Lists

Some collectors swear by them; some collectors swear at them...but most collectors use them! Lists have been around almost as long as the hobby has, but with the advent of the personal computer some ten years ago, the number of lists within the hobby has exploded. With the PC, a collector can not only store the information on many covers (and that's the tedious part), be he or she can alphabetize, rearrange, or extract certain covers within the listing based on selected topics...all with the click of a few keys. Work that would have taken the lister days or weeks now takes seconds.On the Diamond Quality listing, for example, which currently list some 2,700 DQs, if someone should be interested only in DQ Hotels...*click!*...the computer spits that list out; only want DQ Lobsters?...*click!*...it's there; prefer a listing arranged by catalog number rather than alphabetized?...*click!*...you've got it. What a marvelous technological age we're in!

The result of all this 'clinking' has meant a wealth of hobby information is now available to collectors throughout the hobby and throughout the world. That means 'more informed' collectors, and, to my way of thinking, that, in turn, means happier collectors. Some, of course, simply won't wish to be bothered by the extra paperwork and time necessary to 'look things up,' but the advantages of using lists in your collecting endeavors far outweigh these few inconveniences.

The major advantage with using lists is that you *know* what you don't have and what you're looking for. Before, you were just looking for all Matchoramas, for example, in the hope that you'd find some you didn't have as you sifted through all those that came in trade, as requested. Now, you know you don't have #s15, 405, 1006, 2567, and so on, and those are the ones you specifically ask your traders to look for. Even if your traders don't have a matching list of their own, *your* list will tell you the names of the covers you want, and you can request them that way. Girlie collectors do it; Navy Ship collectors do it; it's a much more efficient way of collecting...although it may not be as much fun as going through an unknown assortment. On the other hand, though, many, if not most, of that assortment is going to end up being dupes. Collecting by list eliminates that.