

User Survey Final Report

The HPS User Survey, conducted between April and June 2007 asked HPS members for their views on the Society and for any thoughts and suggestions that they might have. This article is the final report of the survey results and is a summary of members' comments and suggestions. The Officers and Board thank those who responded for their useful feedback and comments.

We would like to congratulate Mrs. A. C. Davies of Wigtownshire, Scotland, who won the free one-year HPS membership.

This table shows the Survey response percentages for total membership, those who receive Haiti Philately via e-mail, and those who receive it through the regular post. The overall response rate of 28 percent is consistent with surveys of this type but kudos must go to our members who responded using regular post with a 100 percent response rate!

	Membership	Responses Received	% Return
Total	86	24	28%
E-mail	75	13	17%
Regular Post	11	11	100%

The survey focused on four areas; the Haiti Philately journal, the Society's auction, the HPS website, and members' overall satisfaction with the Society. Each area is presented in detail below. Percentage totals may not necessarily total to 100 percent and respondent counts may not add to 24 because not all respondents answered all questions.

Haiti Philately

Members' views on Haiti Philately (HP) are overwhelmingly positive. Ninety-six percent of members read every issue of HP and four percent read most issues. Seventy-one percent rate the overall quality excellent while twenty-nine percent rate it good. Sixty-three percent read HP in thirty minutes to an hour, twenty-one percent read it in thirty minutes or less, and seventeen percent take more than an hour. Eighty-eight percent think that the articles have the right level of complexity while thirteen percent find them either too advanced or too specialized.

Eighty-eight percent think that the articles are relevant, timely, and current while thirteen percent do not always find them so. Fifty-four percent of our members find that the articles serve their collecting interests, twenty-one percent do sometimes, but seventeen percent do not. Ninety-one percent find the articles relevant and current.

Although one hundred percent of respondents are satisfied with both the publication frequency and current layout, some want more color and do not like the two-column

format. There were suggestions to increase publication to twice monthly or 5 times per year.

Members would like to see more articles about:

1. Stamps -- errors, varieties, and proofs, the early 1950s Haitian Renaissance period, covers, the Haitian postal system and small post offices, early material and modern issues, revenues, Haiti postcards, and topicals.
2. Technical issues -- how to tell real overprints from fakes/forgeries, a “Beginner’s Corner” with articles on basics (overprint and surcharge differences, postmarks, etc.), and detecting forged stamps.
3. History -- the social history of Haiti, US intervention and occupation, postal history, and historical background to articles.

Several members said that all articles were interesting but the most interesting were those specifically about stamps: 19th century and other early issues, current issues, revenues, forgery identification, cinderellas and locals, and specialized studies. Other areas noted were postal and post office history, US Navy ship arrivals, anything by F. Burton Sellers or Carroll Lloyd, biographies of persons appearing on stamps, and general information about what is going on in the Society and Haiti collecting.

Articles mentioned as least interesting were those about postal rates, US Naval activities, post-1945 issues, “pure” philately, plating, covers, revenues, and those with a thematic focus or excessive detail.

Other comments and suggestions were to send the auction separately from the HP journal, not to devote an entire issue to a single article, to begin work on a specialized Haiti catalogue, and to add more pages for articles and illustrations.

HPS Auction

Eighty-eight percent of respondents consider the auction to be a worthwhile service, and seventy-one percent participate in it. Seventy-nine percent were satisfied with the quality of the material offered, and seventy-one percent said that the material related directly to their collecting areas of interest. Sixty-three percent thought that the current frequency was appropriate, but seventeen percent would like to see more frequent auctions, providing that good quality material is available and that the increased administrative workload can be handled. Twenty-five percent say that they have material for sale in the auction while forty-six percent do not.

Seventy-nine percent think that the costs associated with the auction are reasonable. Forty-six percent believe that raising buyer and seller commissions is a good idea, though twenty-nine percent oppose any price changes. Those who support an increase suggested amounts from 10% up to 15-20%. Fifty percent consider the minimum bids realistic and reasonable. Forty-two percent use the published prices realized while twenty percent do

not. Thirty-eight percent would like to see material from countries in addition to Haiti included in the auction, but forty-two percent would not.

Suggested changes include providing more modern material, postcards, and more scans and better quality color images/photos and illustrations of auction material.

HPS Website

Forty-two percent of respondents visit the website regularly. Twenty-five percent of regular visitors spend 15 minutes or less on the site while eight percent spend longer. Another eight percent spend as much time as necessary. Twenty-nine percent find what they are looking for, but thirteen percent do not. Forty-six percent believe that the site provides information not available elsewhere on the web. Fifty percent find the site easy to navigate, and eighty-eight percent are satisfied with its overall format and design. Forty-six percent say that the site compares favorably with other sites with which they are familiar. Forty-two percent consider the content current, and twenty-nine percent say that it is relevant to their specific collecting needs.

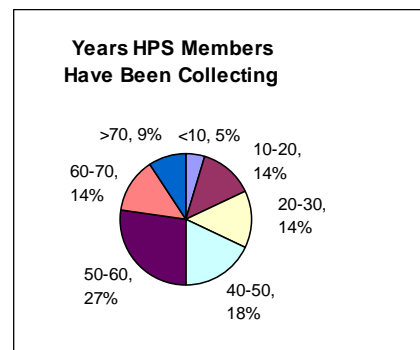
Forty-six percent of respondents would like to see additional material and information on the website. This includes a members' area for posting messages, questions, want lists, and for interacting with other members. Respondents also suggested that specific areas of interest such as forgeries, overprints, first, early, and modern issues have their own pages. Abstracts of HP articles and general information on Haiti and its history were mentioned as desirable. Society information such as bylaws, election results, recruiting materials, and other Society business should also be available on-line. One member suggested providing advertising and dealer price lists for a fee.

There were appreciative comments on the efforts of the webmaster to create and maintain the website both in the past and in the future.

The Society and You, the Members

Eighty-eight percent of respondents stated that the HPS meets their philatelic needs very well or excellently, and ninety-six percent said that their interaction with HPS Officers has been positive. Seventy-five percent said that the HPS compares favorably with other philatelic societies. Ninety-two percent said that the cost of membership is reasonable. Fifty-four percent said that they usually vote in Society elections, thirteen percent vote sometimes and twenty-one percent never vote.

This pie chart shows how diverse we are in collecting years; most of us fall in the 50-year slice but a few, with under 10 years, have just started, while have some have gone on for over 70 years. Congratulations!



Ninety-two percent of respondents stated that they receive specific benefits from their membership such as: information and knowledge of Haitian stamps, postal history, and Haiti in general; meeting and interacting with other members and people with similar philatelic interests; and the CD of back issues, the auction, and the HP journal. Twenty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they would be willing to support a Society project.

Collecting interests include postal history, stationery, early postmarks and post offices, stamps ranging from the early classics to modern issues, revenues, airmails and cancellations, souvenir sheets, errors, first flights, overprints, forgeries, covers and US Navy and occupation era.

Our members specialize in flight covers, errors and varieties, plating, 19th century British and French stamped covers, issues from 1890 through 1920, and town cancels.

Four members said that they had examples of postage stamps overprinted as revenues, and four of you also said that you have unique or rare items.

Eighty-eight percent of our members have collecting interests in addition to Haiti. These include the world and its countries; USA and its possessions, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Europa, Dutch colonies, Norway, Great Britain, Indonesia, Canada, Siam, the UN, and Jamaica. Other areas mentioned were EFOs, World Refugee Year and World Malaria Year issues and varieties, dead countries, topicals, cinderellas, locals, fantasies, bogus issues and forgeries and postcards.

Sixty-seven percent had suggestions for improving the Society. Almost all related to membership; recruiting new members to expand the Society, involving current members more frequently in Society activities and services, promoting more interaction between members and overcoming our great geographic dispersion in order to get together more frequently, perhaps through yearly meetings at a major show. Other suggestions were to have a list of places to buy and sell stamps and to establish an on-line forum where members could ask/answer questions and exchange information. There were several comments congratulating the Society's Officers on a job well done.

What's Next?

The good news from the User Survey is that no responding member identified a major problem that prevents the Society from meeting its members' needs. They did identify several areas where improvements could be made. The next step is for the Society Officers and Board members to evaluate each comment and suggestion and decide to do it now, to do it in the future, or not to do it. To this end, the President will organize and direct the Society Officers and Board to evaluate all suggestions and provide an implementation recommendation. Primary evaluators will be the Society Officers associated with a particular area:

1. HP - Barbara Levine,
2. Auction - Wally DelToro,
3. Web- Bill Matthews,
4. Publicity - Gregory Carruba
5. President – Peter Jeannopoulos

The primary evaluators may call on other evaluators or Board members for assistance as necessary.

One crucial point to keep in mind is that many suggestions call for additional material for the Society journal and website; articles on various subjects, news of Haiti-related information from outside the Society, additional types of material for our auction, etc. A sufficient amount of available material is necessary if those suggestions are to be taken. Secondly, if a suggestion is something new, such as the specialized Haiti catalog, a stand-alone project with sufficient member support will be necessary in order to achieve it.

The general evaluation process would consist of:

1. Is this something new, or changes to something that we are already doing?
2. Can it be done, i.e., are the technical, financial and support means available?
3. What is the additional workload and are sufficient resources available?
4. Should it be done -- is the overall cost/benefit to the Society positive?
5. If it should be done, when? If it should be done, why not?
6. Preparation of an evaluation report addressing the above items and a recommendation on how to proceed with the suggestion,
7. Decision-making by the President and Board on which recommendations to implement, and the schedule.

The following table consolidates the suggestions into major categories, sets out some specific evaluation points for each category, and identifies the area(s) involved. The evaluators will use this table and the detailed material presented earlier to prepare their evaluation reports, recommendations, and schedules.

	Suggestion	Area(s) Involved	Specific Evaluation Points to Consider
1.	Balance number of philatelic, technical and historical articles and those of a specialized and detailed nature	HP	Prepare balanced subject content for the HP based on available articles. Does enough available material exist to support this?
2.	Send auction material separately	HP Web Auction	Determine feasibility of distributing auction listings outside the HP, such as additional electronic and postal mailings, posting on website.
3.	Provide mix of articles in every issue	HP	Ensure each HP issue contains a variety of articles and is not a single article issue. Insufficient material is a cause of the latter. Should be worked in conjunction with # 1.
4.	Increase number of articles	HP Publicity	Determine if present and backlog of articles will support expanding HP page count. Encourage more potential authors to contribute.
5.	Increase use of color and illustrations	HP Web	Encourage authors to use more color and illustrations
6.	Increase HP publication frequency		Determine whether increased publications are warranted based on available articles and additional costs
7.	Have more articles on Society members and activities	Publicity	Identify methods to encourage members to provide articles on items of interest to other members, e.g., your collection, information you have found out, etc.
8.	Increase number of auctions	Auction	Evaluate feasibility of increasing auctions based on cost and material availability
9.	Increase auction commissions	Auction	Determine whether increased commissions are feasible and if, so, what they might be. (Most suggested increase was 5-10% over current rate)
10.	Add non-Haitian material to auctions	Auction	Evaluate feasibility of expanding current auction or establishing a separate auction. Determine amount of material available and extra work involved. (Response was 38% for, 42% against.)
11.	Include more modern material and postcards	Auction	Determine whether necessary material is available from sellers and additional workload to include it in the current auction process.

12.	More scans, better quality images/photos of auction material	HP Web Auction	Identify standards necessary for “better”, web and HP distribution requirements, and necessary equipment. Should this be an on-going Society project supported by members?
13.	Add material to web site	Web	How much space does our web hosting service provide under our existing arrangement, what is our current usage level, and how much room is available?
14.	Add interactive password protected user forum/member’s area	Web	Does our web hosting service allow this? Is the technical capability available? Is sufficient room available on the website (See #13).
15.	Add specialized pages	Web	Same points as in #13
16.	Sell advertising	Publicity	Determine whether there is a market for advertising on the HPS website. If so, develop a cost basis and potential customer list and prepare a marketing plan
17.	Get more members involved in projects	Publicity	Work with the President and Board to identify Society projects and develop an approach to get more members actively involved.
18.	Recruit new members	Publicity	Develop a recruitment plan that identifies markets of potential members and sets out methods to encourage them to join the HPS.
19	Begin work on specialized Haiti catalogue	President	Organize and direct a Society project to do this (see #17).
20.	Have annual meetings at major shows	President	Identify major shows that are candidates for HPS annual meetings.