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## Uniting the World

Olympic pin collectors converge on MdR

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Her time with John Lennon

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# Uniting the World

Olympic pin collectors converge on MdR

By Christina Fuoco-Karasinski  
Argonaut Executive Editor

When Pam Litz volunteered for the Olympics in LA in 1984, she witnessed her peers, athletes and visitors huddled around trading items.

“One of the volunteers said, ‘That’s OK. They’re just trading pins,’” she recalled.

That was her introduction to the sport of Olympic pin trading.

“I was into sports, but always excited about the Olympics because they bring the world together in a positive way,” Litz said.

“They gave us pins as a ‘thank you’ when we started working. As we continued, I threw them in a drawer and didn’t think about it.”

Now, after 15 trips to see the Olympics, Litz has thousands of pins and collectibles.

On the board of the Olympin Collectors Club, Litz is hosting the 2023 Olympin Collectors’ Club Memorabilia Festival at the Hotel MdR on Friday, Oct. 13, to Sunday, Oct. 15. It is open to the public.

The event will house 40 tables filled



CHRIS MORTENSON/STAFF

Bud Kling of the Olympin Collectors Club has thousands of pins and collectibles in his collection.



CHRIS MORTENSON/STAFF

Pam Litz is on the board of the Olympin Collectors Club.

with pins, uniforms, medals, torches and other memorabilia from past Olympics. Guests can bring their own pins to trade and “join in the fun of buying, selling and trading.” Each visitor will receive a free pin.

The Olympin Collectors Club was formed in 1982 — after the Olympic Winter Games in Lake Placid — by Don Bigsby and a group of fellow pin collectors. After modest beginnings in the Albany, New York, area, Olympin slowly grew and began to attract Olympic hobbyists from all over North America. As the Olympic memorabilia hobby grew after the Los Angeles Games in 1984, the club became known globally.

After an early focus on just Olympic pins, club activities and shows today have expanded to include other memorabilia, such as apparel, badges, diplomas, mascots, medals, paper, patches, torches and other collectibles.

Today, Olympin boasts over 470 members worldwide, according to its website. Litz said at the Marina del Rey event, she expects visitors from around the world, including China and Canada.

“The shows are like a big reunion for a lot of the members,” she said.

Litz made her first trade with a Korean wrestling coach for a future Olympics Games, after buying four pins for \$20 at a souvenir stand.

“I was so excited because the pin was from the Summer Olympics in Seoul,”

she said. “I thought it was so cool to get one from the ‘future.’ It’s something that hadn’t even happened yet. Here I was, talking to this Korean coach, who I never would have interacted with otherwise. I was totally hooked.”

“As a result of this crazy hobby,” she said, she has been around the world to watch the games.

“I’ve been to almost all of them since 1984, except when my son was born,” said Litz, adding she missed those during the COVID-19 pandemic, too. “It gives you this wonderful reason to travel. You make friends all over the world and you can talk to anybody who has a pin or a few pins. They’re either wearing them or displaying them somehow.”

Litz sees it as a way of preparing for the 2028 Olympics in LA.

“We’re all excited about that,” she said. ■

## 2023 Olympin Collectors’ Club Memorabilia Festival

**WHEN:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 13; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 14; and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 15

**WHERE:** Hotel MdR, Panache Ballroom, 13480 Maxella Avenue, Marina del Rey

**COST:** Free admission

**INFO:** [olympinshow.org](http://olympinshow.org)