



Editorial

Winter Doldrums: A Solution

You know, once the Long Beach and Keystone-Lehigh swapfests are over in October, there's nothing really going on in the hobby, of an 'event' nature, until the Southeastern Swapfest in March. It's the winter doldrums! Actually, it's the fall-winter doldrums!

Yawn! With the exception of small occasional blips in December, as various club Christmas parties blossom across the country, the hobby basically goes into a four-month hibernation. It's the weather, of course. Who wants to venture forth amidst wind and rain, sleet and snow?

True, this doesn't mean that collectors are hibernating. We're still collecting, still sorting, still buying in auctions and trading. And, every once and awhile we might even venture outside to check whether or not we can see our shadows. But, generally, it's just that we retreat to our homes and, with our noses pressed up against the living room window, we pretty much just watch November, December, January, and February roll on by while the elements rain down from the heavens.

What we need is some big hobby event in the winter to spark interest, maintain enthusiasm, and keep the continuity flowing, instead of just waiting out this big 'blah' spell. But, it can't be a 'physical' get-together, because it's just too much of a hassle to travel in the winter [*After all, we don't all live in California!*] So...how can we get together without... 'getting together'?!

I have an idea. [!] Using the internet and [*groan*] the post office, RMS puts on a huge annual auction, open to every collector in the country (and Canada), regardless of club affiliation. This would be the biggest single auction in the hobby, separate from, and far beyond the scope of, the RMS Bulletin auction. It would be posted on the RMS web site for on-line collectors and sent as a hard copy via mail for everyone else who requests it, and it would run, perhaps, from something like January 15th to February 15th. That would be smack dab in winter, but late enough for everyone's New Year's activities to be over with.

Of course, RMS would garner additional income from all this, but that's not the main reason I'm proposing this. I really *do* believe that hobby needs some focal point activity during the winter...and, I have to admit, it galls me to see ebay continually siphoning off hobby dollars. Would there be enough interest and participation to justify such an effort by RMS? I have no idea. But there are at least five regional clubs that have regular bulletin auctions throughout the year, plus RMS's bulletin auction, plus various private mail and on-line hobby auctions...so the auction bidders are already out there.

But auction bidders would be only half the problem. We can't auction what we don't have. We'd have to have good participation from sellers, as well. And, in that vein, *my* suggestion, for this particular event, would be to abandon the usual "10 lots per seller" restriction and put it on a 'first come-first served' basis, until the auction is filled.

As usual, there would have to be volunteers to do all the work, but that's normally never been a problem, thanks to all the good souls who tirelessly offer their services for the good of the club and the good of the hobby.

Anyhow, it seems like a good idea to me.