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Aleksey is a master engraver, coming from the jewelry capital of Russia – Kostroma. It's not a big city that has five (yes five) jewelry production plants and the very best European jewelers, designers and engravers, as well as the finest universities teaching these disciplines in a century-long tradition. This place is all about fancy design on precious metals. Aleksey holds the qualification title of the 6th degree master engraver, being of the highest category bestowed upon these craftsmen by the institution that prides itself as being unmatched in this field.



Aleksey Saburov's Centennial Hobo Nickel

Today Aleksey continues to excel in the jewelry business, but everyman needs a hobby, right? "A Hobo Coin seemed perfect from the start! This is it! A miniature bas-relief in metal, it's like a tiny sculpture with a sense of tradition behind it. When I started reading up on Hobo Nickel and what it's about, it was precisely down my alley! This is what I was taught and loved the most back in college days."

To him engraving is like an old film development process: first you have the general shapes, but then all these details start coming out into the light. With Hobo Nickels, every coin is a challenge to apply the skills: to get the highest level of detail, the character right and not to miss the iconic traits of those times. It is a truly and deeply enjoyable work, a through back to the college days when projects were crafted for the pure joy of it, and every new one is a creative challenge.

For Aleksey the best subject matter is a portrait. This is one of the tougher ones, like passing a qualifications test every time. It's not enough to be a good engraver, but also getting it to look like the person and capturing the so-elusive character of the face. Such challenge makes you

feel like a first-grader, facing a monumental test of everything you've got. Never know if you'll pass or fail.



Pictured above are Aleksey Saburov and Don Haley beneath Aleksey's Centennial carving pictured on one of the FUN Convention's entryway posts. Don was the winning bidder for the carving in the OHNS auction.

Aleksey is indeed a master of his craft, who has found a hobby that is more than a hobby – a true joy to create, and the work really speaks for itself. ♦

Editor's note: As previously announced, I will feature hobo nickel carvers in *BoTales* who have carved a centennial hobo nickel and submitted a photo to your *BoTales* editor. In the summer issue I hope to feature Ron Landis, Cinco de Arturo (Art DelFavero) and Shane Hunter, all of whom have carved centennial hobo nickels. ♦

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