

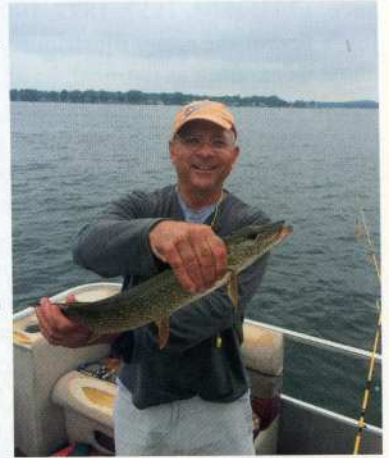
The President's Letter

By Chris Pilliod

This is my 57th President's letter and I want to address the Dues notice many of you have received in the past few months. Our club was the gracious beneficiary of several years of pro bono publishing from our friends at Heritage Auctions. Publishing the Ledger was by far and away the largest cost to the club. Last year they informed us they would no longer offer this service to us, and after seven years we had no choice but to re-institute dues. I appreciate all of you who have renewed your membership and especially those who made an additional contribution to the Club. Also, to insure we can communicate on club business in a precise and thorough manner, please send me your latest email address to cpilliod@cartech.com. I have an email list of most members but I want to take some time and ensure it is complete and accurate. I would very much like to step up the club's synergy and as such would like to take a minute and discuss some organizational business by highlighting a few key areas.

1. Club State Representatives. I would like to re-invigorate the Fly-In Club State Representative program. The mission of the State reps is to promote the Club at local Coin Club meetings, local coin shows, or if you're in Pennsylvania like me at the Flea Markets. This can be done by providing informational flyers and membership applications to interested parties, or if you are especially motivated by giving a presentation on our Club or on the series of Flying Eagle or Indian Cents. We can have more than one State Representative in any state. If you already are a State representative and would like to continue as such confirm this to me in e-mail. And if you are interested in becoming a State Rep, please e-mail me your contact information. There's no background check, no aptitude test, no application. If you are interested please simply let me know.

2. Membership. An additional goal of ours is to recover the members we have lost through non-renewals. We lost more members than I would have liked—172 members did not re-up. I do believe we will recapture some of these as several I know and will reach out to on a personal level. I am assembling a new Club informational handout as well as a new membership application and as such if you are a State Representative or desire to become one I will insure you will get a number for distribution.



3. PowerPoint. Along these lines if anyone would like an informational program on the Club highlighting James B. Longacre's history and accomplishments, as well as some background information on our club and the numismatic interest in Longacre's designs, to present at a coin club or other assemblage of collectors please let me know and I can quickly put something together for you. I am fairly decent at Powerpoint. I will make it available to any member. Please just let me know.

4. Advertising. I have been in contact with Coin World to run occasional ads promoting our Club. The rates are not as cheap as I would have liked. I will plan on running just a single issue and measure the response.

5. If anyone has any other ideas for promoting the club please share them with me.



Copper-nickel 1890 Indian Cent with a test cut/

Now a little bit of numismatics. If I were to discuss a boring year in not just the Indian Cent series but the entire run of one-cent production in our history it could well be 1890. 1890 pales by comparison to some exciting years in United States cent issuance, 1793, 1804, 1857, 1877, 1909, 1922, and 1955 would be just a few of the many illustrious years of production. But 1890 is about as exciting as oatmeal, as an old friend of mine would say.

There's not too many exciting varieties in 1890, perhaps the reverse mis-aligned clashed die is my favorite. But there is one 1890 Indian Cent that by far and away is my most prized acquisition from that year. Its photos are shown here. This particular piece I acquired from a fellow Fly-In member who emailed me in 2001 and said he had found it looking through a coffee can of Indian Cents. The color had caught his eye and he wasn't sure what to think about the piece. After some time it dawned on him that it was likely a copper-nickel trial piece as attributed in Judd and Pollock. He purchased it for a \$1 and having no interest in it he sought me out knowing I was a metallurgist who enjoyed this vein of collecting. After some painless back-and-forth I traded a gorgeous PCGS Mint State 1886 Indian Cent I had purchased for \$250 for his 1890.

The piece grades VF by wear and was subjected to an obvious "test" cut in it as some merchant had concern about authenticity. At this period in time a lot of contemporary counterfeits were circulating in the United States, especially the Eastern Seaboard where this likely was located. Ads were run in newspapers to alert the population of circulating counterfeits. As a result weary merchants subjected suspicious contemporary counterfeits to test scratches or "cuts" like this piece. Hard to believe but in my opinion the test cut in this instance does not detract from the value, but instead adds intrigue. Early on in its acquisition I placed it in my Safe Deposit Box and it's been resting there ever since.

Why am I bringing up this 1890 piece? About a month ago I purchased an 1894 Indian Cent at a local coin shop. It graded a VF30 or so, and for \$22 is likely just one of those mistake coins we all have in our collections-- the way I look at these purchases is the slight chance of having a lot of fun is worth the risk for \$22. It was a dimly lit shop so it was naturally a conducive environment for a mistake. What caught my eye was the color of the coin. It exhibited a distinctive color and immediately reminded me of another piece already in my collection, and that is the 1890 highlighted here.

The 1890 is undoubtedly a trial or metallurgical test piece. That I am confident in. What I am not so sure about is the 1894. This is not attributed anywhere in the guidebooks I have. So I am subjecting both pieces to some metallurgical testing in an effort to determine an accurate characterization. This will be the subject of an article in the next issue of the Ledger.

But if I am speculating correctly something very curious happened in the time period around the 1890's that I don't believe has happened since that time. Ever since I entered the Steel Mills as a metallurgist in 1979 the price of nickel has always been substantially higher than copper, as you can see from the chart shown. So in 1864 when the Mint established the copper content as 95% in the United States cent why were metallurgical trial pieces struck in copper-nickel alloy, similar to the copper-nickel issues of 1856 through 1864? They were struck using production dies, not proofs and in all appearances, look just like normal Indian Cents. The only theory I can throw out is that the price of copper rose above nickel. Some research into this question will be needed as well. Off to the lab I go...



1894 Indian Cent to be subjected to metallurgical testing.