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# Swapfest 2009 Report

by  
Mike Prero

Ohhhhh! It wasn't just another good one...It was an even *better* one! More trading! More auction lots! More covers! It makes me thankful that I was ultimately willing to travel the long 14 miles to get there (!).

The weather was perfect (Of course! We're talking *California* here! California in the *Spring!*—sunny and 70s...and remember, this was in the first week of April). I pulled into the Heritage Inn parking lot (conveniently located right off the freeway), and I could see immediately that the omens were good (the parking space right outside the meeting room doors was *empty!*)

I opened up the back of the truck and began offloading the seven big trays of covers I had brought for trading and started setting up on one of the many tables in the spacious meeting room. At 8:30 in the morning, only Ron Quint, CA, was there ahead of me. By 9:00 AM, several others had set up and that much looked-forward to trading had begun in earnest. And from then to app. 1:00 PM, that's what I did—trade! Oh, and I got a lot of great covers!

For those of you unlucky enough to have never attended a Sierra-Diablo swapfest, I should point out that the trading here is really informal. As Chester Crill says every year, "This is all the stuff I brought up, and I don't want to take any of it back home!"—And that's pretty much the philosophy in place at the swapfest. For the most part, it's not, "John, I've got 76 of yours here. See if you can find 76 of mine you want." Rather, it's "John, take whatever you need!"

I'd also set up a Freebie table with a few thousand covers and full-books. Most of this was material that I had purposely been setting aside for such during the year, but some was also donated material from generous members earlier in the year. I always smile to see the astonishment from first-timers and drop-ins at the 'help yourself' atmosphere of the swapfest.

President Loren Moore and family supplied a two-day array of ongoing drinks and snacks (have to keep up the energy, you know, with all that constant trading!). Poor Loren! He's always on the go during the whole weekend, what with the setting up and auctions. He never gets the chance to sit down and trade during the actual swapfest hours. I assume he makes his trades during the evenings and with the early birds before the action really starts on Saturday and Sunday. But, if Loren's trading suffers, the rest of us

certainly prosper because of his untiring efforts! And, who, exactly, *did* prosper from all those efforts?...

Attending this year were, Ron Quint, CA; Janet and Duane Johnk, CA; myself, CA; Loren, Wendy, Dustin, and Eric Moore, CA; Ron Dalton, CA; DeeJ Norton, CA; Tim Eagan, CA; George and Christine Cosentini, CA; Jack and Alfie Benbrook, AZ; Chester Crill, CA; Raulin Mendonca, CA; Charlie Moore, CA; Mike Schwimmer, MA; and miscellaneous drop-ins (thanks to the local ad Loren runs in the paper prior to the swapfest).

I didn't hear anything negative during the two days I was at the swapfest, and everyone there certainly seemed to have had a good and worthwhile time, but one of the niggling items that was of concern to at least the club officers was that we're not getting anywhere near the attendance from Southern California that we should be getting, so one of the things we're going to do in that area is run an ad in the AMCAL program book, which leads my report, here, to the short business meeting that was held at the end of Sunday's auctions.

And speaking of auctions! There were two, one Saturday and one Sunday, featuring a whopping total of 500 lots. Overall, the lot prices were quite low, so it was a buyer's paradise! The lots, themselves, varied from single covers to albums to boxes of 1000+ covers. Some representative samples were: an album of 400+ Match Co's went for \$27, 21 Full-length covers went for \$2.50, 1000 struck 20's sold for \$26, 4 Midgets went for \$10, 8 Crowns went for a paltry \$2, an album of 342 Foreign sold for \$6, 1 album of 320 Canadian 30s was bought for \$1!

The auctions were lengthy (because of so many lots) but went smoothly, with DeeJ recording all individual results on his lap top, utilizing, once again, Loren's custom-made auction program. At the end of the auction, practically before anyone even got up from their chairs, DeeJ was already printing out everyone's itemized billings, for both sellers and buyers—making 'check out' a breeze with basically no waiting time at all. (Loren, it should be said, has offered that program to the other swapfests and conventions for free—with no takers! What a disservice to auction attendees elsewhere!)

Details of the important decisions at the business meeting are discussed more fully on p. 7, but basically it was decided to initiate a Sierra-Diablo store on our web site which would not only offer our great plastic pages, but also cover sales. Also, it was decided, unanimously, 1) to invest in web advertising rather than lower dues for our on-line members, and 2) to raise dues for hard-copy members from the present \$10 to \$15, starting next April 1st.