

## SURVEY RESULTS

In the last newsletter we sent out a questionnaire to get a better picture of who owns Sidewinders, why, and what suggestions they might have that would help make the Association more responsive to its members. Some interesting facts came to light. Following is a recap of some of the things we found out.

A. The typical Sidewinder owner is 31 years old and has eight years sailing experience; three of them in a Sidewinder. The youngest owner was 13 and the oldest was 59! (and he only started sailing last year!!).

B. It is interesting to note that the Sidewinder was not the first boat for 76 percent of the owners. And why did they switch from another boat to a Sidewinder? The overwhelming majority of these experienced sailors (89 percent) mentioned performance. But for those who bought the Sidewinder as their first boat, only 40 percent mentioned performance. Most of the first-boat owners mentioned flexibility, light weight, looks, cost, good learner, etc. Figuring both the previously experienced and the first-boat owners together, performance was still the major reason for buying a Sidewinder (mentioned by 67 percent), with cost (44 percent) and looks (25 percent) the next two major reasons.

C. Sixty-four percent of the owners race their boats. Of the remaining 36 percent who don't race, all but one said they would like to get into racing if there were boats in their area to race with, if they lived closer to a sailing area or if they had more experience. As for enthusiasm, 81 percent ~~of all owners~~ said they were very much or somewhat enthused about taking part in Sidewinder activities, while 19 percent indicated that they were not that interested in participating.

D. On the question of whether owners thought the Sidewinder was being adequately promoted, the consensus was almost unanimous; 94 percent thought MFG was not doing a very good job of promoting the boat. The dealers fared a little better; 77 percent thought dealers were doing a bad job.

E. Concerning the question on go-fast devices, we got the only unanimous opinion of the survey! One hundred percent of those answering the question agreed with the statement, "there is no need for anymore hardware than that which is already allowed in the By-Laws." That was a surprise considering all the controversy of the last few years concerning go-fast devices, (is it that those few who have been raising all the ruckus were just too lazy or cheap to send back the questionnaire?). Whatever the reason, those who do care have spoken, and their wishes will be followed -- NO MORE GO-FAST EQUIPMENT, PERIOD!

F. Seventy-four percent of the owners were agreeable to an increase in dues from \$3 to \$5 a year. Another 17 percent would be agreeable under certain conditions. Nine percent were against the dues at this time. We just wanted to get an idea of the member's feelings on this point.

By the way, there are no plans to increase the dues,

## CONCLUSIONS

If you take time to study all the data we gathered in the survey a typical owner profile comes to light. The typical Sidewinder owner is the "typical" American: 31 years old, married, middle income, white collar or skilled laborer, a smart buyer looking for performance at a reasonable cost, unhappy with big business (in this case, the manufacturer), and out to enjoy life to it's fullest. Unfortunately, the typical owner has one more trait that is also very typical of us Americans -- he doesn't want to get involved: Over 80 percent of the owners who received a questionnaire wouldn't take just five minutes to fill it out and return it. But you wait and see, it will be that 80 percent who will squawk the loudest when things don't go the way they want them to.

If you are one of those who didn't return the questionnaire, I feel sorry for you. You are probably destined to go through life very unfulfilled and always wondering why nothing is ever the way you want it to be. But, of course, you really don't care anyhow, so it probably never will bother you -- "ignorance is bliss."

To those members who did return the questionnaire you can take pleasure in knowing that the Association is going to be run the way you want it run and its going to be run for you -- not the other 80 percent who don't give a damn. Those of you who asked questions or wanted more information have already heard from Pat Schroth or me. I hope you'll keep the questions coming and stay involved. And for all of you who took part in the survey, I want you to know that you've helped give us some good insight into who the interested members are, what your ideas are and how you want us to help you.

A word of caution: Don't become too over expectant or disappointed if things don't happen overnight. A national Association is only as strong and active as its network of local fleets. We're making headway in that direction but it's going to take a lot more involvement at the local level. That is where it has to start. There is little I can do from Wisconsin to get sailors in New Jersey or New York or Ohio or wherever involved in organized Sidewinder activities at the local level. You have to do that. And once that's done, then we can start talking about expanded national activities.

That's not a cop-out. That's reality. Go to it!

FROM LARRY BARTH