

MATCH TIPS for New Collectors

by "Billboard Bill" Thomas

Here's a random assortment of floor sweepings in which I hope you'll find a useful gem...

When writing to regular traders, enclose a few of your return address labels and suggest that they do the same...Get you one of them rotating rubber stamps with things like DO NOT BEND, FIRST CLASS, and AIR MAIL on them...When getting empty cartons from the supermarket for backing up your displays, try the Produce Dept..—their boxes are often sturdier cardboard...How come some computer guru hasn't yet come up with a monitor screen saver with MATCHBOOKS on it? Keep a drawer of covers with first names on them; folks love to see their own name, and it's nice to enclose a cover with HARRY on it when writing someone named Harry...When flying to conventions and swapfests, make it easier on yourself—put all the real heavy stuff in your suitcase, and stuff light things like underwear, etc. in your carryon bag...

Sad, sad news...after several years of trying to get the postal stamp makers to make a stamp for our hobby's 60th anniversary in 2000, I finally learned that there would be no such stamp made. You'll hafta get by with stamps of Bugs Bunny, Howdy Doody, and endangered animals instead...Hey, ever work on something when you needed a third hand to hold a flashlight? Radio Shack has a neat lamp that fastens to your head like a miner's lamp, with swivel adjust...We've asked before but never had an answer—is a cover from Harrah's or Excalibur a casino cover even though it doesn't have the word "casino" on it? It seems like it should be, but then what about those gambling clubs in Calif. whose covers say GAMING, DRAW POKER, etc., but they're not really casinos?...If you collect Foreign covers, remind yourself that "foreign" really means foreign to whom? To us Yankees, an Israeli cover is foreign, but to them folks an American cover is foreign!

How do you sort US Navy Ship covers? Some folks use purely alphabetic, others separate first by cover size & then alphabetically. I separate by ship type first, like BBs, DD types, cruisers, etc., then I albumize 20s first, then 30s, etc. Under Auxiliaries, I keep ADs, then AEs, AFs, etc...Got a wedding, bar mitzvah, or whatever coming up with the family? Hurry & order a caddy or two of hot print matches, dump 'em in a bowl at the reception...If you must identify a cover by writing on it, please do not use ink; use a soft pencil, or, better yet, use a small post-it note...Have a need to write in the dark, like signing the tab in a dim bar? Office Max sells a real neat ballpoint pen with a flashlight in it; it's called Autopoint, \$9.95...To mail a whole caddy of matches, you should wrap the caddy in metal foil, or use a caddy mailer—a foil-lined box same size as a caddy...A dandy collector gift—a pack of 25 or 50 refrigerator magnets, same size as a business card. You peel off the backing and stick on your business card—great advertising!

Instead of regular or letter-size envelopes, try using invitation-size—4 3/8"x5 13/16". Unlike other envelopes, they will accept two taped bundles of 30s side by side—can save you an .11 cent thickness penalty. If your new Lexus or Mercedes is a tight squeak in your garage, try this—hang a pingpong or tennis ball from overhead so that your windshield just touches it when the car is in far enough...For sorting Foreign covers, learn the word for matches in other languages, like Lucifers for Dutch, fiamifferi for Italian, Tandstrikker for Norwegian or Swedish, Fosforosas for Spanish or Hispanic. If you're weary of "punch this, punch that" when you phone a business, punch NOTHING and eventually a live person should come on the line...

[Hey, write, phone, or fax me your hobby questions or ideas. I'm at 222 So. Ranger Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32792. Phone/Fax is 407-657-0222; I'm home on weekends and up until at least 11 PM. Always glad to hear from you. Let's have a drinkie at AMCAL!]