



Editorial

-Part II-

“How do I keep track of all these things?!”

[overheard from novice collector at 2002 Sierra Swapfest]

“How do I keep track of all these things?!”

[overheard from seasoned collector at 2002 AMCAL convention]

“How do I keep track of all these things?!”

[overheard from veteran collector at 2003 RMS convention]

Club secretaries are continually frustrated by members not sending in their dues on time. Notices are sent out (which cost the club extra money), eventually members are dropped, and then they have to be reinstated. Then there's the ensuing problem of missed bulletins and so on. From the member's point of view, there's the problem of remembering when to send in dues, compounded by the fact that most members belong to several other clubs, as well....further complicated by the fact that all these clubs don't have the same due date *[I think the reasoning there is that they're trying to spread it out so you don't have to write all those various club checks at once...although that might be preferable to the present chaos]*.

For those of you without a computer, these things have to be written down and put into some sort of suspense file...or simply written on a calendar...but the trick is that you the have to check these things on a regular basis. In the past, I've often gotten side-tracked, myself, and forgotten to check what I had written down. My computer, though, gives me a better option. Using the Date Manager - Calendar option, once I log these various dates into the calendar (when dues are due, swapfest date reminders, check back with so-and-so about this or that, etc.), my computer not only *visually* reminds me on those appropriate dates, but it even further brings my attention to them by playing some type of audio sound. It's like having your own personal secretary! *[I'm still trying to get it to make coffee for me, though!]*

If you're one of the die-hard collectors who still trades *[as I am...and it hurts me to describe it that way, but, unfortunately, that's what it's come down to these days]*, you have to have a system to keep track of your correspondence, if not your traded covers. Personally, I use a data base format on my computer where I keep track of my traders, their wants, date of first and last correspondence, etc. *[For example, I've been trading with Dorothy Fry, OH; Marty Israel, NJ; and John Williams, OH, since 1983!]* I try and keep it simple. I don't have 20 years of trades listed for those collectors; that's not necessary, but I have everything I need to keep track of our current status. Such records also allow me to keep abreast of my traders' current street and e-mail addresses and their latest wants, as well as long-overdue and lost correspondence. Every once and awhile, for example, I'll go through and check the dates of the last correspondence. For those dates that are well in the past, I'll send out some sort of inquiry.

How about all your supplies, reference materials, bulletins, and so forth? After you've been collecting for any amount of time, those things quickly start taking up room. If you have everything organized in some fashion, it's all a lot easier to deal with. If you belong to several clubs, for example, you've got several different bulletins and rosters coming in all the time. Some collectors simply throw them out after they've read the bulletins *[as an editor, I'm wincing at that thought]*, but you might want to hang onto those which contain information useable to your ongoing collecting efforts *[tips, lists, procedures, etc.]*. So you need to organize those according to your own preferences. Your reference materials—lists, rosters, glossary, and so forth—should always be readily available where you actually work with your covers. *[Part III coming next!]*