

First Issues

(ISSN 1547-2299) The Official Journal of the First Issues Collectors Club APS Affiliate #232

Volume 27 Number 2

May-Jun-Jul 2019

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 am very grateful to Kurt Streepy for pointing out the link to Earee's Album Weeds as a free on-line reference (see V27N1). It is another nice example of how the club can be of benefit to members. Album Weeds may be an old reference but it is full of valuable information still relevant today. It also serves to remind us that stamp forgeries are almost as old as the hobby itself.

It always amuses me when I read the description of stamps offered on-line and come across something from the seller like "I am not a specialist but it comes from an old collection" as if forgeries were something new.

I recently read a nice short biography of Francois Fournier (1846-1917), one of the most prolific stamp forgers of all time. Referring to his productions as facsimiles, he considered them works of art and he had little concern regarding what his clients would choose to do with them afterward. If some unscrupulous people decided to resell them as genuine items it was for Fournier a "mere technicality" as he put it. At the same time however he always resisted dealers who asked him to mark his forgeries as "fake" since they would not sell as well knowing some were later sold as genuine. Describing himself as "a supplier of quality collectables for people who could not afford the high prices charged by dealers for hard-to-get stamps" he escaped prosecution by producing stamps of dead countries or stamps rendered useless by devaluation.

Fournier's creations are still around today. This is why the wise collector should get familiar with the work of the great forgers.

We all have our own opinion as to the place reprints (official or private) and forgeries should occupy in our collection. As far as I am concerned, they constitute a valuable addition providing they are not used to deceive but rather to educate. I am quite happy for example to have in my collection reprints of Mauritus #1-2 and Reunion #1-2 for I know that the genuine items are out or reach. I am also happy to display good forgeries of Hawaii # 1-2 in my reference collection for the same reason.

Louis Laflamme

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Article Accuracy: *First Issues*, the editor, and other officers of the FICC cannot be responsible for accuracy or originality of any information printed herein. Opinions expressed in the articles are those of the writers and are not necessarily endorsed by *First Issues*, the FICC or its officers.

Articles Wanted: Articles, letters, comments, suggestions, album pages or anything else connected with collecting first issues are always needed. Send your copy to the editor (e-mail address on front page, postal address shown in the return address on outer cover). To be included in V27N3, articles must be received prior to June 15, 2019.

Membership Directory: Members may obtain a free FICC Membership Directory by sending a SASE (No 10 envelope with 1 ounce US postage) to our Secretary. You can also request the Directory via e-mail as an Excel spreadsheet (contact information is on pages 1 and 9).

Back Issues: Back issues of the newsletter are available from the Secretary for \$7.00 per volume or \$2.00 for single issues. Electronic copies are available on a USB Drive or CD-ROM for \$10.00. Refer to the web site (www.firstissues.org) or contact the Secretary for more information (contact information is on pages 1 and 9).

Article Index: An index to the articles in *First Issues* from 1990 (V1, N1) to date is available on the web site (www.firstissues.org).

Bylaws: A copy of the FICC bylaws is available on the web site (www.firstissues.org). These were last printed in *First Issues* V26, N1.

Mail Bag

Selling #1 Collection

Hi Tim, Sadly, I will be selling my extensive collection of Number One's. I think Sweden 1 is my most valuable. Most

of the high value items are certified. They are all organized in 3 3-ring binders. Each country has its own page in a sheet protector and a printed copy of the relevant Scott catalog page is on the other side of the album page. Stamps are in mounts. Any advice?

> Name Withheld, FICC # e-mail: Feb 2019

[Editor; Please see my response to this request – summarized on page 5 of this issue.]

2017 FICC Financial Report

Opening Balance 1-Jan-2018	\$4,894.34
Income	
Dues	\$314.00
Auctions #93-97	\$824.89
Donations	\$48.00
Back Issues/CDs	\$10.00
Total Income	\$1196.89
Expenses	
Newsletter Printing/Postage (V26N1-4)	\$220.97
Web Hosting/Domain Renewal	\$0.00
PayPal Fees/Miscellaneous	\$32.64
Total Expenses	\$253.61
Ending Balance 31-Dec-2018	\$5,837.62

Secretary's Report

Membership News: One new member joined FICC since the last Newsletter went to press.

• Mark Brown, FICC #268, Virginia, USA

Welcome Mark!

FICC >>

Call for Mail Auction #100 Lots

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF LOTS FOR MAIL AUCTION #100 is June 30, 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.

First Issues (ISSN 1547-2299)

First Issues with Hidden Messages

By Louis Laflamme, FICC #210

The Channel Islands were the only part of the United Kingdom to be occupied by the Germans during WWII. Occupation began on July 1, 1940 and lasted until the end of the war in Europe. During the occupation, local mail service between the islands was maintained but the only way to communicate with England or unoccupied countries was through the International Red Cross message service. For the islanders, communications with occupied countries like France was also possible through the German Feldpost system using German stamps. As the supply of British stamps for local mail soon ran out, locally designed and produced stamps were introduced in Guernsey and Jersey. It was out of the question for the Germans to allow a portrait of King Georges VI or allusions to England on the stamps but they did not object to the "Arms of the Islands" design. These arms are in fact quite similar to those of England. The stamps of Guernsey were designed by a local artist, E. W. Vaudin. In Jersey, a retired army officer and artist, Col. Norman Victor Lacey Rybot was charged with the task and asked to reproduce the Guernsey design.

The first issued set (Sc#N1-3) for Guernsey contained the 1/2d green (4/7/1941), 1d red (2/18/1941) and 2 1/2d ultra (4/12/1944). They are roughly rouletted 14 x 7 (shown below left, 125%). The Jersey set contained two stamps (Sc#N1-2), the 1/2d green (1/29/1942) and 1d vermillion (4/1/1941) perforated 11 (shown below right, 125%).



Jersey Sc#N1-2 (125%)



In Jersey, the designer went a little further. In each corner of the 1d stamp, appropriately issued on April 1st, you will see an "A" (shown at right). Together, the four "A"s stood for a Latin phrase "Ad Avernum Adolphe Atrox" or "to hell with you atrocious Adolf" in English.

Continued on p.4

Now if you look closely in the four corners of the Guernsey stamps you will notice the presence of small "V"s, they stood for "Victory" (shown at left).



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Hidden Messages (continued from page 3)

In the top corners of the Jersey ½d stamp, you can see two "A"s for Atrocious Adolf (below left). And in the bottom corners are two "B"s for Bloody Benito as a reference to Mussolini, Hitler's main ally in Europe (below right).



Needless to say that Col. Rybot waited until the end of the war to tell his story, the Nazis were known for many things but a sense of humour was not one of them.

References:

- 1. https://www.theislandwiki.org/index.php/Jersey postage stamps issued during the German Occupation
- 2. http://www.ephemeraltreasures.net/channel-islands-occupation-part-4.html
- 3. https://www.ciss1950.org.uk/occupation/

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Web Site News

By Nick Blackburn, FICC #181

This article is available online at tinyurl.com/ficcreport – this has change as Google has discontinued its "short URL" service. Type that address into your browser and the online version has all the links already in place, so from there you can just click.

WEB SITE TRAFFIC

At the time of writing, the site is averaging 12 visitors a day who, among them, look at 90 web pages. We have now had a visitor from every US state, with North Dakota completing the list. The new countries since the last report are Belize and Uzbekistan bringing the total to 102. This leaves 138 countries from which we have never had a visitor, ranging from Afghanistan to Zambia,

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Disposing of Your #1 Collection

By Tim Balm, FICC #91

The following information is summarized from the response I gave to the member who sent me an e-mail asking for advice (see Mail Bag on page 2). Admittedly, the following suggestions are oriented toward options available to people in the USA.

If you're in a hurry to sell the entire collection as a unit, selling to a dealer usually fills this need - but the price is not very palatable. Note: investing some time in preparing an inventory sheet listing each stamp/set, the condition (mnh, mh, mng, used, etc) and the most current SCV will be met by higher offers.

If you have time to dispose of the collection piecemeal, consider using the APS web site. They take 25% of the selling price, but they do all the work of scanning, shipping, etc.

For stamps in good condition with CV >\$100, consider putting them into an auction run by an auction house. Their typical fees vary from 10%-25%. But, if the stamp(s) have any defects, this is not always the best option.

For stamps with value \$20-\$100 (or higher CV stamps with defects), eBay gives you a decent percentage of your investment. But... you have to deal with all the "ugly stuff " of non-payers, buyers claiming non-receipt, eBay fees/rules, etc. Also, there are "eBay brokers" who will take your collection, do all the work of listing the items and sending them out. I used such a person a while back who took around 27%-30% of the selling prices as his fee. A decent fee for the service.

For inexpensive stamps, consider selling them through the FICC auctions. Then, consider selling the unsold stamps directly to a dealer. You'll only get 20%-30% of SCV, but you can get rid of all of them quickly that way.

If you choose to list through the FICC, your collection will be offered in a special auction listing for only the 5% selling fee – plus any printing/mailing costs for the auction listing and postage for return of the unsold stamps. I'll do all the describing, SCVs, etc.

One option I will certainly entertain when the time comes... consider donating some/all of the stamps either to a charity or to the APS. People who do this claim the donation value as the total SCV. Depending on your tax bracket, you'll receive that percentage of the donation value directly off your taxes. This is an extremely efficient way to quickly dispose of the collection - and almost always for a tax deduction greater than the offer you would get from a dealer.

Finally, but by no means the last to be considered, is to pass your collection on to a family member. You will always be remembered in their heart, and the inheritor may find a new passion.

FICC >

Norway #1 First Day Cover in Recent Auction

Contributed by Kurt Streepy, FICC #18

[The following information was reported by Michael Baadke in the March 25, 2019 issue of Linn's Stamp News.]



Norway's first stamp, the 4-skilling blue, was issued on January 1, 1855. There are only two known covers postmarked with this date. One of these was offered in an auction by the Swedish firm Postiljonen on March 29, 2019 (lot 437 in auction 224). The auction catalogue description states it is "A very beautiful front of a cover". The stamp is cancelled with a grid postmark. A circular date stamp is off to the side and, according to the auction house, shows 'KONGSVINGER 1.1.1855'. The cover front has certs from Moldenhauer and Aune.

Swaziland's Name Change to eSwatini

By Tim Balm, FICC #91

While watching a popular television game show testing trivia knowledge (JEOPARDY on USA television), one of the trivia questions asked what country had recently changed its name to eSwatini. The answer was Swaziland. After some internet research I corroborated that Swaziland had, indeed, formally changed its name to the Kingdom of eSwatini on April 19, 2018 "to mark the 50th anniversary of Swazi independence" from England. The new name of eSwatini means "Land of the Swati" or "Land of the Swazi" depending on your preferred spelling.

According to the Scott Catalogue, Swaziland's independence was proclaimed on September 6, 1968. I found this date corroborated by several other web sites. So, I am unsure of the significance of April 19 accredited as the date for the name change.

Some do not consider the eSwatini name to be a "name change" per se. These people say that it is simply a change from the English spelling of the country to the Swazi spelling. [I have read that both languages have official status in the country.]

To add even more to my confusion, Wikipedia also states that the name change was "partially intended to prevent confusion with the similarly named Switzerland". This seems a bit weak to me, but the reader is left to place as much truth to this statement as he/she deems it merits.

As an aside, I remember a few years ago that I became similarly confused when I saw the name Czechia used for the Czech Republic. After a small amount of research, I found that both names were commonly used – with the Czech Republic being the "formal name" and Czechia being the "short name".

For me, the importance of all this is whether it was reflected in a different name on the stamps. The most recent Swaziland stamps listed in the 2019 Scott Catalogue are Sc#814-18 on August 22, 2016. As this is before the "name change", I remain uncertain if I should consider it a name change for purposes of my collection.

After scouring the internet, I found a web site that showed a set of 4 stamps issued on August 31, 2018 which did, indeed, have the new name printed on them. That said, I was unable to locate any place on the internet that offered these stamps for sale.

I will end this article by repeating two jokes circulating in the on-line stamp community regarding this. One: the new country name of eSwatini will only exist on-line. Two: eSwatini is a typo. Actually, Apple bought the country and renamed it iSwatini. Groan!!!

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Finding an Elusive Piece of a Philatelic Puzzle

By Tim Balm, FICC #91

I have been working on a "philatelic puzzle" that I began back in 1995. At that time, David Olson wrote an article on the Epirus #1-4 stamps published in V5N1 of *First Issues*. The article, was entitled SKULL AND CROSSBONES: THE FIRST STAMPS OF EPIRUS. In the article, Dave describes how nearly all Epirus #1-4 stamps are bogus – including all of the covers bearing a full set of the stamps.

After reading Dave's article (and discussing it with him via email), he sent me a copy of the Hellenic Philatelic Society of America's monograph that they had published in their Bulletin/Newsletter. I got very curious about all the "full set covers" that were described in the monograph. These covers were all cancelled on either 14Feb14 or 15Feb14. They were addressed to the same person [Carolais Gongakis] but in 3 different languages (Greek, Italian or French) with an address in Corfu (Kerkyra) or the Hermes Hotel in Athens. Most included one of two receiving cancels on the back (19Feb14 on covers to Corfu or 17Feb14 on covers to Athens. [Note: one of the curiosities of these forged covers is that a few of the

Corfu directed covers had Athens receiving cancels. The kind of mistake that is the bane of people in a hurry!] It is important to note that the monograph does not credit anyone with creating the covers. Only that the covers all bear forged stamps created by the Spetsiotis brothers.

Over 10-15 years, I amassed 46 covers: 30 written in Greek, 10 written in French, and 6 written in Italian – all with slight to moderate handwriting variations – but many characteristics in common. Obviously, the person/people addressing the covers attempted to disguise their handwriting. With no reason other than curiosity, I set out to determine how many people actually were involved in addressing the covers.

To that end, I obtained books describing how forensic forgery experts derive their opinions on handwriting analysis. This involves a lot of inspection of things like the angle of slant of the writing, the ratio of height of the capital letters to the height of the lower case letters, etc. Doing this analysis has been an on-again, off-again project for many years.

Continued on p.7

Email to: editor@firstissues.org

Philatelic Puzzle (continued from page 6)

Just recently, I acquired another piece of the puzzle regarding the cover creators. For a modest price, I bought one Gongakis cover addressed in Greek handwriting consistent with the many covers I already have – but with the "Spetsiotis Freres" business address imprinted on the back flap of the

cover. Until then, I had only encountered two envelope types – neither having any return address information.

Although not conclusive, this new piece of the philatelic cover was very exciting to me.

FICC >

Finding a "Weed" in your Album – Always Learning Something New

By Tim Balm, FICC #91

Some members may be aware that as a "side collection" to my #1s, I have a collection of WORLD'S FIRSTS – the first stamps (worldwide) in each Back of the Book category. The first Semi-Postal is New South Wales Sc#B1-2; the first Airmail is Italy Sc#C1-2 in 1917; the first Airmail Semi-Postal is Lithuania's Sc#CB1-4; etc. [For more information, see the article I wrote in FIRST ISSUES V13N1.]

As part of that collection, I have Mexico Sc#JX9-19, the world's first Porte de Mar Stamps (JX1-8 were never issued and not listed in Scott). Forgeries of these stamps are abundant. It took me quite a while to assemble a genuine set of all 11 stamps in this issue – or so I thought. A recent article in the April issue of AMERICAN PHILATELIST by Benedict Termini focused on these stamps. Not only did Dr. Termini give an excellent background/history into the rationale for these stamps, he also had a short discussion (three paragraphs) on the forgeries. Here he stated there were seven different forgeries known to him, and discussed the characteristics of four of them. Per Termini, "The most common forgery, which has been referred to as the Second Spiro forgery only has one dot in the lower left corner instead of two. … In another common forgery (the creator of which has not been identified) the ornament in the upper left corner ends in a straight line instead of curling upwards." [The other two forgeries Termini discussed had forged cancels.]

Both THE SERRANE GUIDE and ALBUM WEEDS by Earee discuss multiple forgeries, the only one I have ever encountered was the one Termini calls the Second Spiro (with only 1 dot in the lower left corner under the P of PORTE). In fact, I have seven copies (with different denominations) of this common forgery. Termini's article, however, prompted me to pull my World's Firsts album off the shelf and re-inspect my holdings.

As I'm sure you have guessed, I found my 50c stamp (JX15) met the description Termini gives for the second common forgery. Once I knew what to look for, identification of the stamp as a forgery was easy.

So now I have a new mission – to find a genuine copy of this stamp and complete my set (once again). There is always something to learn in this hobby.



Genuine Sc#JX9 (175%)

Spiro Forgery (175%)

Unnamed Forgery (175%)

Auction #99

Welcome to FICC Auction #99. <u>The auction closes on June 30, 2019</u>. 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. ... Unless noted, catalogue values (CVs) are taken from the 2019 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.

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	#1s						
Lot	Description	CV	Min Bid	Your Bid	Lot		
1	British Honduras Sc#1 mh f [perf faults]	\$72.50	\$18.00		1		
2	German States - Schleswig-Holstein Sc#1 mng 4-mrgn	\$175.00	\$70.00		2		
	[signed BRETTL] [SCV per Classic Cat for mng]						
3	North Ingermanland Sc#1 used(cto) f/vf	\$3.50	\$1.60		3		
4	Somalia Sc#1-7 mlh/mhr f-f/vf	\$137.50	\$50.00		4		
5	Somalia Sc#1-7 mnh f-f/vf [SCV per Classic Cat]	\$374.75	\$165.00		4 5 6 7		
	United Nations - UNTEA Sc#1 mnh vf	\$0.25	\$0.10		6		
7	Yugoslavia Sc#1-14 mh/mhr f/vf	\$17.90	\$6.00				
8	Zambia Sc#4 mhr f/vf	\$0.25	\$0.10		8		
	Change of Governme	ent #1s					
9		\$5.25	\$2.00		9		
10	Eritrea Sc#192-94 mnh f/vf	\$90.00	\$40.00		10		
11	India Sc#200 (Dominion) used (m-cxl) vf	\$0.30	\$0.10		11		
12	Netherlands Indies Sc#N38 (Nationalist Occ) mhr vf	\$0.25	\$0.10		12		
13	US - Hawaii Sc#74 (Republic) used(m-cxl) f/vf	\$1.50	\$0.60		13		
	BOB (Back of Book	() #1s					
14		\$0.50	\$0.20		14		
15	Bermuda Sc#MR1 mh f/vf	\$1.25	\$0.50		15		
16	Lot Description 1 British Honduras Sc#1 mh f [perf faults] 2 German States - Schleswig-Holstein Sc#1 mng 4-mrgn [signed BRETTL] [SCV per Classic Cat for mng] 3 North Ingermanland Sc#1 used(cto) f/vf 4 Somalia Sc#1-7 mlh/mhr f-f/vf 5 Somalia Sc#1-7 mlh f-f/vf [SCV per Classic Cat] 6 United Nations - UNTEA Sc#1 mnh vf 7 Yugoslavia Sc#1-14 mh/mhr f/vf 8 Zambia Sc#4 mhr f/vf 8 Zambia Sc#1 (USA Admin) used(m-cxl) f/vf 9 Cuba Sc#J1 (USA Admin) used(m-cxl) f/vf 10 Eritrea Sc#192-94 mnh f/vf 11 India Sc#200 (Dominion) used (m-cxl) vf 12 Netherlands Indies Sc#N38 (Nationalist Occ) mhr vf 13 US - Hawaii Sc#74 (Republic) used(m-cxl) f/vf 14 Argentina Sc#OD1 mh f/vf [Sun wmk] 15 Bermuda Sc#MR1 mh f/vf 16 British Guiana Sc#MR1 mh f/vf 17 Burkina Faso Sc#O1 used(cto) vf 18 Burma Sc#O1 used(h-cxl) f/vf 19 USA Sc#RE1 mhr f/vf 20 Argentina Sc#OD7 mh avg [no wmk] 21 Chad Sc#19 mlh f/vf		\$0.75		16		
17	Burkina Faso Sc#O1 used(cto) vf	\$0.25	\$0.10		17		
18	Burma Sc#O1 used(h-cxl) f/vf	\$0.25	\$0.10		18		
19	USA Sc#RE1 mhr f/vf	\$1.25	\$0.45		19		
Twins							
20		\$1.00	\$0.35		20		
21	• • • •	\$0.40	\$0.10		21		
22		\$7,250	\$5.00		22		

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 <u>Kurt Streepy</u> and send to the postal address below or use the online PayPal feature at our web site, 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)			
Address:					
City, State, Zip					
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 #99

ເຂັເອັ Bidding Deadline is June 30, 2019 ຈາຈ

(email bids to auctions@firstissues.org)

Name: _____

FICC#:

Lot	Bid	Lot	Bid	Lot	Bid	Lot	Bid

First Issues Tim Balm, Editor 655 Goodpasture Island Rd Apt 216 Eugene, OR 97401-1534 USA



FIRST CLASS MAIL