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Are Membership Lists Still Relevant?

“Membership lists rank as the single most valuable service that any club can supply. Trading, the life blood of the hobby, stems from the use of the list for a correspondence source.

One joins the hobby to find like minded people. The membership list displays the names of interested hobbyists.” [Matchcover Beachcomber, February 1977]

That was true 45 years ago, but is it true today? Collecting, itself, is still basically the same, but the hobby’s circumstances have certainly changed—internet, google, e-mail, electronic files, scanning, web sites, etc.

The world is awash in information (much wanted; some not). Collectors’ names and contact information are no longer simply confined to very limitedly viewed club rosters. They’re all over the place, and they’re accessible to...*the entire world!* And, that’s not bad; the more exposure, the more covers. Plus, that information would be ‘out there’ irrespective of any hobby involvement.

In any case, individual club rosters, while still of some use, are much less important than they once were...which means that clubs need to find another attraction(s) for people to join them.

You might think that that then points to the club bulletin, but almost all of those have been steadily whittled down, both in number of pages and frequency...so, what’s left? Grist for a future editorial.