

## How To...Organize An Album

It's important that you organize your covers in some fashion when putting them into your albums, rather than just putting them in randomly. Why? Because, when you need to find a cover, you need to know exactly where it is. And you *will* have lots of times when you need to find specific covers...i.e., when you're trying to find out whether you already have a cover or not.

As a matter of fact, I'm reminded of the late Warren Marshall, CA, who, when housing his 100,000 Restaurants, actually *did* put them in randomly...in the next available empty slot in the album. However, he had every cover logged into a data base, and the data base told him which page of which album each cover was in. So, even his system was organized.

There are who knows how many possible ways for organizing your albums. The two most common systems are probably alphabetical and by state, but it's whatever you decide works for you. Also, some categories may simply lend themselves more naturally to other certain systems. You may wish to organize your Military collection by branch of service; or, your Minor Political covers by the office the candidate is running for. I even once had my Christmas covers divided by colors, which worked fairly well...at least for awhile.

In a few categories, the decision of which organizational system you'll use has pretty much already been decided for you by the hobby at large. These are the categories that all the other collectors have by catalog number. You don't *have* to do it the same way, but, if you don't, you won't be able to trade with anyone...so... Navy Ships and Girlies are perfect examples of such categories. There are lots of other categories that have lists, such as Matchoramas, Jewelites, etc., but the majority of collectors either just use them as checklists or not at all.

As a general rule of practicality, you'll find that the larger categories demand the most refined systems of organization. For example, if you have 20,000 Bank covers simply filed alphabetically, you'd have to go through *dozens and dozens* of pages of "C's" to check if that new Columbia Bank cover you just got in is a dupe or not...Not efficient and not easy. Instead, for a collection of this size, you need to come up with a system that has more subcategories than just the 26 you'd get by alphabetizing. In my own case, I have my Bank covers divided first by state, then alphabetically. That gives me a total of 1,300 subcategories, not counting further divisions for foreign locations, etc. Much better! There are certainly other ways to go about this, but the goal is always to be able to locate specific covers fast and easily.

You also need to decide how you're going to deal with the various sizes. Do you put all sizes in each subcategory? Do you make a subcategory for each size? Again, the decision is yours. Personally, over the years, I've found that it's more efficient to *not* to mix cover sizes. That is, I have *all* my 20s in whatever system I'm using, then *all* my 30s organized the way, etc. I find that I save page space *and* pages this way...and with the price of plastic pages (and perhaps even their commercial availability), that's important.

As far as size is concerned, I always have each of my categories arranged in the same order: 10s, 20s, 30s, 40s, Jewel/Jewelite, boxes, and, if necessary, really odd-sized and overly large covers at the rear. Of course, there are a number of categories that only come in one size, so...no problem. Lion 30-STICK, DQs, Midgets, Royal Flash, etc. are examples of such.

Just remember...*organization* is a must!