
What To Do With Unwanted Covers

'Unwanted covers'? Who has unwanted covers? Most collectors, I think. Of course, there are your dupes, but they're usually wanted as trading material, even by those collectors who don't do any regular trading....You don't want to be caught short, after all, if an enticing trading situation happens to present itself.

But there are other covers collectors may actually *not* want. Indeed, I can think of several different types, even some of your dupes. For example, I do a lot of trading, and I also put up auction lots, but there's basically nothing I can do with 50+ dupes of the same cover. Can't trade that many, can't sell that many, etc. So, in my case, those covers aren't wanted.

Then there are all the covers I come across that are struck. Don't want them (unless they're oldies); can't trade them; won't put them up for auction. If they're really messed up, I toss them out, although I can see that there are arguments both for and against that. From my vantage point, I'm doing everyone a favor by culling out the garbage from the hobby, and throwing them out also prevents such garbage from endlessly circulating from one freebie table to another. On the other hand, one might argue that *someone, somewhere*, might want those covers.

If the struck covers are only lightly struck and in otherwise nice condition, I put mine aside for the freebie table at the annual Sierra-Diablo Spring Swapfest. *Those* covers have a much better chance of finding a home with someone, even if it's only temporarily until an unstruck cover is found to take its place.

Bob-tailed covers are always a tragic story. If they're bob-tailed, they're almost certainly 1950s or older, and their resulting age just makes us all groan to see them rendered useless. They get thrown out! Although, I should note, that since I maintain the listings on almost all of the old manufacturers, I can still use such bob-tailed covers to add to the listings, as long as the manumark still shows...but I don't keep them...and in case you have some, and don't want them yourself, I'd appreciate getting them, just to see if there are any unlisted ones in there.

There are also the run-of-the-mill damaged covers we encounter (and sometimes, *you know it's true, we're* the ones who damaged them!)...Strikers that are hopelessly corroded or broken, covers whose sides or corners have been broken and mangled by slotted or hand-sewn pages, covers that have been left out in the sun and have been noticeably faded, covers that are irreversibly dirty or stained, ones that are creased or wrinkled, ones that have had the match heads pressed into them so that now they're 'embossed'! I chuck them all.

Flats! Occasionally, we all run across flats. I don't keep them. When I accumulate a stack, I usually advertise them, promising to send them along to anyone who will pay the postage. There *are* collectors who are interested in flats, and I can see why. They're almost always in mint condition and are beautiful examples of matchcover art, even if they *aren't* real covers.

Still, Nationals are probably the most common unwanted covers. They don't have any specific address, hence the term 'National', but moreover, as a general rule, they're pretty bland, uninspiring covers to begin with. Even in mint condition, hardly anyone wants them. So, I end up throwing out at least the more common ones. The rest I eventually put on the freebie tables, assuming that there are at least some collectors, who, like myself, are looking for one of *each and every cover* in their respective categories. Thus, in my Sheraton Hotel collection, for example, I include one of every Sheraton

National. Otherwise, from my point of view, such a collection would never be complete.

And, you might even be able to think of a couple of other situations in which covers were unwanted by the collector. In any event, eventually, I would think, we all end up with some. So, my own suggestions as to their disposition...

1. Determine if other collectors might *reasonably* want such (and I say *reasonably* because even though you could expect that at least one person, somewhere, would want even the most messed-up cover imaginable...keeping it stored at home or continually circulating it through the hobby for such a rare opportunity wouldn't justify its continued existence).

a) If so, devise a means of attempting to match up those covers with those collectors.

1) Put them up for sale if you think there's a market for them.

2) or, Offer them as freebies for postage only.

3) or, Donate them to the freebie tables of your local club, swapfest, or convention.

2. If not, toss 'em!