

International Wood Collectors Society (IWCS) Member Survey Results by Eric L. Krum #9467

Several of the ideas put forth by the IWCS Membership Brainstorming Session group and confirmed by members at the 2016 Lake Yale meeting concerned finding out why new members sometimes do not renew their membership and to find out what current members would like to see in the World of Wood (WoW) and from the Society. As a result Mr. Gary Green the IWCS President Elect created two surveys, one for *past members* and one for *current members*. The President Elect sent the surveys to the Regional Trustees and asked them to contact members in their region and ask them to complete the survey forms and return them to Mr. Green. The goal was to get ten (10) surveys from current members and five (5) surveys from past members in each Region. A total of sixty four (64) current members and sixteen (16) past members submitted a completed survey.

Most of the questions were common between the current and past member surveys. In the below review of the common questions the past and current members responses will be given separately followed by comments about the responses.

Question 1: What is your age group?

Age	Past		Current	
	Responses	Percentage	Responses	Percentage
1-29	0	0%	0	0%
30-45	0	0%	0	0%
46-60	5	31%	10	16%
61-75	6	38%	30	47%
>75	5	31%	24	38%

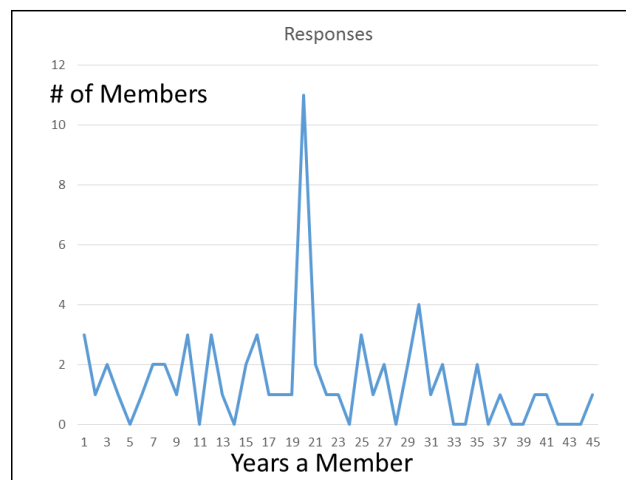
Eighty five (85) percent of current members are older than sixty (60) years, we are a society of retired wood lovers. The age of members has an impact on several later questions that pertain to the movement to the movement to digitization of society related business as many older members do not have a computer.

Question 2: How many years had/have you been a member?

Past Members

Years	Responses	Percentage
1	5	31%
3	2	13%
4	3	19%
5	2	13%
10	1	6%
20	1	6%
No Response	2	

Current Members



The two past members who were members for 10 and 20 years respectively, stopped being members due to health reasons that kept them from being active participants in the society. The average of time a current member has been a member is nineteen (19) years.

Question 3: Do you feel that the current annual dues (\$35 - \$55, depending on location/options) are:

Past Members

Dues	Responses	Percentage
Prohibitive	0	0%
Poor	0	0%
Fair	12	75%
Good Value	3	19%
N/A	1	6%

Current Members

Dues	Responses	Percentage
Prohibitive	2	3%
Poor	1	2%
Fair	30	47%
Good Value	31	48%

The society's dues are clearly felt to be a fair value, the last time dues were changed was in 2012. Considering that the dues primarily go to getting the World of Wood (WoW) published and mailed, gets the website updated and keeps the society running versus the last two years expenses exceeding revenues. We need to seriously consider raising the dues in 2018.

Question 4: Past members only question - Rank the following 1 - 10, 1 being of no importance, 10 being top importance in regard to allowing your membership to lapse:

Membership Lapse	Responses	Percentage
Overall, I felt I was getting no benefits from membership.	74	18%
The IWCS was not what I thought it would be.	56	14%
I lost interest in wood related activities.	53	13%
There were no meets within convenient travel distance.	45	11%
Nothing at the auctions were of interest to me.	41	10%
I found nothing in the World of Wood that interested me.	40	10%
Health issues became a problem.	30	7%
I forgot to renew and was not reminded.	22	5%
The dues were prohibitive.	21	5%
I was a collector and found few resources for obtaining new specime	19	5%
I forgot to renew and was reminded.	13	3%

The response number is the total of the rankings by the 16 people who submitted a survey. All but one of the past members described themselves as crafters. One person stated they were a crafter and wood collector. The results state we need to do a better job of balancing crafter versus collector related activities at events, put more craft related articles in the WoW and on the Facebook page.

Question 5: Would you favor an online only version of World of Wood to control costs?

Past Members

Only an Online WoW	Responses	Percentage
Yes	3	19%
No	12	75%
No Response	1	6%

Current Members

Only an Online WoW	Responses	Percentage
Yes	10	16%
No	53	83%
No Response	1	2%

A clear majority want to receive a hard copy of the World of Wood.

Question 6: Would you favor an online only version of the Membership Directory to control costs?

Past Members

Only an Online Directory	Responses	Percentage
Yes	4	25%
No	11	69%
No Response	1	6%

Current Members

Only an Online Directory	Responses	Percentage
Yes	37	58%
No	26	41%
No Response	1	2%

The need for a hard copy versus an on line copy of the Membership Directory is more evenly split with a small majority of current members willing to have only an on line copy only. These percentages align with the number of members who have a computer and have an email address. We should consider putting the Membership Directory in the member's only area of the website and update the directory each month as new members join. Continue to publish and distribute a hard copy of the directory for the next five (5) years and then go to an on line directory only.

Question 7: Do you consider yourself more of a wood collector/wood technology person or woodworker/crafter?

Past Members

Member Type	Responses	Percentage
Collector	1	6%
Crafter	13	81%
Both	1	6%
No Response	1	6%

Current Members

Member Type	Responses	Percentage
Collector	16	25%
Crafter	28	44%
Both	19	30%
No Response	1	2%

Even though it was not an option on the survey, a lot of members stated they were both a crafter and a collector. Showing that it is primarily a love of wood with a desire to learn more about the thousands of woods in the world that binds us to the society more than just making saw dust or collecting blocks of wood. That the needs and desires of members who just collect blocks of

wood and those that make saw dust must be also be met by the society. As a member who both collects blocks of wood and makes saw dust I feel that if the *Both* option had been on the survey the percentage of members who are both a crafter and collector would have been higher than thirty percent (30%).

Question 8: What would you like to see more of in World of Wood? Select one:

Past Members

See more of in WoW	Responses	Percentage
More articles about woodworking, turning, crafting.	10	56%
More articles about trees, wood, wood anatomy.	2	11%
More human interest articles about members and associates activities.	2	11%
I like the content just the way it is.	2	11%
More articles about starting or maintaining a wood collection.	1	6%
More articles about meets and other IWCS events.	1	6%
Monthly instead of bi-monthly publication.	0	0%
More color photos.	0	0%

Current Members

See more of in WoW	Responses	Percentage
I like the content just the way it is.	23	23%
More articles about woodworking, turning, crafting.	22	22%
More articles about trees, wood, wood anatomy.	19	19%
More human interest articles about members and associates activities.	14	14%
More articles about meets and other IWCS events.	7	7%
More articles about starting or maintaining a wood collection.	6	6%
More color photos.	5	5%
Monthly instead of bi-monthly publication.	3	3%

Many people selected more than one item. Most of the past members identified themselves as crafters and this is reflected here. We need to work on submitting more articles to the WoW on crafting, while adding more articles about trees, wood and wood anatomy and about the people who make up the society. As the society does not pay for articles, the motivation to submit one must come from the love of wood or crafting. With the result that the number of articles submitted the last few years have not been sufficient to keep the WoW at thirty two (32) pages. Should we consider paying for articles or providing some other reward for published articles?

Question 9: Please rank the following 1 - 10, with 1 being of no interest/importance and 10 being very interested/important:

Past Members

Importance/Interest	Responses	Percentage
Gain information about woodworking ideas or techniques.	70	15%
Publication of World of Wood.	67	14%

Interaction with people who share my interests.	63	13%
IWCS meets.	43	9%
The IWCS website.	35	7%
The IWCS Facebook page.	35	7%
I would like to see more social media, blog activities in the IWCS.	34	7%
IWCS auctions, including the All Mail Auction.	32	7%
Using resources within IWCS to obtain technical information about wood.	30	6%
Using resources within IWCS to purchase rare or unusual woods.	28	6%
Opportunities for inexpensive travel to international destinations.	13	3%
Visiting or overnight stays with hosting members.	13	3%
Using resources within IWCS to purchase or trade wood specimens for collecting.	13	3%

Current Members

Importance/Interest	Responses	Percentage
Publication of World of Wood	540	13%
Interaction with people who share my interests.	445	11%
IWCS meets.	373	9%
Using resources within IWCS to obtain technical information about wood.	347	9%
Using resources within IWCS to purchase rare or unusual woods.	337	8%
IWCS auctions, including the All Mail Auction.	333	8%
Gain information about woodworking ideas or techniques.	321	8%
The IWCS website.	305	7%
Using resources within IWCS to purchase or trade wood specimens for collecting.	276	7%
Opportunities for inexpensive travel to international destinations.	254	6%
Visiting or overnight stays with hosting members.	227	6%
The IWCS Facebook page.	173	4%
I would like to see more social media, blog activities in the IWCS.	151	4%

No item really stands out as more important or of higher interest than the others. We are a diverse group of people with a wide range of interests and likes.

Question 10: Do you feel that the current system of the executive board and regional trustees works to meet your needs?

Past Members

Board/Trustees	Responses	Percentage
Yes	2	13%
No	0	0%
Don't Know	10	63%
No Response	4	25%

Current Members

Board/Trustees	Responses	Percentage
Yes	32	50%
No	4	6%
Don't Know	28	44%

The job of a Trustee and Board Members is to lead the society but to also work with the members on making the society a better organization that meets the needs of its members. If the majority do not know if the Executive Board or Regional Trustees meets their needs than we need to consider revamping the society's leadership operations.

Question 11: What do you feel would be of primary importance for improvement of the IWCS?

There were some really good input provided by the members on the survey. Due to space limitations only a summary is provided here. The input in full is posted to the version in the member's only area on the website: http://woodcollectors.org/iwcs/s_login.asp.

Summary

In summary the survey was a great idea and most current members are happy with the WoW and think the efforts to spread the word about the society are important in recruiting new members but would like to see more meetings held and interaction with the members and leadership. A new member that receives no contact, is not invited to meetings and only receives the magazine is not likely to renew. From the member input it is critical that Regional Trustees need to stay in contact with our membership to make everyone feel wanted and all members need to make everyone feel wanted and a part of the society.

Would like to thank the members both past and present who took the time to complete the survey. The society is made up of a very diverse group of people with one thing in common, "a love of wood" the global distribution and the diversity in interests from collecting wood to making saw dust is what makes the society unique. It is the members who make or break the society, we all need to do our part in making the effort to contribute to and to improve the society.

Below are the written responses to the two questions at the end of the survey. Due to the length of the comments they were not included in the article in the World of Wood (WoW).

What do you feel would be of primary importance for improvement of the IWCS?

Responses
Continue current efforts to recruit new members
Better preparation of regional trustees, issue a handbook to these position
Important to contact members who are coming up on membership renewal
Use Facebook and social media more
Am happy with every thing
More reprints from old issues
Increase members especially younger woodworkers, wood scientists and wood enthusiasts
Looks very good
Great idea for published survey

<p>More local regional meetings. Getting our face out in public view. There has to be face to face interaction to recruit and keep members. Our local group has been making toys for hospitals.</p>
<p>More pictures and information about the people in the organization. For example a picture and a write up of all the trustees, maybe one every issue. More pictures of the meetings.</p>
<p>More entries in the Random Wood Art web site page. Advertise the web site more.</p>
<p>Directly email more information about upcoming meetings and meeting agendas rather than rely strictly on the magazine and website. A high percentage of members seem to be wood turners, more focus on turning may help recruit and retain members. My wife and I really enjoy the meetings and the people, much better than the AAW.</p>
<p>Keep the revenue collected at each chapter rather than sending all the money to headquarters. This money should then be used to attract and recruited young members to our society.</p>
<p>Better use of the internet, including shifting WoW there. Believe that opportunities to personally meet and to communicate via phone and email are critical services provide by professional and personal interest organizations.</p>
<p>Get back to the basics. Establish interaction with members with common interests. Explore different ways to keep in contact with members. Brain storm ways to reduce costs. Encourage active participation by members at different levels. Acknowledge that there is room for all levels of interest in IWCS.</p>
<p>More information on getting different woods for turning.</p>
<p>Get more younger people</p>
<p>1. Recruitment, 2, Technology adoption, keeping up to date. 3. Discovery and recruitment of IWCS governance candidates within the membership. 4. Including a Student Membership Coordinator.</p>
<p>Too much botanical information that gets boring after awhile if a collector cont. get any of the wood that being discussed. Get articles about wood from the Internet. Could use more news about recent discoveries with trees.</p>
<p>Spouses should be considered full fledged members with voting rights and be included in our membership tally.</p>
<p>Need to know what are the IWCS objectives.</p>
<p>A significant factor to recruiting new members is for varying reasons the cost to individuals outside the US and I feel that every effort should be made to control these costs where possible. For instance the membership directory is a costly item to mail abroad and is often out of date due to the cut-off date prior to print. I see no reason why not should not be available to members on online only, perhaps password protected to comply with data protection.</p>
<p>I am very much into the scientific wood study part of IWCS.</p>
<p>More woodcraft articles.</p>
<p>Better effort to add new members.</p>

More sharing of ideas about things happening in local area clubs to spread word about things that work and provide stimulus. Good ideas are contagious and valuable.
More regional meets.
Allow a reduced membership fee for applicants from African countries, as this could make it possible to obtain species not otherwise available, it was once proposed this while at a meeting in the USA, but nothing came of it.
More meets.
Information on species of wood should be available to members. The one thing the wood collectors and crafts have in common is the desire to know more about the different species of wood. The two use WoW books were printed years ago, but the information on the species is not available on the web site and they were published yes ago. Seems like the IWCS should be promoting the continued collection and dissemination of information on wood species since only 350 of the 52,000+ species have been covered.
A few more articles each year on musical instruments, the organ article recently published was interesting. There seems to be a focus on furniture and table ware.
I especially enjoy the annual Lake Yale meeting. I like the education lectures and some of the demos although I never expect to turn anything. Love seeing those of the amazing things the members make and display I avoid social media.

Comments?

Submitted Comments
Everyone needs to step up to the plate and take an active role in making IWCS a success. In the worked of electronic everything we need to get back to the original ideas of IWCS. In the beginning the Society was founded on a group of people sharing ideas and a passion for collecting wood. I think we have become too accustomed to the WoW being the only contact with members. We need to explore getting more members from the non-technical side involved.
Good wood is getting harder to come by these days with all the restrictions on importing. Wish there was an IWCS sample collection that could serve as a basis for collectors to swap duplicates.
Much of the time the trustee position has been vacant. Older folks cant plan that far ahead as it could be 2-4 years before one would step into the presidency.
Regarding the Regional Trustee, I've hardly been aware that we had one for the Region until this document was forwarded to me by same. Have never received a phone call nor had my phone calls returned during this term. Am confident that our Trustee elect will be more active and effective.
I feel that recent editors of the journal have done a fine hob in improving both the quality or articles and print quality, especially with regard to the photo-microprahraphs of timbers that were detail clarity is so important. Would like to see more articles in the journal that may

attract/retain crafters especially as many of the magazines on turnery / carving / related design have become defunct.

This is a nice survey, hope you get a good response. I'm mailing this because I don't know how to email it.

Meetings in the Seattle area. Meetings are usually a days drive away so I'm not able to make them.

Interested in finding samples of fruit and nut woods.

IWCS does a great job - keep it up.

I am getting to the age where I have to cut back on the amount of woodworking I can do. I enjoy the WoW.

Kudos to our WoW editor for a fine job, it is much appreciated.

Money could be saved by publishing the membership directory every few years.

It would be interesting to have articles about the use of woodlands around the world.

Membership directory could be published less frequently.

The IWCS seems to be in glide mode with no activity happening in the society.

Would like to see the wood sample selection list broken out into previous samples and new samples added. My interest converge between collection specimens, guitar building and the botany of woods. The articles on members international travel, what they discovered and the color photographic are always interesting.