

## ROBOTS TO YARNSTORMING

by Fred Hobbs

Avid collectors and hobbyists are to be admired for the depths to which some will go to pursue their passion for baseball cards or miniature train sets.

Aside from a brief fling at stamp collecting as a child and an attempt to own every disc of the novelty recordings of Spike Jones and his City Slickers during that same point in my life, I guess I don't possess the almost addictive personality needed to be a true hobbyist.

Somewhere on earth, however, someone or some group right at this moment is busy pursuing a hobby. Some are commonplace, others unusual and a few outright bizarre. Columnist Laura Sesana in a *Washington Times* column called "A World in Our Backyard," researched the phenomenon and came up with a list of some hobbies on a scale ranging from a little kookie to decidedly weird.

How about signing up for a contest in "extreme ironing" also known as "EI"? Amazingly, international competitions are held annually in which ironing enthusiasts take their clean clothes from the washer and proceed to iron them in extreme conditions such as rock climbing and surfing. Both my mother and my wife would have considered this hobby an "extremely stupid" idea to be enthused about, not to mention actually perform. Ironing was not one of their favorite pastimes.

If EI doesn't fire your imagination, you could join a group engaged in robot building. Owning the finished product sounds like it might be fun, but the process of creating a robot would be a daunting task in most home cellars or garages.

Yarn bombing would be a lot easier. That's a hobby of street art akin to graffiti creation. Balls of yarn are shaped in colors and patterns on sidewalks instead of using paint or chalk. Yarn storming, as it is also called, would be mighty difficult to attempt on walls. Use glue or tiny nails, maybe?

You actually may have seen a group of hobbyists who participate in "newsraiding." They enjoy standing in the background of TV shows. Sometimes they are bold enough to wave their arms in a "look what I'm doing" pose. Not just kids but full-grown adults are known to engage in this activity.

Do they work somewhere? Sometime, somehow, will they ever "get a life?"

And, here is the *piece de resistance* in the world of collecting. Not fine art, not vintage automobiles, not rare coins, but airsick bags. Yes, airsick bags. These are bags somehow obtained from the manufacturer or sneaked out of a plane's cabin by a stealthy flight attendant. Fans of the hobby say collections include rare antique to limited issue bags.

Now, are you going to ask the obvious question? Does anyone admit to collecting any bags *after* their intended use, say on a bumpy flight over the Rockies?

Research hasn't turned up any answer, but some crazed hobby fanatic may have one carefully preserved in a glass case in the basement.