



## Editorial

### A Look At the Hobby—In California

After looking at...ah...what's-his-name's article in the January-February issue of the RMS Bulletin about how the hobby is drastically shrinking...and changing...(and maybe it's shrinking because it's changing), it got me started on taking stock of the hobby here in California [*Ok, it's May; I'm a slow thinker*].

True, as a California collector, I've watched my traders dwindle to practically none, and I've seen my mailbox gradually change from an overflowing shopping cart to a barren and lonely cobweb catcher. I can't deny that covers, themselves, have become just as scarce here as anywhere else. And, it's harder to get out and scout new matchcovers because every time I even look at my car, the price of gas goes up a nickel a gallon. But, it could be worse—a lot worse!

I occasionally have been known to wake up screaming, my breathing coming in quick, short gasps, my eyes open in stark terror, the perspiration soaking my pajamas [*well, actually, I don't wear pajamas...but that's another story*]. I tell my wife it's nothing, to go back to sleep...but in reality it's happened again...that same reoccurring nightmare...the one where I keep finding myself a collector in Alaska, or Idaho, or Wyoming, or...

But, my friends, I am here to tell you, “**There IS a God!!**” Life is good! I am a collector in...*California!* Whatever else Hernando Cortez may have been, he was an astute judge of land. It was Cortez that named California...after an imaginary paradise in a 1510 Spanish novel...and this *is* a phillumenic paradise!

Whereas other collectors who find themselves destined by the whims of Fate to live out their hobby lives in places like Kansas and Nebraska are probably *never* going to have access to a local club, or a nearby swapfest, or [*be still my beating heart*]...a nearby convention, we, here in God's own land, have not one, not two, not even three, but FOUR regional clubs—and two of those, Long Beach and our own Sierra-Diablo, are the two largest regional clubs in the country.

And, if you're a collector in places such as North Dakota or New Mexico, you probably don't even have neighbors, much less any nearby fellow-collectors! Here, in California, on the other hand, we have more collectors than any other state. I live in a little town here in Northern California, for example, and within a comfortable 30-mile radius I can visit with a veritable handful of peers—there's Warren, and Peggy, and Jeff, and Marjorie, and Naboru, and Loren, and...

Ah, and the capstone to it all, of course, is AMCAL! We have our very own convention! Nooooooo matter how far away the RMS Convention may be, even when it's in such odd and foreign places as Lowell, MA, and Elizabeth, NJ, we always have AMCAL...right here...every year! Freebie tables! Room hopping! An endless succession of food and drink, covers, auctions, displays, awards. It's better than sex! [*.....let me rephrase that last part...it's longer lasting than sex!*]

And, after all this, I almost hate to mention that the RMS Convention is here next year—it's overkill!