

Networking within the Stamp Club Community

(What my network showed up with recently)

by David M. Allen

“Networking”, especially when job hunting, has most often felt like a clinical or contrived concept to me. As a youth or young adult collector, I worked some at finding trading partners in the stamp clubs I was in. This was mostly because I had severe financial limitations. But trading can only go so far especially if you have limited material to trade. With a very recent offer that came my way, I finally realized that I do have a stamp collecting network and it is mostly within the stamp collecting community we call the CFSC.

While I wasn't working at forming a network, how did it happen? More accurately, what are the avenues available within our club to form a network and how does it happen?

First, your name goes on a roster with your collecting interests. Then there are three specific ways to start showing who you are. First use the Stamp Bourse, where you can put in an ad for free to buy, sell or trade. That action is noted by other club members and especially by the dealers within our club. Your ad will generate some individual comments. How you respond to those feelers determines your seriousness to the people asking.

The second, and I think, even more important way is through participation within the auctions. While you may think your actions go unobserved, people who are interested in the same areas are looking. People you are bidding against recognize you. The seller or buyer takes note of your interests. Your honesty and sincerity are also observed.

The third way, participating in the members bourse after the meeting presentation, can have very similar effects as participating in the auctions. Also giving a presentation for the club meeting or Afterglow can also show your interest and depth of knowledge in a particular area.

From these observations a whole host of things can begin to happen. A member you have bid against can become a person you offer the remains of the lot or your own duplicates from the same country or topic. A club member may show you something to see if you are interested. One of your friends may tell you about something in the club auction or an item a dealer is offering at a show in case you missed it. A seller may offer you their entire country collection because you bought some of it in the auction. Another may give you a passing question of your interest in looking at their duplicates. Yet another may send you an email about something they have that might interest you since they have observed your collecting interests. Also, to be a good network member, you can do these same things for others in your network (an area where I may need some improvement).

All of these have happened to me and show me that, while I wasn't actively seeking a network, I do indeed have a very robust network. This network and the friendships included are a major benefit of being a member of the CFSC.

For me, the latest happening was an email. Since the person knew I collect France, they started: “Do you collect France mint booklets - I have some better ones...” Now I have all the France classic mint red cross booklets (1952-1983) and much of the other standard France booklets with a special Linder Album – first album page shown. **[Figure A1 on Front Cover]**.



Figure A2

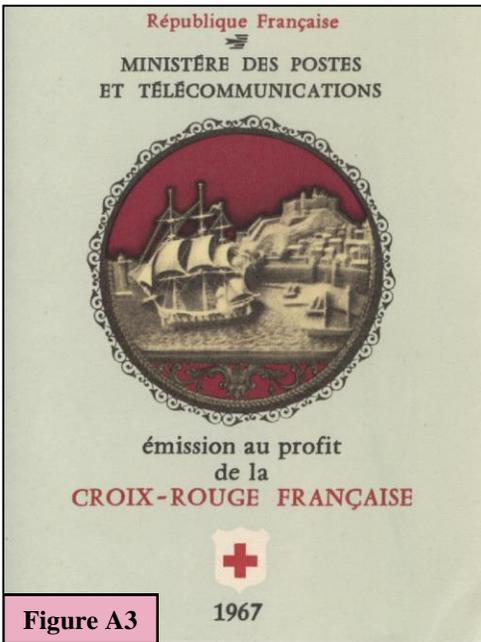


Figure A3



Figure A4

Each year from 1952 through 1983, France issued a semi-postal Red Cross booklet. These were issued in one of two different formats: 1. the more common format is a folded pane of a group of 4 each of the 2 different stamps in the set inside of booklet is **Figure A2** while the cover is **Figure A3**, or 2. occasionally in a pane of 10 stamps of a single stamp in the issue [**Figure A4**]. After 1983, France started issuing booklets on a variety of topics and in various formats. Booklets can be listed in either the general issues or in the semi-postal section. The booklets can be definitive, commemorative, or semi-postal issues [**Figure A5**]. Some booklets having a mix of regular and semi-postal issues on the same pane, are listed in the general issues (leave it up to Scott to figure that one out – they also list the semi-postal issue in the general section).

When I started this article, I was just going to show what I got. When I think about it, networking is a major benefit of being an active member of the CFSC; a benefit that while it is not stated and may not be obvious, is real and available to every member of the club. What it really comes down to is that the more you get involved in the CFSC, the more benefits you will find.

Figure A5



[Editor's note; In this issue of *The Philatelic Missive* we have two excellent examples of the benefits of being a member of the CFSC – networking with your fellow members can produce results when you least expect. I know this well after recent events!]