

'Money architect crafts, sells Chambersburg Liberty Dollars

By Vicky Taylor
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Franklin County resident Pete Hallock and self-styled "money architect" Bernard von NotHaus see the Liberty Dollar as an alternative currency to be used in place of at least some of the dollars that make up the U.S. monetary system.

Many of those who turned out Saturday for the "hallmarking" of the 2008 Chambersburg Liberty dollar saw the unique coins as collectors items instead.

"I just love them," said Chambersburg resident Jane Cummings as she stood in line waiting to buy one of the \$20 silver Liberty Dollars, designed this year to make it harder to confuse the privately minted "dollars" with the U.S. Mint silver dollars.

Cummings admitted that so far she hadn't spent any of her Liberty coins, and didn't plan to do so.

"I'm saving them... they are a memento," she said.

It was her second trip of the morning to Jim's Country Market, where the 2008 redesigned coins were being stamped with the Chambersburg, PA. mark that would make them uniquely local. She had bought two of the coins soon after von NotHaus and Hallock set up in the market, then come back for another one later in the morning.

Jim Danzberger, also of Chambersburg was waiting to buy some Chambersburg Liberty Dollars, but he didn't plan to spend them either, even though over four dozen area merchants take them in exchange for merchandise.

"I am just getting them to save," Danzberger said. "I am going to pass them on to my grandchildren."

Danzberger said he was fascinated with the dollars because they are stamped with the name of his hometown. To him, their value is in the fact that many people consider them collectibles.

Jerry Rowe of Chambersburg agreed. He was also in line waiting to buy the hand hallmarked Liberty Dollars for his coin collection.

"Definitely, it's a collectible," he said.

Some of the buyers saw today as an opportunity to obtain a coin they hope will help them prosper in the uncertain economic climate they feel the country now faces.

Dr. Edwin C. Van Valey and his wife, Ruth, drove to Chambersburg from Red Hook, N. Y... to buy some of the coins. The retired dentist had a pocket full of 2007 Liberty Dollars and a wallet full of the "silver certificates" issued by von NotHaus' organization as an alternative to U.S. currency.

"We have been using these Liberties for years," Van Valey said, predicting that the dollars and the Liberty Dollar certificates will someday replace the currency issued by the U.S. Mint and Federal Reserve.

When the silver certificates were issued by von NotHaus' organization, they were supposed to be backed by warehoused silver and gold and could be redeemed for those precious metals.

That was before the FBI raided six of his business operations in four states in November, including the national headquarters in Evansville, Ill., and seized a half-ton of silver, gold and platinum, two tons of copper-minted Ron Paul Dollars, as well as the die that Hallock had paid \$1,000 to have made for the 2007 Chambersburg Liberty Dollar.

Van Valey claims that in seizing the gold and silver that backed von NotHaus' Liberty Dollar silver certificates, the government stole from him also, since the action lowered the value of certificates that are no longer backed by those precious metals.

"The government doesn't want competition," Van Valey said. "That's why they did it, but they haven't arrested anyone else."

Von NotHaus said neither has the government issued a Cease and Desist order against him.

So he has continued to mint his Liberty Dollars, although he has changed the design on the reverse side to make them easier to distinguish from government-issued coins.

The front, or obverse, of the coin still features Lady Liberty with her crown, the word "Liberty" at the top, the words "Trust in God" to her right and the year beneath the lady with, in very small print, a copyright mark.

The torch on the reverse side of prior year versions has been removed, replaced with the words "Liberty Dollar" along the top and \$20 beneath that. The initials

MSRP (for manufacturer's suggested retail price) is on the left side of the coin and "PVBC" (for private voluntary barter currency) are on the right. At the bottom are the words "Twenty Dollars" with the phone number and Web site in fine print above those words and "one ounce .999 fine silver" in fine print below.

On Saturday van NotHaus used a metal stamp and mallet to impress a circular "hall mark" bearing the words "Chambersburg PA." in the center of the reverse side of the coin between MSRP and PVBC.

The 2007 Chambersburg Liberty Dollar had an entirely different reverse design featuring the town's official crest in the center of the coin and the word "Chambersburg" at the top, but Hallock said the seizure of that die prevented the striking of any more special Chambersburg coins at this time.

More information about the Liberty Dollar is available at either <http://LibertyDollar.org> or <http://chambersburglibertydollar.com>.

(PHOTO CAPTION) New coinage: Mint master and self-styled "money architect" Bernard von NotHaus uses a steel hand stamp and hammer to imprint numerous new 2008 \$20 silver Liberty pieces. The imprint will be the local hallmark of Liberty Dollar of Chambersburg.