



# First Issues

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**The First Issues Collectors Club** promotes the collection of the first postage stamps issued by any nation, province, city or other entity that has, at any time, issued postage stamps, and facilitates the exchange of information about these issues among stamp collectors.

**First Issues** (ISSN: 1547-2299), the official newsletter of the First Issues Collectors Club, is published quarterly. Submissions are welcome from members and others interested in the collection of first issues.

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## President's Message

I read with great interest the article by Tim Balm in V27N2 regarding selling a stamp collection. I like to think that I still have many years of collecting in front of me, but it never hurts to plan ahead. Like death and taxes, it is also a certainty of life that every collection will eventually be sold. Despite my attempts to interest my children in the hobby, none of them showed any lasting interest – so passing on the collection is not an option for me.

As mentioned by Mr. Balm, the fastest and easiest (if not most profitable) way to dispose of an average collection is by direct sale to a dealer. The *American Philatelist* regularly contains letters to the editor on this subject by collectors (or relatives who inherit the stamps) who were disappointed or offended when offered a small percentage of catalogue value – or received no offer at all. I recently read the point of view of a dealer on this subject.

What a dealer is willing to pay is dependent on many factors – but most important are his current financial situation and the status of his stock. Knowing this, it is obvious that it would be preferable to offer your collection to more than one dealer. He went on to give a few more useful tips.

Of most interest to a dealer are stamps in high demand that he can quickly resell to his client base. But most collections are heavily comprised of common or damaged stamps that have little demand, which is the most common reason why a dealer gives a low offer. It is important to have realistic expectations.

Time is precious for everybody, so make it easy for the dealer to go through your collection. Remove stamps from their protective mounts and arrange them in an orderly fashion in stock books. A separate section for your better stamps is also a good idea. If you can't agree on those, there is no need to see the rest. An accompanying list with catalogue numbers, value and comments on condition will also make the collection more attractive. In his own words: "An organized presentation will most likely result in a satisfactory price."

Now, if you own truly rare or valuable items, there is no doubt in my mind that an auction is a better way to go. But this is not for common stamps. An auction will not turn lead into gold.

*Louis Laflamme, President*

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## Mountainous Republic of Karabakh Revisited

By Kurt Streepy, FICC #18

I made a connection with a collector in Estonia in the 1990s who kept me well supplied with the first issues and covers of the former Soviet Republics – Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, etc. He also provided several overprints of USSR stamps that he said were used locally, such as the trident overprints used in Ukraine. In *FIRST ISSUES* V6N6, I reported on one such overprint from the Mountainous Republic of Karabakh. There was a set of eight printed on Russia B149-151 plus the label. The top of each stamp was overprinted “Н. КАРАБАХ АРМ. – 1993” with a value of 50.00 or 25.00 added at the bottom. The overprint was in Russian translated as “N. Karabakh Arm[enia] – 1993”.



They have been in my stockbook since that time, but as I move forward creating album pages, I ran across them again. Now with the help of eBay, Wikipedia, and dealer websites, I was able to track down more information on the Mountainous Republic of Karabakh.

The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic or Mountainous Republic of Karabakh, is a breakaway state in the South Caucasus that is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan. The area is home to an Armenian majority. During the fall of the Russian Empire, conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan developed. This ended when both were taken over by the Bolsheviks. Stalin created the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) to allow autonomy to the area within the Azerbaijan SSR. During the fall of the Soviet Union, the area declared independence in 1991 by referendum. This led to the Nagorno-Karabakh War (1991-94) that ended in a cease fire. Nagorno-Karabakh currently controls the former NKAO along with some unrelated area that provides it a border with Armenia and Iran.

Continued on p.4

**Karabakh Revisited** (continued from page 3)

The state is only recognized by Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are all unrecognized breakaway states in the Caucasus region. Armenia and Azerbaijan have been in discussion regarding the status of Artsakh since the 1990s. Armenia does not officially recognize the status of Artsakh to avoid confrontation with Azerbaijan. Armenia does, however, supply military personnel and economic support.

In 2017, a referendum was passed for a new constitution and to change the official name from Nagorno-Karabakh Republic to Artsakh Republic to better reflect the addition of lands outside the prior NKAO.

Once I began digging into the postal issues, I found no sight or mention of the stamps I had in my collection. I conferred with one dealer in Armenia and two dealers in Artsakh who all said they had not seen these issues. All three agreed any overprints on stamps of the USSR are bogus stamps produced to sell to collectors.



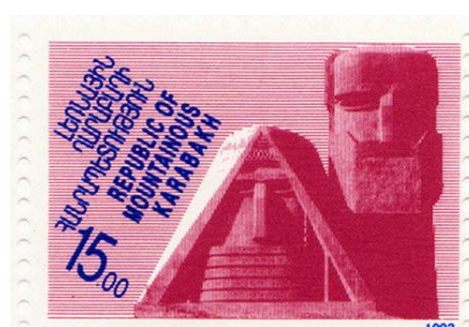
On two dealer websites (as well as eBay), I found what is listed in Michel as #1-3 along with a set of souvenir sheets listed as #4 with some sub-lettering for perf vs. imperf and with control number (for international stamp market) and without control number (for local distribution). They are listed with an issue date of November 6, 1993.



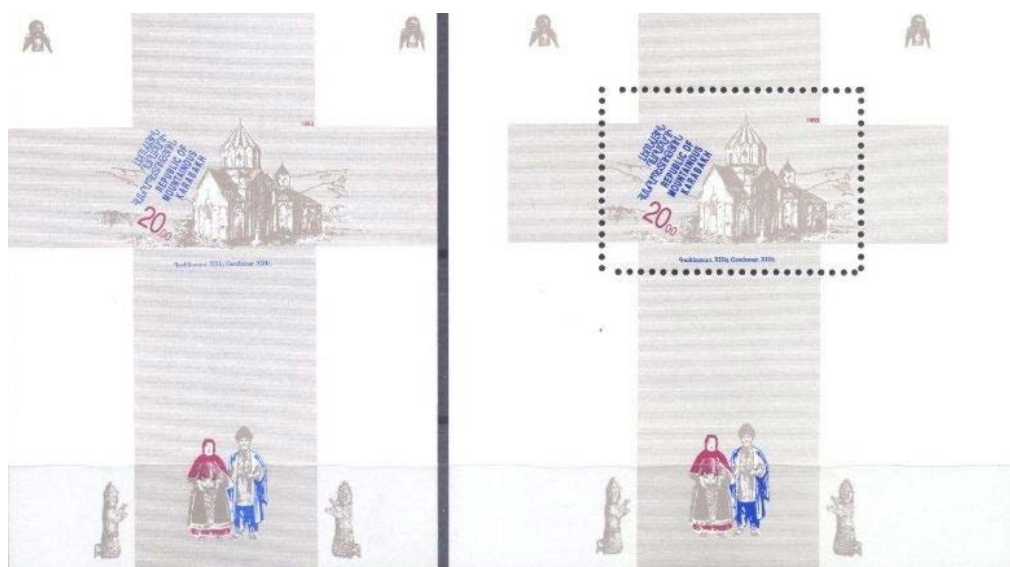
#1: the flag of Nagorno-Karabakh



#2: Arthur Mkrtchyan the first Chairman of the Supreme Council elected Jan 1, 1992, but assassinated April 14, 1992



### #3: Monument "We are Mountains"



#### #4 Church and traditional dress.

I only have easy access to Scott catalogs, so I generally stick to the Scott listing for my first issue collection. But this journey intrigued me, so I purchased the Mi #1-3 along with the set of #4 S/S variations. They arrived postmarked from Stepanakert, Artsakh on with stamps of Artsakh on the envelope. The cover was back-stamped from Yeghegnadzor, Armenia and delivered to me in the USA. It appears the Armenian transit cancels allowed the letters to move through the international mail.

I asked if any of the dealers could provide a #1 on cover, but they could not come up with anything. I offered to purchase another set if they could be used as postage on a cover addressed to me. Unfortunately, the first four issues were issued in Russian

rubles and were devalued when Nagorno-Karabakh moved to the Armenian dram in 1995. [Remainders of Mi #1-3 were overprinted in dram and listed as Mi #5-7.]

I'm not sure of all the factors used by Scott to qualify a country's stamps to be listed in their catalogue, but the fact that a cover from a "country" can make it to my mailbox seems acceptable for me. I can move the overprints to the stock pages of questionable overprints. I'll spend some effort later to determine if any of them are listed items.

[Ed Note: One criterion used by Scott is that the country is officially recognized by the UPU (Universal Postal Union).]

**Continued on p.5**





**Auction #101**

Welcome to FICC Auction #101. The auction closes on Nov 30, 2019. Bids received that after will not be considered. Please read descriptions carefully; lots occasionally have very similar descriptions. If you have questions, please contact me. Also, I will email scans of any specific lots you wish to see. ... All catalogue values (CVs) are taken from the 2020 Scott Catalogues.

**AUCTION RULES**

1. Highest bid wins. In the event of tie bids, earliest postmark or email date stamp breaks the tie. Bid what you are willing to pay; winning bids are rarely reduced.
2. Auctioneer reserves the right to reject unreasonable bids. Bids received after the deadline will not be considered. Auctioneer's decisions are final.
3. All lots are sold "as is" without warranty by auctioneer or FICC. In case of a dispute, the auctioneer will contact the seller and provide the name of the buyer and nature of the dispute to allow direct settlement.
4. An expertizing policy exists for lots with a realized price of \$75 or more (contact auction manager for details).
5. The club receives a 10% fee from each lot sold. The fee will be split between the seller and the buyer.
6. Shipping charges are added to buyer's total. Lots will be mailed using normal USPS rates. Winning lots totaling more than \$200 will be insured, certified or registered.
7. Payment may be requested before shipment.
8. Bidding in this auction constitutes agreement to these rules.

**SUBMITTING BIDS**

Submit bids by email (Auctions@firstissues.org) or postal mail (Tim Balm, 655 Goodpasture Island Rd - Apt 216, Eugene, OR, 97401-1534, USA). If you are submitting bids by postal mail, you can (1) enter your bids on the bid sheet on page 9 and mail that, or (2) you can place your bids on a separate sheet of paper giving lot number, description, and the amount you wish to bid. Please include your name, FICC#, and address. Phone bids are not accepted.

**#1s**

<b>Lot</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>CV</b>	<b>Min Bid</b>	<b>Your Bid</b>	<b>Lot</b>
1	Andorra (Fr) Sc#1-3 mh avg-f	\$3.80	\$1.00	_____	1
2	Azad Hind Mi#1A (perf) mhr f/vf [paper adh, thins]	---	\$1.00	_____	2
3	Azad Hind Mi#1B,4B,9B,10B (imperf) mlh 4 mrgn	---	\$4.00	_____	3
4	Azerbaijan Sc#1-10 mhr 4-mrgn [#2 - white paper; others - grey paper]	\$15.10	\$6.00	_____	4
5	Barbuda Sc#1-11 mlh f/vf	\$178.00	\$75.00	_____	5
6	Bermuda Sc#1 used(l-cxl) f/vf [wmk 1]	\$1.75	\$0.70	_____	6
7	Bosn & Herz Sc#1a hr f/vf [perf tip foxing]	\$16.50	\$5.00	_____	7
8	Cuba Sc#1 used(l-cxl) 3+ mrgn	\$7.50	\$2.75	_____	8
9	Eritrea Sc#1 mhr f/vf [paper adh]	\$10.00	\$4.00	_____	9
10	Fr Oceania (Fr Polynesia) Sc#1 used(l-cxl) hr vf	\$1.60	\$0.70	_____	10
11	Fr West Africa Sc#1 used(l-cxl) f/vf	\$0.90	\$0.40	_____	11
12	Ghana Sc#1-4 mnh f/vf	\$1.00	\$0.50	_____	12
13	Grenada Sc#1 used(l-cxl) avg [A15 St George cxl]	\$55.00	\$20.00	_____	13
14	Haiti Sc#1 used(m-cxl) 4-mrgn	\$5.50	\$2.25	_____	14
15	India - Intl Comm in Laos Sc#1-5 MNH f/vf	\$11.60	\$5.25	_____	15
16	Iran Sc#1 used(m-cxl) 3-mrgn [remainder cto cxl]	\$325.00	\$100.00	_____	16
17	Israel Sc#1 used(l-cxl) f/vf [perf 10]	\$0.25	\$0.10	_____	17
18	Luxembourg Sc#1 used(m-cxl) 4-mrgn(1 close)	\$55.00	\$20.00	_____	18
19	Malaya Sc#1//8 +10 [missing #5,7] used(m-cxl) f/vf	\$569.00	\$225.00	_____	19
20	Norway Sc#1 used(m-cxl) 3-mrgn	\$165.00	\$50.00	_____	20
21	Ruanda-Urundi Sc#6 mhr vf [1 missing perf]	\$0.25	\$0.10	_____	21
22	Spain Sc#1a used(on piece) 3-mrgn [thick paper, TO joined]	\$25.00	\$10.00	_____	22
23	Turkey Sc#1 mng 3+ mrgn	\$75.00	\$25.00	_____	23
24	United Nations-Geneva Sc#1 mnh vf	\$0.25	\$0.12	_____	24
25	USA Sc#1 used(m-cxl, red) 2+mrgns	\$350.00	\$100.00	_____	25

Continued on page 8

**Mail Bid Auction 101** (continued from page 7)**Change of Government #1s**

26	Canada Sc#21 (Dominion) mnh f/vf [gum bend]	\$110.00	\$50.00	_____	26
27	Hawaii Sc#74 (Republic) used(m-cxl) f/vf	\$1.50	\$0.60	_____	27
28	Neth Indies Sc#N38 (Nat Occ) mvlh f/vf	\$0.25	\$0.10	_____	28
29	Romania Sc#22 [Romania] used(m-cxl) 4-mrgn	\$70.00	\$28.00	_____	29
30	Syria Sc#300-305,C117-23 (Constitutional Govt) mnh/mlh f/vf [301,305,C118-9,C123 mlh]	\$26.60	\$10.50	_____	30
31	Tanganyika Sc#57-60 (Republic) mnh/mlh vf [57-9 mnh; 60 mlh] [also last issue]	\$1.25	\$0.50	_____	31

**#A1s/K1s/L1s/N1s/Z1s**

32	Saudi Arabia Sc#L1 used(??cto??) f	\$50.00	\$17.50	_____	32
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**Misc Stamps from First Issue Sets**

33	Australia - Victoria Sc#4 used(l-cxl) 4-mrgn(1 close)	\$100.00	\$35.00	_____	33
34	Canada-Nova Scotia Sc#3 used(l-cxl) 4-mrgn	\$300.00	\$125.00	_____	34
35	Fr Oceania (Fr Polynesia) Sc#2 mhr f	\$2.75	\$0.80	_____	35
36	France Sc#3 used(m-cxl) 4-mrgn	\$34.00	\$15.00	_____	36
37	German States - Bavaria Sc#2 used(m-cxl) 2+ mrgn	\$16.00	\$5.00	_____	37
38	Haiti Sc#2 mng 4-mrgn	\$12.00	\$4.00	_____	38
39	Haiti Sc#3 used(l-cxl) 4-mrgn	\$8.00	\$3.50	_____	39
40	India - Jhalawa Sc#2 mngai hr 4-mrgn	\$1.90	\$0.75	_____	40
41	India Sc#2 used(h-cxl) 3+ mrgns [SG Die 1]	\$35.00	\$12.00	_____	41
42	India Sc#2 used(m-cxl, blue) 3+ mrgns(2 wide) [SG Die 1]	\$35.00	\$14.00	_____	42
43	Labuan Sc#4 f/vf mhr	\$77.50	\$25.00	_____	43
44	Labuan Sc#4 f/vf mlh (with bottom selvage)	\$77.50	\$30.00	_____	44
45	Liechtenstein Sc#3b mvlh f/vf	\$350.00	\$100.00	_____	45

**Twins to #1s**

46	German States - Hanover Sc#2 used(m-cxl) 4-mrgn	\$9.00	\$4.00	_____	46
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**Forgeries/Reprints**

47	Arg - Buenos Aires Sc#2-5 MNG [FORGERIES/REPRINTS]	\$11,800	\$4.00	_____	47
48	Heligoland Sc#1A mng hr 4-mrgn [REPRINT]	\$800.00	\$2.00	_____	48

**End of Listing**

☆☆

**Call for Mail Auction #102 Lots**

**DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF LOTS FOR MAIL AUCTION #102 is December 15, 2019.** Please send singles, sets, FDCs and covers related to first issues -- basically anything you think other FICC members would be interested in owning. The full set of guidelines governing the auctions is published in each auction mailing.

1. Submit lots to: Tim Balm, 655 Goodpasture Island Rd Apt 216, Eugene, OR 97401-1534 USA.
2. Include an inventory with your name & address, 1-line descriptions of the lots including cat#, current cat value, and minimum accepted bid. [Note: Scott catalog is the default; first issues listed by other catalogs are welcome.]
3. The club receives a 10% fee from each lot sold -- split between the seller and the buyer.

FICC 



*First Issues Collectors Club*  
**Membership Application or Renewal Form**

Membership includes four issues of the FICC Newsletter, First Issues. Dues for members who receive the Newsletters electronically or who have United States mailing addressees are \$10.00 per year. Rates for members with non-U.S. addresses who receive the Newsletters via postal mail are US\$14.00 per year. Make checks payable to **Kurt Streepy** and send to the postal address below or use the online PayPal feature at our web site, [www.firstissues.org](http://www.firstissues.org). Thank you for your renewal or new membership!

- ☐ New Membership
 ☐ Renewal
 ☐ Additional Contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Electronic Copy (by E-mail)
 ☐ Paper Copy (by postal delivery)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone\* \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail\* \_\_\_\_\_

APS# \_\_\_\_\_ Other Memberships: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Your telephone number and e-mail address will be kept confidential if you wish.

Send this form with your dues to: Kurt Streepy, 3128 E. Mattatha Dr., Bloomington, IN 47401, USA



## BID SHEET FOR AUCTION #101



Bidding Deadline is November 30, 2019



(email bids to [auctions@firstissues.org](mailto:auctions@firstissues.org))

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

FICC#: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Bid</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Bid</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Bid</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Bid</u>

# IT'S RENEWAL TIME

Check your address label on this newsletter. If it has an expiration date of V27#4, that means your FICC membership expires with this issue. Please send in your dues renewal by December 15, 2019 to ensure that you do not miss an issue. Dues are \$10.00 per year for members who receive the Newsletters electronically or who have USA mailing addresses. Rates for members with non-U.S. addresses who receive the Newsletters via postal mail are \$14.00 per year. We believe this remains a bargain relative to most other stamp clubs with newsletters.

A membership renewal form can be found on page 9. If you have an email address, please include any changes. Make checks payable to **Kurt Streepy** (not FICC), and mail your dues to Kurt at the address on the renewal form. If you wish to pay electronically using PayPal or Skrill/MoneyBookers, please contact Kurt Streepy for instructions.

## ***First Issues***

Tim Balm, Editor  
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USA

FIRST CLASS MAIL

