Letter from the Editor

With the world economy in its present state and everyone trying to make ends meet, it is a small wonder that groups like the International Oak Society manage to survive. Personally, my wife and I have been working very hard just to support ourselves and consequently much of our free time has been occupied in doing so. We must apologize to our members for the delay in releasing this third issue. This publication is compiled on a free-time basis and unfortunately, in these times, it is something that most of us have little to spare. Indeed, it is challenging to fulfill the obligation to members to become more familiar and to share the appreciation of this noble genus of trees, *Quercus* and its vast array of varieties and forms is too important not to have a society such as ours devoted to it. In these times of difficulty, I remind myself of this truth.

We will no longer be publishing a seed exchange forum as we did with issues #1 and #2. The new plan of seed exchange is modeled upon other successful plant society exchanges which enable members to obtain rare and unusual species of plant via seed form. The first step of this new plan is for collectors of fresh acorns to donate some of their seed lots to the IOS's exchange distribution point (hopefully, there will be two, being an worldwide organization). In the near future, we will have distribution points established. Secondly, a catalogue or listing of all the collected materials will be compiled and sent to members wishing to participate in the seed exchange. All members wishing to participate in the seed exchange need to fill out the enclosed form and send it to the Journal Office. Thirdly, seed lots of 5 to 20 acorns will be priced according to rarity and availability. All proceeds will go to the IOS to cover the costs of shipping, to fund publication costs and improvements, to fund events (such as the Conference in 1994) and promotions of the Society for new members. We in no way wish to discourage our members from writing to each other to exchange seeds. To assist in this step further, we have enclosed a current membership list.

We have received a wonderful response to the aforementioned Oak Conference '94, to be held in Midwestern United States, possibly at the Morton Arboretum near Chicago. The many ideas and comments upon the subject were very enlightening and we, like everyone, are anxious to meet the wonderful people who make up our organization. Some of the responses are in this issue's "Letters to the Editor." With it still being over a year away, further developments will be published in the next issue.

Despite my rather solemn opening, the outlook for the IOS is far from depressing. We have come a long way since our little group of enthusiastic pen pals. Membership has been steadily increasing and we received a lot of response to the promotional brochures we compiled and mailed. We have enclosed a brochure for you to pass on. We hope to arrange membership cards for everyone in the near future so that there is tangible identification of belonging to the IOS. In future issues we will be introducing advertising space to further generate income to our society.
Since commencing this project, we have increased our knowledge of computers and we can now organize our database more efficiently. We are quite confident that we can handle membership inquiries and the general running of the "business." Of course, we need not repeat, the experiences and observations of our members are welcome at any time to be shared amongst our fellow enthusiasts. Many of you have contributed already, and for this, we thank you.

In order to keep the Society growing, we need help from all of you by sharing your oak experiences, and most of all, to maintain the level of enthusiasm which commenced the IOS from the very beginning.