

## MATCH TIPS for New Collectors

by "Billboard Bill" Thomas

You've been told all about the RMS convention room rates, tours, registration, etc., but here's what you *really* need to know if you've never been to one.

Room hopping - you wander from room to room, introduce yourself, and take ONE of any cover laying out on the bureau. If you want two, ask first. Later, folks will come to your room to do the same.

Auctions - there will be four. Lists of lots are available, and lots can be viewed about 1 hour before auction time. To bid, you must get a number card before the auction starts. You settle up your tab when the day's auction is over. Auction is by hand signal, not voice. Keep the chatter down low, as it irks the auctioneer.

Freebie tables - also known as grab tables. Several huge, round tables in a room are heaped high with covers. You sit at a table & paw thru the covers, taking only what you need. They're free—donated by other collectors...next year YOU get to be an "other collector." Good way to meet others & set up trading. In the freebie room, there are some games with prizes. Patronize them; it's the host club's way of making some \$\$.

Eats & dress - Most of us make our own eating plans, either alone or in groups. The banquet on Sat. eve is supposed to be formal—that means a coat & tie for gentlemen and at least a nice cocktail frock for the ladies. For those guys who won't wear a tie unless it's put on by a funeral director, please make an exception. This is the Big Event of RMS, and we like to make it look so. Many cameras will be shooting, so lose the T-shirt & jeans, please.

The banquet - there's a cocktail hour with a ca\$h bar first. After the meal comes the

introduction of the old-timers, outstanding collectors, first time attenders. Then the display awards are presented, the Hall of Fame inductees, and the Outstanding Collectors are announced, after which a raffle calling begins. After that, we congregate in the bar for a nightcap and past president John Woods makes a traditional speech.

Displays - There's a huge room with about 300 displays to look at. Look but don't touch. Entrants' names are known only to the display committee. On Friday, the room closes and some judges enter to pick the RMS award winners. A ribbon is placed on each winning display and the room reopens, but the winners of club and individual awards are not announced until the Sat. banquet. Display room usually opens for business on Wed. morning.

Business meeting - there used to be two; now there's one, and it's usually short in a non-election year. This year, two clubs will be putting forth a pitch for the 2001 convention—Angelus MC of Pasadena, CA, and Liberty Bell MC of Phila., so it could be interesting.

Club meetings - Some local or regional clubs use this time to have their own meetings.

Hospitality Room - a lounge for meeting others & resting, usually w/refreshments. Also, there's a large board with what people are in which rooms—helpful in room hopping.

Misc - there is a social one evening in which the host club seduces you into trying some local specialty eats, maybe even some entertainment. There may also be a Show & Tell period in which some folks place their albums out for your viewing and answer questions. Old-timer collectors are eager to impart their knowledge to you, so don't be bashful about asking questions of anyone. Not all old people are old-timer collectors, and some old-timers are still not ready for AARP, though.

*[Write, phone, or fax me your questions or hints to share with others. I'm at 222 S. Ranger Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32792-4331. Phone/fax is 407-657-0222. I'm home days and up until at least 11 PM EDT. Sorry, e-mail is still in my*