

## MATCH TIPS for New Collectors

by “Billboard Bill” Thomas

It’s Christmas shopping time, and each year I save you & your family a lotta work by listing all the hobby goodies that you should find under your tree. Here’s most everything, but if your family is rich you can always add more: Postal scale, fire extinguisher, magnifying glass, C-clamps, artboard for displays, album covers, album pages, case of personalized matches, subscription to a collector club (like Denver Strikers), ticket to the next AMCAL or RMS convention, Ralph Arnold shucking pliers, hobby ball cap or T-shirt, 20 hours of free shucking, frame for Feature matchbooks, minivan full of matchbooks...you fill in the rest.

Hallmark again has a matchbook tree ornament; it’s over \$10 but mebbe you can get one for half price after Christmas like we did last year.

Going to Walt Disney World in 1999? I have a blurb on where to get matches at WDW; send me a SASE for it & I’ll include a few older Disney covers. Note that Euro Disney, in France, is now called Disneyland Paris. They have matches, too. Joe DeGennaro will send you a listing of all Disney World covers for \$1 and a SASE.

Postmen aren’t required to read anymore—they shove your mail into a machine that reads it, so they want you to use block capital printing and NO punctuation marks. Any stuff like “attention of,” etc. should go above the address and not below the city/state/zip. Enjoy your last year of .32¢ Christmas cards, as the postal rates go up in January. Three years ago we told the PO about an obvious error in their rules regarding mailing of matchbooks. They agreed & said they’d fix it. We’re turning blue holding our breath waiting.

Here’s a coupla uncommon foreign boxes you can have by sending Billboard Bill a SASE—a

box from an Irish pub in Bangkok, Thailand, and a box from a hotel in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Thailand also has a very lovely set of nine holographic boxes promoting Thailand, very novel and colorful. Sorry, we have no spares of that.

Well, for over 2 years we tried to get our old ship, the USS Independence, to have a matchbook made when it retired. We got NO response to FOUR of our letters to the ship, even after we had offered to underwrite the cost of a case of ship matches. In early Oct. we learned that the ship was decommissioned in Bremerton, WA with much fanfare and cutting of cake—but no matches. Sorry, guys. They let us all down. But, then, not answering one’s mail has become a standard practice, hasn’t it? It’s true in business, in the military, and even in our hobby, and it’s a daggum shame. The only mail you don’t dare fail to answer is those threatengrams from the IRS. The Navy has a smart scheme for forcing a response—they had a phrase called UNODIR, which meant “unless otherwise directed,” so a junior would send a senior a message or letter saying, “UNODIR, I intend to blah, blah, blah...” and if the senior didn’t want the action taken he bloom’in’ well had to respond promptly.

Those Camel sets are coming out faster than a NASCAR pole starter, aren’t they? We do not collect them so we can’t understand how the set numbers are assigned and by whom, but as they are so popular among our people, wouldn’t it be great if someone among us write to RJR or to DD Bean and asked them to put sequential numbers on the covers, like 2/15 for #2 in a set of 15? The Europeans have done that for many years; it helps.

Best wishes to Keystone-Lehigh MC for their Nov. holiday weekend, and to all the clubs which are having Christmas/Hanukkah parties. Fond Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday greetings to you all, and remember Billboard Bill’s rule—always keep a drink alongside you while shucking so you can pour it on a fire. If there’s no fire, you know what to do with it. *[Write me at 222 S. Ranger Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32792 and I’ll try to help with your hobby questions.]*