

Hobby Ethics

[Edward Perkins, a collector's collector and founding member of RMS, wrote the following piece on hobby ethics in 1947. Even though that was 66 years ago, and even with the major changes that have taken place within the hobby since then, most of his points here are still valid...but you're in for a surprise or two!]

“It is almost impossible to derive maximum results without assistance from other collectors. In dealing with your colleagues always observe the Golden Rule! Be charitable with the views of others even though they don't agree with yours. If a Full Book collector asks for matches in tact do not answer his request by attempting to make a matchcover convert out of him.

The fact that your received inferior covers is no excuse for sending back those which are equally inferior. Your trader may be a beginner, and while his covers do not measure up to your requirements, they are no doubt the best he has on hand.

In other words DON'T be an 'eye for eye' collector!

1. Keep in close touch with the developments in your Hobby. Join a good Matchcover Society. Attend the National Collectors' Conventions, the meetings of your Regional Units. Organize a collectors Group in your locality.
2. Answer all matchcover mail and respond promptly to trades. Always attach sufficient postage to your letters and packages, and when information is requested attach a stamp for reply.
3. Never send out soiled covers, used covers or Samples [flats]. Restriction against used covers may be waived only in cases where it is definitely understood that they are wanted. Check against salacious unmailable designs particularly on the inside of covers.
4. Return reciprocal courtesies. The following is an illustration of an UNFAIR trade: - Smith sends you two hundred covers with return privileges. You keep one hundred, and return two hundred which include the one hundred not wanted! This deal extends him only a fifty per-cent advantage. FAIR PLAY is to return three hundred, including the one hundred not wanted!
5. Bargaining for the collections of decedents, or those who have definitely quit the hobby should be motivated first, by a desire to improve your own collection, and then to sell or trade to others. Don't try to corner the market by diverting to the attic rare covers. It may work temporarily, but only too soon after you are gone will they come into circulation, perhaps at bargain prices.
6. It is decidedly unethical to have match-books produced solely for circulation among the collectors.
7. 'Juggling' is a decided form of dishonesty. It involves the act of holding back certain units which might complete sets to obtain a monopoly, to be cased in later at high premiums.
8. Distributions in quantities larger than the market will bear results in freezing the trade value of the covers, and is unfair to the recipients.”

Ed. Hmmm...#6 would seem to nix convention covers!