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The Evolution of RMS Bulletins— Some Quick Thoughts

Text: typewritten: carbon copies > spirit duplicating (RMS purchased a new Royal typewriter in 1949 to cut stencils) > mimeographing > photocopy > professional printing > desktop printing

Font: some bulletins were printed all in italics; for example, From Mar/Apr 1976 to Jan/Feb 1979 all of the *RMS Bulletins* were done in italics. I did my first issue in 10 pt font (magazine style), but was later told that was too small, so now its 12 pt. Computers allowed for different fonts and a wide variety of sizes.

Graphics: (graphics started appearing by 1957, although crude by today's standards) Before that, if there were any graphics at all, they were normally hand drawn. In the early 1980s, I had to cut and paste graphics into Sierra-Diablo's bulletin masters. Scanners and desktop publishing ended all that.

Format: Earliest bulletins were one-sided and in black & white; professional printing changed the former; desktop publishing and the internet ended the latter. Listed items were put in paragraphs instead of columns; sometimes paragraphs would go on for two solid pages. I think that was due more to who was doing the typing rather than technology. Business meeting notes would often run 5 pages! 7¼ pp. in the October 1952 issue!

Computer: dot matrix early 1980s-1990s (dot matrix was only slight improvement over the previous printing quality) >ink jet and laser printer 1990s-present

Content: lots of time and space devoted to new covers. I never saw the usefulness of that since most collectors wouldn't be in a position to get those covers (from the businesses). Early on, collectors would write to those businesses and hopefully receive one of their covers, but later on postage had risen to such heights that that option was no longer feasible. Today for, example, writing to the business and enclosing a SASE would mean that you would be paying \$1.16 for that cover!

Content went from ads, club minutiae, and social news (announcements) to articles about hobby related items.

There was an obsession with the conventions; i.e “Only seven more months till the Annual Convention..” [*RMS Bulletin*, February 1950] “...the message was repeated IN EVERY bulletin—with the same old message in each.” [*RMS Bulletin*, Jul/Aug 1987]. As one deceased member noted, “The bulletin covers the upcoming convention for six months and spends the next six months covering the past convention!” We don't do that anymore.

Listing of single covers and sets often did not give the size early on; it was just assumed that the reader understood that it was 20-strikes being listed (the other sizes were either as yet uncommon or hadn't even appeared yet).

Delivery: the bulletins have always been delivered to club members via postal mail because that was the only option, but computers and the internet can now eliminate postage costs while offering instant delivery and blazing color. This has been an especially important innovation in light of skyrocketing postal costs and diminished club funds, although too many members, as yet, still insist on their old black & white, postal-delivered hard copies.