

MATCH TIPS for New Collectors

by "Billboard Bill" Thomas

I had hoped to tell you about our annual convention, but our editor's fixed deadlines make no allowance for conventions, comets, tidal waves, Armageddons or Second coming of the Lord.

Disney World in Fla. is still growing but with much less emphasis on matches. Their new wild animal theme park has NO Disney matches, their All-Star sports venue has only a generic matchbook. In the newest part of their Downtown, called West Side, the matches in the Big Name places like Gloria Estefan's Bongos make no mention of Disney, nor do those of the Wildhorse Saloon on Pleasure Island. Too bad.

Now is not too early to start your Christmas shopping and Christmas hinting. Leave some ads or notes laying around for things you'd like to have, like a postal scale, fire extinguisher (what - you still don't have one?), scanner, album pages. If your spouse is a collector, start paying attention to what he or she mumbles about needing. How about a book about matchcover collecting?

Many modernized post offices have a rack of envelopes & boxes for Priority and Express mail. One of the free boxes, a sturdy 5.25" x 8.5" x 1.5" Priority Mail box, is great for mailing covers, but - Ahem - is also great for storing covers or matchbooks - just don't take too many at one time and don't tell 'em we told you.

Now we are less than two years away from our 60th anniversary convention in 2000 AD. We assume it will be in the New England area where our hobby began, but not likely in a Big City, as the hotel rates are too out of sight. That should be a major, milestone convention, and if you can only attend one occasionally you should make that one a top priority. Those living out west should plan on it too, as it looks like the next

three RMS conventions will be in the West...unless you western folks decide to bid for hosting one.

You who live in the humid South, like us here in Florida, should take pains to keep your covers from getting soggy & mildewed. Keep them inside an air conditioned or dehumidified house, even if you have to move your spouse's dancing shoes out into the garage. One way to keep covers & stuff in a humid garage is to buy a junked, no-longer-working freezer - a big one - and keep your covers in it along with some desiccant - the crystals that sop up moisture. We've been doing that with dry foods like cereals, etc. for years, and it works real dandy.

Rubber bands or C-clamps are nice for flattening covers, but if you do it Big Time get you an adjustable bench vise - the kind that sits on a bench instead of clamping onto the edge of it. That, plus several slabs of 1/4" plywood cut to the size of your covers, will enable you to flatten 200 -300 covers at a time. Our vise is called a Speedy Vise, and it even swivels; got it in a True Value hardware store some years ago.

We saw a list of all the many uses for a book of matches; some were real clever, like leaving a trail while exploring a cave - but the list omitted one obvious use - lighting a cigar or cigarette! Of course, that's only for desperate people these days.

[Hey, write, phone, or fax me with your questions about covers or the hobby. I don't have all the answers, but I have a list of them who do. I'm Bill Thomas of 222 S. Ranger Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32792-4331. Phone/fax is 407-657-0222. If you include some nice covers, I'll return some from Florida's Walt Disney World.]