

Evolution Of a Hobbyist

All activities take time, and hobbies, by definition, are designed to occupy us and, therefore...use *up* our time! A hobby, though, is meant to use *spare* time! You know, *after* all the business, chores, and daily obligations are taken care of. But, I wonder how true that really is for collectors in general, and especially for the more rabid of the species...such as...hmmmm...I don't know....myself?

I've been collecting things all my life...and never half-heartedly—marbles, as a kid; , model planes, as an adolescent; baseball cards, as a teenager; coins and books, as a young man; and, for the last 26 years, matchcovers. In the beginning, with a new family, I fit it in here and there—somewhere in between changing diapers and walking the floors. Later, it was in between T-ball games and bedtime stories; and still later it was in between soccer matches and dances.

After that, though, as the kids started taking off on their own more and more, and I had more time...*golly!*...I started really concentrating on that hobby and both my collections and my interest soared.

Finally, the boys left (and I got my study back!); then, the daughter left (and I got a new hobby room); then the wife left (and I got the whole house!!).

During that same 26 years, along with my actual collecting, I had early on become a computer enthusiast, going all the way back to my first Apple IIC. I'd stumbled into the ground floor of a new club starting right in my area (Sierra-Diablo) and found mine was the only hand raised when the question of who was going to write the bulletin came up. So, I merged my love of writing with my hobby and my computer and have been doing bulletins ever since.

In 1994, I became RMS editor, and somewhere around 1996 Lone Star MC found itself in a bind, and I became its editor, as well. Now, every year I pound out 24 bulletins for three different clubs (336 pp. annually).

Then came the web sites. In 1998, the computer guru for my school district loaned me his web site manual, and in a couple of weeks I had a site for my classroom up and running. It turned out to be so easy and so much fun that I put up Sierra-Diablo's and RMS's in 1999 and my own collecting site in 2000. So, now I webmaster three hobby sites.

Well, somewhere along the line, there, with collecting, writing, and webmastering, most of my spare time vanished. But, that's good. As noted above, that's what a hobby is for, and I've certainly come out ahead because of it all. I've learned a lot—the in's and out's of a entire hobby, lots of cultural history, and some technical knowhow regarding computers. I've met and dealt with a lot of great people, all of whom share my hobby interests, including some I've traded covers with steadily for over twenty years.

The hobby has also insured that I have no dull, boring empty spaces in the house. Everything is crammed with covers, albums, and stacks of bulletins and research materials (two hobby rooms, multiple closets and cabinets, under the bed), and the overflow goes in the garage.

It's a great hobby, and it's been 26 years well spent. I only hope there's another 26 in store for me... Of course, that would mean I'd have to live to 90, but I'd be willing.