

MATCH TIPS for New Collectors

by "Billboard Bill" Thomas

Welcome to the Big 2K- I hope you survived the big transition without spilling your drink. And if you think you're now in the third millennium, I have a bridge over the East River in New York that I'd like to sell you.

This is a banner year for RMS—its 60th year, and the convention in August in Lowell, MA, is there because New England is where our hobby began back in 1940. I urge you to get to Lowell, even if it's just for a few days—you might get to meet one of the surviving founders of our hobby.

If you're fond of covers from Florida's Walt Disney, don't expect too many more; in 1999, Disney abolished all matchbooks from its theme parks. The only ones currently available are ones from Disney's tenants like the Swan & Dolphin & some other hotels, and the Wildhorse Saloon & other entities run by non-Disney folks. In Nov. 1999, Disney raised their parking fee to \$6...gee, I remember paying \$6 for a Broadway show orchestra seat. Long ago.

For some years, the major political candidates have shunned campaign matchbooks—in part because of some federal rule saying candidates can't give out things that have a functional value. So they can give out bumper stickers but not matchbooks. But some candidates violate the rules, so keep an eye out for campaign matches, and if you find any be sure to send me one. Thanks. Oh, the rule doesn't apply to candidates for the RMS elections in August, 2000, so let's have at least two candidates for each office, to generate campaign matchbooks, eh?

Be aware that the RMS display rules have changed some. They have eliminated some blah categories like Fraternal & reshuffled some. Unfortunately, they still look upon Canadian and Mexican covers as non-foreign. If you agree that it's ridiculous, please write to RMS display

honcho Marc Edelman & ask him to make Mexico a foreign land. Canada is okay—they speak our language, except they end everything with an "eh?"

A foreign cover isn't foreign just because it was made overseas; it also has to be made for a foreign audience. Thus, a cover advertising a Jeep dealer in Kansas isn't foreign because its manumark is a Japanese one—it's a domestic cover made overseas. But, a cover advertising McDonald's can be foreign if it also has some Japanese squiggly characters on it. I have a cover advertising a Mexican auto rental outfit; the wording is in English and the manumark is a US one, but it's a foreign cover because it touts a foreign service to tourists in Mexico. It's not the product that determines the nationality; it's the audience. A Volvo cover is domestic if it's in English, whether the manumark is a US or Swedish one, but if it has Swedish words on it, it's foreign. There, isn't that easy?

If you mail boxes that are squished flat instead of sliced open and flattened, you might avoid a thickness penalty of 11¢ if you slip two boxes onto a 20s cover, so that they don't bunch up and make the envelope thicker than 1/4". I use invitation envelopes because an 8 1/2x11 letter double-folds neatly into it and you can also place two thin piles of 30s covers side-by-side using a paper strip wrapper, thereby avoiding the thickness penalty.

The 1x5x8" Priority Mail box is dandy, but it costs \$3.20 to mail, even if it weighs only a few oz. I turned the box inside out & mailed it regular 1st class for \$1.43 but was told not to do that.

If you're on-line but have no fax machine, you can get a free phone no. from Fax4Free, which will let you send me a fax from your computer, and will let me fax to your computer from my fax machine. Editor Mike Prero has it, and we use it often.

[Hey, write, phone or fax me your hobby questions, I'll try to help. I'm at 222 S. Ranger Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32792 Phone/fax: 407-657-0222; sorry, no e-mail yet.]