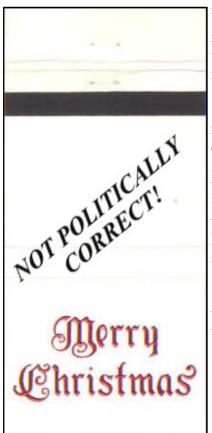**Editorial**

The Decline of Christmas Covers
...And The Disappearance of Christmas

Christmas has come and gone...apparently in more ways than one. Having an Anthropology background, just before Christmas I was recently pondering the influence of societal values on what we collect *[I know, I have no life!]*. As individual collectors, our tastes may change over the years, but as society changes, our collectibles change, not only technically, but in subject matter, as well.

For example, in the 1950s, one didn't see matchcovers with obscenities (swear words) on them. Now we do (I've even started a collection!). One also didn't see covers with gay themes. Now we do. One of the biggest such changes, perhaps, and one of the most disturbing, is unfolding before us even as you read this. The wave of "political correctness" which has been suppressing common sense in this country for the last decade, and which shows no signs of relenting, may well prove to be the end of Christmas covers, by and large...and the end of Christmas as a national tradition. To be sure, covers of all types have drastically declined due to economic and other changes in social mores (i.e., the anti-smoking campaigns), but the position of Christmas covers is especially precarious due to this largely unintelligible fad of political correctness.

One hears, now, of the onslaught almost weekly—the disappearance of sidewalk Santas, clerks being told not to say "Merry Christmas", local stores no longer having a store Santa to hear children's wishes. Everything is a generic "Happy Holidays"—pointedly ignoring what the Holidays are based on. At public schools across the country, my own included, there is no Easter Vacation; it's now "Spring Break". There is no Christmas vacation; it's now "Winter Break". No more Christmas plays. Christmas carols...only if they're mixed in with a variety of other multi-cultural and multi-religious offerings.

To say it's a shame is just...too little. And I'm not arguing from a religious standpoint; I'm not a religious person, but I *am* deeply concerned to see how rapidly we're divesting ourselves of our language, our traditions, and our own cultural heritage as we endeavor to meet this distorted idea of 'fairness'. And so we give way—in our lives, in our behaviors, and, yes, even in our hobbies. When's the last time you saw a new Christmas cover not issued by a fellow collector? For me, I believe it was a "Merry Christmas from Marlboro" Atlas 40-strike several years ago.

I'm glad my children had the opportunity to grow up surrounded with these wonderful traditions. I doubt if my grandchildren will be afforded the same opportunity.