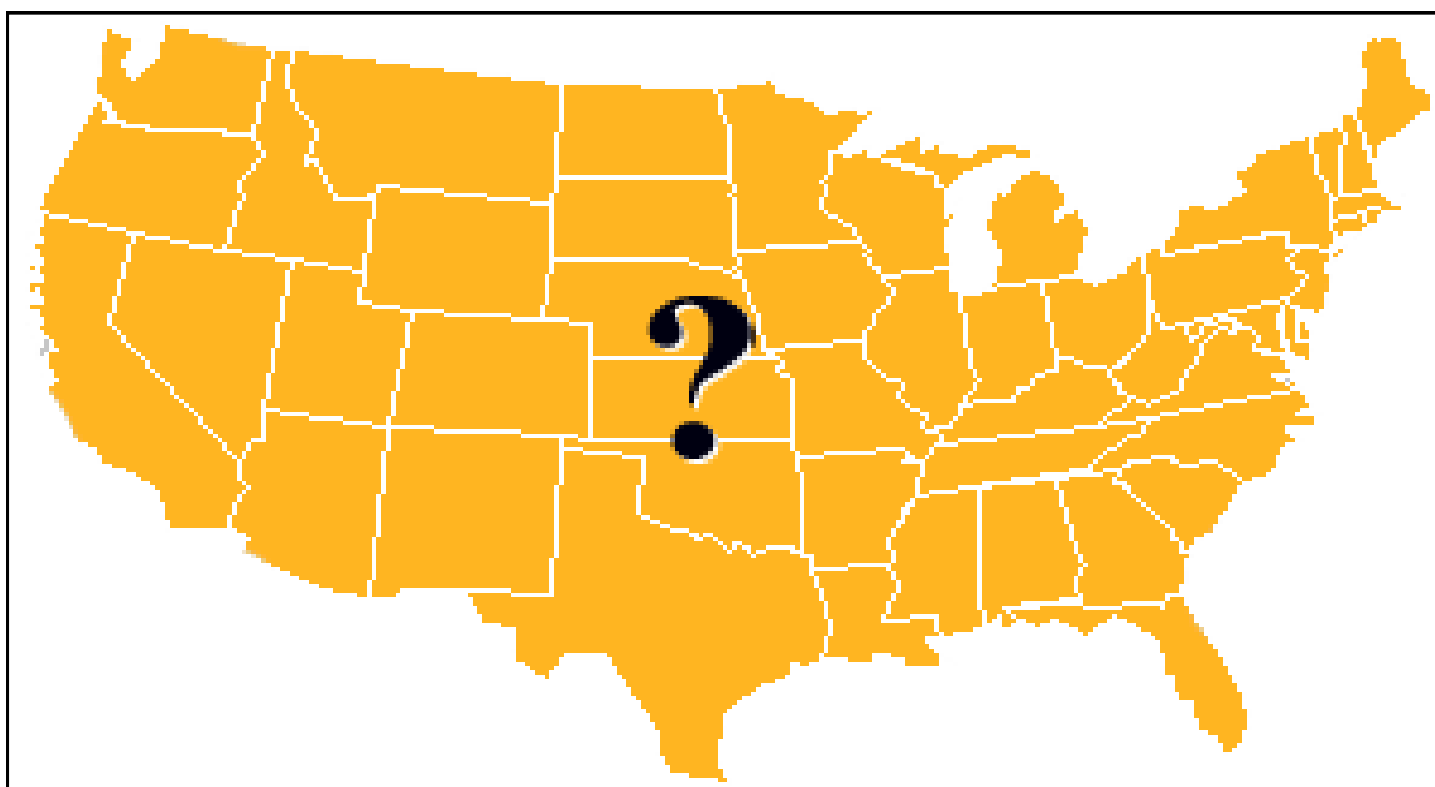


2005 Demographics

by
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We haven't looked at the hobby's demographics in depth in four years, so this time we make some comparisons and see what's changed, where, and what those changes may mean. The hobby continues to go through the major down-sizing that began shortly after the collapse of the domestic match industry in the mid-1980s, capped by the disappearance of Universal as a manufacturer in 1988. The hobby's membership constantly changes in any event, of course, so let's take a look and see what the numbers say...



I. Collectors:

Total collectors known in hobby:

<u>2001</u>	<u>2004</u>
2,004	1,897

Total collectors in RMS:

<u>2001</u>	<u>2004</u>
761	764

Percentage of Collectors by State Country

California	12.4	10.1
Ohio	%	%
Pennsylvania	10.0	9.8
New York	8.3	8.4
Texas	5.6	6.4
Florida	3.9	3.8
Illinois	3.7	4.3
New Jersey	3.7	3.6
Wisconsin	3.3	3.7
Washington	3.1	3.4
Massachusetts	2.8	1.7
Michigan	2.8	2.9
Maryland	2.5	2.8
Virginia	2.4	2.2
Connecticut	2.0	2.3
Missouri	1.8	1.6
Colorado	1.8	2.1
North Carolina	1.5	1.8
Iowa	1.5	1.4
Indiana	1.3	1.3
Kentucky	1.3	1.7
Oregon	1.3	1.3
Tennessee	1.3	.9
Minnesota	1.2	1.2
Arizona	1.2	1.6
Kansas	1.2	1.0
Louisiana	.9	1.1
Nevada	.9	.6
Oklahoma	.7	.9
Georgia	.7	1.0
Rhode Island	.6	.6
South Carolina	.6	.5
New Hampshire	.6	.6
Hampshire	.5	.5
Wyoming	.5	.4
Alabama	.4	.5
Nebraska	.4	.4
Maine	.3	.4
Mississippi	.3	.3
New Mexico	.3	.3
Arkansas	.2	.3
Delaware	.2	.5
Idaho	.2	.2
Washington,	.2	.2
DC	.1	.3
Hawaii	.1	.1
North Dakota	.1	.2
South Dakota	.1	.3

Vermont	.1	.2	2001	2004
West Virginia	.1	.2	2001	2004
Alaska	.05	.05	2001	2004

Midwest	29.3	30.6	+1.3
Northeast	%	%	%
West Coast	26.4	26.8	+4
Southeast	18.8	14.1	-4.7
Southwest	15.0	17.8	+2.8
Rocky Mtn.	6.9	6.7	-.2

Percentage of Collectors by Region 2001 2004 loss/gain

Percentage of Collectors by Gender

2001	2004
-	male - 72.5%

[Note: Does not include 3 collectors for whom I do not have current addresses]

Percentage of Collectors by

United States	90.4	92.4
Canada	%	%
England	5.9	5.1
Australia	.8	1.5
India	.2	.3
Netherlands	.1	.1
Russia	.1	.05
Argentina	.1	.05
China	.05	.05
Czech Rep.	.05	.1
Denmark	.05	.05
Finland	.05	-
Germany	.05	-
Iceland	.05	.05
Malta	.05	-
Mexico	.05	.05
New Zealand	.05	.05
Saudi Arabia	.05	-
Singapore (*)	.05	.05
South Africa	.05	.05
Philippines	.05	.05
Brazil	-	.05
Puerto Rico (*)	-	.05

* = or other areas

[Note: Region figures based on US collectors only]

Observations

These figures are based on my collector data base, which I've been maintaining since the late 1980s. Data base input comes from club membership lists and club bulletins. I basically see them all, except, I believe, for the two smallest clubs, and when their members who are other club members are removed, what number remains is relatively insignificant. I believe the data base is as accurate as anyone could expect it to be.

Hobby membership: I could kick myself for not recording the total number of known collectors within the hobby on an annual basis. I didn't start doing that until recently, but I can remember in the late 1980s, there were 4,000+ collectors listed in the data base. By 2001, some 50% of those were gone, and as of this writing (November, 2004) I show 1,897.

RMS membership: As one would expect, RMS membership has shown a similar decline over the same years, although we've hovered within the 755-795 range for the last four years, going up, down, and up again.

Collectors by state: California remains the single biggest state for collectors, even after losing over 2% from 2001. It's interesting that the two biggest states have percentages in decline while the third and fourth states both show increases. But, do the changes in stats mean anything significant? For example, are collectors leaving California in droves for some reason? No. As the hobby has shrunk in size, California, as the most populated state (and with the most collectors), has simply taken the biggest hit. Not surprising. But, collectors in Ohio will be glad to see that the gap keeping *their state* out of the first place position has narrowed considerably. Most of the sparsely-populated states have remained basically the same. It's nice to see Montana with us!

Collectors by region: The Midwest still holds the largest number of collectors, and the Southeast now can boast a bigger number than the West Coast. If one roughly divides the country in half, lengthwise between the Rocky Mountain and Midwest areas, it becomes obvious why almost all the RMS conventions are held in the eastern half. Some 75% of collectors are located in the eastern half, and that lopsidedness is somewhat more pronounced now than what it was in 2001. Again, as far as the change in numbers is concerned, I believe the main factor here is that these areas have simply lost or kept more of their collectors amidst the shrinking hobby population...rather than collectors physically moving to or from these areas. For example, the Midwest showed the greatest gain, but I don't think there's been any national population shift to that area.

Collectors by gender: Again, I unfortunately didn't think to record these stats from earlier years, but the hobby currently shows a 3-to-1 male-to-female ratio, and I doubt that that has significantly changed from 2001. Why the huge discrepancy? It's always been there. Perhaps it goes back to the times when smoking was mainly a male thing. Ordinarily, I would have thought that the percentage of female collectors would be much greater than it is, since females tend to live longer and the great majority of collectors are 'seniors'...or 'tending' in that direction (myself included!).

Collectors by country: No real surprises here. I think the most significant fact is that the hobby here in the US pulls in very few collectors from overseas, even with the advent of our global web site. One might correctly point to obvious language problems as a factor; and the cost of international postage, perhaps; but I think the biggest obstacle to our spreading the domestic hobby overseas is that the rest of the phillumenic world simply doesn't focus on matchcovers, but rather matchboxes and labels. I don't know that that's a gap that can ever be significantly bridged.

I've always been amazed that there's such a lack of collectors in Mexico. For as long as I can remember, there's been only *one* known official collector there. One would think that for such a large country, and one that is adjacent to the US, there would certainly be more active participants in our hobby, here.

II. Clubs: I'm running out of room, but the club situation is basically the same as it was in 2001,