



Editorial

Byte Me!

The other day I found myself reminiscing about being an editor. In one way or another, I've been an editor for the last 33 years, and it struck me, as it has many times in the past, that cranking out bulletins has changed in so many ways from what it was like when I first became Editor for Sierra-Diablo Matchcover Club in 1983.

At that time, many club bulletins were still being done on a typewriter, but even then I used a computer (an Apple IId, I believe), but that, and the ol' dot matrix printer, was *it*—no scanner, no printer, no internet, no Google, no .pdf, no web sites. Every time I got stuck on an article, I'd have to run down to the local library to see what information and pictures I could find. Then I'd have to photocopy the pics. Eventually, when I printed out the 'finished' bulletin masters, I'd then have to cut and paste whatever I had photocopied. Finally, the whole thing would then be mailed to whoever was in charge of getting the bulletins printed and mailed out. It was a labor of love, to be sure, but looking back on it all now...it was something of a nightmare.

Fortunately, time and technology has since provided me with the four things I need to do a much more satisfactory job—a much more advanced computer (with scanner), the internet, e-mail, and a large matchcover collection.

Now, when I get stuck on an article, I literally have the world's information at my fingertips, and I can pull just about any photo I need from the internet. Any cutting and pasting is now copying and pasting, and it's all done electronically. When I need pictures of certain covers, I can normally find what I need in my collection and simply need to scan them and plug them into the bulletin. If I have a really specific question or need a technical bit of information, I just e-mail an appropriate collector, and I have what I need within a few minutes or a few hours. And now, the bulletin masters are simply e-mailed out for printing and mailing. Envelopes and stamps, no longer needed; glue and scissors, just gathering dust.

Reader input is always important, and I welcome all I can get, but any editor will verify that you certainly can't count on reader contributions to fill up your bulletins. Sometimes you get a few items; mostly you get nothing. Almost all such input now comes in via e-mail, and, using e-mail, I can now quickly and efficiently gather classified ads, run Insta-Polls, and just generally keep my finger on the pulse of the hobby...which comes in handy for an editor.

The internet has millions and millions of web sites, with every sort of information, but I usually end up using Wikipedia in most instances. Since anyone can add information to what's already there on that particular topic, it's not always the most accurate source, but I use it because I don't have to worry about copyrights. I've found over the years that when I request permission to use content from a specific web site, I normally never get a response, and, if I do, it comes in weeks, even months after the request. By that time the bulletin in question has come and gone.

And my trusty computer, with all of its wonderful abilities, allows me to tie all this together. So, all in all, being an editor these days is certainly a joint effort...as long as there's electricity!