

RMS INSTA-POLL

“Who was your Mentor (for the hobby)?”

[September, 2010 - 81 responding]

-Hank Northam (5)	-Jo Wilding (1)
-Jim Moffett (4)	-Ken Moyer (1)
-Steve Weiner (3)	-George Yenko (1)
-Bill Thomas (3)	-Harry Branchaud (1)
-Stuart Bergman (3)	-Bud Shappell (1)
-Carol Stone (2)	-Bill Morrison (1)
-Charlie Wissel (2)	-Bob England (1)
-Les Good (2)	-Dan Bitter (1)
-Walter Hoffman (2)	-Doug Fouquet (1)
-Orvie Hoffman (2)	-Jene Lyle (1)
-Jane Eagen (2)	-Wayne Eadie (1)
-Bill Hollmann (2)	-Manny Phillips (1)
-Steve Kovacs (2)	-Floyd Holland (1)
-Bob Cigrang (2)	-Dave MacNally (1)
-John Williams (2)	-Marie Harbison (1)
-Ruth Richmond (2)	-William Newkirk (1)
-Warren Marshall (2)	-Bob Hofacker (1)
-Martin Stephen (1)	-Bob Oliver (1)
-Laverne Schlegel (1)	-Wally Wade (1)
-Mark Quilling (1)	-Robert Fischer (1)
-Bill Hubbard (1)	-Janet Johnk (1)
-Rose Rundell (1)	-Mrs. Harold Staats (1)
-Lindsey Bowle (1)	-Walt Wecker (1)
-Jack Gerson (1)	-Kent Morris (1)
-Mike Beatrice (1)	-Chester Crill (1)
-Paul Spoff (1)	-Cheryl Crill (1)
-Doris Arrigoni (1)	-Herman Hildebrandt (1)
-Joe DeGennaro (1)	-Self-taught (13)
-Rich Greene (1)	
-Bob Borton (1)	
-Ken Moyer (1)	
-Wray Martin (1)	
-Rich Sayers (1)	
-Shirley Sayers (1)	
-Barbara Dixon (1)	
-Bill Gigantino (1)	
-Great Lakes MC (1)	
-Liberty Bell MC (1)	
-RMS members (1)	
-Bill Hayes (1)	
-Neal Hospers (1)	
-Pat Mains (1)	
-Bob Heskett (1)	
-Art Houser (1)	

Although some enter the hobby and never have a mentor, many others are lucky enough to have had one. Some novices are just out in the boonies, away from clubs and other collectors. Although, these days, with e-mail, that shouldn't be a problem for novices and newbies anymore. Most clubs have members who are more than willing to take a new member under their wings...if they'll just show up at the club meetings where contact can be maintained. Personally, I've never seen anyone so devoted to such than Sierra-Diablo's Loren Moore. If a walk-in or novice shows up, he's right there telling him or her all about the hobby, covers, and how things are done...and why it's such a rewarding experience.

It certainly helps if mentor and novice are in the same neighborhood. Dan Bitter not only had me over to his home many times, but he always showered me with covers and explained the ins and outs, the processes of collecting.

Looking at the accompanying list, here, is much like looking at a Who's Who index of the hobby, past and present. I remember fondly people such as Jim Moffett, Hank Northam, Bill Thomas, Warren Marshall, Harry Branchaud, and others from my own novice days. Bill Thomas...Warren Marshall...Boy! *There* were two lovable characters.

Most of the most frequently mentioned collectors in this survey have passed away now, but it's heartening to see so many of today's collectors on the list and working to insure that entry into the hobby for new collectors is as smooth as possible. More than one novice has left the hobby because he or she felt unloved (!).

I haven't heard anything recently about clubs having their own mentor program, but several clubs in the past have tried it. Long Beach MC, I know for certain. Such programs tend to slowly just dwindle away. But, I think they're worth it. That encouragement and flow of knowledge and experience help to increase the odds that those novices are just passing through the hobby as transients. Who knows, you might be mentoring another Hank Northam or Jim Moffett.