

The Cover Story

Membership and Attendance Trends

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A year and a half ago, I presented the auctions statistics from 2005 - 2017 (April 2018 Insert B). This article is the companion article dealing with club membership (2005 - 2018) and member attendance (2006 - 2018) and will look at trends and comparisons in the data. Additionally, correlations with the auction statistics will also be discussed.

First, I and the club are deeply indebted to Ann Dowrick for keeping and supplying accurate and complete statistics on meeting attendance. Without her effort and advice, this article would not have been possible. While Ann's records of attendance include members and guests, only the member attendance is used in this analysis. The membership data is a membership of record for each meeting in the period compiled from club rosters (as the primary source), club newsletters and auction records. See the Appendix, section 1 for details on data standardization.

Figure A1 shows the membership and member attendance statistics. Both annual averages show an increasing trend with dips, more in the membership data than the attendance data. The trends are about a 2.5-fold increase in attendance and a 2-fold increase in membership. The dips in 2006 and 2007 cannot be interpreted as absolute minima since early rosters show the club has been smaller in earlier times. Years are marked as typical with a "B" and "E" when membership started the year at a low and ended at a high. See the Appendix, section 2 for details about the "Starting Loss" and "Growth" columns and abnormal years.

Over the past few years, the unofficial goal was to get to a membership of 100. That was accomplished in 2015, 2016 and 2018 only in the maximum. With a very low loss of members in 2019, we will just miss the goal in the minimum and should make the goal in both the maximum and the average membership for the year. The summary chart that can be found on the **front cover** says it all.

The differences in average attendance at cried auctions and the other meetings was compared and found to be statistically insignificant. The data is shown in **Figure A2**. For details on this analysis and discussion of the ratio of average attendance to average membership see the Appendix section 3.

We have now found increasing trends in membership, member attendance, and in average auction values. The question of correlation is begging to be answered. For this, we use "rho" (the Pierson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient) that measures linear correlation. A value of 1 indicates perfect correlation and 0 indicates no correlation. "Rho" for the groups of membership/member attendance and the types of auctions is very strong at over 0.94. While this is expected for related data, the surprise is that the cross correlations between member attendance and the auction data is fully as strong. While this does not indicate a "cause and effect" relationship, there are some (and perhaps many) causal elements in common. See the Appendix, section 4 for a full discussion of "rho", it's interpretation, and the full data.

We can also now definitively answer a question left open from the auction trend article. **Figure A3** shows the data we had from the auction trends for number of members successfully involved in an auction during the year. Now we have the total number of members attending a meeting sometime during the year. (Remember we have an auction, silent or cried, every meeting thus making the data relatable.) From 2014 through 2018 it appears that 70% to 80% of the attending members are successfully involved in the auctions.

Getting at the causes of these positive trends is difficult and beyond the pay grade of a statistician. However, the world of organizational dynamics can give us some general guidelines. Here are the ones that best relate to the CFSC. Create a welcoming congenial atmosphere that values people and exhibits mutual trust. Continually improve benefits and opportunities for members. Have a clear focus and clearly communicate the external purposes of the organization. Be adaptable and creative to changes in technology and surrounding trends. Perhaps the quote from Queen Elizabeth II in the September 2019 newsletter puts much of it together: *"I know of no single formula for success. But over the years I have observed that some attributes of leadership are universal and are often about finding ways of encouraging people to combine their efforts, their talents, their insight, their enthusiasm and their inspirations to work together"*

While it is clear that hobby pundits say that philately is in an overall declining trend, we have a club where, for the last 15 years, the leadership has fostered and developed these organizational practices so that our club has a friendly atmosphere and exhibits healthy growth trends. They have guided our club to a 2-fold growth in membership, a 2.5-fold growth in attendance, and a 4 to 5-fold growth in auction valuation. It has also been accomplished while making the club more financially stable growing the club's assets to a 4-fold increase. For this we should all be exceedingly grateful for the leaders of our club.

In conclusion, I leave you with a caution and a suggested new goal. Our leadership and all of us need to continue in building the club up and fostering proper purposes. The caution is to avoid mistakes of the club's past; being penny wise and pound foolish as we did in 1961 when we elected to save a cost of \$1.75 per year by dropping APS membership or in 2004 when we almost did not make use of the Internet at a cost of about \$75 per year. We need to avoid divisiveness as we failed to do in 1954 when the club split in two.

Now that we are at 100+ members (a somewhat arbitrary goal that served well), I suggest a new goal that comes out of our history. Just before the first FLOREX show we did in Orlando in 1953, it is stated in the Florida Federation of Stamp Clubs December 1953 missive that we had 136 members. I suggest that 136 be our new membership goal, one that if we make it, will require us to move to the ballroom permanently or to other accommodations.

Membership							Attendance				
Starting Loss from Prior Year	Growth During Year	Low At Beginning	Low	Annual Average	High	High At End	Year	Low	Annual Average	High	Average Attendance as % of Average Membership
3			99								
9	21	B	81	92.4	102	E	2018	34	45.4	60	49.1%
17	6	B	84	86.8	90	E	2017	22	37.8	48	43.6%
14	14	B	87	93.2	101		2016	30	38.1	44	40.9%
12	18	B	83	92.2	101	E	2015	30	37.0	43	40.2%
7	12	B	83	88.6	95	E	2014	27	35.2	42	39.7%
10	15	B	75	83.2	90	E	2013	29	34.9	45	42.0%
19	21	B	64	74.4	85	E	2012	26	31.0	36	41.6%
13	11	B	72	77.3	83	E	2011	24	28.5	34	36.9%
0	12	B	73	78.2	85	E	2010	20	27.2	32	34.7%
7	20	B	53	61.6	73	E	2009	17	26.9	37	43.7%
3	13	B	47	51.2	60	E	2008	8	20.0	27	39.0%
6	5	B	45	47.3	50	E	2007	12	18.0	25	38.0%
16	-3		50	53.5	57		2006	13	22.1	28	41.3%
	4	B	66	68.7	70	E	2005				

Figure A1

Average Attendance			
Year	All Meetings	Meeting not a Cried Auction	Cried Auction Meetings
2018	45.4	45.5	44.8
2017	37.8	37.4	39.4
2016	38.1	38.1	38.4
2015	37.0	36.9	35.0
2014	35.2	35.6	33.6
2013	34.9	34.8	35.3
2012	31.0	30.9	31.2
2011	28.5	28.4	29.0
2010	27.2	27.3	26.8
2009	26.9	26.7	27.6
2008	20.0	19.9	20.2
2007	18.0	17.8	18.8
2006	22.1	21.8	23.2

Figure A2

Total Members attending sometime during year	Total Members Involved Successfully in an Auction	Year	% of Attending Members Involved
89	71	2018	79.8%
75	53	2017	70.7%
80	60	2016	75.0%
80	64	2015	80.0%
73	58	2014	79.5%

Figure A3

Editor's note: When this article is published on the **HISTORY** page of the club web site, the referenced appendix will be published with the article.
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