



The ASBC Pages

Results of the 2011 ASBC Survey

In the Fall 2011, we conducted a survey of the ASBC's past and present membership through an online questionnaire. Our goal was to get feedback and suggestions on a few key issues. These included: (1) present and potential constitutional mandates, (2) diminished membership and participation; and (3) the Society's publication, *The Midden*.

We had 153 responses, from both current and previous members, who took time to give us their thoughts and suggestions. To all of our respondents, we say a tremendous, *Thank you!*

The brief summary provided here addresses the results that are directly relevant to *The Midden*. The publication has been the attention of some discussion recently, as some members have suggested transforming *The Midden* into an online resource. This could result in lower production and mailing costs and increased

accessibility to a wider public audience. The latter may better serve the ASBC's mandate of public education.

Other comments from ASBC members stressed the importance of lectures and field events like walking tours as selling-points for membership. While, at this time, it seems prudent for the ASBC to shore up its strengths prior to building others, we look forward to pursuing such events in the near future.

The below summary begins with a short list of the key findings, details the relevant questions and results, includes some comments by the membership, and concludes with some discussion on the future of *The Midden*.

The survey results can be found on the ASBC website:

<http://asbc.bc.ca/content/asbc-membership-survey-2011>

Key Findings

- *The Midden* represents the main reason why members have maintained Society membership.
- *The Midden* is ranked highest in satisfaction among ASBC services.
- Sixty-three percent of *Midden* subscribers read it in its entirety.
- *The Midden* and public lectures rank highest for future Society activities.

Results

What are the main reasons you have maintained membership? (check all that apply)

Subscription to <i>The Midden</i>	78%
Interest in public archaeology	68%
Public lectures	56%
Sense of community	53%

Which parts of *The Midden* do you regularly read? (check all that apply)

I read all of <i>The Midden</i>	63%
Articles	26%
Artifact features	11%
Book reviews	7%
I do not read <i>The Midden</i>	5%

How satisfied have you been with ASBC services?

The Midden

Satisfied	79%
Indifferent	15%
Unsatisfied	7%

Public lectures

Satisfied	63%
Indifferent	33%
Unsatisfied	4%

Public archaeology events

Satisfied	20%
Indifferent	52%
Unsatisfied	30%

Looking to the future, what services would you like to see the ASBC focus on? (check all that apply)

Public lectures	67%
<i>The Midden</i>	66%
Field trips/interpretive walks	64%
Public arch. days at museums	51%
Semi-annual local conferences	40%

Comments from Membership

What features or topics would you like to see more of in *The Midden*?

"I love *The Midden* as it is!"

"A broader scope of archaeology in B.C.; there seems to be repetition from the same contributors."

"*The Midden* should continue with the good balance of informed public policy debate (this is such an essential issue and a key purpose of the ASBC itself) and reports from field projects and collaborations with First Nations that are ongoing."

"More to do with archaeological discoveries in B.C.—a great deal less to do with poorly formed opinions of often largely ignorant students and fewer book reviews about books that are no practical interest to archaeologists, except a handful of academics."

"Current issues in B.C. and NWC archaeology, including controversies generated by CRM."

"The problem with *The Midden*—and I know that's not what you're asking!—is it's become too academic. There are other media where scholars and wannabe scholars and those seeking tenure can write. But there's nowhere else where we can read accessible articles about B.C. archaeology."

"Technical reports, microscopic analyses (phytoliths, pollen, starch, protein, ancient DNA, animal tissues, lithic usewear, etc.), paleoethnobotany, faunal analysis, taphonomy, museum studies."

"ONLINE ACCESS—members and the executive in Victoria have suggested this for years but communication is so poor across the gulf."

"*The Midden* is getting to be a little bit 'inside baseball' with a lot of professional practice issues and grievances being aired out there. I see it as first and foremost a venue to publicize amazing B.C. Archaeology. Perhaps there should be an e-newsletter or a discussion forum for the other issues."

"More input from students and the public."

"Provide digital copies of *The Midden* and forego hard copies."

"More of the good debate and thought in *The Midden* should trickle into the mainstream media."

"Archaeology is political, thus more politics."

Some Concluding Remarks...

Clearly, there is a wide range of opinion regarding the present and future of *The Midden*. For some, the opinions expressed in articles are "too political," while others have challenged us to more overtly engage in discussions regarding politics and controversy in archaeology. Some people would like to see more technical reports and articles featuring scientific analyses of sites and artifacts, yet others suggest that the tone of *The Midden* is "too academic."

The Midden is the product of those who are interested and involved in B.C. archaeology and, like any group, diversity in approach and opinion is both to be expected and encouraged. In our 2011 issues, we tried to highlight media reporting of archaeology, First Nations' perspectives on heritage, and the policy and practice of cultural resource management, as well as artifact biographies, new site reports and reviews of recent books of inter-

est to ASBC members. Our 2012 issues will continue all of these themes. We encourage contributions that address controversial aspects of archaeology as *The Midden* represents one of the only places where these topics are regularly discussed. We especially invite students, First Nations and members of the interested public to contribute by submitting letters, articles and features, and we will be liaising with various communities to welcome their participation.

One issue that has been on the table for some time is taking *The Midden* online. We agree in principle that offering a digital version may result in lower costs and increased public visibility for the ASBC. We must also be cautious not to rush toward this goal, as *The Midden* is presently the Society's core undertaking, as illustrated by this recent survey. We will be looking into this idea further and will keep you all posted.

With Thanks again to all who contributed, *The ASBC Executive*

Craig Rust (President), Rich Hutchings (Vice-President), Jim Pound (Treasurer), Sarah Smith (Membership), Kristy Whitehurst (Secretary), Marina La Salle (Midden)