

## BC HISTORICAL FEDERATION PUBLICATIONS SURVEY SUMMER 2010

Thank you to participants in the 2010 survey of all aspects of BC Historical Federation publications including the magazine, newsletter, website and special projects. The survey was conducted by the BC Historical Federation Publications Committee. Thank you to the compiler.

The BC Historical Federation Council on Feb. 6, 2011 received the summary report and approved the posting of the summary to *bchistory.ca*. A notice will go in the BCHF newsletter informing members and thanking them for their participation.

45 surveys were returned. Several people commented they did not have computers and could not access online information. There was also confusion about membership categories e.g. affiliates and associates.

### POSITIVES:

Respondents liked most the range and variety of reliable and interesting articles and book reviews on BC History in the magazine. They appreciated the website, the newsletter and special projects. Over half the respondents indicated interest in Windows and the Sockeye special. Two-thirds of the respondents were interested in a collection of articles on themes in BC History, e.g. social history, politics, paddlewheelers, canneries and women.

Book reviews influence book purchases of 75% respondents.

BC History has been attracting newer readers as half of the respondents have been subscribers for 10 years or less.

Readership is split almost equally between men and women. The majority of respondents have post secondary education. Respondents have a range of occupations. Two-thirds are retired.

Many respondents praised the magazine.

### CHALLENGES:

Respondents liked least the irregular publication schedule of the magazine, the length of the book reviews and the lack of maps. Some respondents also asked for scholarship essays, less scholarly articles, more on the interior, and better quality photographs.

11% of subscribers donate or pass on their magazines. 20% keep the magazine short term. Perhaps more subscribers could be encouraged to donate back issues to museums, libraries, seniors centres etc.

Respondents reside or subscribe mainly in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley [37%] and Vancouver Island [31%]. Only 20% identified themselves as Interior residents. BCHF needs to promote publications in the Interior of the province.

Respondents to the survey are mainly over 50 [86%]. This and the comment that many do not have internet access indicates website users did not respond to the survey, and that we should promote BCHF publications with younger people.

Survey respondents are mainly subscribers [73%]. Retail sales could be promoted. One person commented that BC History should be available in stores.

Gift subscriptions are given by 20% respondents and 19 knew about gift subscriptions but 16 did not. This is another area for promotion.

Challenge for the newsletter seems to be distribution more than content.

Challenge for the website seems to be limits on internet access.

Challenge for special projects seems to be awareness/promotion.

#### SUGGESTIONS:

##### *BC History:*

Editorials; shorter book reviews, reviews of DVDs and websites.

More maps; better quality photographs.

Topics: towns, immigration history, labour, business, Interior of the province.

Themed issues.

Student scholarship essays.

List of books entered in competition as well as winners.

Cost for sale and subscription could be higher.

*BCHF Newsletter:* Do editorials give more news, feature societies, give upcoming events including those of Heritage BC, BCMA and AABC.

The challenge here might be that not all members or subscribers get the newsletter on a regular basis, so they are not aware.

*Website:* Blog, calendar of events, online subscription and membership, book reviews. A few comments re navigation and pdfs. Adobe acrobat is available on each page.

The suggestion to partner with Knowledge Network re History DVDs is an interesting one.

It is interesting to see the comments that 80% might purchase a book noted in BCHF publications, and that half of respondents are interested in historical tours, rare books, antiques and collectibles, other magazines, DVDs, insurance, local arts and crafts.

## CONCLUSION

This survey indicates respondents and the BCHF Publications Committee are in accord about what is being done and what needs to be done. This survey is a useful tool going into reviewing the Publications Committee long range plan.

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