



Editorial

Baby Boomers a Boon?

The Baby Boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, may just prove to be an unexpected, but much needed, boon to the hobby, it seems to me.

How so? Well, for starters, this is a hobby that is time-consuming space-consuming, and is practiced indoors. Those are all factors that point to *more mature* individuals. Also, older people, as a group compared to younger people, grew up in a time when, I believe, collecting (anything) was at its peak. I know, when I was growing up as a kid, I, and all my friends, collected baseball cards, comic books, and a variety of other items. But, as a teacher, I've noticed over the years that fewer and fewer of my seventh grade students are collectors of anything, boys even more so. In the early years, I always used to have many students who were coin collectors, stamp collectors, etc; not so anymore. Now they're all busy

Now, as we're all aware, this is a hobby where children are virtually absent and young-to middle-aged adults are the exception. This is a hobby that is demographically dominated by *seniors!* In 2007, I surveyed RMS members as to their age, and the *average* was 62. It's probably even somewhat higher now, as the hobby's population has dwindled and almost all of the 'looky-loos' are gone.

So, all of this sets the scene for the Baby Boomers. Last year, 2011, the first of the Baby Boomers started turning 65, and, as this generational wave continues to pass through the society all the way through 2029, we'll be having an unusually high number of people becoming 65 and older. And, by and large, all of those people will be retirees, with lots of leisure time, established in their own homes (space), with a higher percentage of resources, etc. etc. Those are also the very same people who grew up in the golden age of collecting.

Ergo, we have the perfect circumstances for this 'bulge' passing through the hobby, as well, resulting, hopefully, in an influx of new people coming into the hobby and settling down as serious collectors. Of course, once the bulge finishes passing through, then those very same collectors will be gradually passing away, and the hobby may be back where we are right now...or even worse, since we'll have lost a goodly number of our present members by then. So, all this wouldn't represent a permanent solution to our dwindling membership, but it would be at least a temporary boost where there may not be any other.

Well, will my prediction here come to pass? Who knows? Where will the hobby be in, say 2040? I have no idea. I'll have to write a follow-up editorial then. [*I better make a note of that on my calendar. I'll be 95 in 2040, and my memory may not be what it used to be!*]