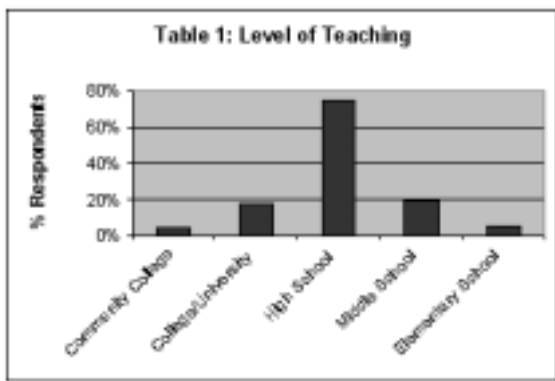


RESULTS OF 2003 AATF SURVEY ON NATIONAL FRENCH WEEK

We included a questionnaire on National French Week on the 2003 dues renewal invoice. The results of the survey are encouraging but also provide us with valuable input on ways to improve the services we offer to members to help them celebrate National French Week. We have tallied responses from 2540 members out of 9356 who received the invoice for a response rate of 27%.

The responses reflect the demographics of the AATF membership. 86% of the respondents were women and 13% were men (the others did not indicate their gender). 86% of the respondents were employed full-time, while 10% were employed part-time. Table 1 shows the teaching level breakdown which again reflects the membership distribution (per-



centages add up to more than 100 because many respondents indicated multiple teaching levels). The average respondent had been teaching 19.6 years and teaches 108 students per year. We received responses from 48 states and the District of Columbia as well as five foreign countries. The highest percentage response rate compared to membership came from the less populous states. Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Arkansas, Kansas, Montana, Maine, Wisconsin, Alabama, Alaska, and New Hampshire (in descending order) all had responses rates of at least 30%. The largest single number of responses came from New York with 222 questionnaires returned.

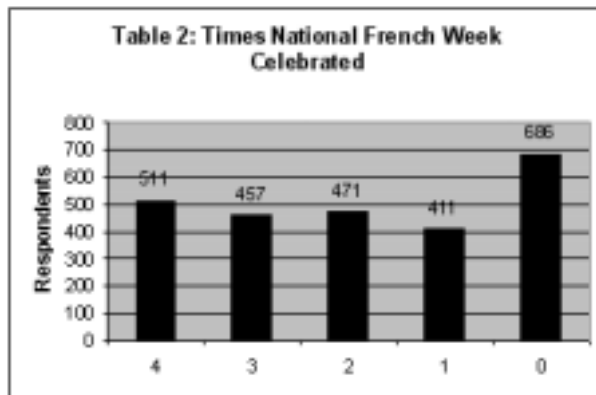
When the questionnaire was first disseminated in October 2003, we had only celebrated National French Week four times. We now have two more under our belt. Table 2 shows that the number of members who had celebrated National French Week 4, 3, 2, and 1 times was roughly equal with a slightly higher number not having celebrated it at all. Nonetheless, 63% of those responding stated that they intended to continue celebrating National French Week, and only 11%

indicated that they would not. Table 3 shows the main reasons cited for not celebrating National French Week. The number one reason was lack of time to prepare. It was encouraging to learn that even among those who did not celebrate National French Week in early November, the overwhelming majority responded that they engaged in promotional activities and events throughout the school year. A number of members cited lack of interest by students or colleagues and administrators as a reason for not celebrating.

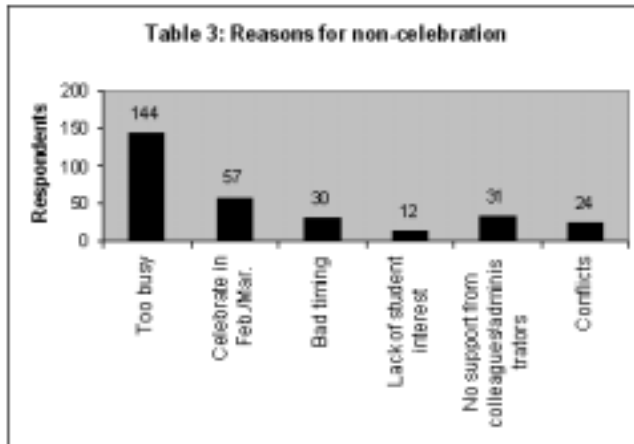
Anecdotal experience as well as the results of this survey have shown that the effects of National French Week activities can impact significantly the attitudes of students, other teachers, administrators, parents, and other decision-makers in the community and make them participants in the celebration.

Some teachers indicated that they prefer to celebrate in March during *la Semaine de Francophonie* or during Mardi Gras. Others stated that all language teachers in their schools observed National Foreign Language Week or had designated some other period for recognizing all the languages taught. From the inception of National French Week, the AATF organizers have tried to reiterate that it is the act of celebrating French that is important, not the exact dates it is observed. When trying to find dates for a national event, it is impossible to select a time that works for everyone. Those who choose to celebrate French earlier, later, with a purely French focus during Mardi Gras, or as part of international language festivities are nonetheless reflecting the goals and intent of National French Week.

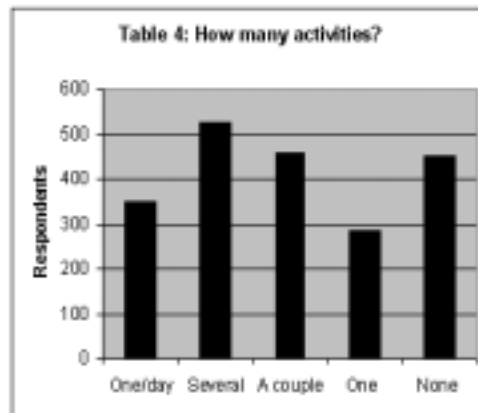
As we analyzed the responses from



those who have celebrated National French Week, we sought to find out what

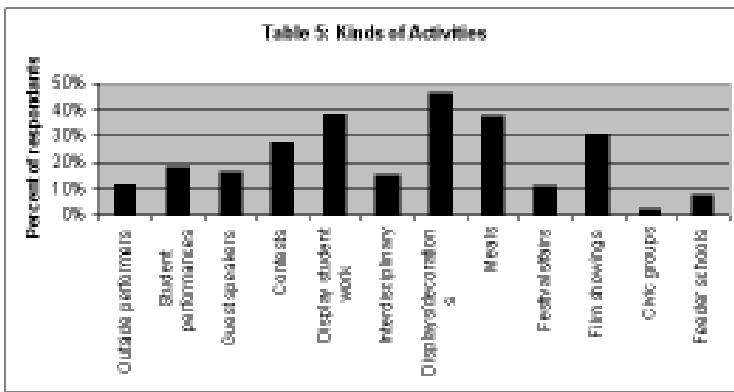


kinds of activities they engaged in, how many, what resources they were able to call upon, what support they received from colleagues, how they used the media, and what positive impact they have noticed as a result of their efforts to take French out of the classroom and into the school and community. Tables 4 through 9 show the responses to these queries. The majority of respondents organized several events,

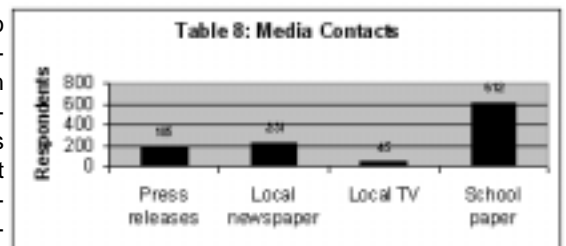


some organizing one every day (Table 4). Table 5 shows the kinds of activities that occurred, with French-themed displays and decorations being the most common, followed by meals, displays of student work, and film showings. Among the other activities mentioned were theme days, fundraising sales, activities to involve parents, French announcements or trivia, labeling in the schools, and even exchange visits occurring at this time of year. We have developed an extensive Web site devoted to National French Week and were pleased to learn that 44% of respondents had consulted it for ideas.

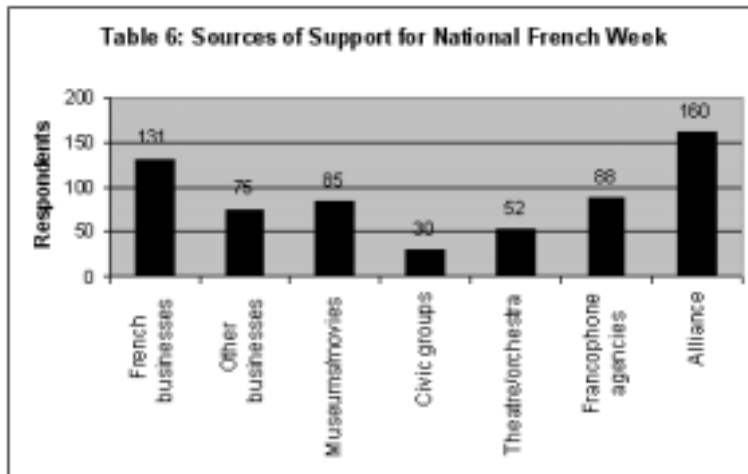
Table 6 shows that teachers received support from a variety



newspaper to announce National French Week activities, others did their best to involve local newspapers and television in their activities (Table 8). A few individuals cited lack of interest by the media as a



of businesses and organizations who share an interest in promoting French. The most commonly cited source of support for National French Week was the *Alliance française* which continues to be a close ally of the AATF in local and regional efforts to promote French. Members also cited support received from Francophone government agencies, in particular French consulates and Quebec delegation offices, as well as museums and movie theaters, theater and musical groups.



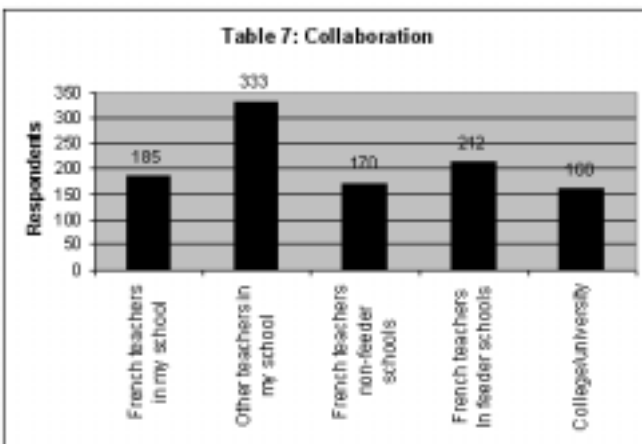
Although a handful of respondents mentioned lack of support among their colleagues as a reason for non-celebration of National French Week,

organizing events that might generate interest by the local media. Another question asked if members used official proclamations in their publicity for National

there was a demonstrably increased interest on the part of students, parents, or administrators thanks to National French Week promotional activities. Extension of programs to higher or lower levels was cited by 142 respondents, and 29 indicated that a program was saved. While a fairly large number said there was no change because of National French Week, given the negative climate surrounding French in recent months, we can hope that such celebrations may have helped generate positive reactions or mitigated negative ones.

Members' comments have helped the national office understand better where we need to communicate and publicize National French Week resources and ideas, and we will be implementing some of those for National French Week 2005.

National French Week was initiated in 1999 in order to provide more positive visibility for French in local schools and communities where the decision regarding which languages a school or district offers and which languages are chosen by students are made. We urge AATF members and all French teachers to take French out of the classroom and to demonstrate through every means at their disposal—student performances and work, cultural celebrations of *la Francophonie*, contests, meals, publicity, or official acknowledgment through proclamations and messages from elected officials—that French is a critical language to know in today's world.



those who did celebrate cited collaboration with many colleagues (Table 7). While collaboration with other French teachers in the school was most frequently cited, many teachers worked with colleagues in other disciplines as well as in feeder schools to promote French.

A large percentage (33%) of respondents who celebrated National French Week took advantage of the school

organizing events that might generate interest by the local media. Another question asked if members used official proclamations in their publicity for National French Week. It is unfortunate that more than 50% of those responding to the question did not. Those who did took advantage of positive statements from the President of the U.S. (a

message obtained every year since National French Week began by the national office and published in the September issue of the *National Bulletin*) as well as governors and mayors. This media and public relations focus is an important element of National French Week.

Finally, we asked members what results they had noticed from their efforts (Table 9). The answers indicated that, in many cases,

