice - Uncirculated with strong luster, very few contact marks, excellent eye appeal. Strike is above average.
- (MS-68) Mint State Premium Quality - Uncirculated with perfect luster, no visible contact marks to the naked eye, exceptional eye appeal. Strike is sharp and attractive.
- (MS-69) Mint State All-But-Perfect - Uncirculated with perfect luster, sharp, attractive strike, and very exceptional eye appeal. A perfect coin except for microscopic flaws (under 8x magnification) in planchet, strike, or contact marks.
- (MS-70) Mint State Perfect - The perfect coin. There are no microscopic flaws visible to 8x, the strike is sharp, perfectly-centered, and on a flawless planchet. Bright, full, original luster and outstanding eye appeal.

The Three Coin-Grading Buckets

The most misunderstood aspect of coin grading, from the newcomer perspective, is how the grading scale works. Think of it as having three "buckets".

The first bucket is for circulated coins, the second bucket is for About Uncirculated (AU) coins and the third bucket is for Uncirculated (Mint State, or MS) coins. The MS scale (from MS-60 to MS-70) isn't really just a continuation of the previous scale of AU coins. It is a completely separate mini-scale of 11 grades that begins with the "basal state" MS-60 Uncirculated coin. This is an ugly, bag-marked, no-luster dog but it is Uncirculated! By comparison, the AU-58 coin beneath it has attractive eye appeal and nearly full luster. The reason a coin that grades 58 looks much nicer than a coin that grades 60 is because they are really in separate "buckets" of the grading scale.

Likewise, the AU portion of the scale starts at 50 and runs through 59. The AU-50 coin might never have actually circulated in commerce, but because it has scuff marks, has been through several coin-counting machines, and has been handled a small amount, it is no longer in Mint State.

So we put it in the AU bucket and give it the bottom grade of AU-50 if it's ugly, and AU-58 if it's not. This is oversimplifying a little, but it demystifies why the grading scale seems to go from "appealing coins" to "ugly coins" and then back to "appealing".

How to Grade Circulated Coins

The third bucket is the range of circulated grades, from P-1 to EF-49 (although EF-45 is the highest circulated grade you'll probably see actually being used.) Most beginners looking for grading help have circulated coins, and fortunately circulated coins are the easiest for the novice to grade. It helps to have a Mint State specimen of the coin type under consideration to make comparisons to, but this isn't a requirement.

Step 1

First of all, you'll need to have an excellent light source, such as a 100 watt bulb in a lamp close to where you are sitting. Secondly, you'll need a decent magnifier, preferably something that magnifies about 5 to 8 times (expressed as 5x to 8x). Anything stronger than 8x isn't usually used in coin grading, and anything lower than 5x is too weak to see important details and small damage marks.

Step 2

Determine which "bucket" your coin fits into. Is it absolutely Uncirculated (Mint State)? Does it have only the slightest hints of wear on the high points (About Uncirculated)? Or does it fall in the most common bucket, the Circulated bucket?

Step 3

Compare your coin to the scale shown above to determine where it fits on the scale. Keep in mind that the numbers are not proportional; in other words, the amount of detail loss between EF-40 and EF-20 is not the same as that which is lost between MS-60 and EF-40 (remember, they're in different buckets.) In fact, the coin that grades EF-40 has lost only about 5% to 10% of its detail, but the coin that grades F-20 has lost about 60%. Use the written descriptions to place your coin as best you can.

If you want more precise grading, I recommend "The Official ANA Grading Standards" book, which breaks the grades out for every major U.S. coin type, along with photos to help you determine the correct grade.