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A Household Word: Collecting Dust

"Barbies are hot collectibles. Unfortunately, Perry's collection is a heap of naked, natty-haired blondes - all are missing their boxes and a few are even missing their heads."

By Carol Band



A Household Word
BY CAROL BAND

My husband has never forgiven his mother for cleaning out his room when he went to college and giving away his baseball cards. He's convinced that if he only had his 1973 Wayne Twitchell, we'd be rich. Never mind that baseball cards have to be in mint condition to fetch any kind of money and mint condition is defined by the folks at the Topps baseball card company as:

Mint (MT) - This is a flawless card, all corners are sharp, centering perfect, original color and gloss, and the photo has transferred in perfect focus. The card has no spots or gum stains.

Nothing in my house is in mint condition - not even the spindly mint that springs up in the flower garden every summer.

Still, I don't want my kids to blame me when they can't afford to send my grandkids to college, so I've saved their collections. That's probably why my house is a mess.

Remember Beanie Babies? We've got dozens of them - with their little heart-shaped tags still attached. My kids loved those little legume-filled creatures, and I was sure that the Beanies would appreciate enough to be able to finance the kids' college education, plus provide me with a cushy retirement in the [Bahamas](#).

Sure, I might have psychologically damaged my children by screaming, "Don't touch the tag!" whenever they played with their little toys. But, as a result, the Beanies are in pretty good condition. Not mint, but pretty good. Still, on eBay people are practically giving away the Beanie Babies that were supposed to fund their kids' inheritances.

"Must clean out daughter's room," says one ad. "Make an offer." Another pleads: "Take 'em away ... please!"

It's clear that we're not going to get rich from our investment in Beanie Babies, but I've learned from my mother-in-law's mistakes and I'm hanging on to my kids' Beanie Babies. At least until they get their own apartments.

We've also got thousands of Pokémon and Yu-Gi-Oh cards in a big plastic container in the den. Somehow, individual cards still manage to migrate all over the house. I find Squirtle under the carpet, Pikachu wedged in the couch cushions and Weezing inside the medicine chest. I throw them away because I know that we have at least four duplicates of each card.

"Mom, I can't believe you threw this away," Lewis wails as he spies a corner of a Mewtwo card buried in the kitchen trash. "This card is really valuable."

Yeah, right.

My oldest son, Nathan, collected Magic cards. As a result, we have zillions of them. Good thing, because I am told that, like the Pokémon cards, some of the cards are rare and, hence, valuable.

Although I never saw anyone actually play with their cards, I understand that there are actual [games](#) involved in Pokémon, Yu-Gi-Oh and Magic: The Gathering. In fact, I've discovered that there are even professional Magic players. Nathan informs me that the Magic Pro Tour will be in Hollywood on May 23-25 with a \$230,795 cash prize



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for the winner. It's good to know that if the whole college thing doesn't work out, he'll have something to fall back on.

It's not just the boys in my house who hoard stuff. My daughter, Perry, has dozens of Barbie dolls that she has amassed over the years. Barbies are hot collectibles. They are hot if they are in mint condition, over 30 years old and in their original boxes. Unfortunately, Perry's collection is a heap of naked, natty-haired blondes - all are missing their boxes and a few are even missing their heads.

Too bad, because on eBay, some Barbies (ones with heads) sell for hundreds - even thousands - of dollars, including the one with the black-and-white striped [bathing suit](#) ... the one I had when I was a kid ... the one my mom gave away! But a 1973 Wayne Twitchell, even in mint condition, is only \$3.99.

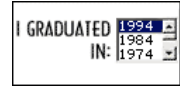
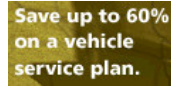
The entire contents of Carol's house are available on eBay. Make an offer or write to her at carol@carolband.com. [Click here](#) to read more of Carol's award-winning Household Word columns and to see her new blog.

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