



## Editorial

### **The E-Bay Problem:**

Usually, an editorial is a call-to-arms, a plea to muster resources to combat some current problem—but I don't see a solution to this problem. It seems to be inevitable.

The problem is multi-faceted. E-bay auctions tend to raise the prices on everything, for example, but the main thrust is that the hobby is losing covers because of e-bay, and it stands to lose many more in the future. On the one hand, hobbyists are offering their covers more and more on e-bay, rather than within the hobby, as has been the case traditionally, and many of those covers are purchased by people outside of the hobby—the would-be “investor,” the collector of Coca-Cola paraphernalia whose only interest in Coke covers is as an adjunct to his larger interest, the railroad or beer enthusiast who wants those covers for the same reason, etc. Granted, occasionally such enthusiasts have briefly entered the hobby in the past to find what they could find, but the problem has become much more widespread with the advent of e-bay.

On the other hand [and this is by far the more serious concern], there are all those collections and accumulations of covers from people outside of the hobby that ordinarily would have been disposed of within the hobby [through bulletin ads, bulletin auctions, etc] that are now going to be disposed of through e-bay—a non-hobby outlet—which means outside the hobby. Thus, more covers are lost to us.

Of course, this won't mean the demise of the hobby or the eventual disappearance of covers through traditional outlets, but the problem is serious enough to cause concern. I don't see that there is anything that can be done about it, but I believe it's worth noting and keeping our eye on in the future.