

Noah's Ark:

Now, we all know the story of Noah. He saved two of every animal, and that's how the animal kingdom was repopulated after the Flood. Well, here's your chance to be a modern day Noah, albeit a 'Noah II' (like the Uniglo II), a slimmed-down version, because, here, you'll only be saving *one* of each type of animal.

It's the *challenge* that intrigues me. How close could a collector come to putting together a collection comprised of 20-strike covers depicting every type of animal? (20-strikes because you wouldn't stand a chance otherwise). There are already a lot of collectors who collect at least one type of animal (I collect lobsters, for example). I've even seen a few over the years who collect animals in general. So, this idea may have some appeal to some of you.

You *would* have to make some command decisions right away, though, or face some insurmountable problems. For example, what's an animal? My encyclopedia defines an animal as "any member of the animal kingdom as distinguished from the plant kingdom." The difference between the two is usually seen as the method of getting food. Plants typically manufacture their food from inorganic substances; animals must secure food already organized into organic substances. Then there's the difference in locomotion, but you get the idea. Any way you cut it, 'animal' covers *a lot* of territory.

So, you'd have to substantially narrow the category down, I would think. After all, what are your chances of finding an amoeba on a cover? But that's OK; I don't think Noah bothered with amoebas either. Insects? Amphibians? Reptiles? Hmmmm...I don't think so. Even birds would be impossible. There are a number of bird sets, to be sure, but they're certainly not comprehensive. But, how about



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'mammals'? That would certainly be a challenge by itself.

Yes, I think that would be a reasonable choice. Oh, you'd find your lions and tigers, dogs and cats, and the like quick enough. But, there are 'easy ones' in any category. Pretty soon, you're looking for sloths, armadillos, and anteaters! And then it starts getting *hard*!

You might be thinking at this point that such a quest would be useless, because it would simply be impossible. Well, it would be very difficult, I'm willing to admit...but *impossible*? In order for it to be impossible, you'd have to be willing to concede that out of all the *billions* of covers that have been issued in the last one hundred years, *not one* had a woodchuck on it...or a lemur...or a whatever. Hmmm...

It might be *easier* than one would think. Just approach it in an organized manner. My suggestion: first, print out a list of all mammals, eliminating variations so you just have one representative of that type (ex: instead of going after an African elephant and an Asian elephant, you'd just be looking for *an* elephant). Then, using that as a check list, go through your stock of covers and see which ones you already have. Everything you still have listed afterwards becomes your want list. Send out your want list to traders, and see how many come in.

After all this, what's left on your want list will pretty much be the 'harder' issues. So, that's where the thrill of the hunt really begins! Just how big *your* ark actually becomes depends on your diligence and dedication.

