

*collecting clubs - a wealth of information....and more*

# Web Watch

Judy Penz Sheluk

In today's Internet world, some might think there isn't any need for collecting clubs – after all, isn't everything you'll ever want to know just a click away? Not according to Larry Krug, co founder, Association of Collecting Clubs (ACC).

"Collecting clubs are an important segment of our antiques, art and collectibles industry," Krug said. "The combined knowledge base of their membership is usually the backbone of knowledge for that particular collecting area the club supports, be it cut glass, Red Wing pottery, bookends, mechanical banks, vintage autos, coirs or lemon squeezers.

There are more than 40,000 collecting clubs in the world, representing nearly every country. The ACC, headquartered in Gaithersburg, Maryland, works with more than 5,000 of them on six continents. The leadership and members of practically every club is just as dedicated as the next."

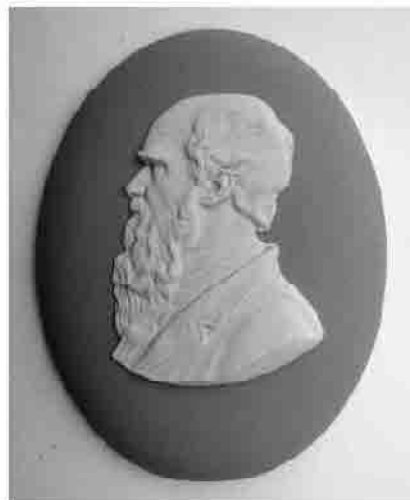
But what exactly do these clubs do? "Clubs provide information for the collecting area they support – from research, study and documentation, to preservation and archives," Krug said. "Many clubs are the industry watchdogs for ethics violations and reproductions. They support the development and operation of museums and exhibits and publish journals and newsletters. Some clubs have mentoring programs for new members and provide advice on collection management, storage, display and accountability. They offer conventions, shows, workshops, seminars and auctions."

And that's not all. According to Krug, one of the most important benefits that collecting clubs offer are the networking opportunities for buying, selling and trading – not to mention fostering the establishment of personal friendships within the hobby that can last a lifetime. Furthermore, being a member of a strong collecting club can person-

ally make you more knowledgeable and thus make your collection more valuable.

Today, many of these clubs – even smaller, local collecting clubs – now also have a website. "For most of these clubs, even though they may have been in existence for decades, their website is the first direct exposure they have had to a mass audience," Krug said. "Usually their newsletter or publication is distributed only to members. Often their annual convention is for members only. A club website which not only reaches beyond the club membership, but offers a global reach, is new to these clubs. But many of them are rapidly becoming key resources for our industry, not only covering club activities and news, but a wide array of helpful information to the collector or anyone else that happens to visit their site."

Some club sites offer virtual museums, photo galleries, history of that particular collecting area, photo features of member collections, pattern identification, glossaries, reproduction alerts, upcoming antique sales and



Wedgwood Jasper Medallion of Charles Darwin. Object and photo courtesy of Adele I. Barnett. Many people don't know that Charles Darwin was Josiah Wedgwood I's grandson – but you can bet that members of the Wedgwood Society of Boston know! A link to their website, [www.wedgwoodsociety.org](http://www.wedgwoodsociety.org), as well as other Wedgwood collectors' associations, can be found by doing a club directory search on <http://collectingclubs.com>.



Dodge Tackeye Wigeon Drake and Hen decoy pair, c. 1880. Courtesy of RJG Antiques. There are no fewer than 10 decoy collectors clubs listed on <http://collectingclubs.com>.

shows dealing with their collecting specialties. Many club websites offer forums or discussion groups for those having specific questions about that particular collecting area.

"If you are simply looking for information on an item you have, check out the club websites. The ACC Club Directory is the largest on the Internet, offering the most information on clubs, with ready contact information including many direct links to websites," Krug said. "For any serious collector, if there is a collecting club serving your area of collecting, you need to be a member of the club."

About the Association of Collecting Clubs: Established in 1996 as the place to provide free information for collecting clubs, collectors and the entire antiques, art and collectibles industry, ACC's website, <http://collectingclubs.com>, offers a myriad of resources and services, including a club directory, club convention schedule, flea market directory, repair and restoration directory, collectors' glossaries, auction and show calendar directory, news service, collectors trade show, appraisals and appraising information, as well as information on the Hobby Protection Act, U.S. Preservation Acts, and other ACC and NAC programs.



Kelly Bros. (1903-1965) mounted Texas spurs with double diamond mountings on the hand. Courtesy of Cody Old West Auction/Ireland Graphic Design. Do you collect spurs that jingle, jangle, jingle? A good place to get 'spurred on' and meet like-minded individuals is the National Bit, Spur and Saddle Collectors Association; members are interested in western Americana memorabilia and Western artifacts. Their website, and others in this category, can be found on <http://collectingclubs.com>.



Courtesy of Skinner, Inc. Interested in paperweights? The members of The New England Paperweight Collector's Association [[www.nepaperweight.org](http://www.nepaperweight.org)] is one of many paperweight collector's clubs easily found by doing a club directory search on <http://collectingclubs.com>

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