

Victoria-area author jazzed about B.C. history's future

- by [Don Descoteau - Goldstream News Gazette](#)
- posted Jun 3, 2016 at 7:00 AM



Historian and author Barry Gough of Victoria is the new honorary president of the B.C. Historical Federation.— *Image Credit: Photo Contributed*

Barry Gough doesn't just write about history, he's one of the biggest advocates of community groups working to preserve their communities' heritage.

The B.C. Historical Federation likely had that in mind when directors of the provincial umbrella organization named the Victoria-area resident their honorary president, at last month's AGM in Revelstoke.

While acknowledging the title puts him in company with some "giants in the field" who have held the post in the past, Gough admitted the honorary position is primarily "titular and ambassadorial."

"He or she becomes a sort of spokesman and advocate for B.C. history," he said in explaining the role. "It would be likened to become a historian laureate."

A former president of the BCHF, he took the opportunity of a chat with Black Press to extol the virtues of this non-profit advocacy group, which began life as the B.C. Historical Association back in 1922.

“It’s a fabulous thing; it’s not as well known as it should be, but my job as ambassador is to get the word out,” Gough said. “The great thing about it is it links all these communities around the province.”

Member societies represent jurisdictions from valley towns on the edge of the Rocky Mountains, to rural farming and ranching towns through the heart of the province, to those in B.C. coastal communities, large and small, he added. “They are a collection of groups that involve people who are drawn together in the wide web of history.”

The Federation now numbers 99 member societies, with roughly 25,000 members throughout B.C. It works to promote and recognize the historical preservation work being done through local museums, archives, collections and special projects, and honours those who write about history or create visual stories focusing on the past.

The BCHF’s focus in the coming year, Gough said, will be on the upcoming 150th anniversary of Confederation. “The federation is concentrating on the theme, ‘British Columbia in Canada 150,’ and getting all the communities talking about B.C.’s relationship to the rest of Canada.”

He noted that the sesquicentennial coincides with the 100th anniversary of the battle at Vimy Ridge, considered by many to be this country’s greatest military victory and a symbol of the birth of our national pride and awareness. “That was iconic. We have a concept of Canada’s status in the world as a result of that.”

Gough, 77, is a working historian specializing in maritime and naval history. He has authored numerous publications on the topics, including many relating to the west coast of B.C.

Winner of various academic and literary honours in North America and Britain for his work and publications, as well as Queen’s Golden and Diamond Jubilee awards, he is currently president of the Vic High Alumni Association and celebrates his 60th grad reunion this month in Victoria. He is also an accomplished jazz clarinetist.

To find more information about the B.C. Historical Federation and its activities, check them out online at bchistory.ca. Or to look into the history of your own community, contact your local municipal hall and ask about their archives.

editor@goldstreamgazette.com