

## MATCH TIPS for New Collectors

by "Billboard Bill" Thomas

No, this is NOT the last Match Tips of the millennium! The next millennium doesn't begin until Jan.1, 2001. If you don't believe me, ask God or the US Naval Observatory.

Slitted album pages seem to be going the way of the dinosaur, and rightly so now that we have pages which are more kind to our brittle old covers. The slitted pages are still fine for new covers and are still the cheapest way to install covers in an album, but we find that there is only one source for them these days, and that is Larry Ziegler of Canada. Of course, you can always get used ones from those who sell off collections.

When the plastic pages first came out, folks were real thrilled, even though the cost was considerably higher than for the slitted pages. Then someone learned that the plastic pages were deadly to matchcover strikers—there was a chemistry clash which attacked the strikers. Apparently, the makers got the ominous word and went back to their lab, as later versions of the plastic pages are more kind to our strikers. I predict that the greatest bulk of album pages in the future will be the plastic ones.

Even before plastic pages existed, there was an alternative way of mounting covers in albums, and that was sewn pages. They're still fine and don't injure covers, but they are a homemade product which you must make or find in collection disposals. They are cheap to make, as they use ordinary scrapbook pages, but the labor is kinda intensive as it involves much needle & thread work. Nice thing about them is that you can tailor-make a page to hold several different sizes of covers.

If you like slitted pages and don't want to (or can't) buy them, you can always make your own. Write to Ellen Gutting in Las Vegas. She had a

template which helped you to mark pages for slitting, and again such home-made pages provide for multiple size mountings on one page. The old Beach pages were kinda soft and supple, so if you make your own pages don't use stiff, hard pages as they will impose all the wear & tear on your covers.

For those who collect full books, there are a couple of choices. Long time ago there was an album which looked like a huge, oversized matchbook. It contained double folded strips of paper just like matches, and you could insert a full book onto the strip just by opening the matchbook. The album cover was hard to handle because it was soft, so I stiffened mine with a slab of heavy cardboard, but those albums were still bulky and hard to store, hard to carry, hard to show. A much better full book album page is offered by Larry Martin, AZ; his pages are standard 8 1/2x11" size with slits to accept 20, 30 and 40s matchbooks. You merely insert the matchbook onto the page. An advantage is that you can see the back of a matchbook, but a disadvantage is that you can't mount matchbooks on both sides of a page.

Fred Houk of Maitland, FL, has a novel way of albumizing matchboxes. He keeps the intact box with its tray, and inserts 6 or so matchboxes into a Ziploc baggie, then staples the baggie to a stiff album page, and of course you can see both sides just by raising the bag. This method makes for very thick albums and is not suitable for matchbooks as they tend to slosh all around and bunch up.

Displaying full book Features is easy; you buy a cheap picture frame at K-Mart and you staple 1" wide strips of cardboard horizontally across the frame. Then you can insert your full books onto the strips, intermixing 20s, 30s, and 40s—or even Giants. If you choose your frame size carefully, you can even fit it into your luggage.

*[Hey, I'm Bill Thomas of 222 S. Ranger Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32792. Phone/fax is 407-657-0222. I'm up until 11 PM Eastern time. If you include some nice covers, I'll return some from Florida's Walt Disney World. Merry Christmas]*