

MATCH TIPS for New Collectors

by "Billboard Bill" Thomas

Don't Send Me Junk! Okay, I won't send you junk, but first you must tell me what YOU call junk. The old-time junk man who came around and took junk off your hands did so because he saw a **profit** in your junk; he wasn't doing you a big favor. So let's talk a bit about what is and what is not junk.

In our hobby, some covers are commonly referred to as junk by **most** collectors - not all. Used covers, meaning ones which have been truck, are generally considered to be junk - except to those few who don't mind used covers. Then too, a cover which might be highly prized in a new condition, like a Vatican Planet Hollywood, would not be looked upon as junk just because it had a few strikes showing on the striker, eh? So there's real junk and there's kinda junk. Basic rule of thumb: not every used cover is automatically junk, but it should not go among your other to-be-traded covers.

What else is junk? How about bobtailed covers - those with the striker cut or torn off? Most of us consider them uncollectible and untradeable, but many of us will accept a bobtailed or a used cover in our album to save a place for the fine, mint condition unused one when it comes along. So, like used covers, bobtailed ones are tentatively junk but not automatically so.

It's easy to recognize a used or a bobtailed cover and to categorize it as junk or not, but what about nationals? Our hobby looks down its nose on national covers too; we consider them to be the same as a 32¢ stamp - except they're not worth 32¢ or even 1¢. What's a national cover? Before generic chain hotel covers came along, nationals were the kind you often got out of cigarette vending machines, the ones that said, "Draw me" and had an address on the inside for those foolish enough to heed the art school advertising.. They were circulated all over the

nation, hence the term "nationals". Today, we also have which I consider to be nationals - those generic covers that just say "Hilton" or "Sheraton" with no specific hotel or locale. Most folks call them generics, but they're in the same league as the older nationals - no one wants them because they're spread all over the nation. Please don't trade such generic hotel covers - use one such Hilton at the beginning of all your Hiltons in your own album if you like, but don't dump them on anyone else.

My gosh, what can I send in trade then? Just about anything else, but do try to adhere to your trader's collecting preferences. It's not considered nice to send parts of a set, but someone may actually be looking for that one cover from a set that you want to send. Don't send porno or obscene covers to anyone; don't send provocative or girlie covers to priests, monks, bishops, nuns, or any clerics, and don't send multiple duplicates just because you have lots and want to get rid of them; they might not be junk, but hey, how would you like to receive 30 birthday cards, all exactly the same?

We have some hard-nosed folks who are fond of only certain kinds of covers, and to them everything else is "junk"; that's a narrow-minded view which doesn't deserve much sympathy. To them kinda folks you say, "Oh, well then I'll just tear up this Lindy cover instead of giving it to you, cause it's been struck and so you would call it junk, right?" Yeah, right.

[Hey, I'm Bill Thomas of 222 S. Ranger Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32792. Phone/fax is 407-657-0222 and I welcome you questions, ideas, or complaints. If you include some nice covers, I'll return some from Florida's Walt Disney World.]