



Editorial

Saving For Posterity

In a previous *RMS Bulletin*, I discussed the topic of planning ahead for the eventual disposition of your collection...when that time arrives, as it will, for all of us. Prior to that, Trans Canada's bulletin carried a good piece on the topic in 2001. Whether you, the collector, plan to sell off your collection, give it away, or leave it to a next-generation collector to carry on, the point was that it's necessary to have a plan in place, especially if you should be called to that great convention in the sky somewhat prematurely!

But, you know, there's a lot more going on in the hobby that should be safeguarded for posterity than just the covers, themselves. Specifically, I'm thinking of 'artifacts' and information.

The "artifacts" of the hobby would include those items that have to do with the history and development of matchcover collecting. To my mind, that would include such things as club bulletins and rosters, convention booklets, samples of different album types and pages over the years, flattening and shucking appliances, varieties of sorting boxes, and so on. Not only should these things be archived for posterity and future collectors, but a display of such at the annual RMS Convention would be an interesting addition to what the conventions already have to offer...and, it would all be educational for novice collectors, the public, and the reporters who write up each convention.

Of even more importance for the future, perhaps, is the archiving of information gathered about the hobby, about its covers, its founders and collectors, its clubs, and so forth—research! Compared to what existed earlier, the hobby is currently going through a Golden Age of Information. Technology—the internet, e-mail,

scanners, computers—has made the gathering and exchange of information unbelievably easy and accessible to all. Articles, lists, publications, books, historical references...yes, and even perhaps editorials...That information needs to be saved, archived, and made available to the interested collectors and researchers who will come after us. Witness all the time and effort that people are willing to put forth in the interest of pursuing information, not only for their own uses but for the use of others. Look at Ken Ryesky's current 29-part series on "Matchbooks in the Lawbooks" and Herb Price's seven-part series on Calendar Art Sets. Look at the Girlie Matchcover Club's incredible cataloging of known Girlie covers, or the COMBINE's listing of Navy Ship covers, or the American Ace listing of some 12,000 individual Ace boxes. While nothing is valuable to all, everything is valuable to some. The Group I listings I just recently finished running, for example, were unwanted by some and eagerly sought after by others. Information is *always* usable.

Every club should have the RMS Librarian on its mailing list so that its bulletins can be archived; every research and list maker should ensure that 1) his or her work will either be carried on by someone else when the time comes or 2) that that research or list goes to the RMS Librarian where it can be safeguarded for the future.

If you've ever done a listing, you know just how much time and effort goes into such an enterprise. Imagine that all going basically for naught...because you've passed away, and your master list has been boxed away and forgotten about by unknowing relatives...or simply tossed out. Pretty soon, your list becomes more and more obscure, until eventually it becomes part of that nebulous "Oh yea, I think someone did a list on that...don't know who it was or what happened to it." The knowledge you've garnered is just as big a heritage for future generations as your collection. Make suitable arrangements for both. The RMS Historian is set up specifically for the former.