

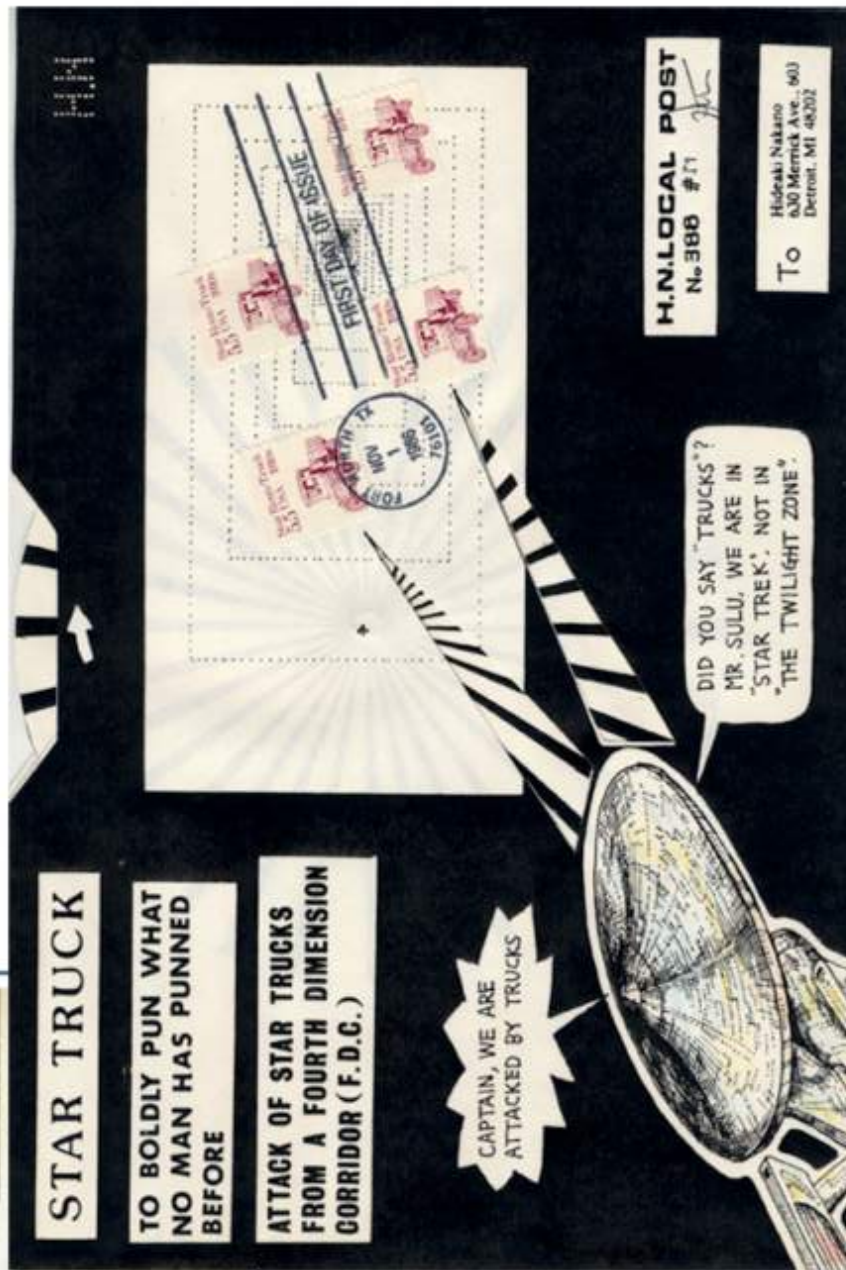
Weird Stuff First Day Covers

A stamp, an envelope and a postmark. That is all that's needed for a basic first day cover.



Among the highlights in this exhibit:

- First day covers made from materials other than paper
- First day covers where the emphasis is on the postmark, not the cachet
- Unusual art techniques and media
- Very small FDCs and very big FDCs
- Combinations by topic and by other criteria
- A very a-peel-ing FDC



The one above, for Sc. 914 Overrun Countries-Belgium, was prepared by a 17-year-old collector newly-arrived in the United States from that country.

However, FDCs can be so much more. This exhibit will take you from a basic FDC, such as that, through simple variations and finally to some **really weird** FDCs that only someone a little "off" could create: Combinations, unofficial locations, dual-cancels (and more-than-that-cancels), very small FDCs and very big ones; envelopes, cards and postal stationery; even Origami and animated covers with moving parts, such as this one on the right.

If you turn the wheel at the top of this cover, the "phasers" will appear to shoot at the four 5.5¢ Star (Route) Trucks. When Sc. 2125 was issued on November 1, 1986, those four stamps covered the first-class postage rate at the time, 22¢.

This cover was created by Hideaki Nakano, known for his unusual FDCs that demonstrated his unique sense of humor. Another of his unusual FDCs is included later in this exhibit, as are other cachetmakers' animated cachets.

H.N. LOCAL POST
No. 388 #71

To Hideaki Nakano
630 Merrick Ave., 603
Detroit, MI 48202

Weird Stuff First Day Covers

This exhibit will show how first day covers can be more than just a stamp, an envelope and a postmark. It also illustrates how it's not just the cachet that can make a FDC "weird" — the cachet may not even contribute to the eccentricity. We will explore what those other factors might be.

I include in the term "first day cover" cards, folders and other ephemera that has a First Day of Issue postmark. One piece here, however, has a "*Last Day of Issue*" postmark.

One goal is to demonstrate that a FDC can be special even if it doesn't have great art. Only a few of the FDCs here were produced by a professional artist, Dave Bennett, or a then-future professional artist: Tony Ciccolella was an art student at the time he produced the covers shown, such as this one, experimenting in his cachets with the use of different media and techniques. The other cover-producers, such as Denise Lazaroff, whose 3DLAZ cover for Sc. 4465 Negro Leagues is shown here, were or are employed in other fields.



Another goal is to display interesting, eye-catching first-day material that will appeal to the casual collector and even non-collector, and perhaps encourage them to collect FDCs. (The name of the Michael Mellone/Barry Newton book that became the Scott U.S. FDC catalogue was *Discovering the Fun in First Day Covers*. We took it to heart.)



**Any FDC collector can create weird FDCs.
All it takes is imagination and a willingness not to conform.**

Some of the items here were created from scratch, specifically for use with the first day of issue. Others were made using existing materials.

Value and Cost

None of the material here was acquired with monetary value in mind. One of the more expensive pieces to produce is the autographed baseball photograph: A \$50 purchase. Adding the stamp and postmark probably *lowered* its value (at least to a sports memorabilia collector)!



What Isn't Here

This exhibit is mostly limited to more-or-less flat items. I do have other three-dimensional FDCs, such as this bottle for Sc. C145 Trunk Bay (Virgin Islands). Only material that will fit into standard stamp show frames is included, with one possible exception.



Exhibit Highlights

- Wallpaper FDC (Frame 2, Page 3)
- Smokey Bear Unofficial Location FDC (Frame 1, Page 12)
- "Songbook Cycle" Ella Fitzgerald Dragon Card (Frame 2, Pages 7-8)
- Bugs Bunny USPS Maximum Cards (Frame 2, Page 11)
- "Shot Heard Round The World" autographed photo (Frame 2, Pages 13-14)
- John Steinbeck "cover covers" (Frame 3, Page 1)
- Nakano Liberty Bell envelope origami FDC (Frame 3, Page 4)
- Bennett Cachetoon Tweety & Sylvester variations (Frame 3, Pages 7-8)
- \$5 ZIP Block FDC autographed by cachetmaker/stamp designer
- Very Small FDC (Frame 3, Page 5)
- Largest FDC by a major cachetmaker (Frame 3, Pages 9-10)
- Original artwork by Dave Bennett for a Dragon Card, serviced as FDC (Page 13)
- World Stamp Expo 25-Stamp 15-Postmark Card (Frame 3, Pages 11-12 and 15-16)
- An actual working clock, with four postmarks (Frame 3, Page 4)

No, this exhibit is not complete, with every possible weird first day cover included, or even every possible type of weird FDC. Tomorrow, a collector may affix a stamp and postmark to something even stranger, such as a classic automobile. (Wait! That was done at the Woody Wagon first day in 2001!) The possibilities are endless.

Further Reading & Sources:

Information in this exhibit comes from a wide variety of sources:

- The standard references books and catalogues specific to FDCs
- Personal face-to-face conversations and interviews, and telephone calls
- Exchanges of email and Facebook messages and at least one Facebook discussion
- Issues of *First Days* via the *First Days Digital Archives*

Weird Stuff FDCs Exhibit Detailed Bibliography

Here are some of the sources specific to this exhibit:

Anonymous (probably Barry Newton, editor), "FDCs in Print Elsewhere," *First Days*, June 1, 2001 (Whole Number 311), page 259 citing *Linn's Stamp News*, March 19, 2001, about Robert F. Bolton.

Bennett, Dave. Email about the Bradbury FDC, August 2022.

Ciccolella, Tony. Conversation at NApEX, June 2022.

Cornejo, Elena. "Cachetmakers Spotlight 140." *First Days*, September 1, 2001 (Whole Number 313), pages 466-7.

de Vries, Lloyd A. "Dave Bennett's cartoon cachets are popular with collectors." *Linn's Stamp News*, September 2, 2019, pages 16-17. Based on my interview with Bennett at Americover 2019.

de Vries, Lloyd A. "Imagination drives the creation of innovative FDCs." *Linn's Stamp News*, August 23, 2021, pages 24-25. Describes in detail the production of the Sc. 2551 Desert Storm/Desert Shield wallpaper FDC.

de Vries, Lloyd A. "Paperback Covers — Still More Weird Stuff." *First Days*, November 15th, 1983 (Whole Number 171), page 1339. Describes how the author obtained the Steinbeck book covers, one of which is seen on page 1 of frame 3.

de Vries, Lloyd A. "Wooden and Weird: Balsa Wood FDCs." *First Days*, August 15th, 1984 (Whole Number 177), page 815. Shows all four varieties of the Croton River Numismatic Society balsa wood FDCs (one of which is shown on page 10 of frame 1) and how they came about. It includes a short interview by the author with one of the creators.

Emrick, Bob. Discussion about the Landing of Cadillac. AFDCS Group Facebook, August 2022.

Lazaroff, Denise. Email, August 2022.

Monty, Richard A. "Robert Fredrick Bolton: The AFDCS Centurion," *First Days*, September 1, 2001 (Whole Number 313), pages 438-440.

Thompson, Mark. Telephone conversations.

Weddle, Mike, Smokey Bear cachetmaker (1/12). Facebook messages, August 2022.

In addition, the Planty-Mellone, Mellone and Scott FDC catalogues were used extensively.

Also, some bona fides:

de Vries, Lloyd A. "Weird Stuff." *First Days*, July One, 1983 (Whole Number 168), page 823.

de Vries, Lloyd A. "more Weird Stuff." *First Days*, August 15th, 1983 (Whole Number 169), page 1004.

de Vries, Lloyd A. "Mounting Weird Stuff." *First Days*, April One, 1984 (Whole Number 174), pages 346-7.

de Vries, Lloyd A. "Weird Stuff To The Rescue." *First Days*, July One, 1984 (Whole Number 176), pages 732-3.

Russell, Gene H. *Handcrafted Cachets: The Make-Your-Own Cachet and Envelope Handbook*. Brick, NJ: American First Day Cover Society, 1984. (Latest edition currently available from AFDCS Sales, Post Office Box 44, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701-0044 and at www.afdcs.org/publications.html) I was the copy editor and did much of the layout for the first edition.