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## Playing With Matches!

Who *are* we, anyway?...We're *matchcover* collectors!...And that, by definition, means we like to live life on the cutting edge, forever seeking rarities, challenges...and...*danger!* We *laugh* at risks! We *scorn* peril! We *gamble* with destiny!

Well, hey, come on!...We play with matches! And what do we *all* tell our children?...“*Don't play with matches!*” But, after all, it's not the same thing. We're *adults!* Ah! [*sigh*] But is that enough? Permit me to regale you with an incident out of my own true-life experiences...

Some years ago, I had recently come into a fairly large accumulation of matches and had been shucking full-books for hours. I had already filled the shopping bag twice with stripped matches and unceremoniously dumped them in the garbage can in the garage, and the bag was now approaching its capacity for a third time. So, once again, I hefted the bag down to the garage and, once again, emptied it into the garbage can, only...

This time I suddenly found myself, I was certain, standing on the launch pad at Cape Canaveral! Suddenly, out of nowhere, and with no warning at all, there was a gigantic *WHOOSH!!!* as the garbage can did a very impressive imitation of a jet engine. The erupting flames briefly went high enough to touch the ceiling, singeing my eyebrows and part of my very distinguish-looking beard in the process.

It was all over before I really even knew what had happened; I was left standing there with my mouth agape, little wisps of smoke rising from various once-proud facial hairs. [*I've often thought I should submit that anecdote to Idiots At Large Magazine*]. Suffice to say, I never did that again! Moreover, as a pipe smoker, more than once I've had the entire matchbook suddenly ignite in my hand.

So, veteran collector or novice, one and all have to be *very* careful with matches. If you're a full-book collector and thus have those matches around permanently, you need to insure that, however they're displayed, however they might be stored, there's zero chance of any significant friction [*although, with matches, you never know how much friction is significant*].

If you're like most of us, you shuck the matches and get rid of them. I once did an *RMS Insta-Poll* on how collectors got rid of their matches. Although there were, indeed, some novel approaches, by far the most tried and true solution is soaking the matches before disposing of them. That protects you, your house, and everyone nearby [*you wouldn't want to be responsible for your local garbage truck going up in flames as it chugs down the street!*]

And, not so incidentally either, a little fire here and there, now and again, will also make your insurance rates soar...Another reason to handle matches safely!

