

MATCH TIPS for New Collectors

by "Billboard Bill" Thomas

Even if you can seize your wife's beer money, get you to Moline for the convention if you possibly can, even if it's just for the last few days. You'll be glad you did. You know the dates, rates, etc. so here's some of the things we old collectors know but you don't—yet. Bring one dress shirt, tie & jacket, as the Sat. evening banquet is a semi-formal thing. Years ago, the ladies all wore long gown, but now cocktail frocks are okay. You register in arriving, which gets you your banquet tickets, program book and a sack of nice covers. The program book tells you what goes on when, so keep it handy.

Somewhere there's a blackboard where you list your room no. so folks can copy it all and know where to go room-hopping. There's a hospitality room, hosted by the various clubs, where you can meet, loaf, guzzle soda and pretzels and swap lies. There's a room with several large, round tables heaped with covers. They're free—you just sit around, paw thru the covers & make friends with others doing the same. Those covers were donated by collectors, so next year YOU can also be a cover donor. In the same room (or maybe a separate one) you will find a few dealers selling nice covers & stuff. They show fixed prices, but there's no reason why you can't haggle or bargain.

There will be four auctions; the lots will be on view for an hour or so before each auction. You sign up for a numbered paddle which you can use to bid with, and you settle up your account at the end of each auction. No sales for cash. Sit next to an old-timer, but keep the chatter down low as the auctioneer doesn't want competition.

All week long there's room-hopping...you wander from room to room & find each room has lots of stacks of covers set out on the bureau. Just introduce yourself, take ONE of any cover you like, say thanks, and continue on. Later on,

others will come to your room to do the same. This is another way to make friends and set up trading with those who have common preferences. This is where your list of rooms & names come in handy.

Some specialty clubs have their one & only meeting during the convention, so you may find some days with a busy schedule. On Wed., the display room opens and soon thereafter it is filling up with some real dandy cover displays, so don't miss it. On Fri., the RMS judges go in and select award winners; the awards are presented at the Sat. eve banquet. Don't touch displays, as guardians are obligated to cut your hands off!

Normally, a local club hosts the convention for RMS, and RMS then receives a percentage of the host club's profit, but this year there is no host club, so RMS is its own host. The profit is derived from tours, games, auction percentage, raffles, etc. There are normally a couple of local tours on Mon & Tue, as the convention doesn't get down to business until Wed., so if you can't be there all week, try to come for the later part of the week. Things build up to the Sat banquet, which is preceded by a cocktail hour. At the banquet, old-timers and other honorees are introduced.. You get your banquet seating place when you register.

Things to bring: money, covers for your room, swim suit, camera, displays, spouse or equivalent, thirst & appetite. I always bring a 100W bulb, as some rooms have dim lighting for seeing covers. Except for the banquet, we dress sloppily casual daily, maybe non-sloppy for dinner. No weekday meals are planned—you go where, when & with whom you want, but wherever you eat, get at least a caddy of their matches and share them with all of us. And this year's convention has casino ships on the river, so you'd better pre-buy your bus ticket homeward in advance!

[Hey, write, phone or fax me with your hobby questions or hints. I'm at 222 S. Ranger Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32792. Phone/fax is 407-657-0222]