

# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

77 surveys completed, 35 % response

## Tell Us About You

**How many years have you been a JWHA member?**

1-5 Year	6-10 Year	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	Over 20 Year
23	9	13	3	26

**My JWHA membership dues are paid by**

Me	My employer	Other
65	5	3

**Why did you join the JWHA?**

- Interest in Mormon history
- To meet other researchers
- It was a great place to present papers and meet people in my field. I was a graduate student at the time and only knew most authors from their articles and books. I had met very, very few of them until I attended a JWHA meeting.
- Initially, to get the journal. Now it is because I feel part of the JWHA family.
- I love the History of the Restoration
- Journal / Conferences/ association with others
- Interest in history of Mormonism
- Interest in 19th century history of the movement
- Interested in Restoration history.
- I was active in MHA and publish some Mormon history
- Interest in Mormon History
- I'm a Mormon Studies historian and other church history guilds (even AAR) just don't talk about Mormon Studies to my liking.
- Husband is in it and he really enjoys the people and fellowship
- Interest in church history.
- Mormon history and friends.
- Good ol' history buff said I should, he was correct
- So I could present papers
- I am interested in church history. I honestly had not heard of JWHA until I joined the Mormon History Association and they asked if wanted to join JWHA as well. I am happy I joined.
- Billie Young urged me to re-join after I had dropped my membership several years ago.
- Interested in the board subject of Mormonism
- I love Mormon History
- For the journal
- I have an interest in Mormon history
- To support my research.
- Member of Historic Sites Foundation Board. Appreciation and passion for history
- Curious about church history. Interested in the different aspects of church history the journal offers.
- I did when I joined MHA.

# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

- Interested in the journal.
- Out of responsibility to the world of Mormonism. It's always time to ask more questions.
- To learn and to interact with others in Mormon history field, especially those who are skeptics.
- Loved church history and guided at the Kirtland Temple and the Temple in Independence, MO
- I was a student who presented a paper and decided to stick around.
- Studying Church History is a passion — especially with regard to the multitude of things that occurred in Nauvoo.
- Shared interests in the history of the Restoration
- To find an open forum for restoration studies.
- To get the journal, go to yearly conference, mingle with friends.
- Like to read church history
- Why else? Mormon history interest.
- For interaction with people with common interests and to share scholarship.
- Original founder
- I am interested in church history.
- Love of Community of Christ history
- I was interested in the history of the RLDS movement, wanted to maintain contact with old friends and as a way to stay connected to my religious heritage.
- Honesty in history and information
- Interest in Mormon history
- I love the history of all kinds of Mormonism's, and besides that, meeting RLDS historians and enjoying their work (especially responses to papers at MHA) made affiliation irresistible.
- A place to think.
- Originally to keep up on developments and writings by RLDS members and scholars.
- Interest in the subject and the members. Invited by a board member.
- I took Alma Blair's "History of the Latter Day Saints" class at Graceland in 1974. I got hooked on reading scholarly appraisals of our history.
- Interest in Mormon history, including multiple perspectives.
- Mistake
- Very much interested in the Restoration movement
- Extremely interested in Restoration History. Like to present historical material. Love the journal.
- My love of Latter Day Saint history.
- Interest in Mormon History and interaction with others who have broad interests in Mormon History.
- I have a degree in Western US and Mormon history.
- Interest in Mormon History
- Interested in Mormon history in general and especially RLDS/C of Christ history.
- In all thy getting, get understanding. Yearly conferences have filled the bill admirably.
- I love history and genealogy and theology. JWHA does a bit of all three.
- Interest in Mormon and American history.
- It represents my field of study--the RLDS Church.
- Interested in Restoration history.

# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

- My primary areas of research are on Mormon schism. JWHA and the journal keep me up to date on the latest in the field.
- Like the small community feel, have many friends who belong
- Independent researcher of American history
- My husband wrote a book about Joseph Smith and defended it at a JWHA meeting. My childhood fascination with church history was reignited and so we decided to join. Besides, so many of our friends and family belonged.
- To become the Executive Secretary.
- Staying in the know, scholarship.
- I helped found it, so we could have one more trustworthy vehicle to explore church history in a climate of detachment, scholarly rapport, and mutual respect.

## JWHA Benefits

Please rate the following membership benefits:

	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Not Important</i>
<i>JWHA Journal</i> (currently published twice a year)	68	6	0
Annual Conference	47	21	4
Discount registration for annual conference	19	31	24
<i>JWHA Newsletter</i> (currently published three times a year)	33	37	3
JWHA Website	28	36	9
Membership E-directory	16	40	18
Full voting privileges at membership meetings	24	30	21

## Conferences

How often should JWHA conferences be held?

Annually	Semi-annually	Every two years	Never	In connection with a historic anniversary
64	5	2	0	0

Past tradition has rotated the conference location between points with significance to the Restoration, especially Community of Christ. What would be your preference?

Continue visiting various important historical sites	Stay in Independence for all conferences	Rotate between Independence, Kirtland, and Nauvoo
48	7	11

Other:

- I would add Lamoni to the list.
- Rotate Independence, Lamoni, Kirtland, Nauvoo. Other selections should be offered to a full vote of the membership for approval.

# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

- Every other year in Independence. Other years at other restoration sites with good accommodations.
- Colorado is still a viable conference site.
- Currently a good system
- Independence, Nauvoo, Kirkland, and Lamoni
- Not relevant to me, since I never am able to attend
- I am 90 years old and no longer able to participate. I have enjoyed this organization immensely.
- I would love if you could come out west.
- Independence 2 out of 3 years and alternate between Kirtland and Nauvoo the third year.
- I would not object to two conferences yearly, but I am happy with the current setup.
- Have never attended a conference so I'm not qualified to give opinion on the matter one way or another.
- Independence usually has the largest attendance. Maybe meet in Independence years 1 & 2, away from Independence year 3.

## **Are there any specific locations where you would choose NOT to attend? Why?**

- Any place on the US State Department do not travel list.
- No
- Europe, Asia, and South America, due to extra time away from home.
- Some places are very difficult or expensive to get to.
- I probably would not attend an overseas conference.
- If a conference site was a particular long drive from a commercial airport, I may chose not to attend.
- Nowhere in particular, but cost of travel and lodging is still prohibitive for me, unfortunately.
- Travel is difficult for me now, which is why I rely more heavily on the Journal and the Newsletter. Please don't weigh my answers above with the same value attached to those who are faithful conference goers.
- Probably not. The location is less important than the timing--when the conference is held at a particular location and what else is going on with me.
- Tonopah, NV
- No
- I wouldn't attend if it was in Independence every year because I don't live in the area and like to see new places.
- I am now disabled and cannot travel.
- All locations I have attended are relevant
- No, as long as the site is airport convenient and has good lodging.
- Any place in Utah
- No
- No
- East Coast and West Coast are too far away.
- Places where the accommodations aren't adequate.
- Basin. Too far.
- I can travel only limited distances; therefore NY and Utah are too distant.
- No

# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

- At some point, the distance to travel is too far. I think the distance from Independence to Kirtland is about the limit for me.
- I am in Chicago, so those locations are more likely for me to attend. Depending on my participation, due to the fact that I have to pay for everything, it's harder for me to justify trips on planes.
- No
- It is tough to have to fly and then to have to drive, cost wise. I will go where ever the board decides. Nauvoo has lousy connections, but still a great venue.
- Salt Lake City, Utah
- Alaska
- Utah
- I'm not a fan of traveling, much less to places with poor housing.
- Places that are irrelevant to Community of Christ history and tradition.
- I cannot attend those other than the ones held in Independence. I am living on very limited resources.
- A nice hotel is important.

## **Regarding JWHA conferences, what features are especially enjoyable and what might be eliminated, added, or changed?**

- No comment
- I like the variety already established. Trying to cover three papers at one session is not very useful, especially if the lead paper presenter dominates the time.
- I would like to see the cost the evening banquets lowered. The food is often not that good and the price is exorbitant. Why not just do sandwich boxes for \$10 a pop rather than lousy catered food? Is the food that important? I think some forego the entire event because they don't want to fork over \$35-40 bucks for a meal.
- I am sorry I haven't been able to attend one yet. I am looking forward to it though!
- More early reorganization
- Change nothing.
- I like them just the way they are.
- Sessions and conversations. Love the greet and meet with food and beverages; a relaxed atmosphere for meeting new friends.
- Would like to eliminate so much focus on Joseph Smith's years, and spend more time on the years after his death and to the modern time. Stop talking about polygamy.
- I come for the well-researched papers and presentations.
- When able to attend, I always had problems deciding which one to go to hear. There were so many sessions I would like to have attended.
- I like the Thursday gathering and Fri/Sat banquets. The Friday night meeting is very memorable every year. Maybe add a feature like "Dick Martin Roasts"
- More Professional Historians
- Opening reception, coffee pot
- I like the current format
- The conference should be combined into two full days, instead of one full day and 3 half days. This will allow travelers to save on lodging and rental cars.

# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

- I always enjoy the Richard P. Howard lecture. The plethora of papers presented creates frustration in terms of which to attend, but it also brings such a variety of participants to the conference with whom we can meet meals and breaks.
- Tours are especially enjoyable.
- Fine as is.
- More author meets critics sessions
- No opinions here
- I like the vendor's room. I love the church history tours. The silent auction was fun. I appreciated the snacks. The panels are great.
- Invite more young historians and professional historians, and stop having the same clique talk about the same things. JWHA is the most cliquish of all professional organizations to which I belong. This is a little club of 15 who scowl at the hundreds while patting the same 15 people on the back.
- I liked the current scheduling
- Tours, tours, tours
- Sunday morning devotional services are nice with low attendance. Either make them so good or just let folks go to regular church.
- Paper presentations are great. Wish I could go to more. More sessions would help.
- No dogs allowed!
- Have only one banquet. The banquets are expensive and having two is one too many. This would open up another evening for another presentation or informal socializing and discussion. 2. Some of the bus tours have been to sites where there isn't much to see and they are also expensive. 3. Enjoy fellowship between "mountain" and "prairie saints".
- The awards banquet could be a lunch instead and the President's address that evening. Friday night could be an informal gathering. Two banquets can be expensive for attendees.
- Haven't attended on yet.
- Q&A following presentations is especially for me.
- N/A
- Enjoy opportunities to interact with others. Would like more opportunities to interact with larger groups.
- Too many banquets. (They are rather expensive.) I enjoy renewing friendships. The presentation topics are usually interesting, however, I think we need to explore more recent parts of RLDS history. I enjoyed the presentation about W. Wallace Smith a couple of years ago.
- I haven't attended yet, due to insufficient financial resources.

## Who pays your conference registration, travel and meals?

Me	My employer	Other
53	11	4

## What motivates you to attend or not attend the annual conference?

- I would love to attend, but the travel costs are not in my budget.
- How much money I have.
- Seeing what work other people are doing. Networking.
- It is a choice between MHA and this conference based on location and topics.

# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

- Specific topics of interest
- I have not attended any recently but enjoyed the ones I attended.
- My love of Latter Day Saint history.
- Cost
- Location and if I am available at the meeting date
- Money that year, location
- I am not an academic but I love meeting historians and fellow history enthusiasts. The panels are very interesting.
- To attend: I want to be up to date on recent work and who's doing it. I want to be engaged, so being part of communities like JWHA is important. Not to attend: you can buy anything in the world with money, even travel to and from and lodging at the JWHA conference. Of course, since the value of the conferences is immeasurable, despite my limited means, I appreciate the JWHA's efforts to lower the costs from what they could be.
- Topics to be discussed, whether I am feeling positive or negative at the moment, if there are scheduling conflicts.
- Cost of air fare.
- In addition to things stated above. I regard these annual conferences as something of a pilgrimage and reunion.
- The location and program.
- My interest in Mormon history and to see old friends and make new ones
- Different points of view, educational, everyone welcome.
- Meeting with friends, opportunities to do research in the area
- Material presented.
- Interested in the paper sessions, tours and associations.
- The conference program entices me to come as does the memory of the enriching experience of the year before.
- Don't have time right now
- The papers and presentations, seeing old friends.
- Interest in latest in church history
- On occasion a conflict on my calendar occurs rendering me unable to attend.
- I can't really attend
- Conference subject matter. Do not care for presentation topics that have focused on minutiae of the 1830-1844 period. Travel distance has caused me to not attend sometimes.
- Program and interactions
- Availability.
- Health issues, and distance required to travel from my home.
- Have not attended in the past
- Subject matter of the conference and the preliminary program list.
- Recently, the only reason I haven't been able to go is because of personal reasons (like, for example, I'm currently pregnant so this year's conference is unlikely)
- Where and when
- That history I need along w/fellowship of the talent I've met
- Meeting people and collaboration with others on material they have a joint interest. Annual meeting is important to gather. We just need more participation with the younger

# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

crowd. We are graying too much as an organization. Need to attract a younger crowd. This is the area we should discount. The older folks are the bread and butter and do not need the discounts. Go after these academic institutions with the young.

- I enjoy the speakers and choice of conferences. The cost for hotels is usually reasonable and in nice accommodations.
- Program and health
- Affordability
- Location
- The location.
- Relevance of sessions to Mormon origins in 1820s rather than RLDS traditions of 1950s.
- Excellent presentations
- I haven't been able to attend because of scheduling conflicts. Early fall is a bit difficult.
- Location and/or access to travel funds
- I like to attend every year when I can. I usually only miss if funding is not available for a variety of reasons.
- The biggest factor is the quality of the scholarly interaction and the reception of my scholarship. It would be very helpful to have more academics and professional scholars involved, more C of C linked people, and fewer amateur LDS in decision making positions. My expenses won't be paid by an employer once I'm retired but still actively producing scholarship.
- I would attend every year, but budgets do not always allow for that.
- The primary reason I usually miss the JWHA Conference is that I have another conflicting conference with the Communal Studies Association that is usually one or two weeks apart from the JWHA, so arranging to attend two conferences that are so close together is usually difficult for me.
- Interest in site and convenience.
- I enjoy the scholarly exchange
- I attend to network with fellow Mormon Historians and to hear fresh viewpoints and presentations on familiar topics.
- My interest in Community of Christ history
- Attend=visits to historical sites, meet with friends  
Not attend= getting time off from work, instance
- Conference seems to be for academics or scholars? I'm just a curious sort that enjoys the articles. I don't research or write so I did not feel I was the target audience for the conference.
- Program/Location
- As I said before, I am partially disabled and can no longer travel.
- Distance, time, and expense. I will probably never attend. But I appreciate the edited and reported insights from those conferences.
- Time, distance, and local obligations prevent my attendance.

## **Journals and Newsletter**

**With the expanding online resources and increasing costs of publication and distribution, *The Journal of the John Whitmer Historical Association* should be published:**



# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

Semi-annually (current)	Quarterly	Annually	Never
45	11	16	0

Some scholarly journals are converting to only online publication and distribution making them available only through electronic media. This could be a useful future option for *The Journal of the John Whitmer Historical Association*?

Yes	No
27	46

The JWHA Newsletter should be published?

Quarterly (current)	Semi-annually	Annually	Never
33	36	4	1

Converting the JWHA Newsletter to only online publication and distribution could be a useful future option.

Yes	No
53	19

## John Whitmer Books

Should JWHA continue to maintain an imprint and book publishing division?

Yes	No
66	7

JWHA Books should publish volumes

Only dealing with the RLDS/Community of Christ tradition	Any restoration topic
9	60

Other? Please list:

- It's fine to publish popular titles if they pay the bills but most of the titles should be of a high quality scholarly sort, even (or especially) if they are not likely to be published by some other scholarly venue.
- Quality manuscripts dealing with any Restoration topic should be sought and published.
- Opening the Journal to a broad selection of restoration topics
- JWHA books serves a great purpose. That being said, I don't want to keep publishing if it will be a greater financial burden to JWHA than a gift.
- I'm keenly aware that longtime Mormon history publishers like Signature, Kofford Books, John Whitmer Books are rare, and fill a definite niche that the "celebrity" publications by the University of Oklahoma and Oxford University Press don't touch. I realize that there are financial considerations, but I also believe that many levels of readers are loyal to publishers who produce "my kind of book" whatever that kind is.

# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

- Include works of interest to LDS readership.
- JW Books are valuable since they make available a publisher for Mormon history outside the Utah tradition, which might not otherwise get published in any of the organs now dominated by Utah Mormonism
- This has turned into a vanity press for John Hamer and his friends.
- There is not enough advertising regarding publications of the John Whitmer Books.
- And shared vision topics. JWHA should maintain their unique focus. Each has a specific mission.
- A more robust number of RLDS/Community of Christ publications could be very helpful
- Be willing to publish more articles of events in the 20th century, and not be restricted to 1820-1844.

## JWHA Website

How often do you visit the JWHA Website ([www.jwha.info](http://www.jwha.info))?

Daily	Monthly	Seldom	Never	In conjunction with the upcoming conference
0	43	15	2	12

What suggestions for improvement do you have for the website?

- It needs more of everything
- I think it is fine just as it is.
- Honestly I don't go to it very often - only around conference registration.
- It used to have a database listing past issues, articles, and authors for the journal. That feature was very helpful for me since JWHA Journal is not accessible via online sources.
- The website is fine
- Keep it up to date! A few days ago it did not yet have this year's officers and committee members. When it is up to date, it's terrific.
- If I were more skilled at navigating it, my opinion would be more valuable. As it is, I've been able to find what I need with a little patience and sometimes a couple of tries, but I don't think the problem is with the website--just with my inexperience.
- None
- None, really. I don't frequent the site often enough to have an opinion
- Keep building with more information. Different corners or watering holes for people to contact and discuss. Blogs' are helpful if disciplined and do not get out of control.
- The site needs to be current in all respects.
- Be able to download the past volumes in a single PDF or even be able to download an article.
- Downloadable back issues in .pdf format. More like the Dialogue journal of Mormon thought where you can get the whole issue or just an article
- Haven't visited often enough to have any suggestions for improvement.
- It could be updated more often. I seldom find what I'm looking for there.
- None at the moment.

# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

- More articles and misc. historical and other information.
- When I do visit it is frequently not up to date.

## Organization

**According to the Policy Manual of JWHA, the Objective of the John Whitmer Historical Association is to**

- Create and encourage interest in Latter Day Saint history, Restoration Studies, especially the history of the Community of Christ.
- Stimulate scholarly research and publication in the field of Latter Day Saint history Restoration Studies.
- Promote communication among scholars of Latter Day Saint history Restoration Studies.
- Provide an institutional vehicle for the dissemination of the fruits of scholarly research to members of the Latter Day Saint Restoration churches and other interested persons.

**Are we meeting our purpose?**

Yes	No
73	2

**If no, where do we need to improve?**

- Recruit more academics and full-time scholars, especially younger people.
- But there's definitely room for improvement.
- Spending too much time on LDS Mormon viewpoints of Joseph Smith years.
- Sorry to get sarcastic, but the longer the survey became as I worked my way to the bottom, the more I remembered you don't really care what the average member thinks.
- Reach out to the younger crowd, this is the only way to grow the organization. Need to be more collaborating and mentoring by the older generation. Not exclusionary.
- However, since Restoration Studies has been folded into JWHA it is not as able to promote and encourage theological dialogue

**Is JWHA as an organization meeting your needs as a member?**

Yes	No
70	3

**If no, where do we need to improve?**

- Value serious scholarship to a greater extent.
- Generally
- Keep building on what you are doing. Do not spend down the endowment fund to cover daily operating costs. This not good. I have brought this up before with little heeding.
- See the above
- But again, room for improvement.

**How can we promote/increase JWHA membership?**

- Not sure. Actively recruit more academics.

# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

- Volunteers to represent your interests at church reunions.
- Publish books and other material regularly and on schedule
- Advertise. Especially using FREE social media. JWHA seems missing in action on blogs, FB, and elsewhere. Stream conferences online (for a registration fee) to those who can't physically attend.
- It can only be done through more time being spent among Community of Christ connections rather than relying on BYU, LDS Church History Department and MHA.
- Maybe a YouTube-like video about what the C of C is all about. Have some members share their thoughts and experiences about membership in this church.
- Make a pitch to college/university professors and invite them to offer papers for publication and/or speaking at conferences.
- Members invite personal to attend. Lou is reason I joined.
- Maintain the excellent quality of the JWHAJ and excellent quality of the annual conference.
- I believe staying in one location, Independence, will allow for the many numerous congregations to attend. It also has enough hotels, food, housing to make the trip doable for more people.
- Advertise in local congregation's Sunday bulletins. Advertise at institutions of higher learning where we have young members already.
- Maintain the quality we have.
- Greater outreach to LDS Church members through MHA, Sunstone (Salt Lake and regional), etc.
- Send promotional materials for display on church bulletin boards. Advertise in Saints Herald.
- Ha ha. Do you really care? Oh, yes, the clique needs financial contributors to pay the way of the clique.
- We can encourage our friends to join JWHA. Use the newsletter to promote the association. Encourage individuals to attend annual conference. Keep the spirit of openness.
- Media presence at conferences, etc
- Student academic organizations.
- How do people know about JWHA? Is it only by word of mouth or do we advertise in the Herald or other "Mormon" periodicals? 2. Would a mini-conference immediately before or after the C of C conference attract C of C members from around the world and stimulate their interest in Restoration history?
- Advertise with like organizations. Promote the organization to student history groups. Make conferences fun.
- MHA promotions are probably the best vehicle, but I take the opportunity to show historically interested friends particular articles that appeal to me, and I do so on a rather frequent basis.
- Not sure.
- Advertise in church publications
- Not everyone is a history buff, but I'm not sure the average member of Community of Christ knows we exist. How do we advertise JWHA?
- There are plenty of people engaged with Restoration traditions online, but not in the mode of historical scholarship. The online community should be engaged deeply in both

# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

historical awareness and ethical responsibility for the future. JWHA should figure prominently in raising historical awareness in online communities interested in Restoration traditions. This might be one of the most important ways for the JWHA to carry out the “prophetic” commitment of the Restoration traditions.

## Would you be willing to volunteer your time to the JWHA?

Yes, I could offer time if available	Yes, I could offer time in conference preparation.	Yes, I could offer time to JWHA Books when available.	No, I'm unable at this time.
<p style="text-align: center;">27</p> <p>Mark Staker Sally Roth Keith Wilson Henry Goldman Greg Smith So much for an anonymous survey. :-) Steve Mayfield Glen Larson Melvin Johnson John Dinger Ryan S. Bingham Craig Foster David Howlett Lew Weigand Halli Johnson Terry O'Leary I loved working with JWHA. Once I defend my dissertation I'm happy to volunteer wherever I'm needed. I would like to be of service to the organization, if possible. I review articles for JWHAJ</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>Sherry Mesle-Morain</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>Gary Bergera</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">30</p>

## What suggestions do you have for the current board?

- Bring back some old timers like Al Blair
- Help us all to build commitment to historical understanding.
- In whatever you do abide by our By-laws. Make sure decisions are for the benefit of the association. Do not make difficult policy to follow. Make sure you know the financial status of JWHA and always be open and ask questions. Thanks for serving!
- It is fine as it is. By the way, are my dues due?
- JWHA is well run and I appreciate the efforts of those who currently serve. Thanks, Keith Wilson
- Keep up the good work. Don't take my opinions too seriously, since I have always been only a marginal member, even though a charter member.
- Let the membership offer suggestions for conference themes and conference content

# JWHA 2016 Membership Survey Results

- Maintain the goal of appealing to interests of members outside of the Community of Christ
- My involvement in recent years is limited to reading the Journal. I enjoy it and think that Bill Morain and the other people running it are doing a fine job.
- None right now.
- None.
- None. Wonderful bunch of people.
- Put some young people on the board.
- Thank you for your hard work.
- This is a fine organization. Keep pushing the boundaries of our understanding of the past.
- Work together for the good of the C of C and in welcoming new ideas and direction. Have a balance of C of C and LDS board members who strive for collaboration and unity.
- Work with a consultant for advice on how to grow JWHA into a recognized scholarly membership association.