

RMS INSTA-POLL

“Within the last 5 years, overall, have you... 1. Reduced your want areas? 2. Increased your want areas? 3. Basically remained the same? 4. If you have reduced your want areas, have you mainly cut back on small categories, major categories, or both? 5. If you have increased your want areas, have you mainly added small categories, major categories, or both? [April - 94 responding]

1. Reduced your want areas? 27
2. Increased your want areas? 36
3. Basically remained the same? 31
4. If you have reduced your want areas, have you mainly cut back on small categories, major categories, or both? LARGE—11 SMALL—7 BOTH—9
5. If you have increased your want areas, have you mainly added small categories, major categories, or both? LARGE—1 SMALL—15 BOTH—20

Well, I have to admit that I went into this with some pre-set assumptions, and the responses here seem to support them. My initial hunch was that collectors had significantly shifted more to smaller categories. The stats above show that seems to be true, in two different ways.

First, for those collectors who said that had reduced their want areas, #4 shows that what was reduced was more of the larger categories than the smaller categories. Thus, even for those collectors who have cut back on their categories, the stats would suggest that they're focusing on their smaller categories more. Additionally, and with an even clearer indication, more collectors reporting reported *increasing* their want areas, and #5 obviously indicates the increase as been to smaller categories.

Well, why is this? I could pontificate on my surmises, but several respondents mentioned why this is so. Overall, there just aren't any new issues available anymore in most of the larger, traditional categories. And when there aren't new issues coming out, collector interest tends to rapidly dwindle (except in the case of the Oldies categories where the interested collector already knows going in that they don't make them anymore). So, no more Cameos, Foilities, Filigrees, Matchoramas, Matchtones, Jewels, Jewelites, etc. Chain Hotel issues are now as rare as hen's teeth. Even when the typical 'lobby covers' disappeared in favor of generic nationals or just outright blanks, one could still hope for new issues from the hotel's bar, restaurant, etc. Now, with smoking bans, etc., such new issues are usually very tough, if not impossible, to find. The same is true for the majority of H/M/R across the country. Ditto Banks, Military, Christmas (which has actually become politically incorrect these days), Fraternal, Auto, and so on.

On the other hand, small categories, since they're usually conjunctives to other, larger categories, offer collectors an almost unlimited, yet continually rewarding, challenge. Even if they stopped making matchcovers altogether today, you'd still have literally tens of millions of covers to look through for your Whales, Mermaids, Indians, Crests, Embossed, Raised Ink, or just about whatever other small category you were looking for—Certainly more than enough to supply you with the pleasure of collecting for the rest of your life!...And isn't that what it's all about? The large categories certainly aren't dead; there are always going to be those (at least) few that you still don't have, but more and more collectors certainly seem to be shifting to the smaller categories.