

TIME MANAGEMENT, PRIORITIES, MY CTC COLLECTION (not necessarily in that order) AND A FEW OTHER THINGS

by Everett Runtz #772

For years my time management rarely allowed me to do all of the “important” things that I wanted to do. Being married (happily I must add, as I’m sure my wife will read this) and a parent, days were always filled with adventure, intermixed with going to work.

I have collected coins, cards, and stamps, which is sort of the standard starter point for most collectors. I also got into other “neat stuff” including automotive brochures from the car dealers, miniature liquor bottles, matches (not matchbook covers, just the matches), license plates, original cartoons, unused toilet paper, and a host of other items. Many of my collections have been placed away in storage or gone by the wayside.

2003 was when I officially started my CTC collection, becoming member number 772 of the CTC Collectors Club. I’m not sure of how I heard about our club but it was “lust at first sight”. As a new member I was treated with kindness, understanding, and helped by so many of the other members, which continues to this day. We have wonderful people and so many true collectors in our club who many times go unappreciated. In 2005 I was very fortunate to become a director in the Ontario region for our club, furthering my contact with other members.

My collection grew in leaps and bounds – so many coupons to collect along with all of the other neat CTC stuff. My enthusiasm continues to grow too.

I started my collection by trying to obtain a different coupon and denomination for each variety. I’m still far from a complete set but it still allows the quest to continue. My next type of collection was to find a high and a low serial number for each coupon. This form of collecting I find very rewarding as every new coupon I obtain has the possibility for a new high or low. It doesn’t really matter what the official highs or lows are or the condition of the coupon, but what actual new coupons I find for my personal collection.

I also have had a reputation for being very anal for detail and when I discovered “varieties” I was hooked. Looking through the Bilodeau Guide and reading the COLLECTOR, our wonderful newsletter, further enticed me to collect varieties. Finding a variety listed in the COLLECTOR or the Bilodeau Guide is wonderful. Discovering a new variety or error is downright exciting. More on varieties in another article in this issue.

A source for coupons often is a great stumbling block for collectors. The club has many fantastic auctions in the newsletters and club meetings, and there are many members with an almost unbelievable selection of coupons for sale. We all go through the process of contacting all of our friends and

relatives to save their coupons. Some members are extremely fortunate to have access to a store or gas bar. I made contact with our local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and on a biweekly basis purchase the CTC coupons from their donation box usually adding a personal donation too (our favorite charity). Many sources are out there, it often just takes a bit of personal contact.

In October of 2006, after a little over 34 years in my occupation, I retired. GREAT! – unlimited time for my CTC collection. Hmmmmmm, I’m a male, therefore I must be wrong. I was! Retirement only lets you know how fast time can go by and how little time you actually have to do things. (Maybe I should take a course in time management, but then, I don’t think I have the time to do it.) In August I was finally taking a serious look at some of my collection by going through my S27-B stash (growing since 2002). Wow – little did I know. Hopefully you will read my article on varieties later on in the COLLECTOR to see how that turned out.

In closing, I want to mention our regional club meetings and get-togethers. I am very fortunate to be in a very central location (Long Sault, Ontario, south of Ottawa and bordering on the Saint Lawrence Seaway). Since joining our club, I have only missed five or six meetings encompassing the area from Montreal to Ottawa to Toronto and even London. Every meeting I have attended has been informative and of a personal benefit in so many ways. I have made many acquaintances and even better, many wonderful friends. I am pretty well unilingual English but have always been provided translation and more importantly a sincere welcome at the Kirkland/Montreal meetings.

This August was my first opportunity to attend Jerome’s swap meet at his home north of Montreal. My good friends Dave Gray (Wellington) and Doug Adams (London) spent Friday evening at my home and we set off early Saturday morning for an “excellent adventure” to Jerome’s. I can’t say enough about Eva (Jerome’s wife) and Jerome’s hospitality. They went to the extreme to provide a wonderful aura of hospitality and friendship. Everyone in attendance had a great time. Our trip home was an unexpected adventure as we ended up going a unique route. With Doug navigating (after I missed a turnoff) and Dave just enjoying the scenery, we saw some beautiful countryside, had a short trip on a barge across the river, and made it home safe and sound. We never even had to ask directions, not that we would have asked anyway.

Get out and attend as many meetings as you can, the club and other members need your support! You can also car-pool, it’s a wonderful way to get to know others and help the environment.

THE GRID – FOR THOSE OF US ANAL AND NOT SO ANAL.

by Everett Runtz #772

I have a procedure that I think would be of great assistance for fellow collectors in defining and locating where errors or hard to see items are on any of the coupons.

Initially, I spent a lot of time writing little notes describing the location of any errors that I found i.e.: red dot on the back of the coupon just below the “P” in “Property of Canadian Tire ...” and to the left of “Propriete de la Societe ...”. This method is fairly precise but rather cumbersome. Depending where the information is stored (Post-Its, envelopes, foolscap, ...)

and space for the information may also be limited. After some thought (not too much thought because that just gives me a headache) I came up with a grid system that works very well in nailing down a fairly precise and easily discernable location for the error or variety.

The grid system is composed of letters on the top and bottom rows (A to Z) and numbers on the left and right columns (1 to 15). That was easy wasn’t it, but there must be more.

How do I make the grid?

Using Microsoft Excel (apologies to the dedicated Mac users) I establish the rows with a height of 12.75 and the columns with a width of 5.43. This is about as close to a square as I can get for the grid. Starting at least at the second column from the left, the letters "A" to "Z" are placed from left to right in upper case across the top of the grid. Starting at least from the second row down, the numbers 1 to 15 are entered.

In lower case, I place the following letters in the corresponding locations:

- upper left corner (above the 1 and left of the "A") the letter "a"
- upper right corner (to the right of the "Z" and above the 1) the letter "b"
- lower left corner (below the 15 and left of the "A") the letter "c"
- lower right corner (to the right of the "Z" and below the 15) the letter "d"

I use a slightly modified version but for descriptive purposes this will do for now.

How do I print the grid?

Using the appropriate type of transparency film for either an ink jet or laser printer, I just print the graph (I usually print two to a page as there is plenty of room for two). It is very important to use the correct plastic page for the printer, as the wrong type will smudge.

How do I use the grid?

Place the entire grid with grid square A1 over the inside corner of the upper left printed portion of the coupon. All the top row of letters and the left column of numbers should be on the unprinted outside border. This maintains the integrity of the grid location in relation to the printed surface, no matter how wide the borders are or how poorly centered the coupon is. Then you just locate the error/misprint or whatever location you want to document.

Questions?

OK – good question on how do you know if it the front or back of the coupon. Any location on the front of the coupon

grid is indicated by the number followed by the letter, and if outside the grid, the letter or number (including the lower case corners) followed by an asterisk (*). Conversely, the back is identified by the letter followed by the number and outside of the grid (including the lower case corners) by an asterisk (*) followed by the letter or number.

Examples

- L4** is the top of the dark green maple leaf on the back of the coupon (letter followed by number)
- 8R** is the tip of Sandy's nose on the front of the coupon (number followed by letter)
- *d** is the lower right corner of the white border on the back of the coupon (* followed by lower case letter)

All right – another good question as to whether the system can work on the gas bar series. Sure it can. In fact, it can work on any of our coupons with or without a white/coloured border. Same rules apply and should always be very accurate as long as the basic procedures are followed. The grid is just a bit small for normal sized Canadian currency but could be easily adapted.

This may all seem a bit confusing at first but once you understand the letter/number and number/letter concept it should be very valuable and time saving. Maybe this could even be included in the Bilodeau Guide and included with the variety descriptions.

I'm hoping our esteemed president (please stand) Thayer (please be seated) will be able to use it in identifying his collection of errors. (Please stand) Thayer (please be seated) has so many coupons with errors he is unable to keep track of them all. Maybe He (you don't have to stand as I didn't mention Thayer's name – oh, crap, I just did – please stand and be seated in honour of our president), maybe He will get a new supply of pencils and foolscap to record everything.

For those who would like a soft copy of the grid, send me an e-mail at CTCC4EVERett@gmail.com I will send you the file. For those who do not have access to a computer/printer, I will attempt to make arrangements for copies to be made for club meetings. Sending by mail may cost a bit due to postage and the cost of transparency sheets (they are about \$1 a sheet).

Any comments will be greatly appreciated.

a	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	b
1																											1
2																											2
3																											3
4																											4
5																											5
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c	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	d

Front of coupon - Number followed by letter	1A	Corners	
Back of coupon - Letter followed by number	A1	* followed by lower case letter	*a
		lower case letter followed by *	a*