



Editorial

An Exercise in Heresy

I happened to be talking to Loren Moore, CA, the other day (*oh oh!*), and he brought up a subject that, in all my 31 years in the hobby, I had never before heard seriously broached—changing the name of our organization.

I have to admit that over the years it had certainly occurred to me that “Rathkamp Matchcover Society” was probably not the best of names for our hobby organization, but listening to Loren’s arguments for a name change put it all into a meaningful perspective.

Already I can hear the legions screaming, “WHAT!!! Change the name after all the time, effort, and expense we’ve put into establishing name recognition?!” Well, that was the main point. We *have* no name recognition. There are some 320 million people in the U.S. How many do you think have ever heard of the Rathkamp Matchcover Society? They haven’t even heard of *the hobby*, much less our specific club. RMS has had a publicity budget for years, but it obviously is not working. Most new members are brought in by our web site [*and, thus, we should be advertising on the internet*]. Library displays, newspaper and magazine articles about collectors here and there are nice, but they reach an infinitesimally small number of people. Name recognition of any hobby organization is miniscule, but RMS doesn’t even register on the meter.

Loren brought up another good point in that our current name may actually *deter* people from joining! There is no other hobby organization, certainly no major one, named after an individual. Doing so immediately makes the organization look provincial instead of all-encompassing. When Bill Retskin started his own club, for example, he knew what he was doing when he named it the “American Matchcover Collecting Club” instead of “Bill’s Matchcover Club”.

Point three: The word “Society” implies a social theme, and, while some may rejoice in that, that’s not what we’ve banded together for. Although, I admit it could be worse. The original name of our organization was the “Rathkamp Memorial Society of Match Cover Collectors”. At least we dropped the ‘Memorial’, but notice that we also dropped the ‘collecting’ aspect!

“Society,” even “Club,” also implies responsibilities when one joins, Loren pointed out, and I doubt if anyone could characterize today’s society as being as socially responsible as that of our father’s and grandfather’s. People don’t want to be locked into club meetings, schedules, demands for volunteer work, etc.

“Changing the name just to change the name won’t do much. In fact, if the priority of RMS continues to be social, then the name fits. The conflict comes in when their subtitle is “The Voice of the Hobby”. This indicates that matchcovers is the priority (which is not the case). And, when you have no reference library and no effective educational/marketing program, and put your time and money into expensive conventions, it’s difficult to justify the subtitle. Personally I would like to see RMS review their priorities and their purpose....to ensure survival,” Loren stated.

Something to think about...