
The E-Gobrecht
Volume 3, Issue 7, July 2007
Whole Number 28

The *E-Gobrecht* is an award winning electronic publication of the Liberty Seated Collectors Club (LSCC). The LSCC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the attributions of the Liberty Seated Coin series. The LSCC provides the information contained in this email newsletter from various sources free of charge as a general service to the membership and others with this numismatic interest. You do not have to be a LSCC member to benefit from this newsletter; subscription to the *E-Gobrecht* is available to anyone. All disclaimers are in effect as the completeness and/or accuracy of the information contained herein cannot be completely verified. Contact information is included near the end of this newsletter.

Miscellaneous Notes from the Editor

Editor's comments. This issue has some really good information. Mark Benvenuto discusses more origins of the Seated Liberty Design, Len Augsburger found some wooden artwork by Christian Gobrecht, Randy Wiley receives his well deserved 2006 Kamal M. Ahwash Award, and we have another 1842 Small Date Small Letters Reverse Half Dollar. Read on for more details.

We now have 256 subscribers, an increase of three over last month. Every month I seem to get rejected emails – if you change your email address, be sure to let me know so I can update my private email address listing and you can continue to receive the *E-Gobrecht*.

Acknowledgements. Many thanks to Jim Gray, Len Augsburger, Mark Benvenuto, and the subscribers who corresponded with me.

Availability of past issues. Through the generosity of Gerry Fortin, the previous issues of the *E-Gobrecht* are readily accessible on his seated dime website at <http://www.seateddimevarieties.com/LSCC.htm>.

Please consider submitting something for print. It need not be elaborate; it can be something as simple as a short note on your favorite variety, neat find, nice cherry pick, happenings at a coin show, rare Liberty Seated coinage coming up for auction, etc. If you are interested in it, rest assured, others will be too! Sharing information is a goal of this newsletter. This is a continuing plea.

Features in this issue

- ==> Question of Month by Jim Gray.
- ==> Auction News by Jim Gray.
- ==> Christian Gobrecht's woodcuts by Len Augsburger.
- ==> Seated Liberty: A Bit More on the History of Seated, Allegorical Figures by Mark Benvenuto.

- ==> LSCC Regional meeting at the June 2007 Baltimore Coin convention.
- ==> A Third 1842 Small Date with Small Letters Reverse Half Dollar discovered.
- ==> Recent subscriber correspondence.
- ==> Advertisements for Wanted or Sale of Liberty Seated Coinage.
- ==> LSCC Calendar.
- ==> Information on the Liberty Seated Collectors Club.

Details

==> **Question of the month by Jim Gray.** This forum hopes to increase collector interaction and correspondence. Your participation is welcomed and encouraged. Send your replies and comments to the *E-Gobrecht* Editor at wb8cpy@arrl.net.

Last Month's (June) Question

Reader **Charles Sullivan** submitted this question. We welcome questions of the month from other readers.

Question - Will Seated coins ever be collected by die variety with the same enthusiasm as large cents and bust halves? If so, which Seated series gives the most opportunity to collect by die variety?

No answers this month!! Is everyone too busy vacationing, gardening, and cutting grass to spend a few moments for an answer?

This Month's (July) Question

If you needed a rare Seated coin such as an AU 1878-S half dollar for your collection and one was for sale by a dealer or at an auction, how would you determine what price you would pay or bid in order to obtain the coin?

==>

AUCTION NEWS

By Jim Gray

The Heritage, Long Beach Sale, featured an 1844 dime in VF-25 and perfect for a fine/very fine set for \$805. Quarters contained a splendid 1859-S in XF-45 that sold for a strong \$5,750 while an 1866-S in F-12 with mellow toning went for \$1,150. An 1867-S in VF-35 did not sell, but an 1872-CC in AU, but whizzed and toned back, realized \$5,750. An 1872-S quarter which was cleaned and porous, but graded F-12 by PCGS, realized \$2,990 while a F-12 1873-CC with arrows, which had been cleaned and scraped, did not sell.

Dollars contained a repaired 1854 in AU-58 that sold for \$2,990, but an 1852 in MS-62 with nice toning did not sell and had not sold at the ANR August, 2006 sale. A bright, but sharp, AU 1871-CC dollar realized \$6,325 while a wholesome 1872-CC in

VF-25 went for \$4,312. An 1872-CC in AU-53, which was well struck and nicely toned, soared to \$16,100, but a golden brown example of the same date in MS-62 and hallmarked by a scratch at star 5 did not sell and had not sold at the Bowers and Merena, November, 2006 sale. Nine bidders vied for an original XF-40 1878-CC Trade dollar with the lucky winner obtaining the piece for \$3,220.

Stacks, Prestera Sale featured an 1859-S dime in VF-30, and nice for the grade, for \$1,265. Quarters contained a nicely toned AU-50 1852-O quarter with some obverse marks for \$4,830. An 1854-O Huge O in XF-45 with some marks and dipped, but hard to find better, realized a strong \$6,037 while an MS-62 1855-S quarter, which was well struck and nicely toned, but rather marked up, only realized \$4,025.

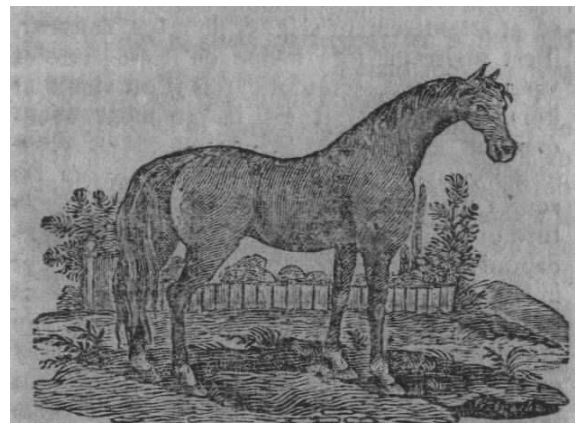
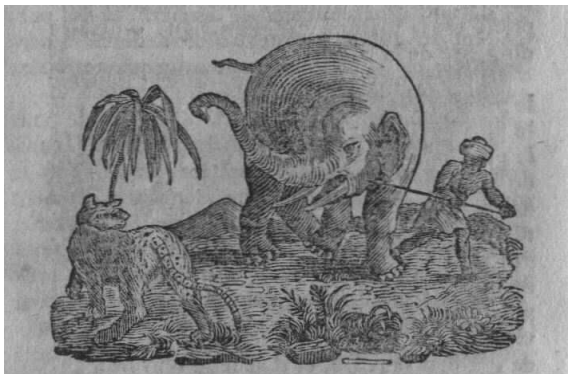
For half dollars, an 1840-(O) reverse of 38 in cleaned XF went for \$483. A lovely, well-struck 1852-O half in MS-62 soared to \$7,475 whereas an 1857-S in AU-53 went for \$2,185.

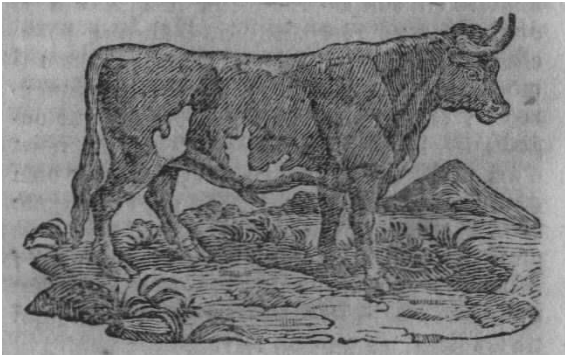
The Bowers and Merena, St. Louis Sale, contained a very nice 1838-O dime in AU-58, which was well struck, nicely toned and no rim cud for \$1,840.

An 1860-S quarter in cleaned XF, but nicely retuned and very presentable, went for \$6,900. A lovely 1865-S in XF-45 was held to \$1,150 because of a dark area above the reverse shield.

An 1842-O small date half dollar in VF-20, which was well worn but with a mellow look, realized \$1,840.

==> Christian Gobrecht's woodcuts by Len Augsburg. I recently purchased, via abebooks.com, an old volume that contains woodcuts executed by Christian Gobrecht while he lived in Baltimore. "A Key to French Conversation and French Idiom," published by Warner & Hanna in Baltimore in 1812, is a primer to the French language, with numerous woodcuts illustrating the text. Many are unsigned, but probably most are the work of Gobrecht. The engraver cleverly hid his signature within the base of the cuts, some indicating "G", others "Gobrecht". Three of these images were rendered in the Hanover Numismatic Society series of medals from 1966-1981 honoring Christian Gobrecht and are illustrated here, scanned from the 1812 volume.





Some of these woodcuts apparently originated in an earlier volume, "The Baltimore Spelling Book : Containing Easy Lessons in Spelling & Reading, Ornamented with Elegant Cuts", this also published by Warner & Hanna in Baltimore, and thought to have been published in 1811. This volume was referenced at the Maryland Historical Society. Warner and Hanna published a

number of other books, and it is quite possible that Gobrecht woodcuts could be located in these as well.

==> Seated Liberty: A Bit More on the History of Seated, Allegorical Figures by Mark Benvenuto. The recent article appearing in the Gobrecht Journal about the history of seated allegorical figures -- certainly including, but not limited to, Mr. Gobrecht's design -- was intriguing because it did not seem complete. There's no offense intended here. The authors did a good job of making their case for a seated, female figure on the coinage of Great Britain and ancient Rome, but there seemed (at least to me) to be something missing. There was a wide waste in that span of time between the legions leaving the British Isles to defend Gaul and other parts of the Empire, and the appearance of a seated figure on the reverse of the copper "cart wheels" of Great Britain in 1797. It seemed that while the article made for an excellent starting point, there had to be more.

The first place to look when filling in a few more dates between 1797 and the time of the Roman Empire was right back here in the young United States of America. Like most people, Christian Gobrecht was a product of his time. Therefore, the classic pose of his seated Liberty was most likely inspired by other, earlier artists, and the design most likely did some inspiring of its own. Before going back in time, let's look briefly at one piece that was probably influenced by the seated Liberty design.

An example of Gobrecht's influence might be the impressive statue "Virginia Mourning Her Dead," a massive bronze that resides on the campus of the Virginia Military Institute, in Lexington, Virginia. VMI, as the school is known to its cadets, friends, and alumni, has the odd distinction of being the only college in the history of the United States in which the entire student body went to war, as a unit. The corps of cadets was part of the Confederate Army that charged a hill at the Battle of New Market, on May 15th of 1864. Their charge inspired the Confederate lines, and turned the battle, although obviously and ultimately not the war. Ten cadets died in the charge, and forty-seven were wounded. Six of the ten are buried on the VMI grounds, at the base of "Virginia Mourning Her Dead," a work of sculptor Moses Ezekiel, who was a member of the VMI class of 1866. An allegorical figure of Virginia sits, head bowed, wearing classical drapery as her garb. The similarities between the Gobrecht design and Mr. Ezekiel's work are rather obvious; and it would be hard to imagine that this is the only piece of art that the seated Liberty design helped or influenced.

Moving back in time though, before the already-mentioned 1797 copper pennies and copper two-penny pieces of Great Britain, one can find many examples of U.S. colonial coinage that sports a seated female figure, as well as several pre-federal pieces with the same. The first pieces listed in the "red book" - Mr. Yeoman's "A Guide Book

of United States Coins” - with a seated figure are the Wood’s Hibernia coinage. Dated from 1722 to 1724, this series has a reverse design in which a seated, female figure holds a harp, as well as a reverse in which the figure seems to be resting on a harp and holding a branch or frond.

The “red book” also lists the Hibernia - Voce Populi pieces of 1760, which show a seated female figure with a harp next to her, now holding a pole in her right hand. The pole does not appear to have a Liberty cap atop it, but the similarity with the Gobrecht design remains strong nevertheless.

The Immune Columbia pieces are the first listed in the “red book” that can be considered pre-federal, and not colonial, as they are dated from 1785 - ‘87. They are said to have a seated figure of justice on them - on the obverse, in three cases. The entire series is crudely enough made that it’s anyone’s guess as to whether the figure is male or female. But the scales of justice are prominent, as is a capped pole in the seated figure’s right hand.

Listed under Massachusetts are a few unofficial coppers that each have a seated figure on the reverse, all wearing classical drapery, and all with a pole. The figures all appear to be sitting on a globe, although what is called the “1776 halfpenny” is so crudely executed that the figure could simply be sitting on a rock. In addition, the figure has a shield propped against the globe. The symbolism in such a design can be taken to represent Liberty, but can just as easily be considered a British design in which Britannia defends her empire -- if, as we go along, we find an older design like this from Great Britain.

The Connecticut series of coppers, issued in a bewildering array of varieties, is simply larded with seated figures, most of which appear to be sitting on a globe, all of which seem to be holding a pole with a cap (I say “seem to be” because some of the designs are off-centered enough that the cap and upper part of the pole are off the planchet). Issued from 1785 - ‘88, this entire series is another that pre-dates the Great Britain coppers of 1797.

The state of New York has a somewhat less productive flirtation with pre-federal coinage, but there exist several pieces of 1786 with a seated figure on the reverse. As with some that we have mentioned, the figure is done in such a manner that one cannot tell if it is a man or woman, although the classical drapery seems to be present, and something rests atop the pole that the figure is holding.

Those collectors and aficionados familiar with the Machin’s Mills coinage, also known as imitation British coppers, know that a seated figure holding a pole appears many times in this series. In addition to these, the figure appears on the Nova Eborac pieces (Nova Eborac is simply Latin for New York) of 1787. Vermont weighs in with a few seated figures as well, although none appears to have survived in higher grades, and thus details of the figure may be forever lost. The pole and the shield are still identifiable on many of these though.

What the “red book” calls private tokens -- most of which were minted before the opening of the U.S. Mint facility in Philadelphia -- have quite a few seated, female figures scattered throughout. One of the best rendered has to be the Myddleton tokens, although that is one that is dated 1796. The date is significant, in that the Mint had been operating for a few years, but it is still earlier than the British cartwheels. These Myddleton pieces were actually produced in Great Britain, but show a beautifully rendered seated figure on the reverse, with head bowed, spear pointing downward, and left arm resting on an oval shield that displays the Union Jack.

As if all this wasn't enough, the "red book" even lists two Washington tokens, both dated 1783, with a seated, female figure on the reverse. She holds a capped pole in one hand and a plant in the other. We'll leave it to some keen-eyed botanist to determine if the plant is indeed an olive branch.

This list certainly makes clear that there were plenty of seated, female figures on coinage of the young United States. All of them could lay some claim to being the source of inspiration for the Gobrecht seated Liberty. It is also noteworthy though that in 1792 two of the token issues of France, sometimes called 2 sols Monneron pieces, were issued with a seated, female figure. The design here is the main device of the obverse of these pieces, and the figure holds the capped pole prominently, not nestled in the crook of her arm. The word, "Liberte" is placed in large letters on the obverse, and the rooster, another symbol that is associated with the French state, stands behind the seated figure.

But what about Great Britain? Going far back from the 1797 coppers, we can find in the Krause, "Standard Catalog of World Coins," covering the 18th century that farthings sported a seated, female figure as early as 1714, and halfpennies did the same as early as 1701 (although the plate coin in the catalog is one dated somewhat later). Virtually everyone who looks at these pieces will agree that the figure, holding what appears to be a spear, and seated near a shield, is Britannia. But this figure does begin to fill in the gap for us, and indicates that Mr. Gobrecht had over a century of such designs upon which to draw when it came time for him to create the one we find so appealing today.

Curiously, Seaby's book on British coinage makes clear that the seated figure of Britannia was used not only on copper coinage, but on silver as well. A silver four pence, also called a groat, is one of the coins pictured therein. Interestingly, it is dated 1836, and Britannia holds the familiar trident, instead of a pole and Liberty cap. The trident is a symbol of Britain's naval might. As well, this book pictures a Bank of England silver dollar that is dated 1804. On the reverse, within a central oval sporting the words "Five Shillings Dollar" is a seated female figure -- presumably Britannia -- with the Union Jack shield nearby, holding what appears to be a spear, and holding a plant in her right hand.

These two silver coins definitely indicate that seated, female figures were present on both copper and silver coinage prior to Mr. Gobrecht's work, but they don't do more than any of the other pieces we've mentioned when it comes to pushing the general design back in time. Seaby's "The Story of British Coinage," does do exactly that though, with an illustration of a tin farthing dated 1685. Illustrated in Chapter 9 of the book, "From Restoration to the Great Recoinage," the piece is a half penny, and the seated figure seems to be holding a spear, with the shield again present. The author notes that the figure is present on the farthing as well, but does not have an illustration of one.

Beyond this point, there appears to be nothing. Going back through the history of British coinage, and the parade of royal heads that make up the obverses of so many of them, as well as the coats of arms that make up so very many reverses, one finds nary a single reclining or seated female figure. The only other illustration and mentions of such in Seaby's work are in the second chapter, "Roman Britain," in which a bronze piece of Hadrian is shown, with Britannia in an almost standing pose, with a shield that has a central spike, and lines emanating from it. The figure does not appear to be holding a pole, spear, or trident. Since it is a coin of Emperor Hadrian, his reign puts the piece at 117 - 138 AD. Seaby also mentions, but does not show, a copper "as" that displays Britannia, "in an attitude of dejection..." The idea thus seems to be that these Roman pieces were issued to commemorate Rome's victories in Britain.

It does then appear that there is a fairly strong connection between the subject of Gobrecht's artistry and that of British coinage, even back into ancient times. But what has been presented here begs a few questions. Why was the Britannia figure abandoned after the legions of the Roman Empire left Britain? Why was a seated Britannia revived in the 1600's, when there were certainly other symbols that could have sufficed? And why did the seated, female, allegorical figure have such a pull on the artists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries?

While the answers to such questions will perhaps obviously be speculative, the first is most likely the easiest. If the Britannia figure on Roman coins represented a Roman victory -- meaning a Briton's defeat - the local rulers would probably want anything but this design on their coinage.

The answer to the second question is probably related to the time in which such coins were issued. What we now call the Renaissance had its beginning in the late 1600's. With an increase in trade, and the accompanying upswing in the movement of people (usually the landed gentry, who had the money to travel, either for war or business), it was only a matter of time before Britain reconnected with its ancient Roman past. Indeed, the passion for all things Roman became so strong in both Britain and in continental Europe that at about that time certain wealthy members of the various nobilities had Roman ruins commissioned to be placed on their estates, and actually paid for fake Roman coins, usually gold, to add to their own growing collections of coins and medals. Arguably, the most famous example of this made-to-order ruins is not British, but rather, Austrian. Outside Vienna lies the Schoenbrunn Zoo, now a public park, but once a holding of the Hapsburg nobility. On it stands, or lies, a ruined Temple of Mars, made just for the site. It may seem like a stretch, but it is probably fair to say that the seated figure of Britannia from the ancient coins struck a chord with the landed gentry of England who had the ear of those who produced coins for use throughout Great Britain.

As for the third question, the following is the most speculative answer of all, but has some merit: the landed men and women of the United States in the early 1800's had something of a "love-all-things-European" complex. They sent their children on the grand tour, meaning a trip to all the capitals of Western Europe. They craved European fashions and trends. They were enamored of the antiquity that Europe had, of which the United States just seemed void. In addition, Britain was the easiest of all European countries to visit. It was pretty much the closest across the water, and a person did not need to learn a second language to be understood when they visited. It is a small wonder then that a design like Mr. Gobrecht's came to be. The figure had been established throughout centuries of coinage artwork, and it made tangible a connection with our own British roots.

Sources:

1. Krause, C.L. and Mishler, C., with Bruce, II, ed. "Standard Catalog of World Coins, 18th Century Edition 1701 - 1800," Krause Publication, Iola, WI, 1998.
2. Seaby, P. "The Story of British Coinage," Butler & Tanner, Ltd., London, 1985.
3. Yeoman, R.S., with Ken Bressett, ed. "A Guide Book of United States Coins," St. Martin's Press, New York (issued annually).

==> LSCC Regional meeting at the June 2007 Baltimore Coin convention. Twenty-one numismatists met on June 29th at the Baltimore Coin Convention for the regional meeting

of the LSCC. Len Augsburger, LSCC Secretary-Treasurer, called the meeting to order at 9 AM. Len presented the updated information on the *Gobrecht Journal* Collective Volume #5 (now in draft), discussed the efforts to get the LSCC on the internet (the LSCC website at <http://www.lscweb.org/> and the monthly *E-Gobrecht* newsletter), the articles in the upcoming *Gobrecht Journal* issues 99 and 100, and the ANA events. The annual meeting of the ANA will be conducted at the 2007 ANA Convention in Milwaukee on Thursday, August 9th at 9 AM. Please try to attend. Additionally, Len Augsburger and Darryl Low will present a program entitled the "History and Beauty of the Liberty Seated Coinage" on Friday, August 10th, at 10 AM.



Len then presented Randy Wiley (at left in the photograph) with the 2006 Kamal M. Ahwash Literary Excellence Award for his excellent series of articles on Die Marriages of the 1861-O half dollar. This award is given annually by popular vote for the best *Gobrecht Journal* article. Normally, this award is presented at the annual LSCC meeting in conjunction with the ANA Convention but Randy is unable to attend this year. Congratulations, Randy!

The meeting continued with an excellent photographic coin quiz by Len on the various minute differences of Liberty's head between the denominations. Everyone was surprised at the nuances and learned a lot. The meeting formally ended at 10 AM but most lingered afterward to talk coins. Here is a photograph of most of the attendees (the dealers had to leave early to set up their tables).



==> A Third 1842 Small Date with Small Letters Reverse Half Dollar is discovered. At the June 2007 Long Beach, CA Coin Show and Convention, Dick Osburn, noted half dollar collector and owner of Dick Osburn Rare Coins, discovered the third example of the 1842 Small Date with a Small Letters Reverse half dollar. Normally, this date has a large letters reverse; the small letters reverse is extremely rare. This coin grades an attractively toned AU55 with very minute vertical pin scratches in the right obverse field, has the same die diagnostics as the previous two, and is the second finest known of the three. Here is a listing by grade of the known examples of this rarity:

1. PCGS-64. Ex-Stack's 11/2005:285 at \$57,500. Previously, it was Stack's 4/1988:1279 at \$2,520. This coin was encapsulated in PCGS-64 holder after the 2005

sale and sold to an advanced collector. Additional information with photographs can be found in the *E-Gobrecht*, Volume 1, Issue 9.

2. AU55 (this coin). See photos below.

3. VF30, the discovery piece. This variety was the first found and identified by Brian Greer in 1998. Additional information with photographs of this coin can be found in *Gobrecht Journal* Volume 24, Issue 72.

Thanks for sharing this information and congratulations, Dick; this is a great find that provides hope for others still looking for this variety. (*Editor, see photographs below. They are a bit fuzzy but I took the photos at the Baltimore Coin Show with the aid of neither a tripod nor good lighting.*)



==> Recent subscriber correspondence.

From **Michael Fey**: Hi Bill, I collect rotated reverses from many series, especially dollars. FYI, below are seated coins with rotations from my collection. I found an 1846-O ANACS-50 seated dollar with a nice rotation several years ago for a friend. Best wishes, Michael S. Fey.

| Series | Date | Grade | Degree Rotation |
|-------------|--------|--------|-----------------|
| Dime | 1839 | G | 35 CW |
| | 1875-S | F | 60 CW |
| Quarter | 1853 | VF+/XF | 45 CCW |
| | 1853 | VF+/XF | 60 CW |
| | 1854 | F/VF | 80 CW |
| | 1854 | F/VF | 60 CW |
| Half dollar | 1842-O | VF | 70 CCW |
| | 1854-O | AU | 45 CW |

From **Jason Feldman**: On the subject of rotated reverses, Mr. Half Dime wrote extensively on the subject and his text can be found on the Gerry Fortin website, www.seateddimevarieties.com/ under the “Message Boards” and “Seated Half Dime Q&A.”.

Advertisements for Wanted or Sale of Liberty Seated Coinage

Rare Coins for Sale: Since 1979, **David Lawrence Rare Coins** has specialized in Seated and Barber coinage for collectors. Please visit our web site for 6,000+ offerings of U.S. & World coins, currency, and stamps for sale and auction. We are also interested in buying or selling your coins at auction. <http://www.davidlawrence.com> or phone 1-800-776-0560, members: PNG, ANA (life), FUN, CSNS

Cud coins wanted: I am always looking for major die breaks/retained cuds/cuds/shattered terminal die states on Liberty Seated Quarters, and major rotated dies greater than 75 degrees CW or CCW. My Preference is for breaks/cuds in the field areas only, no rim cuds. Please reply through the e-mail venue of the *E-Gobrecht* newsletter. Thank you!

LSCC Calendar

- Gobrecht Journal Issue #99 postal mailed – Mid-July 2007.
- Color photos for the *Gobrecht Journal's* 100th Issue accepted – until August 1, 2007.
- Annual Meeting of the LSCC at the ANA Convention, Midwest Airlines Convention Center, Milwaukee, WI – August 9, 2007.
- Dues notice and ballot for The *Gobrecht Journal* Award – September 2007.
- 100th Issue of the *Gobrecht Journal* – November 2007.
- LSCC Seated Dollar census – 2008.
- LSCC Trade Dollar census – 2009.

Information, input, comments, criticisms, or suggestions for improvements to this *E-Gobrecht* are actively solicited from anyone and may be sent to wb8cpy@arrl.net or by writing or calling:

Bill Bugert
Editor, *E-Gobrecht*
P.O. Box 3761
Gettysburg, PA 17325-6927
(717) 337-0229

To be added or removed from the *E-Gobrecht* mailing list, send an email message with the words "Subscribe/Unsubscribe" in the subject line of the message to wb8cpy@arrl.net.

Information on the Liberty Seated Collectors Club

The LSCC Pledge. To encourage, promote, and dispense numismatic knowledge of the Liberty Seated coins; to cultivate fraternal relations among its members and all those interested in the science of numismatics.

LSCC Officers.

President: John McCloskey.

Vice-President: Larry Briggs.

Secretary/Treasurer: Len Augsburg.

LSCC Membership Information. Dues are \$15 per year and include three issues of *The Gobrecht Journal*, an award winning numismatic publication. To join the Liberty Seated Collectors Club, for *The Gobrecht Journal* mailing address changes, or for other membership questions, correspond with the LSCC Secretary Len Augsburg at:

Leonard Augsburg
P.O. Box 6114
Vernon Hills, IL 60061
Phone: (847) 816-1649.
Email: leonard_augsburger@hotmail.com.

Articles, comments, or advertisements for publication in *The Gobrecht Journal* may be addressed to the LSCC President:

Dr. John W. McCloskey
President, LSCC, and Editor, *The Gobrecht Journal*
Email address: John.McCloskey@notes.udayton.edu

The *E-Gobrecht* is not copyrighted; use its content freely but please be sure to quote the *E-Gobrecht* and the Liberty Seated Collectors Club.
