

The Third Side of the Coin: A Numismatic Halloween

by [Michael E. Marotta](#)

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Shopping the classifieds in *Coin World*, *Bank Note Reporter*, and other periodicals, you can find inexpensive numismatics to give away. Money is cheaper than candy. Besides, kids get more candy than is good for them and money is more interesting.

Banknotes cost between 10cents and 25cents each when you buy them in lots of 25 to 100. Patronizing several dealers brings a mix of material. Since kids come to the door in small packs, you can give out a random sampling. Most of the banknotes will be recently devalued money, ten to 25 years old, from Latin American nations, Balkan states, and former soviet republics.

Finding coins at a good rate can be more of a challenge. The most common deal will be a pound for \$8 or \$10. This usually comes to about 100 coins. I know a local dealer in a college town who does the campus police a favor every couple of years by taking off their hands the accumulated international "parking tokens" donated by students. I get them for less than 10 cents each when I buy two or more pounds. Foreign coins have to be bigger than a quarter or else I drop two in the bag.

Mardi Gras Doubloons are also inexpensive if you watch for them, usually 10 cents to 25 cents each. They are big and bright with interesting graphics. Wooden nickels are another alternative. However, transportation tokens, and other exonomia tend to be less interesting to the non-collectors.

Do it with style. When I gave out doubloons, I dressed up like a pirate and talked like Long John Silver. Aarrrr, sez I, doubloons from the coast of Malibar! When I gave out banknotes, I wore my tuxedo and a mask, the Phantom of the Opera. Maybe next year, I will dress up like a cowboy and give out fake western assay bars.