

ANACS' "COURT OF APPEALS"

IT'S YOUR RIGHT

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If one takes the time to read the fine print on the reverse of an ANACS certificate, the second paragraph reads as follows: "Certification does not constitute a guarantee that an item is genuine nor that others would reach a different conclusion as to the grade." If one was to look closely into this statement, it could be mistakenly interpreted as some sort of "cop out" regarding an ANACS opinion. However, I interpret this sentence on the back of the certificate as an up front and honest statement of the ANA policy regarding their assessment of numismatic material sent in for an "Opinion." The word opinion is very important because that is exactly what the ANA grading board is doing, expressing an opinion. The strength of that opinion in the marketplace is directly proportionate to the interpretation of its accuracy, as judged by the vast and varied numismatic community.

Since opinions are functions of human beings (who are far from perfect) occasionally there might be a divergency of interpretations in regard to assigning a grade to a coin. At the present moment an ANACS opinion in my estimation has a considerable amount of strength. If anything coins are being undergraded, which is good for the consumer and frustrating to the dealer. Fortunately as part of the ANACS procedure an appeal process is available to anyone who feels that a coin was examined with too strict an eye.

I have availed myself of this appeal service on many an occasion, and although I do not feel justice was served in every case, I did receive a fair percentage of reversals in my favor. Of those coins that were not changed, I received a clearer picture as to why the grade I received was placed on my coin/coins.

I highly recommend appealing coins if you feel that a coin warrants a second go around. I say this not only because of the satisfaction one gets if they win, but also it is a learning process if you don't. ANACS has built into its structure a definite appeal process and they do not mind at all taking a second look at a coin. No one is being insulted, and neither is anybody's ego at stake. The placing of a grade is done by consensus with up to 7 people involved, and some decisions are pretty close. Therefore, APPEAL if you feel you have a good case, but try to be fair and maintain an open mind. From experience I follow a certain set procedure when I appeal a grade. I recommend some variation of it, or you can copy it exactly, for what I consider a fair amount of success. Just like my other articles I am going to outline an ANACS appeal in a step by step procedure; otherwise I'll just ramble on forever and wind up discussing the virtues of Henry the 8th.

Step 1: When you first get your coins back from Colorado and are going over the grades, try and go over each coin and see why a coin was given the grade it was assessed. This includes both the favorable grades and those that quietly drive ANACS coin dealers up the wall. Since the silver dollar is the most numerous coin that is sent in for a grade, I am going to use it as an example throughout this highly stimulating discourse. An MS 65/65 dollar has certain features in regard to eye appeal, luster and bag marks. If you get any back, stare at each side and try to fix in your mind what a 65/65 looks like. After you have done this, look at the dollars that received less than a 65 grade on either the obverse or reverse. Keep the picture of what a 65 looks like in your mind and see if you can find what the ANACS staff picked up on in placing a lower grade on the coin.

Step 2: In the vast majority of cases it is possible to discern what it was that the ANA grading board picked up on to give a coin a lower grade than expected. It is human nature to feel that one's product is better than it might be assessed by others, and coins are no exception. However, there will be a few occasions where no matter how highly you respect an ANACS decision, a question lingers as to the fact that the coin could have possibly been undergraded. If you feel that you have legitimate point of view that differs from the ANA grading board, then by all means send the coin back.

Step 3: If you do decide to send the coin back for a second look, back up your request for an appeal on pure and simple fact. For this I recommend a certain amount of basic numismatic references and knowledge. For example, if you get a grade of 63/65 on a 1904 P Morgan Dollar, and the coin doesn't have a single mark on the obverse, perhaps it was downgraded due to lack of luster. If you mention in a letter to the grading board that '04 P's come dull, just like '03 P's and '02 P's, perhaps this might be taken into consideration. It may also help to send in to the grading board a second '04 P that was graded 65/65, that had dull luster in order to show them that there is merit to your point. I have also sent photocopies of pages from various reference books regarding certain points I want to make, including the ANA grading guide, which is the best book to quote.

Step 4: After you have examined your coins closely, gave the grading board the benefit of the doubt, supported your point of view with an informative letter quoting suitable references and whatever information you can draw upon to support your contention; then the next step is to send in your coin, knowing you have done the best you could. If your facts are correct, and the coin is legitimately undergraded, there is a better than even chance it might be changed. The people who work at ANACS are fair, and do rectify mistakes when it is brought to their attention in a fair and intelligent manner. Also, another point to remember when appealing a coin, or fighting a speeding ticket, you catch more flies with honey than a swatter. My great grandfather told me that just before the Cossacks chased him into the Volga River.

ANACS TRAVEL SCHEDULE

Below is a list of shows at which ANACS staffers will be present. This would be a good opportunity to meet with them and discuss any grading questions that you might have.

July 10-16, COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO - 15th Annual Summer Seminar. Judy Stebenne, Seminar Coordinator, P.O. Box 2366, Colorado Springs, CO 80901.

August 16-20, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA - 92nd Anniversary A.N.A. Convention, Town & Country Hotel.



PLEASE NOTE:

The deadline for submission of articles and advertising

for the July issue of REPORT ON ANACS COINS IS:

JULY 7th

