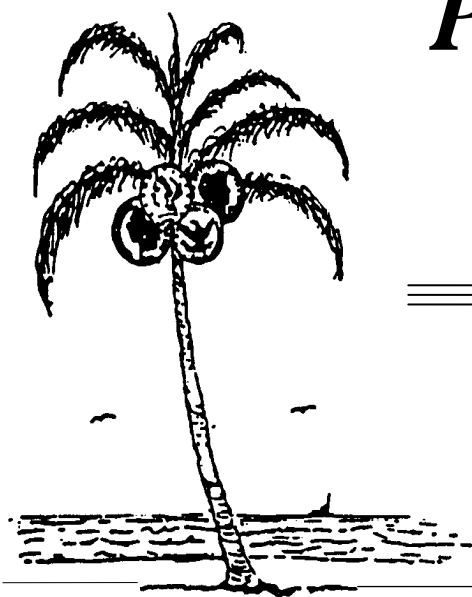


Palm Beach Coin News

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July 2005

JULY 2005 EVENTS CALENDAR

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |

- 7/1-3 *Clearwater Coin Club Show*
 Harborview Center, Clearwater
- 7/3 *Gold Coast Coin, Stamp & Collectible Show*
 David Park Recreation Center, Hollywood
- 7/10 *Coin, Stamp and Collectible Show*
 Eau Gallie Civic Center, Melbourne
- 7/13 ***PBCC Meeting: Doors open at 5:30 PM***
- 7/17 *Coin and Stamp Show*
 Art Serve Library, Ft. Lauderdale
- 7/24 ***PBCC Coin Show***
 Knights of Columbus Hall, West Palm Beach
- 7/27 ***PBCC Meeting: Doors open at 5:30 PM***

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well if you have not been to the club meetings lately, let me tell you what you have missed. In April, we had a free food night with Hungary Howie's pizza and Vince's subs. Also that night, we had a 200-lot foreign coin auction, prices starting at 33% of Krause prices. Sixty-five members were present. At the second meeting in April, Odyssey Marine Explorations showed us slides of the recovery efforts on the SS Republic. They have recovered \$75 million worth of coins and artifacts and they brought some with them to sell. Seventy-seven members were present for this wonderful presentation.

In May we had a 15-lot coin grading contest. Thirty members participated and Mark Schwartz graded the most coins correctly and won a BU Morgan dollar. Our program was "50 Mistakes Made by Beginning Collectors and How to Avoid Them" We had sixty-five members present.

In June, the meeting on the 22nd was "Other Hobbies Night" where members brought in samples and tell us about their other hobbies such as, metal detecting, wine collecting, and rock & roll record collecting.

The ANA will be awarding our club a plaque for 25 years as an ANA member club. The plaque can be picked up at the July ANA convention in San Francisco or they will mail it to us.

We will continue to bring an assortment of numismatic programs to the club. Hope to see you there. Oh, and by the way, club membership is now 250 paid members.

Tony

Frankenstein Meets the Quarter Shrinker

By Eric Brothers

"Power on!"

Switch on the power. The hum of electricity filled the air of the laboratory.

"Increase power!"

A gloved hand pushes the lever higher. The hum of electric energy turned into a bellow.

"More power!"

The gloved hand pushed the lever even higher. The machine began to shake violently. The bellow of raw electric power turned into a roar. A surge shot through the machine.

Ka-boom! The explosion destroyed the wire coil. The shrapnel from the thick coil shattered the protective Lexan shield.

"Power off!"

A bank of power resistors drained off the energy from the overloaded capacitors. The alarm rang and a red light flashed brightly until the charge was completely drained.

The laboratory filled with dark smoke. When the smoke cleared, the damage was visible. The machine suffered some damage; glass windows and the skylight above were punctured by the explosive fragments of wire and Lexan.



"Yes, Flash, this machine will shrink all of your quarters!"

The retired electrical engineer sat back and thought about how various elements of high voltage and pulsed power -- like the fictional Dr. Frankenstein before him -- have always fascinated him. But he was not consumed with the idea of harnessing electricity to reanimate dead tissue. He was going to use the power

of the sky to become a numismatic mad scientist. He would be known as Bert Hickman, the man who would shrink quarters!

A look at Hickman's journal gives us some background: "I acquired a batch of large 54 uF 15 kV GE pulse capacitors. Each was metal cased with 'Frankenstein' insulators and weighed about 150 pounds. A veritable Mad Scientist treasure!" One can almost hear the uncontrollable psychotic laughter as he dropped his pen. He was thus able to create -- with the assistance of a fellow mad scientist -- a combination can and quarter shrinker.

Hickman feverishly writes that, with continued use, "the system suffered from progressive weakening of the internal capacitor buses, ultimately leading to catastrophic capacitor failures." The problem? "One failure caused the steel case to rupture and gallons of nasty looking blackened oil and capacitor foil fragments to leak onto the laboratory floor!"

Our mad scientist performed an "autopsy" on the equipment. The "pulse caps" were built as PFC capacitors and "could not withstand the repetitive high current and electromagnetic forces needed for quarter shrinking."

After finding a batch of Maxwell 70 uF 12,000 volt pulse capacitors, Hickman redesigned "the system so that it can deliver up to 24,000 Joules, or about 17,800 foot-pounds of energy per shot. This is about the same energy as dropping a one-ton weight from a height of nine feet."

Failure was part of the learning process in developing Hickman's quarter shrinker. One night after the system was shut down, our mad scientist began to unbolt the wires and suffered "a tooth-rattling electrical shock." He shut down the system and bled off the capacitor bank charge. The problem? "A wire had come loose from a high-voltage relay -- the very wire that was responsible for safely discharging residual energy from the capacitors."



Before and after shots of the 2005 Minnesota quarter.

Quarter shrinking is fraught with danger and the unknown. Hickman expects "a controlled mechanical and electrical explosion" each and every time he shrinks a coin. He tells us, "I've had several capacitor explosions, some premature firings from the spark gap switch and a number of short circuits."

How did Hickman feel when the first coin was shrunken to his specifications? "It was an incredible rush. Especially because I knew that the ONLY thing that altered the shape of the coin was an invisible -- but incredibly powerful -- magnetic field that existed for only 25-millionths of a second!"



"Go, Mongo, get all their quarters!"

But why does Hickman bother shrinking coins in the first place? "Because I can," says the electrically-driven scientist.

"I like the sound and look of high voltage and high energy electrical discharges," he

told Palm Beach Coin News. "I like the fresh smell of ozone and the blue glow of corona." He also enjoys "pyrotechnics, explosions, lightning and thunder -- the clashing of immovable objects and irresistible forces."

Hickman has shrunken several thousand coins to date, and is "still amazed at how nicely they turn out. I am also intimately aware of the interplay and balancing of huge forces that are required."



Hickman's amazing quarter shrinker.

How does his Quarter Shrinker work? The technique used is high-velocity metal forming. An invisible ray -- a pulsed magnetic field -- pounds the coin into submission and forces it to change its shape in a split second.

How much power flows within the coin? Over "100,000 amperes of current" surges through the coil of insulated wire that surrounds the coin and "inducing perhaps one million amperes of current to flow within the coin."

According to Hickman, the "instantaneous power going into the work coil is comparable to the electric power consumed by a large city."

The "skin effect" takes place: a phenomenon that forces the current to flow around the coin, penetrating less than 50-thousandths of an inch into it.

The Quarter Shrinker works best on clad coins. Morgan dollars and other 90 percent silver coins also shrink well. Bi-metal coins also shrink successfully, oftentimes separating into two pieces.

Don't try quarter shrinking at home! It must be done by qualified, trained mad scientists with very powerful contraptions and 'Frankenstein' capacitor banks. So beware! The next time you hear an explosion and mad, uncontrollable laughter, it may be your neighborhood quarter shrinker at work!

Editor's note: Learn all about the world of quarter shrinking by visiting Bert Hickman's web site, <http://www.teslamania.com>.

COIN OF THE MONTH

By Eric Brothers



You really can find anything on the Internet. Here's a souvenir "Dracula Coin" created by some creative entrepreneur. A perfect gift for the impaler in your family!

PBCC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Dues are \$10 for the year

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PHONE _____ (optional)

DATE _____

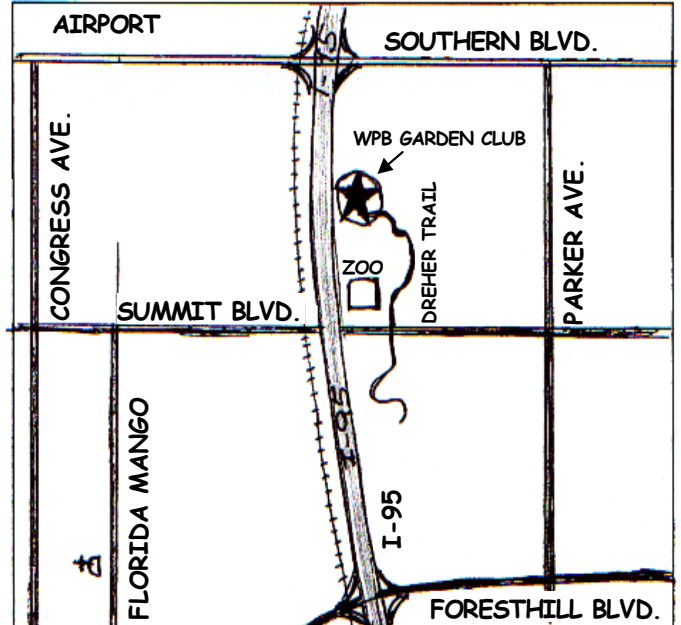
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