



## Editorial

## Where are all the advertisers? Part II

I frequently hear member complaints that they receive little or no response to the ads they run (which, in turn, are fewer and fewer). So, why aren't collectors responding to the ads of fellow collectors? I can think of a couple of explanations, and perhaps readers may well possibly come up with others...

Well, if I may wax philosophic for a moment, it might be one of the many effects of the liberal do-goodism prevalent since the 1960s. The attitude that the government will take care of everything for everyone...handouts...let the other guy do it...no one takes responsibility for anything anymore. It's everyone's God-given right to get everything, and everything served on a silver platter, to boot!<sup>1</sup> [*Ah! I feel better already!*]

- But, more specifically to our problem here, perhaps what's being advertised isn't what's being sought. With the hobby shrunk down to the more serious collectors, run-of-the-mill material isn't as attractive as it was in past times, simply because the vast majority of collectors who would have been interested in that material aren't in the hobby any longer. What we have now is a much higher percentage of 'veteran' collectors who are only interested in the higher end material in their categories.

- Also due to the hobby's shrinkage, there are simply less collectors available. So that means there are fewer to respond to ads in the first place...fewer to look for the covers you're advertising for...fewer who might be interested in what you have.

- And, although I have no stats to back this up, the impression that I get about the current 'patterns' in the hobby is that more collectors are going for the bigger or 'bulk' buys rather than the traditional opportunities to obtain this lot of 15 covers and that offer of 25 covers. One seems to see more collectors these days going after complete collections, large accumulations, etc. And there's certainly nothing wrong with the latter (I'd do it myself if I had the resources). But, one of the results may be even fewer smaller advertisers and fewer such takers.

- Then, of course, there's the factor that every editor is well aware of—apathy. It's a *huge* problem!...as it is in all areas, not just our hobby (look at the deplorable decline in voting, for example). Apathy is a two-pronged beast: 1) there's the type of apathy where there are good intentions but no follow-through, and 2) there's the type where the intentions, themselves, don't even form! One can see it all over our hobby—people don't pay their club dues on time (which creates untold headaches for the unpaid volunteers who act as club membership secretaries and treasurers), local collectors don't show up at club meetings (that unpaid volunteers have knocked themselves out setting up), and so on.

So ads get few responses >>> fewer collectors advertise >>> another part of the hobby shrivels. What can be done about it? Realistically, I don't see that there is any answer on the horizon. It's like fishing—you bait your line and you take your chances...

<sup>1</sup>The preceding was a paid political advertisement by the Republican National Committee (!!)