

Best Practice #011, Yahoo! Groups
Heading: Chapter Communications
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The Silicon Valley Woodturners (SVW) finds that Yahoo! Groups provide organizations, such as AAW chapters, an effective, easy to use, confidential and no cost means of communicating among their members. The Yahoo program offers the ability for the:

1. chapter to post newsletters and other notices, which members can read and download at their convenience,
2. chapter to automatically issue event/meeting reminders to members via email,
3. members to post emails that are immediately sent to all other chapter members (e.g., wood alerts)--this can be monitored or un-monitored (in our case, un-monitored - postings immediately go out to all), and
4. members can create photo albums for others to view.

To create a site like this for your chapter, follow the instructions below from Phil Roybal, SVW's website custodian:

1. Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/> and click on the Start a New Group link.
2. You're asked to select a category and subcategories for your group so people can find it. SVW's group is in Hobbies & Crafts/Crafts/Woodworking.
3. When you arrive at the right list of categories, click on the Place My Group in that category. Then give your chapter's group a name, group email address and description. You can also determine who can join the group and under what conditions. Finally, you come to a page that asks you to create your profile in the new group to determine how you will receive messages posted to the group.

SHAZAMM! Your group exists. Now you can go to the group, click on the Management link at the left of the page, and customize your group's picture and appearance. You can also go to the Invite link and invite chapter members to sign in. The invitees are issued an email invitation with a link button. If they click on the link, they become members of the group. If non-members go to your group and request membership, your custodian will receive an email asking to either approve or deny the requested membership. In our chapter, new members are invited to the Yahoo! group when they join. If members have trouble or questions they usually bring it up at the next chapter meeting.

Yahoo! Groups provide many benefits over a simple web page. It allows discussions and archives them. It allows file storage up to about 20 MB for newsletters and other documents (When ours is close to becoming full the custodian saves old newsletters and files to a CD to be kept in the club library.) And it provides places for databases, member chats, and links. All in all, a great way for chapter members to stay in touch.

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