



Editorial

On The Frequency Of Passive-Aggressive Tendencies Among Randomly Observed Phillumenists During Selected Accumulating Activities

Having attended a multitude of club meetings, swapfests, and conventions over the last 30 years, and being an ardent, and trained, observer of human behavior [*a result of 40 years of being a teacher!*], I have come to the conclusion that there are a number of highly stressful situations inherent in our hobby. This stress is a result of basic politeness (a trait for which our hobbyists are famous) coming into conflict with any number of avaricious and indiscreet forms of conduct. Please note the given examples below.

At freebie tables, a collector methodically sorts through hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of covers, a verifiable pleasant activity that most of us thoroughly enjoy. You note, however, that instead of stacking the rejected covers so that they're easily accessible to other collectors at the table, our collector simply flips them haphazardly back in the center of the table. You roll your eyes, sighing under your breath, but you're too polite to say anything. Thus, tension builds, leading to stress.

You've covered your hotel room with a myriad of enticing stacks of covers. In comes a collector during room hopping. You surreptitiously notice that he (or she) is taking *half* of each stack. Obviously, your first impulse is to scream, "What the f...!!" However your innate politeness holds you back. The best you can manage is a sedate "Pardon, may I help you?" Tension builds, leading to stress.

As you peruse auction lots prior to the auction, the person ahead of you is unwrapping lots and sorting through the covers. Worse, they happen to be *your* lots! You want to get a ruler and rap his knuckles (or better yet his forehead). Still, with a *Dr. Strangelove* move, you force your arm back down to your side and simply point out that you don't think auction lots are supposed to be opened. More tension; more stress.

You're meticulously judging which display deserves your vote when the collector behind you suddenly imparts, "Oh, that one's mine. I spent 27 hours putting it together and cut up my wife's best tablecloth for the background. I'll probably never be able to duplicate it." You offer a smile, a nod, and a "Really?!" all the while mentally crossing that display off your list of possible contenders.

And finally, the convention has ended, and you're paying your room bill. Upon receipt of your bill (euphemistically called a "guest invoice"), you notice that there seems to be a few additional charges to the room rate: tax, a resort fee, an incidentals charge, a city supplemental fee, a security fee, and by then your vision is blurring and you can feel the blood rushing to your head. You daintily hand over your credit card and then head to the bar for a double scotch.

The true quandary here, of course, is that while medical science says that it's dangerous to hold in your feelings, it's just as bad to 'vent'. At the very least, you have no idea of what the other person's reaction is going to be. To date, I haven't yet been able to discover a suitable solution to this malignant undercurrent in the hobby. In fact, I'm beginning to feel tense.