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EDITORIAL

Former Presidents of these United States of America write their memoirs. Former Presidents of this Society write editorials for *Wood and Fiber*. A thought which places egos in proper perspective!

One thing leading to another, I am prompted to consider another difference between the national scene and our Society. A recent editorial discussed the diminishing role of professional societies. Declining membership, flagging interest, and a whole series of dismal statistics presaging destitution and rank doom for professional groups in general were quoted. The learned doctors who made the study may be quite right—except that they forgot to ask us—or perhaps they didn't want us to differ from the statistics.

Because, friends, we don't fit that part of the national model. Over the past year our membership has increased by about 8 percent. And student membership increased by 21 percent. Apparently we do have something to offer—and the wood scientists and wood technologists of the future like it.

While we all want to know what the Society will do for us, one of the gratifying things I found as President was the number of people who, when shown how they could do something for the Society, responded with enthusiasm. And usually with suggestions that went further than, and improved upon, what the Board thought was possible.

From a personal viewpoint, the greatest demonstration of the members' faith in the Society was passage of the dues increase. It passed by a 3-to-2 margin. No landslide, I grant you, but 60 percent of the members voting were in favor, and presumably those who did not vote were not violently for or

against the increase. I think most of us realized that our professional Society has been operating for some time on a shoestring—and it was getting to be a rather frayed, sad-looking shoestring at that. The decision to double dues was more than just a housekeeping need to increase the operating funds. Basically it was a vote of confidence in the viability of our Society.

I suppose I am what might be called an optimistic realist. I was optimistic that you, the members, would approve the change in our Bylaws. And grimly realistic about the fact that you might not. A few days before the ballots were counted, I was talking with a member and I wondered whether I should not have carried out a harder "sell" on the need for a dues increase. His reply was that perhaps it had a better chance of passing because I hadn't.

Ignoring for now the implicit commentary on my persuasive skills, I think he was right. We each have to make up our mind as to what we expect to get from, and give to, our Society. And whether the sum of these is worth the money.

To me, in these somewhat hard times, the passage of the dues increase was a resounding affirmation of faith in the Society. It will enable us to increase the scope of the Visiting Scientist Program, implement to the full the Employment and Referral Services, improve the "Newsletter" and *Wood and Fiber*, and generally do many things to make wood scientists and wood technologists more visible, and hence more respected, members of society. I know that increased visibility does not always bring greater respect; for us, I believe that it will.

Rather like a popular comedian, we often
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2. It is highly recommended that a flexible, moisture-proof coating, for example polyethylene-polyurethane, be applied to the new wood and maintained during the length of service of the beam. This coating should be carefully inspected around knotholes or other surface imperfections since these areas accumulate dilute acids that lose water during drying cycles and become concentrated acids.
3. Properly protected wooden beams used in acidic environments should give the same satisfactory life as those used in more favorable locations.

REFERENCES

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Editorial

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complain that we "get no respect." I believe that is mainly because we are not well known. We can expect society to regard us as professionals only when more, much more of society recognizes that we have skills to solve problems that affect them personally. We won't do it overnight. But I predict that 5 years from now, we will be much more widely known and recognized than we are now. And, bluntly, improvement of our professional image can do much to enhance career opportunities for each of us.

This Society will do as much, or as little, for our profession as we make it do. I believe that we need to promote, sell if you

will, the fact that just as wood is our one great renewable resource, so wood scientists and technologists are the best-qualified people to help the public use it effectively. We won't do this by sitting in conferences and telling each other that we are professionals. We will only do it by selling our abilities to the public. And we will be professionals only when a large segment of the public regards us as such. The Society is a potentially splendid vehicle for getting our message out; let's use it.

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