

The Third Side of the Coin: Professional Societies for Numismatic Merchants

by [Michael E. Marotta](#)

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It is too easy to find fakes, damaged goods, misidentified and misgraded material. The fact of the matter is the sellers are often more ignorant than the buyers. So, how to do put a floor under your risk?

You protect yourself first of all by patronizing only those dealers who have demonstrated their professionalism. Such dealers belong to professional societies that enforce codes of conduct sticter than any government laws. Of the societies listed here, the first two also accept collectors as members.

THE AMERICAN NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION

818 North Cascade Avenue
Colorado Springs, Colorado
80903-3279

The ANA was founded in 1891. It was later chartered by Congress to advance knowledge and improve communication among numismatists. The ANA is the largest organization of its kind with about 25,000 members. The ANA leadership often consults to and with the US Treasury and Congressional committees on the forms and uses of money.

THE AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

Broadway @ 155th Street
New York, New York
10032

The ANS is the senior club, founded 50 years ahead of the ANA. It is more scholarly, less populist. The ANS publishes a long series of monographs on numismatics that has set and developed the foundation for the science and art of coins, banknotes, and medals.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL NUMISMATISTS

Jean-Paul Divo, Secretary
Loewenstrasse 55
CH-8001 Zurich
Switzerland

The IAPN serves dealers. Its Athena logo is a symbol of assurance for the public that the merchant meets strict criteria for professional demeanor.

PROFESSIONAL NUMISMATISTS GUILD
Robert Brueggerman, Executive Director
3950 Concordia Lane
Fallbrook, California
92028

The PNG serves dealers. Its logo is a symbol of assurance for the public that the merchant meets strict criteria for professional demeanor.

In addition, you will find regional, state, and local clubs. The Central States Numismatic Society, the Michigan State Numismatic Society, and the Livingston County Coin Club are typical. They host conventions (locally, they are "shows"). They publish newsletters. You can meet the members. You can become a member. Specialty clubs also exist. People who collect Large Cents and Half Cents benefit from Early American Coppers, Inc. Other clubs focus on anything from Wooden Nickels to Morgan Dollar Varieties. You will find most of these clubs listed in an ANA Club Guide. Numismatic News has also published a different (though necessarily similar) club guide.

Beware of societies and clubs that were not members of the ANA or another, higher, officiating body. Beware of high sounding "societies" that do not publish journals or sponsor conventions.

The requirements of the ANA, ANS, IAPN, and PNG are not trivial. Collectors and dealers alike can, and have, lost their membership for actions and words that were well within the law but were outside good sense and polite exchange. We all like to match wits in a game where book learning and a sharp eye are the keys to profit. However, no serious numismatist ever takes advantage of an obviously untutored buyer or seller.

Before you trust a dealer (or collector), ask to see their membership card, certificate, or decal. If you know your Buffalo Nickels, feel free to buy and sell as you see fit. If you don't know your coins, know your coin dealer. Reputable dealers belong to associations with long histories and broad memberships.