

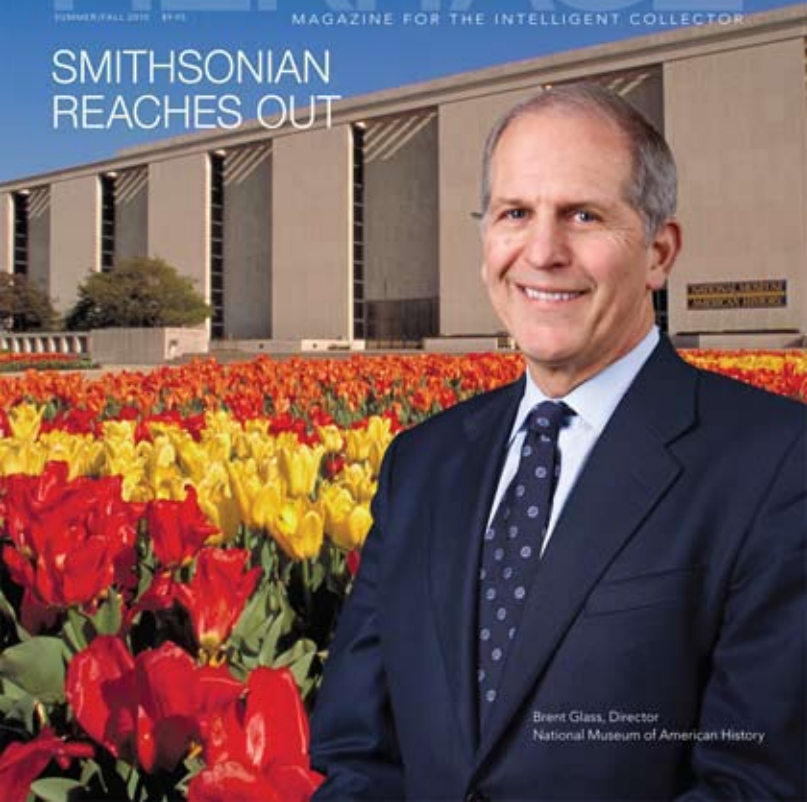
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MAGAZINE FOR THE INTELLIGENT COLLECTOR

SMITHSONIAN REACHES OUT



Brent Glass, Director
National Museum of American History

The Smithsonian's Appeal

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
AMERICAN HISTORY
TEAMS WITH HERITAGE
AUCTION GALLERIES TO
RAISE FUNDS FOR THE
NATION'S LEGENDARY
NATIONAL NUMISMATIC
COLLECTION

By Hector Cantú

As a scientist, James Smithson was an avid collector of crystals, minerals and gems. Upon his death in 1829, the British citizen bequeathed more than \$500,000 to the U.S. government to create an institution "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men."

In 1846, Congress officially established the Smithsonian Institution, a public/private partnership that today includes 19 museums and research organizations. Millions of Americans



The National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., is home to the National Numismatic Collection, one of the largest numismatic collections in North America.

annually visit Washington, D.C., to view a sampling of the Smithsonian's 135 million treasures.

It's not an easy task curating, preserving and maintaining these items. For 164 years, a mix of government and public funding has kept the Smithsonian humming along. "Even though some people think the Smithsonian gets all its funding from the federal government, it's really about 70 percent," says Brent D. Glass, director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. "The balance comes from private sources."

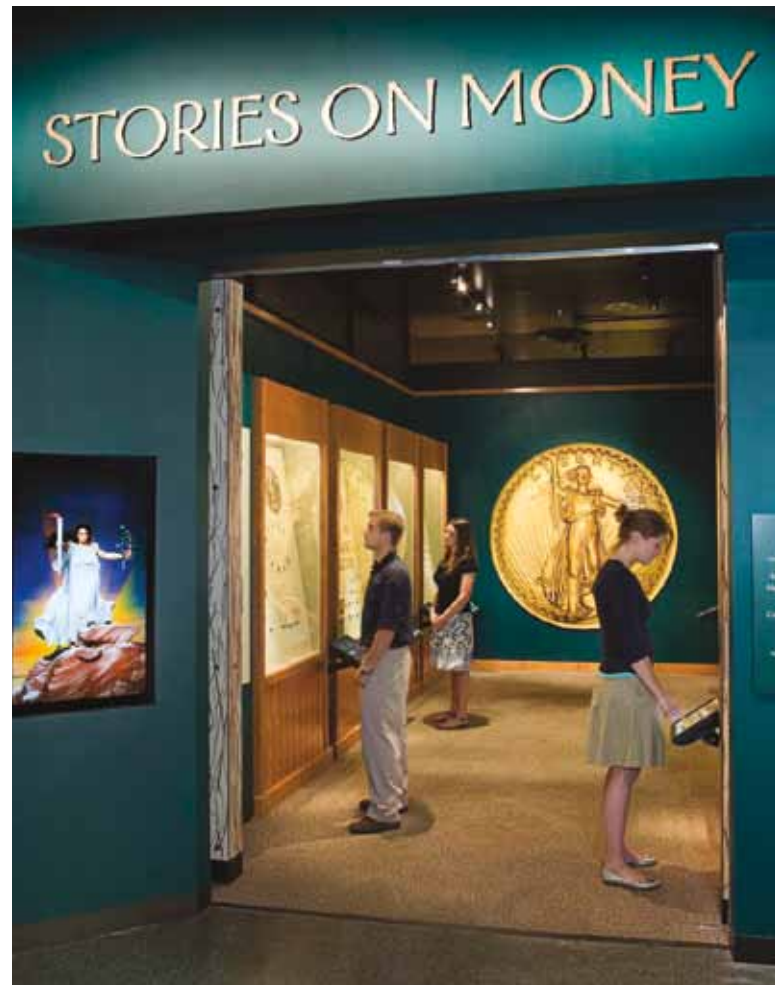
Now, with leaders in Washington under pressure to trim budgets, the National Museum of American History is reaching out to the American public once again for help.

In partnership with Heritage Auction Galleries, the Museum is launching the first of hopefully a series of coin and currency auctions to create an endowment fund for the National Numismatic Collection (NNC) housed at the Museum, which includes some of the most important coins and currency in the world.

This is the first benefit auction devoted to assisting the Museum with funding to help maintain materials and to broaden access to the National Numismatic Collection, says Valeska M. Hilbig, the Museum's deputy director in the Office of Public Affairs. "Auctions like this are a rare event at the Smithsonian and thus very special, and we are looking forward to working with Heritage Auction Galleries."

No need to panic. The Museum is not auctioning coins from its National Numismatic Collection. Instead, it is asking numismatists to donate coins and currency from their personal collections to the auction, with proceeds going to the collection. The first benefit auction is scheduled for Jan. 5-8, 2011, at the Florida United Numismatists Convention in Tampa, Fla.

Proceeds from the special auction on behalf of the National Numismatic Endowment Fund will be used solely for numismatic programs, Glass says. "The funds will be used for research, collections care, and other curatorial activities, such as exhibition." Funds would also be used for staffing. During the 1970s, under the curatorship of Vladimir and Elvira Clain-Stefanelli, the NNC was managed by as many as seven numismatic specialists. Today, that is down to a staff of three, including one senior curator – Richard Doty, author of *America's Money*, *America's Story*, one of the most respected books on the subject of U.S. coins and currency.



The National Museum of American History's current "Stories on Money" exhibit "illuminates history in fresh and unexpected ways," says Brent D. Glass, director of the Museum.



Dr. David K. Allison (left), associate director for curatorial affairs at the National Museum of American History, discusses plans for the upcoming auctions with Heritage Auction Galleries President Greg Rohan, wife Lysa Rohan, and Sandy Merin, president of children's advocacy center Safe Shores.

"Staffing is a big challenge," Glass says. "The numismatic collection is a good example where we've had retirements and people leave and we haven't been able to replace them. That's why this endowment for the National Numismatic Collection is so important."

KEEPING THE STORIES ALIVE

Visitors to the National Museum of American History have always been fascinated by American coins and currency.

The current "Stories on Money" exhibit explores the Museum's numismatic collections from several perspectives. The main section shows what money looked like in Colonial America and at other pivotal times, including the Gold Rush, Great Depression and in the current era. "This display," says Glass, "illuminates history in fresh and unexpected ways and allows visitors to think of how money tells stories about different historical periods."

The Museum's legendary National Numismatic Collection includes more than 450,000 coins, medals and decorations, and 1.1 million pieces of paper money. Among the legendary coins: a Brasher half doubloon, an 1849 double eagle (first of the gold \$20 pieces), and two 1877 \$50 patterns. Other rarities are a 1913 Liberty head nickel, three 1804 dollars, and two of the three-known examples of the world's most valuable coin, the 1933 double eagle.

"It's a valuable collection in so many ways," Glass says. "Money helps a nation define who we are as a people. The collection reflects the earliest origins of the Smithsonian, but it also reflects an international quality. We have objects from all over the world, considered some of the finest examples of each country. It really is a world-class collection, maybe among the finest in the world and deserving of our collective greatest efforts."

Greg Rohan, president of Heritage Auction Galleries, calls the National Numismatic Collection a cornerstone of the Smithsonian's treasures. "It is an essential resource for future generations seeking to explore history through numismatics," Rohan says.

EVENT

The National Numismatic Endowment Fund Auction is scheduled for Jan. 5-8, 2011, in Tampa, Fla. For information, contact Erin Emerson at 214-409-1575 or ErinE@HA.com. Receive a free catalog in any category online at HA.com/HM19202 or call 866-835-3243 and reference HM19202.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SMITHSONIAN BENEFIT AUCTION

Coin, currency consignments now being accepted

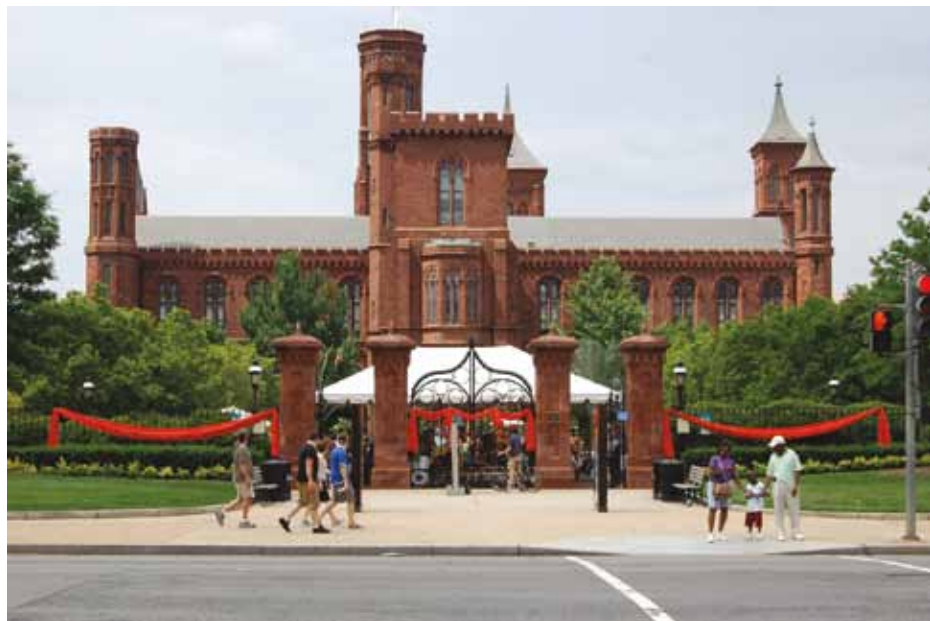
The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and Heritage Auction Galleries hope to raise \$2.7 million over three years for the National Numismatic Endowment Fund. Here's how you can donate your coins and currency:

- Call Heritage Auctions consignment directors at 800-872-6467, ext. 1000 (coins), or ext. 1001 (currency) to discuss your participation.
- You can consign one coin (valued over \$500) or a group of coins (total consignment value over \$1,000) to the National Numismatic Endowment Fund auction, to be held at FUN 2011 in Tampa, Fla. Remember – 100 percent of your prices realized will be a tax deductible donation. No reserves will be permitted on these lots.
- Or, you can designate the proceeds of specific lots of an existing consignment in one of Heritage's other auctions (or a dollar amount out of your proceeds) to be applied to the National Numismatic Endowment Fund.
- After each auction, all funds raised by Heritage Auction Galleries will be transferred to the National Museum of American History, National Numismatic Endowment Fund.

"No one is sure why James Smithson was so generous to a country that he never visited," says Heritage Auctions President Greg Rohan, "but the knowledge and sheer joy that the Smithsonian Institution and the National Numismatic Collection have imparted to the American people for more than 150 years is incalculable. Now is the time for America's coin and currency communities to support the NNC and let their coins and dollars be counted."

An experimental ultra-high relief 1907 Double Eagle, donated by Cornelius van Schaak Roosevelt, nephew of President Theodore Roosevelt, is among the treasures in the National Numismatic Collection.





IN 1846, CONGRESS OFFICIALLY ESTABLISHED THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, A PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP THAT TODAY INCLUDES 19 MUSEUMS AND RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS.

In coming years, the National Museum of American History plans to make the collection more accessible to visitors. "Even though it's well known and famous within the numismatic community," Glass says, "I think it deserves even a wider audience around the country and around the world." The National Numismatic Endowment Fund will help achieve that goal.

APPEALING TO COLLECTORS

In the 18 months following the completion of renovations in 2008, more than 6.5 million people have visited the National Museum of American History.

"It's been gratifying to see that response to the Museum since we reopened," Glass says. "I thought we would drop a little bit in the second year. There was no inaugural this year, which drove a lot of people here, and we had some huge snowstorms in Washington that shut down the Smithsonian for over a week. But even with those factors, we're still at about the same [attendance] level that we were last year at this time."

Despite solid attendance, budgets are tight at all Smithsonian museums. The National Museum of American History has an annual budget of about \$30 million; nearly one-third of that amount comes from donations. "More and

more we are relying on private sources of funding, whether it's special gifts from donors – whether it's foundations or individuals or corporations – or funds we generate from business activity," Glass says. "We are constantly looking at ways to supplement our annual appropriation with private funding. That's across the board."

The benefit auctions with Heritage Auction Galleries are another way to generate those funds. The fundamental idea is asking collectors to donate coins and currency for auction, with proceeds benefiting the National Numismatic Endowment Fund.

The overall goal is to raise \$2.7 million over three years, Rohan says. The auctions will feature no seller's fees and no buyer's premiums. "Heritage is donating all of our normal fees and services, so 100 percent of all donations of cash or 100 percent of donations of material to the auction will directly benefit the endowment."

It makes sense, Glass says, to ask the nation's top numismatists for help. After all, the Smithsonian itself was initially funded by a collector who wanted to preserve history. Donating is in the best James Smithson tradition.

"What we've found is that in each area of our Museum, the knowledgeable people, the collectors, the people who do research on different aspects of our collections, are the people who start the initiative to both preserve and provide access to those collections. So it's a natural fit to work with and appeal to the numismatic community to participate in this

auction, to donate coins or currency of value to generate proceeds to start this endowment."

Adds Rohan: "I don't think it's asking too much for numismatists to join us in keeping the National Numismatic Collection of the Smithsonian Institution accessible, on display and properly curated. The country needs their support and their donations."

In the end, the Smithsonian, Heritage Auction Galleries and numismatists have the same goals, Glass says. "[Heritage] is one of the top firms in the field and one of the largest. They have a vision like we do that increasing support for the National Numismatic Collection will benefit not just the collection, but future generations who will want to know more about the history of money and how that history connects to the larger story of America's economy and the world economy."

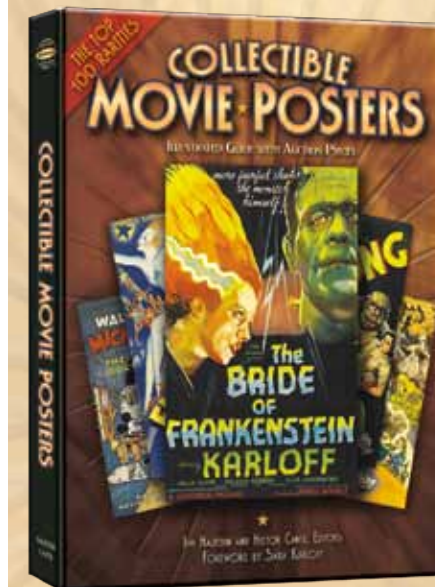
To consign coins and notes to the National Numismatic Endowment Fund at FUN 2011 in Tampa, Fla., call 800-872-6467, ext. 1000 (coins) or ext. 1001 (currency). To learn more about the National Museum of American History and the National Numismatic Collection, visit americanhistory.si.edu.



The National Numismatic Endowment Fund will be used to preserve some of the world's rarest coins, including (clockwise from top) a 1913 (V) Nickel (one of only five made, but never authorized); an 1877 \$50 "Half Union" (one of only two produced in gold); and an 1849 "Double Eagle" gold coin (the only known specimen).

"A Tribute to the Golden Age."

—Sara Karloff, daughter of screen legend Boris Karloff



Jim Halperin and Hector Cantu—two experts from Heritage Auction Galleries, which handles 70 percent of the world's movie-poster auction sales—share with you the wonderful world of the rarest, the most valuable, and the most exciting movie posters known to exist. 224 pages, full color. \$19.95

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—The Boston Globe

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