Drowning in digital information as we are, and fast losing touch with the-condition-formerly-known-as-reality, reviving the lost art of letter writing sounds like a life saver. And Friday night revivals of that slow-form, intimate experience (sounds hot, huh?) are what's now on the marquee once a month at the Jaffe Center for Book Arts in Boca Raton.

One of the (most undeservedly) lesser-known lights of the local cultural scene, the Jaffe Center, on the FAU campus, houses one of the nation's largest and most varied collections of artists' books, the gift of private collectors Arthur and Mata Jaffe. Around it revolves a galaxy of innovative exhibits, workshops and special events dedicated to books and all things print media.

The letter-writing as social event lightbulb first went off in the head of Jaffe Center Director John Cutrone. "It came about when I got a letter in my mailbox one day last fall, and it struck me as such a momentous occasion," he told New Times. "Usually you open your mailbox and you get bills and junk, and this was a handwritten letter from a friend. You don't get many of those anymore. It was such a happy moment for me, I thought, 'Let's do more of them.'"

With a supply of donated writing paper on hand, and with an array of pens and inks, sealing wax and rubber stamps (and postage stamps, cookies, coffee and tea) Real Mail Friday kicked off in early February. It drew a crowd of eight that first night, growing to a group of twenty in the following months, a mix of students and scriveners of all ages from throughout the community.

"It's been a nice way to connect to people of all sorts," Cutrone told us. "People have been making new friends. They're writing to old friends and finding new pals." Some sessions start quietly and then "become more and more chatty, others are more quiet. Each group has its own personality."

Conversation at the socials wanders far from the matter of letter writing, Cutrone said. "It's a little bit of everything, like at any event where people gather. They could be shelling peas, and talking about what's going on in their lives."

The crowds have been mostly female, Cutrone told us. Had he thought the event might be seen as a high-brow pick-up spot? "That could be pretty interesting," he said, and laughed. "I wouldn't rule it out. When people have similar interests, there's always that potential spark."

Real Mail Fridays. First Friday of each month, 4 to 6 p.m. Jaffe Center for Book Arts, Wimberly Library, Room 350, Third floor East, Florida Atlantic University, 777 Glades Road, Boca Raton.