

Prickly Pear seeds have mutated to drifting



## Plant Lab

Name: Prickly Pear

## Perone



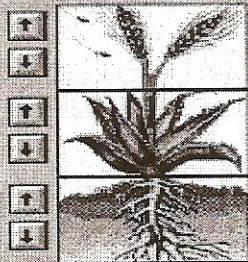
## Gene Pool Diversity



### Mating Difference



% Genes from  
Father




1994

Undo

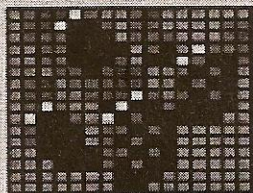
Clear



५००१५

 no leaves

## Hours

 第四章

No heat or Drifting Seeds  
Evergreen desert Shrub  
Land Plant, sprouts in Warm dry weather



OPUNTIA  
50



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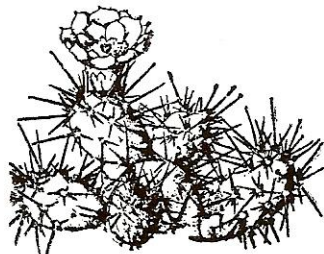
**OPUNTIA** is published by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. It is available for \$3 cash for a one-time sample copy, trade for your zine, or letter of comment. Americans: please don't send cheques for small amounts to Canada as the bank fee to cash them is usually more than the amount. US\$ banknotes are acceptable in Canada at par value; what we gain on the exchange rate we lose on the higher postage rate to USA. Do not send mint USA stamps as they are not valid for postage outside USA and I don't collect them.

Whole-numbered OPUNTIAs are sercon, x.1 issues are reviewzines, x.2 issues are indexes, and x.5 issues are perzines.

**COVER ART CREDIT:** Opuntiaeworld, from Sim Life.

**I ALSO HEARD FROM:** Pascal Lenoir, Bruce Pelz, Russ Forster, John Held Jr, Anna Banana, Chester Cuthbert

[Editor's  
remarks  
in square  
brackets]



FROM: Murray Moore  
1065 Henley Road  
Mississauga, Ontario L4Y 1C8

2001-12-06

Candidates for the 2002 Canadian Unity Fan Fund (CUFF) delegate are needed. The 2002 CUFF delegate will travel to Calgary, Alberta, to attend Canvention 22, which is being hosted by Con-Version 19 from August 9 to 11. Canvention is the annual physical expression of the Canadian SF professional and fan community's appreciation of the best of its activity in the previous year. The English-language and French-language winners in each category receive the recognition of their peers, represented by a trophy, the Aurora Award.

CUFF's connection to the Canvention is that it pays the travel and hotel room expense of a fan attending the Canvention. The CUFF delegate attends as an ambassador from one part of Canadian

to another. During the 2002 Con-Version/Canvention, the CUFF delegate is encouraged to:

- \* volunteer to help put on Con-Version
- \* attend the Canvention business meeting
- \* represent CUFF
- \* take notes of what is heard, seen, and said.

Following this, the 2002 CUFF delegate becomes the CUFF administrator, duties of which include:

- \* writing, publishing, and selling a CUFF trip report. Publishing a trip report is important because SciFi Inc. of Southern California, on receipt of a fan fund trip report, donates \$500 to CUFF.
- \* opening a bank account into which all of the CUFF money received by the CUFF administrator is placed.
- \* organizing the selection of a successor who will be the 2003 CUFF delegate and administrator.
- \* passing the CUFF money to the 2003 CUFF delegate.

To qualify to be a CUFF delegate, you:

- \* are a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident.
- \* agree to attend the 2002 Canvention.
- \* agree to fulfill the obligations of the CUFF administrator.

To become a CUFF delegate candidate:

- \* before March 1, 2002, deliver to the CUFF administrator a

maximum 100-word election platform. In theory, the Canvention alternates between host conventions on either side of the Manitoba/Ontario border. In fact, the 2001 Canvention was hosted by VCon in Vancouver, and it will happen in Calgary in 2002. Accordingly, the 2002 CUFF delegate race is open to all fans who live outside of Alberta. In theory, the CUFF delegate is elected. In fact, more often the CUFF delegate is acclaimed. In the case of an election, which means the selecting of the candidates whose names will appear on the ballot, I recommend that each candidate gather nominations from three fans living on each side of the Manitoba/Ontario border.

I want to receive two kinds of 2002 CUFF delegate selection messages:

- \* notice from fans that they are candidates.
- \* recommendations from other fans, with reasons, of fans who could be the CUFF delegate.

[As an added incentive, the OPUNTIA editorial staff wish to point out that anyone arriving early or staying late for a Calgary convention can be at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology (the world's largest fossil museum) in the Drumheller badlands in two hours eastward driving, or go west one hour into the Kananaskis mountains, 1.5 hours to Banff, or two hours to Yoho National Park. Or 3/4 hour north to the Torrington Gopher Museum.]

FROM: Teddy Harvia 2001-12-03  
 12341 Band Box Place  
 Dallas, Texas 75244-7001

Sue Mason's prickly fairy is a marvelous addition to the Opuntia mythology. The tear in her stocking is painfully funny. The character is not technically a cartoon since she has five fingers instead of the requisite four, but that makes her no less appealing.

FROM: Joseph Major 2001-12-04  
 1409 Christy Avenue  
 Louisville, Kentucky 40204-2040

I see that the Con-Version panel "Robots in Space" carried on the old tradition of heresy-hunting among space activists. This makes it very easy to not do anything in space. Get the Mars Direct folks to testify against a return to the moon, the International Space Station mavens to talk down planetary probes, and go on mixing and matching until the space community has pretty thoroughly debunked the space community. Then you can spend money on more important things like dairy subsidies.

Conventions past, present, and future: It should be added that the "tiny clique of SMOFs and BOFs who think they are true fandom" did absolutely nothing to help with the convention, have no

interest in organizing one of their own, but are scathing in listing the failings of any actually existing one. They also act the same way towards fanzines.

FROM: Lloyd Penney 2001-12-03  
 1706 - 24 Eva Road  
 Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 2B2

It's good to see Sue Mason try her hand at covers [OPUNTIA #49]; I do enjoy her cartoons.

I think SF may be ailing because it has always done so. No matter if the media stuff is out there or not, SF requires its readers to think, and getting people to think has always been difficult, especially today. People proudly proclaim they don't read, and often their behaviour shows they don't think. The few who do read and think may or may not enjoy additional mental exercise in the form of SF. Besides, if more people read SF, it would become mainstream, and we might find something more esoteric to read.

Good to hear there'll be a club arising out of Con-Version. I hope the club's managers will get in touch with older clubs, such as those in Vancouver, Ottawa, Montreal, and Fredericton, and find out their advantages, strengths, and problems, and how to survive



in this Internet age. I also hope that the new Calgary club will communicate with others outside of their city.

[That's what I like about you, Lloyd; you're an incurable optimist. Unfortunately, I suspect the only communications between Calgary and other Canadian clubs will be Trekkie to Trekkie, Star Wars to Star Wars, Buffy fans to Buffy fans, and so forth. I have struck up conversations with media fans at Con-Version and found that while they are pleasant enough to chat with, and express great interest in the outlanders such as literary fans or zinesters, there will be no follow-up on their part. Media fans are not only completely ignorant of Canfandom past and present, they just don't want to know.]

FROM: Harry Warner Jr  
423 Summit Avenue  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

2001-12-01

The information on Con-Version and assorted other items caused me to reflect on the years when I was resentful over large masses of prose about conventions in fanzines. They impressed me as crowding out items about the element of fandom that interests me most. fanzines. But today convention reports seem fine compared with the lavish amount of space that goes to reviews of fantasy films and telecasts.

## POSTAL PROBLEMS: CRANKS AND CIRCULARS

by Dale Speirs

Every communications system has its problems, and the Papernet is no exception. Just as the Internet was quickly parasitized by spammers and lunatic-fringe Websites, so it was and still is that the postal system is plagued by crank letter writers and circulars.

### They're Not All Insane.

Those who write letters to public figures cannot all be lumped together regardless of the circumstances. An example is the popular category of newspaper letters-to-the-editor. Far from being cranks, these letter writers have been demonstrated to be mainstream. While there are some Colonel Blimps trumpeting that things have gone downhill since the National Service was abolished, the majority of editorial letter writers are not from the lunatic fringe.

A detailed 1964 study of three Kansas newspapers [3] showed that people sending letters to the editor were of all age groups, but with a majority middle-aged or elderly. They were mostly well educated, voted regularly in elections, and were generally white-collar workers. About three-quarters of them were male. Although motives for writing letters were sometimes egocentric, they were usually

logical and sensible. A 1972 study showed that letter writers communicating to newspaper editors were not politically polarized or ultraconservative, but were in the majority of reasonable people [2]. A common characteristic was that they were highly involved in politics as concerned citizens.

### **Circulars.**

Advertising circulars are as old as the postal system in its modern form since the 1840s. Complaints about junk mail are nothing new; in 1864, British journalists were grumbling about what they called 'circular bores' [8]. Advertising direct mail persists because it pays. Businesses would not bother with it if that wasn't the case. This is not crank mail, but crank writers were well aware of the benefits of direct mail.

This was especially so prior to Sir Rowland Hill's reforms, when circulars could be sent postage due. Even after 1840, prepayment was not always compulsory, and some unscrupulous individuals took advantage of that. In 1858, there were complaints in Britain about revolutionary propaganda being sent postage due [10]. Later that same year, a postal worker who had been dismissed for cause was brought up before Bow Street Court for sending postage-due circulars abusing Sir Rowland Hill [9]. The culprit was ordered to pay postage due and court costs.

### **Common Characteristics of Crank Letters.**

Public figures subjected to crank letters have noted that many of them are written in coloured ink. A 1914 commentator wrote: *"Now, when you see a letter in coloured ink, be the ink red, green, or vivid violet, or even all these colours combined, as sometimes happens, you may judge immediately that it comes from one whom we are obliged to call a crank. No doubt some doctor, or possibly some optician, could explain the connexion between crankiness and coloured inks."* [1].

### **Dealing With The Lunatic Fringe.**

There are several schools of thought on how to deal with crank letter writers. Public figures dependent on goodwill, such as politicians, actors, and novelists, have to tread a narrow line. Some prefer to ignore cranks, while others will make a polite but non-committal response.

Should one respond politely but vaguely? That philosophy was illustrated by a pre-World War One example of an author faced with a letter from a woman offering her experience in astral travel: *"I so much admire your last book that I feel sure you would be interested in my newly-discovered Truths about Astral Life, and I want you to let me, as one who knows, come and tell you about it."*

*I am able with the help of my inner Astral Impulse to go nightly to Mars, while nobody knows of my absence. The explanation is that Ra, the sun-god ... [and so on at great length]*".

The author who received this letter replied: "*Dear Madam: I am much obliged to you for your kind communication of recent date. Pressure of work, however, forbids me to accept your kind invitation for the present.*". A friend of the author protested to him that it was wrong to encourage such people and why did he do it?, to which the author said: "*Because I cannot afford not to; there are too many of them about.* [1]".

### **Arresting Prose.**

Threatening letters from cranks are an old story. (Blackmail letters are excluded from this discussion.) In 1921, USA President Harding had a Brooklyn man arrested for sending him letters demanding \$300,000 to compensate for a court judgement [4].

### **False Confession.**

It is standard practice among police forces around the world to withhold certain details from the public and news media about unsolved crimes. This is due to the cranks who confess to crimes they did not commit, or, alternatively, send false communiques claiming credit for someone else's job. These cranks are a

constant plague on law enforcement agencies.

During wartime, hoax letters abound. In 1915, the USA Department of Justice was kept busy investigating a flood of anonymous letters claiming bombs had been placed on ships. One writer claimed his bomb sank the Lusitania, and the Germans were stealing credit from him [7].

Ordinary crimes attract hoaxers. In 1916, a Chicago chef named Jean Crones tried to poison an archbishop and other Catholic prelates. He skipped out to New York City, and when that became known in the press, the NYPD began receiving letters from hoaxers claiming to be Crones [6]. Since they had samples of his handwriting, it was relatively easy to distinguish the fake letters, but it did divert time and energy from serious investigation.

### **Sarcasm.**

In 1920, a crank writer in the USA was sending packages to the Federal Employees' Fund. Each package, about 30 within three months, contained a crust of bread and a note "*Here's something for needy government employees.*" [5]. Not threatening, but obviously someone who had a grudge from somewhere.



- 1] Anonymous (1914-06-15) The letter-writing crank. THE TIMES (London), page 11
- 2] Buell, E.H. (1975) Eccentrics or gladiators? People who write about politics in letters-to-the-editor. SOCIAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY 56:440-449
- 3] Vacin, G.L. (1965) A study of letter writers. JOURNALISM QUARTERLY 42:464-465
- 4] Anonymous (1921-04-19) Threatened President. NEW YORK TIMES, page 10
- 5] Anonymous (1920-12-26) Sends crust for workers. NEW YORK TIMES, page 5
- 6] Anonymous (1916-02-21) Caller at station taken for Crones. NEW YORK TIMES, page 18
- 7] Anonymous (1915-07-21) Cranks give work to Federal agents. NEW YORK TIMES, page 2
- 8] Anonymous (1864) The circular bore. PUNCH 46:133
- 9] Anonymous (1858-12-07) Bow Street. THE TIMES (London), page 10
- 10] Anonymous (1858-10-11) Southwark. THE TIMES (London), page 9

**THE MURDERED STAMP COLLECTOR**

by Dale Speirs

**How I Started Hunting A Philatelic Urban Legend.**

While searching a 1963 back issue of ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS for an unrelated item, I came across a filler item about the recent auction sale of an 1851 Hawaiian Missionary 2-cent stamp [1]. The caption read in part: *"The stamp was formerly in the collection of M. Gaston Leroux, who is thought to have been murdered because he refused to sell the stamp. Legend has it that a detective posing as a connoisseur bluffed the murderer into showing him the stamp."*

The name Gaston Leroux seemed familiar and I quickly placed it; he was a French journalist who turned to writing detective and suspense novels. His single most famous work is THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, later turned into an equally-famous musical. Leroux died, not by murder, in 1927.

**The Urban Legend Lives On.**

In a 1950 issue of SCOTT'S MONTHLY JOURNAL, the Gaston Leroux story was included as a factual account in an article on Hawaiian Missionary stamps and their history [5].



By 1978, the story had mutated to the murder of its owner in 1892, who had refused to part with it despite a L400 offer from a fellow collector [2]. A slightly different version mentioned that the stamp subsequently passed through the Ferrary and Burrus collections [3]. (Ferrary and Burrus were two early collectors of immense wealth who bought expensive stamps like candy.)

### It's Been Refuted.

One of the most prolific philatelic authors since the hobby began was Herman Herst Jr. He noted the existence of the Leroux legend, and published a warning that it was fiction [4]. The story began as a French short story a century ago, which was subsequently translated into English and began circulating as fact. The French Surete were and probably still are put to the trouble of informing enquirers that no such case exists in their records. Despite Herst, the story still circulates in hack-written articles or cut-and-paste stamp club bulletins.

### References.

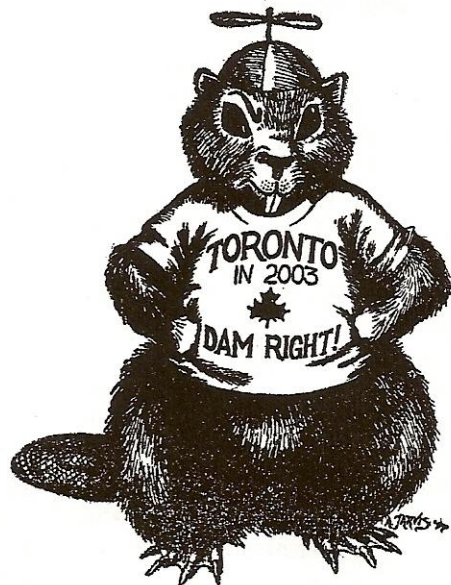
1] Anonymous (1963-06-08) A window on the world. ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS 242:881

2] Sumpter, Ken (1978-05-04) The scarcity business. STAMP COLLECTING 130:1007

3] Schmur, W. (1977-01-24) Philatelic detective solves Missionary murder case. CANADIAN STAMP NEWS 1(16):10

4] Herst, Herman Jr (1979 June) Letters to the Editor. SCOTT'S MONTHLY STAMP JOURNAL 60(6):64

5] Hatcher, J.B. (1950) Tales of the Hawaiian Missionaries. SCOTT'S MONTHLY JOURNAL 31(8):225-226



## SHADOWLAND AND RUBBERWORK

by Don Mabie qua Chuck Stake

[Editor's note: I have compiled this article from two artist statements Don Mabie sent me, and hope it will illustrate a few facets of the alternative scene in Calgary.]

### Shadowland.

Shadowland is an ongoing/in-progress installation curated and created by me. It is on display at the Art Gallery of Calgary from 19 July to 5 September, 2001. At the core of Shadowland will be selections from my own archive of ephemera and documentation of the alternative art activity that I have been involved in since the late 1960s.

Shadowland refers to the situation that a great deal of alternative art activity exists in the shadows of the mainstream art world. Attention is focused upon it from time to time, but it continues to function in the shadows. Shadowland also references the idea that the material which constitute the exhibition/installation are only fleeting shadows or second-generation documentation of the actual activities that the exhibition is really focusing upon.

Most of this activity is process oriented and moves away from the object, which has been the focus of Western Art for most of its

history. A number of artists and critics

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are of the opinion that the main thrust of 20th century art was, in essence, about the shift in aesthetics from object to process. Marcel Duchamp is a key figure in this shift. His ready-mades are a significant rupture in the continuum of the Western obsession regarding taste, technique, representation, and the very act of creation. Early in his development, Duchamp became interested in the ancient Greek sceptics. He was influenced by the sceptics' concept of 'ou mallon' ("no more this than that"), the idea that true reality can never be known with certainty. I was also influenced by my reading of the sceptics, and along with a number of Calgary artists, formed The SKEP(tic)KS, a collaborative art group that worked together for most of the 1990s. The SKEP(tic)KS took ou mallon as their motto. Their discovery some years later that Duchamp was very much interested in the same concept confirmed (at least in my mind) that many Postmodern concepts are anything but new.

I began performing in 1968 and became involved in the international Correspondence/Mail art network in 1972. I started publishing IMAGES AND INFORMATION (sort of an art magazine) in 1974. Most recently, I have been obsessed with Artist Trading Cards. I see all of these activities as interrelated and/or interconnected in many ways as they focus upon chance, collaboration, improvisation, open-ended creativity,



art=life/life=art, art and anti-art (or, surpassing art). Shadowland will reference these concepts and a number of international art movements, including Futurism, Dada, Surrealism, CO.BR.A, Gutai, Nuclear Movement, Lettrism, Fluxus, Correspondence/Mail Art, Visual and Sound Poetry, The Vienna Group, Art and Language, Neoism, The Situationists, John Cage, Black Mountain College, Happenings, the Artist-Run Centre network, etcetera. I will try to connect these movements to local Calgary activities. I will be working in the gallery on an ongoing basis throughout the exhibition and will be available to talk to and collaborate with visitors to the gallery.

### **Rubberwork/Copywork Artist Statement.**

I have been employing rubber stamps in the production of artworks for some twenty years. I originally became aware of the medium through my involvement with correspondence/mail art. My commitment to both correspondence/mail art and rubber stamps (as a medium or process of production) came through their direct philosophical associations with the Dada and Fluxus movements.

The rubber stamp has overtones of officialdom and bureaucracy. Employing stamps in the production of artworks provides such works with a double reading; art subverting the system. Rubber stamps were illegal in many of the former East Bloc countries,

and, I understand, remain illegal in some totalitarian states today. Stamps provide an inexpensive, primitive (simple), and self-contained method of reproduction for images and ideas.

Collage, or elements of collage, has been an integral part of my practice for some 25 years. Working with rubber stamps is, in many aspects, an extension of the collage technique. It allows for the inclusion of and referencing to aspects of mass or pop culture within works of art. The stamp images are selected for formal reasons, or because the image has become a cultural icon, or has some kind of personal resonance for me. With that said, I see the stamps primarily if not completely as formal devices. But, to almost contradict myself, as they are selected from my environment, they do, to a degree, reflect my personal interests and subjects of study/research (obsession) at a particular time.

Notwithstanding the above, the primary significance of the stampworks is transmitted by its perceptual characteristics, that is, its formal overall pattern, not by the images or words as such. All of my works deal with the overwhelming chaos of reality (or, of our brains?). The works communicate first and foremost as a pattern. Patterns of colour, patterns of shapes, textural pattern, etcetera, and only later if at all as conveyors of specific meanings. The meaning, such as it is, is embodied in the form.

Structurally the works employ the concept of horri vacui, the fear of empty spaces. They are composed of many units of equal weight. These repetitive units create a contradiction of unity/diversity through homogeneity. The works are most often evenly and densely filled with a homogeneous pattern. They present a world view in which one finds oneself more or less in the same place wherever one goes, in both a physical and intellectual sense, because of the way our brains function. There is no underlying or conscious structure in the works. Such an approach, employing a conscious deliberate structure, is abandoned as ARTificial and completely unrealistic. It is replaced by a network of connections ("it all connects") among the elements of the work.

The works are about, what else?, life and the interconnectedness of everything. They are about trying to see the situation holistically and, of course, my/our complete and total failure to do so. Theory has little or no influence on my practice. I was intuitively attracted to Dada when I was an art student at the Alberta College of Art. The radical anti-art/anti-society/skeptical stance of Dada had a visceral attraction for me. This attitude has subsequently achieved widespread (relatively speaking) and superficial acceptance under the guise of Postmodernism, and has become buried under an avalanche of theory. But hopefully the original impetus underlying Dada is strong enough to even endure Postmodernism.

## GREAT MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF MAIL ART: 1926

Philatelists have long decorated their envelopes with cachets for first day of issue stamps. Mail artists lay on colours and drawings. Activists use their envelopes as travelling propaganda. These people take the use of envelope art for granted, but it does confuse the mundane population accustomed to no more than an address and return address. Witness the following exchange that took place on April 16, 1926, in the Canadian House of Commons between the Prime Minister and an opposition M.P. This extract is from CANADA HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATES, Session 1926, page 2507.

### MAIL MATTER: MARKING WITH RUBBER STAMP

On the Orders of the Day:

Right Hon. W.L. Mackenzie King (Prime Minister):      Mr. Speaker, yesterday my honourable friend from Toronto West Centre, Mr. Hocken, asked a question as to whether a rubber



stamped paragraph on an envelope which he sent over to me had the approval or consent of the government. I promised to confer with the Postmaster General Hon. Mr. Murphy in regard to it. I find that this stamped statement, or whatever it is, was undoubtedly put on by the person who sent the envelope. It was certainly not impressed on the envelope by the Post Office Department in Montreal, where the letter originated, nor, so far as is known, was it placed there by anyone connected with the government service.

I would point out to my honourable friend that the Post Office Department has no control over an envelope passing through the mails beyond requiring that the space which is used for the address shall not be interfered with. The owner of the envelope is free to print or stamp any matter on it that he wishes; there is no regulation of the Post Office Department to preclude this. I presume that is how the stamped matter referred to appears on this envelope.

My honourable friend asked me to be sure to return the envelope to him. I should like the House to bear witness that I am doing so now.

Some honourable members: Oh, oh.

Mr. H.C. Hocken (Toronto West Centre): Mr. Speaker, am I to understand from the Prime Minister that any person is at liberty to rubber-stamp anything he pleases on the outside of an envelope going through the mails?

Mr. Mackenzie King: No, there are certain classes of matter prohibited by law, obscene matter and the like.

Mr. Hocken: I do not mean anything of that kind, but propaganda that any person or class of persons might desire might be put on the outside of the envelope?

Mr. Mackenzie King: I think anything like "Buy-made-in-Canada articles" might be stamped on envelopes and be perfectly within the law. Anything of that kind is permissible.

Mr. Hocken: Then I presume the Prime Minister means that if some person prepared a stamp ...

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Hocken: I will ask the Prime Minister if he intends to convey the idea that any person could prepare a stamp the reverse of this one and be at liberty to put it on envelopes.

Mr. Mackenzie King: Quite so.

An honourable member: And make propaganda for the Orange lodge?

[Editor's note: On the basis of that last interjection by a backbencher, and the earlier mention that the envelope was sent from Montreal, I am guessing that the rubber stamp message on the envelope was for some Roman Catholic cause.]

## **MAIL ART FICTION**

by Dale Speirs

### **Art Books.**

Mail art has often been used to tell a story, in the form of faux postcards, envelopes, and artistamps. The stories are told in the form of letters and postcards pasted into the books. The reader opens up an envelope and reads a letter, the next page has a postcard in reply, and so forth. Cinderella stamps, faux covers and postcards, and philatelic collages are the major features of these books.

Ahlberg, Janet, and Allan Ahlberg (2001) **THE JOLLY POSTMAN, OR, OTHER PEOPLE'S LETTERS**. Published by Little Brown & Co, USA

Ahlberg, Janet, and Allan Ahlberg (2001) **THE JOLLY CHRISTMAS POSTMAN**. Published by Little Brown & Co, USA

Ahlberg, Janet, and Allan Ahlberg (1995) **THE JOLLY POCKET POSTMAN**. Published by Little Brown & Co, USA

- Childrens' books, with the story told in the form of tipped-in envelopes, letters, and postcards. Tells about the Jolly Postman and the people and places he delivers to.

Bantock, Nick (1991) **GRIFFIN AND SABINE**. Published by Raincoast Books, Canada.

Bantock, Nick (1992) **SABINE'S NOTEBOOK**. Published by Raincoast Books, Canada.

Bantock, Nick (1993) **THE GOLDEN MEAN**. Published by Raincoast Books, Canada.



Bantock, Nick (2001) THE GRYPHON. Published by Raincoast Books, Canada.

- A romance between Griffin (in England) and Sabine (on a Pacific island) in this series.

Crimmins, G. Garfield (1998) THE REPUBLIC OF DREAMS. Published by W.W. Norton & Co., USA

- A guidebook to the mythical island of La Republique de Reves. Lots of Zeppelins and surrealism, mixed in with faux postcards and artistamps.

Jonath, Leslie (1995) POSTMARK PARIS: A LITTLE ALBUM OF MEMORIES. Published by Chronicle Books, San Francisco.

- A young girl spends a year in Paris. The story is illustrated with stamps from her collection.

King, Gerald (1978) ALICE THROUGH THE PILLAR-BOX AND WHAT SHE FOUND THERE: A PHILATELIC FANTASY. Published by Whizzard Press, England.

## Artistamps.

Anonymous (1993-06-10) Franking privileges. FRANK 143:8-11

- This scandal magazine created fake Canada stamps and used them in the mails. 26 out of 28 went through and were delivered.

Eisenhart, W. (1980) THE WORLD OF DONALD EVANS. Published by Harlin Quist, New York.

- This is a catalogue in full colour, illustrating the artistamps handpainted by Donald Evans. His stamps were from fictitious countries and quite realistic. Evans was in the process of compiling a background pseudo-history of these stamps when he died young in an apartment fire.

Horry, David (2001) THE UNISSUED STAMPS OF KING GEORGE VI. Published by Murray Payne Ltd, England

- Illustrates faux postage stamps of the KGVI era from various British Commonwealth colonies.

Thompson, Michael, and Michael Hernandez de Luna (2001) **THE STAMP ART OF THOMPSON, MICHAEL, AND MICHAEL HERNANDEZ DE LUNA**. Published by Badpress, USA.

- Artistamps by two Chicago artists. They received cease-and-desist orders from USPS for their fake stamps.

### **Fiction.**

Kimberlin, Annie (1998) **LONELY HEARTS**. Published by Love Spell Books, USA.

- This is a romance in the mass-market paperback tradition. The plot involves a young woman, Sylvie Taylor, who operates a home business as a rubber stamp artist, and as a hobby is involved in mail art. Her letter carrier Ray Novino is rather grumpy about this, as he has to deliver the weird stuff sent by mail artists to Sylvie. She falls for him not just figuratively, as her dog knocks over a ladder while she was up on the house roof, leaving her stranded up there. Ray happens to come along, delivering the latest batch of mail art for her, and helps her off the roof. Unfortunately she slips coming down, lands on top of Ray, and puts him on sick leave with a sprained ankle.

As he recuperates, she tries to make amends, starting with rubber stamp art and mail art, supplying home cooking and ankle remedies, and just being a nuisance. The course of true love never runs smooth, naturally. He likes plain white envelopes because the address is easy to read. She likes the unexpected and exotic, such as envelopes addressed with a rebus. Both have their own hurts from earlier life, which hold them back from commitment. His life is neat and orderly, everything sorted in order just like his daily load of letters. Her life is chaotic, and occasionally seems to have no logic to it, just like a batch of mail art.

Ray always wanted to travel but could never afford it, being a foster child from the wrong side of the tracks. As a letter carrier he gets to see mail from around the world and experiences a vicarious form of travel. As a stamp collector, he can sort out stamps into his collection and muse on their points of origin. Sylvie has fun with her mail art, getting surprises from her friends around the world and expressing herself with rubber stamps.

The novel progresses over 300 pages before arriving at a satisfactory conclusion. Sylvie and Ray (and her poodle Jean-Luc) clash and separate, regret and reconcile, and finally reach togetherness. A fairly standard romance, but interesting for a stamp collector or mail artist to read because of the numerous postal references.