

# THE WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

## MINUTES FOR THE:

Tuesday January 4, 2022 Meeting.

Meeting called to order at 7:50 PM, with 7 or 8 WPNS Members present and 0 Guests.

Meeting held at the Mount Lebanon United Methodist Church at 3319 West Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15216

- 1) **TREASURER'S REPORT** – Larry H. reports Nov 30, 2021 Standard Bank balance of \$1,689.16. The WPNS Christmas gift check of \$50 on behalf of Mrs. D (for her meeting desserts) clears the bank and \$0.04 of interest earned was earned. Ending Dec 31, 2021 balance at \$1,639.20.
  - a. Larry H. stills need to write 2 WPNS checks for \$100 each as remembrances for deceased WPNS members - \$100 to PAN on behalf of Ted S. and \$100 to the ANS on behalf of Tom F.
  - b. Larry H. needs to get Gosia F.'s December 10<sup>th</sup> email to other WPNS members regarding directions on how to donate to the ANS on behalf of Tom.
- 2) **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**
  - a. There is discussion about a contribution to the Heinz History Center for a brick donation by WPNS; Mike D. will investigate cost details.
  - b. Mike D. reports eBay sales of \$23.32 in December. This month Mike will be selling angelic cherubs on eBay.
- 3) **CORRESPONDENCE** – Nothing to report per Richard C.
- 4) **OLD BUSINESS** - Nothing to report.
- 5) **NEW BUSINESS:**
  - a. 2022 WPNS dues will be collected in February and March at \$20 per member.
  - b. The Clarion magazine is at the printer and should be out next week.
  - c. The February 2022 speaker will be Tom U.
  - d. Discussion of the November 2022 WPNS banquet meeting at Scoglio's. The WPNS meeting and banquet will be held Nov 1, 2022. ELECTION DAY will be Nov 8, 2022. In prior years these dates conflicted so hopefully this November the election day volunteers will be able to attend the banquet.
- 6) **PRESENTATION** – Richard J. gives an excellent presentation on “the House of Constantine” at the start of the Byzantine empire in year 300 AD. Richard emphasizes how this was a very convoluted and complicated empire – with much of the turmoil arising from the “lust for power” due to marriage, political and leadership divisions. There was constant infighting between challengers as well as blood relatives in attempts to gain power. A major player in this line of leadership – “JULIAN THE APOSTIC” saw his

Father assassinated and he became a very hardcore ruler with a hardened heart. BY 361 AD there were no more heirs in the Constantine line ruling the Byzantine empire.

- a. One reason that **CONSTANTINE WAS CONSIDERED GREAT** is that he, among others, was helpful in bringing Christianity to Europe. In fact, his first wife HELENA, became very religious in her later years and at age 70 she took a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and supposedly uncovered the Cross of Jesus Christ's crucifixion. Helena was named a Saint for this.
- b. **(Point b. ADDED BY LARRY H.)** Another reason that **CONSTANTINE WAS CONSIDERED GREAT** was that - **The Byzantine Empire, that is the Eastern Roman Empire, lasted for quite a long time; from 284 to 1453. For much of its history, Byzantium was rich and prosperous,** with a stable monetary system and a long period of economic expansion. Minor Asia, Syria-Palestine and Egypt had agricultural economies that were well established, as such, they provided the bulk of the state revenues. / Between the time of Diocletian to the time of Marcian (284-457), the Byzantine Empire established its long-lasting institutions. **First, Diocletian introduced A NEW SYSTEM OF TAXATION based on heads (capita) and land (iugera).** Second, runaway inflation had been a major problem for the empire since a crisis in the third century. **Constantine instituted MONETARY REFORM, whereby, instead of trying to restore silver currency, Constantine concentrated on minting large quantities of good standard gold pieces, called the SOLIDUS or NOMISMA. The value of the SOLIDUS remained largely stable until the crisis of the eleventh century, and this was a large part of Byzantium's prosperity.** / Since taxation on the land was greater than on the heads, many people fled the rural areas to move to the major cities of the Empire. This was positive since the majority of the cities were near the sea, and this facilitated trade as moving goods through sea and rivers was much cheaper than land transportation. However, **this rural depopulation also had some downside risks as the expansion of large landowners could be a threat to the state, so the emperors had to keep a careful watch on land accumulation,** and this depopulation made the constant raids by the Goth and Hun invaders much easier.
- c. Some reasons that **CONSTANTINE WAS NOT CONSIDERED GREAT** was that 1) some of his sons rebelled against him and his leadership, 2) Constantine had a number of blood relatives killed, 3) Constantine had some of his foes boiled alive until they perished, 4) and he was not baptized in the River Jordan until he was upon his deathbed.

7) **SHOW & TELL:**

- a. Ed K. brought some of the coins which he will be cleaning when he makes his WPNS Presentation later this year.
- b. Mike D. will be working on a project for his daughter-in-law's family where he will transform a Cuban cigar box into a Coin box holding both Polish and Cuban coins.

8) **ADJOURNMENT** – The Meeting is adjourned at 9:20 PM.