

MATCH TIPS for New Collectors

by "Billboard Bill" Thomas

Coming to Quebec? You've read all the meat & potatoes about the convention; here's some of the gravy & seasonings you should know if you've not been to an RMS convention before..

To bring: coat & tie (cocktail frock or gown), money, camera, 100W bulb, poncho or umbrella, displays, auction lots, prizes, covers for your room, grab table covers, passport, driver's license, or voter registration. NO radar detectors—Canada will seize them.

Before Wed. there will be tours, etc.; convention begins on Wed. When you register, you get a sack of covers and a program book, and you pick your banquet table seats. There's usually an auction on Wed. night; the other three are daytime ones. Sit in on at least one; you will learn a lot. The items are viewable for about 1 hr prior to each auction. Bidding is visual signal; you use a numbered card & pay your tab each evening AFTER the auction. It moves fast—some 300+ lots are auctioned in about 3 hrs. Wray Martin, best auctioneer in the world, will tell you the few simple rules before he starts. Converse softly or else go outside, or Wray will throw a grenade at you.

Displays—on Wed. the display room will open, & soon many will be on view. The room is open much of the day; make it a point to go later in the week when more displays are there. You'll see some great & rare covers. Big rule is Look But Don't Touch. On Friday, judges will view the displays in private & the winners are announced at the Sat. eve banquet.

In or near the hospitality room is a big board for names & room numbers; put yours on there and copy the rest for room hopping, which goes on all week. You visit their room, introduce yourself & take just one of every cover that appeals to you. If you want two, ask first. Keep track of which rooms you visit, and later you'll reciprocate.

There are some games to make money for the host club and a room with big round tables piled high with covers & boxes. Help yourself, but be selective rather than piggish. The covers are all donated by collectors, so **next** year **you** can be one of the donors. They unsuccessfully try to keep junky covers off the tables. Several dealers will also be set up to sell. Haggle, you may get some good bargains. Near the week's end, some dealers get desperate & cut prices, but some of the items can be found room-hopping. See me first for Disney World covers.

During the week, many local clubs will have their meetings, like Denver Strikers, Mermaids, Girlies, and Huggable Bears; days & times may not be known until later in the week. Fri. or Sat. night is an RMS business meeting, usually routine since there is no contested election this year.

One big difference this year is the Canadian money. Hey, don't let it scare you, just make note that each time you pay out \$1 Canadian, you're paying .71 cents US. Save all your receipts, as you can recapture some of the Canadian Value Added Tax when you depart Canada. Ask the hotel about it. Banks will most likely give you a better \$\$ exchange rate than hotels or restaurants, or get some Canadian \$\$ from your bank beforehand. Or, use a credit card & let AMEX or VISA do the work. Don't worry about your French; if you say, "Toilet?" **everyone** will understand. Honest.

The Sat. eve banquet is semi-formal; NO jeans or T-shirts, **please**. There's a cocktail hour first. Many old-timers are introduced, display awards are handed out, raffle is run & then we adjourn to the bar for an 11 PM salutation by ex-prez. John Woods. Probably a coffee & donuts something early Sunday morning by the host club, Phillu Quebec. They promise we'll enjoy it, & I'm sure they'll keep their promise.

Write, phone, or fax me your questions; I'm Bill Thomas, 222 So. Ranger Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32792, Phone (407) 657-0222.