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### Where Is The Hobby Going?

Perhaps it's because I happened to enter the hobby at its peak in the early 1980s...or maybe it's just that summer's over and we're headed into winter, and that means the hobby's activities basically go into hibernation... that I find myself in the doldrums, somewhat, as to the hobby, itself.

For those of you who have been in the hobby for a couple of decades or so, doesn't it seem as if the hobby is just marking time

these days...spinning its wheels...not really going anywhere? It seems as if we're stagnating. Nothing new is happening...no new innovations...no new horizons breached...We're just sort of busily attempting to maintain what we have.

That, in itself, of course, is no mean feat, however...not in the face of the great decline in domestic matchbook production and the resulting sharp decline in collectors. Although much smaller, the hobby has still maintained its conventions and some 27 clubs across the US and Canada.

Still, it seems that the hobby is in a period when the status quo reigns, going from year to year with its annual conventions and swapfests, with its clubs chronically decrying poor attendance at meetings, declining membership, and ever-rising bulletin costs. I keep hoping that there will be some hitherto unforeseen 'breakthrough' event that will infuse the hobby with new vigor.

Well, that's on the hobby, or 'big picture' side. But, what about us, the individual collectors? As far as I can see, we're still enjoying ourselves in any event, each according to what we put into the hobby.

The hard core collectors still pursue those yet-to-be discovered covers, going from convention to convention, swapfest to swapfest, relishing the interaction with their peers. Others continue to collect (and enjoy) at their own level.