

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON JUNK MAIL AND POSTCARDS: HOW TO TELL YOU'VE RECEIVED A LEGITIMATE POSTCARD AND ARE NOT BEING DIRECTED TO A BOGUS WEBSITE

(Updated July 23, 2007)

1. The Current Problem with Junk-Mail Postcard Notices
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1. The Current Problem with Junk-Mail Postcard Notices

Recently you have noticed that there are a lot of e-mails that have subject headings such as:

"You've Received a Post Card from a (Family Member, Partner, Classmate, etc.)!"

When you look at these e-mails in the preview pane of your e-mail, what you'll see will look something like this:

" Your (family member, partner, etc.) has sent you an e-card from (name of card company, can be a well-known name like AmericanGreetings.com," or something else - they are just spoofing the name, and can use any name they choose).

Send free e-cards from (name of card company, again spoofed) with your choice of colors, words and music.

Your e-card will be available with us for the next 30 days. If you wish to keep the e-card longer, you may save it on your computer or take a print."

Then you are given choices, which involve your "clicking through" to a website address, which is usually just a bunch of numbers, and bears no relation to the name of the greeting card provider.

These are **BOGUS e-mails**, and you should not click through those links. Visit Snopes.com at <http://www.snopes.com/computer/virus/postcard.asp> for details on how this works. Basically, it's an attempt to induce recipients into clicking links that install a variant of the Storm Trojan, an aggressive piece of malicious software that has been hijacking computers to serve as attacker bots since early in 2007. Snopes.com is the most respected verifier of urban legends on the web. It's their job to tell you whether or not something is true.

The unscrupulous senders of these notices use real or real-sounding names of greeting card providers. The key is that they appear to be from legitimate companies or providers, but in fact are not, and are just using the legitimate sounding name as a cover.

The key is to NOT to stop sending postcards (what a terrible alternative, just playing into the spammers' victory). The key is to RECOGNIZE what a genuine notice looks like, so you can tell the difference.

2. What Notices From NNVA Postcards Page Look Like

PICKUP NOTICES

In an effort to make sure that you can really tell the difference, as of July 23, postcard notices from the Northern Neck of Virginia Postcards Page have changed. The subject line of the e-mail your recipient receives now says:

"Northern Neck Postcards Page pickup notice - you have a card waiting!"

The standard notice that began "You have a postcard" is no longer being used by the Northern Neck Postcards Page to avoid the confusion.

The genuine Northern Neck of Virginia Postcards Page notice to the recipient continues with including the name of the sender, and the name of the recipient in the body of the notice (different from the spam notices - they can't afford to customize them all). You can see this in the preview pane of your e-mail without ever opening the e-mail itself.

You are given options in the genuine notice: (1) go to the Northern Neck of Virginia Postcards Page, a clearly identified place with a real domain name, and enter your ticket number to pick up your card, OR (2) you can click through on a link provided - but note that the link provided in the real NNVA Postcards Page notice takes you to a specific location that begins with identifiable language as follows: "http://pro.mypostcards.com.sgragercard.cgi? - and is followed by the specific identifying number of the card created. The address to which you are referred takes you to a reputable assembler of cards located in Alberta, Canada, who even has UNIX servers that are not vulnerable to viruses. Your card is assembled from the photograph and the music chosen by the sender (photos and music stored on the NNVA Postcards Page web site), and combined with your message, is prepared and waiting for your pickup.

DELIVERY NOTICES

There's also been a change to the notice you receive when your recipient picks up the card you have prepared. The new delivery notice has a subject line that will appear in your e-mail that says:

"Northern Neck Postcards Page delivery notice - the card you sent has been received!"

Again, in the genuine notice, you will see in the preview pane of your e-mail that your name and the recipient's name are listed (which spammers can't afford to take the time to do):

"Susan (for example - it's always the name of the sender) has created a special postcard for you, Betty (for example - it's always the name of the recipient), at the NORTHERN NECK OF VIRGINIA POSTCARDS PAGE and sent it to you on 06/29/2007 15:29 PM (the date and time of the creation of the card is always included.)"

You will also see a link that allows you to view the card you sent again (and notice that the link directs you to <http://promypostcards.com/sgragercard.cgi?> followed by the number that identifies your card only).

It is incredible that now genuine providers of greeting cards have to explain to their faithful friends all of this detail in order to have regular users of their cards protected. This is especially not fair to providers who are making cards available at no cost to users, and providers who do not get subsidy from advertisers on the card pages. If you've patronized card services that have those winky-blinky ads, even though you are not charged a fee, you have the annoyance of having your message sent with whatever the current ad is - and you have no control over what that may be when the recipient picks up the card.

As of July 2007 there are over 750 absolutely free e-cards from which you may choose at the Northern Neck of Virginia Postcards Page. Please do not choose to invalidate this fun and interesting way to keep in touch (think of it as stationery online). You may want to forward this document on to friends and family of yours with whom you share Northern Neck of Virginia Postcards from time to time, or just send it on to people you think should know more about the current drastic situation with these spam notices. As always, thank you for choosing Northern Neck of Virginia Postcards to share with others!

[Return to the Northern Neck of Virginia Postcards Page by clicking here.](#)

[Visit the Snopes.com page on the junk-mail notices and the seriousness of the problem.](#)