



**NOTICE OF CHANGE IN MEETING DATE: OUR NEW MEETING DATE GOING FORWARD WILL BE THE THIRD MONDAY OF EACH MONTH.**

In this issue of our newsletter, we have another great article from Jeff Garrett on the subject of "Looks Do Matter." **Our next meeting will be held on Monday, May 19, 2014 at 6:30 PM in the Bronte Bistro at Joseph-Beth Booksellers in Lexington Green.** As a reminder, they have asked that we not bring in outside food or drink when attending the meetings. Instead, we are welcome to stop by the bar on the way into the meeting room to purchase soft drinks, coffee, or food items.

**DOOR PRIZE TO BE GIVEN AWAY!**

You won't want to miss this meeting! Jeff Garrett at Mid-American Rare Coin will be donating another door-prize item to be given away. Also, Jeff has a really nice deal for any club members who would like to become members of the American Numismatic Association. Jeff will pay half of the first year's basic membership dues for any club member who wants to become a new ANA member. Several of our club members have already taken Jeff up on this deal. The ANA offers members many outstanding benefits including discounted coin insurance, life insurance, library use, on-line delivery of The Numismatist Magazine, and a great convention each summer.

## **LOOKS DO MATTER**

**By Jeff Garrett**

As everyone knows, coin grading can be a very complex subject. Every coin is different and trying to assign a specific grade number to each piece can be difficult. Many factors must be considered, including wear, strike, luster, toning,

and bag marks. Each series is unique as well, with many factors to be considered for each. Large coins, like Silver Dollars generally have many more bag marks than smaller denomination coins. These issues are all taken into consideration when assigning a grade.



Contrary to what most price guides suggest, nearly every coins value can vary significantly based on its appearance. This is more pronounced now than at about any other time in my career. Rare coins in the same grade can bring prices in a wide range. The two 1921 Peace Dollars pictured above are a great example. The coin on the left recently sold at auction for less than \$600. The coin on the right recently auction for nearly \$800. Both coins are accurately graded, yet sold within a few months for a 30% difference in price. You would think that the less expensive coin would be the best value and the easiest sale. This is one of the biggest misconceptions many collectors have. Buying the cheapest coin is not usually the best play. I can tell from tremendous experience, the more attractive coin will sell much faster, regardless of price.

When going through other dealers coins I am usually looking for coins with the best possible eye-appeal for the best price. I am not a bargain hunter, as dealers with this sort of material will experience a slow turnover of merchandise. I make an effort to cull my inventory of lower end coins after the coins have not sold in a short amount of time. One big mistake is to put these kinds of coins in auction, especially un-reserved. Collectors are much more sophisticated and will not bid on coins they deem unattractive. On the contrary, I try to only send coins to auction that are extraordinary for their issue. Collectors will sometimes bid

extremely aggressively for coins with a great look. Beautifully toned coins almost have to be auctioned as some will bring way more than even the most imaginative dealer would predict.

The best way for collectors to get a better understanding of what makes a coin attractive is to study as many coins as possible. Regardless of the series you collect, you will need to compare different coins of the same grade to better understand eye-appeal. Attending a large coin show or auction is the best opportunity for most collectors. There are thousands of rare coins at every major show for you to examine. There is no better way to educate yourself than to compare coins side by side. Many large rare coin auctions will have several coins of the same issue in the same grade. Make careful notes, and then compare your notes with the auction prices realized. This will be very enlightening. You will also get a sense of which coins are being purchased as possible upgrades.



Eye-appeal can be pretty subtle stuff. The two Bust Half Dollars illustrated above are both NGC MS65. Both have considerable toning, are nearly mark free, and are well struck for the issue. Obviously, the coin on the left is more attractive. The toning is more iridescent at the rims, and has more overall contrast. The coins would probably sell for substantially different prices. The coin in the left might bring twice current price guide values and the coin on the right would probably be discounted. As mentioned above, I would strongly urge buying the more

attractive coin. Rare coins are becoming more like art than the commodity that price guides suggest. There is much left for interpretation and today's buyers are more interested in a beautiful coin than a bargain. Do yourself a favor and make sure you know the difference when shopping for that next coin!