

MATCH TIPS for New Collectors

by "Billboard Bill" Thomas

Now is the time to look at your calendar, your checkbook, and your frequent flyer miles to see which 1999 events you can get to. AMCAL is in Bakersfield, CA, in May, so all you folks west of the Big Muddy just saddle up your ponies and ride west. Easterners, bust your piggy banks and get you a redeye flight to the land of the big earthquakes. Then in June there's the UES meet in Hagerstown, MD. Here's where Easterners drive their Land Rovers to MD while the western folks ride east in big iron birds. Most coast to coast air fares are cheaper than to mid-country points. And then in August comes the biggie—the 59th RMS convention in Pittsburgh. If you can only make one gathering this year, make it RMS, as it will have interesting stuff like two clubs competing for the 2001 convention. But you gotta plan ahead, so start planning NOW & not when all the seats are sold. PGH is a USAirways hub.

Do you like seeing displays, or making & showing them? You saw the RMS display rules in the January Bulletin; some are outdated and need changing, but nothing will change unless enough of us pound upon chairman Marc Edleman, so write him & tell him what you'd like to see changed. Clubs and individuals can present display awards at RMS too, so just contact chairgirlies Shirley Sayers and/or Pat Shappell for info on how to go about giving an award.

How do the many local and regional clubs relate to RMS, you ask. Well, they are all kissin' cousins; RMS is NOT the parent of any other clubs, but it likes to support them and likes to have their support. Local clubs are all autonomous, although some may band together like the clubs in California to form a mother club, AMCAL. Well, it's not really a mother but more like a Big Brother; it coordinates their efforts and promotes harmony like getting them to have meetings on different weekends. AMCAL has officers but no dues; if you're a member of any Calif. club, you're also a member of AMCAL. UES is pretty much the same way, altho we can never figger out just what eastern clubs are a part of UES, if any. That's not important—what's important is that they do things and have fun.

What's a foreign cover? To us Americanos, any country external to the USA is foreign, but our hobby complicates things a bit. By tacit agreement, we consider Canadian covers to be not foreign. I guess Canadians call US covers non-foreign too, but I dunno. But what about Mexican covers? Well, some obscure display rules say that covers from the USA, Canada and Mexico are not foreign. I don't agree with that. All we share with Mexico is a border; no common language or heritage—they even make us buy their auto insurance when we drive into Mexico, so I consider Mexico to be as foreign as Spain r Honduras. If you agree with me, please argue that point—Canada Yes, Mexico NO! I think Puerto Rico covers are foreign too.

Have you acclimated to the new postal rules yet? International mail was NOT affected by the Jan. 10 change in our domestic rates. When you insure a mail parcel, be sure to insure in for over \$50 so you can use the blue insurance tag with a V-number on it, as it is traceable, while the little green one has NO number to enable the PO or anyone to trace it. The little green one is for domestic mail only, and you can use it to insure for \$50 or less—but why insure if a lost parcel can't be traced? The blue V-form is for both domestic or international mail (including APOs) and the minimum insurance fee is \$1.80—but for that fee you can insure your parcel for up to \$100. If you use that form but insure a parcel for \$20, they will still charge you \$1.80—the rate for \$50.01 to \$100. Go figure them out—we can't.

At Florida's Walt Disney World, the Buena Vista Palace Resort (hotel) is now the Wyndham Resort & Spa, and their posh Arthur's 27 restaurant has a 30s silver on white matchbook. The Wildhorse Saloon at Pleasure Island now has a slim box which mentions WDW, and the Portebello rest. has a new slim box. The Hotel Royal Plaza has a white/gold 30s, and on Pleasure Island there are some totally blank covers in various colors with nothing on them but a Disney manumark. I have NONE of the above covers for you yet, as I'm tied close to home—my bride had a heart attack. Hang in there, I'll have 'em for you later this year.

[Got cover or hobby questions? I'm at 222 So. Ranger Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32792-4331 The phone or fax is 407-657-0222. How did I get such a number? I own the phone company!.]