

SEEING HOW IT ALL TURNS OUT

A Report on the 45th Reunion Survey of the Smith College Class of 1962

**by Celine Sullivan, Survey Queen
December 2007**

I'll be honest: I thought seriously of abandoning this project as we approached our 45th reunion. You must be getting tired, I reflected, of the quinquennial appeals to tell all so we can reassure one another that if we're not OK, we're at least in good company. But some very persuasive classmates wouldn't let me off the hook.

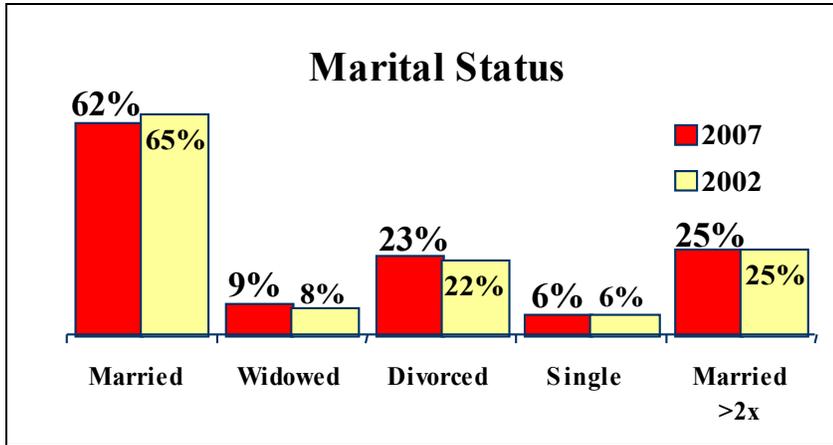
Imagine my astonishment, then, when more replies than ever – 230 --came in this time. True to your wonderful form, your answers were thoughtful, energetic, entertaining, and touching, reminding me that this is a privileged role I've been playing as "Survey Queen" of the class. I get to read all your responses -- and no one else on earth enjoys that degree of closeness to so many of you. Thanks to all who participated for giving so much to this effort, thanks to all who consume these reports with such enthusiasm, and thanks to those of you who indeed have had enough of this, but ever so kindly pretend otherwise.

So what does the aggregation of your data tell us? In the most general sense, this year's survey results suggest that by and large, we're pretty much at ease behind the wheel as we move through our lives. As one classmate put it, the most delightful thing about being our age is "at least seeing how it all turns out." Whatever we're glimpsing – straight ahead or in the rear view mirror – is falling into context. And while we can't see all that's coming at us, we're enjoying being in the here and now, feeling that – as another respondent said, "Whatever got us this far will take us the rest of the way."

As you look at this class profile, it's important to keep in mind that there were more classmates who didn't participate in the survey than did, not many more, but more. Had we heard from everyone (which rarely if ever happens in survey research), the answers of those non-respondents almost certainly would have departed from those of respondents, producing somewhat different aggregated results. People who aren't feeling sanguine about their lives today aren't likely to file a report, people who are too ill aren't up to the task, people who feel disenfranchised from Smith probably don't even open mail from the college or the class -- to cite a few under-represented circumstances. So this report could well be the "best case," and if it doesn't resonate with you, try to be patient with an imperfect process, and know that we're far more diverse than surveys of this unscientific nature can document.

However approximate, though, here's how we were looking and what we were thinking as we approached our 45th reunion...

Our demographics

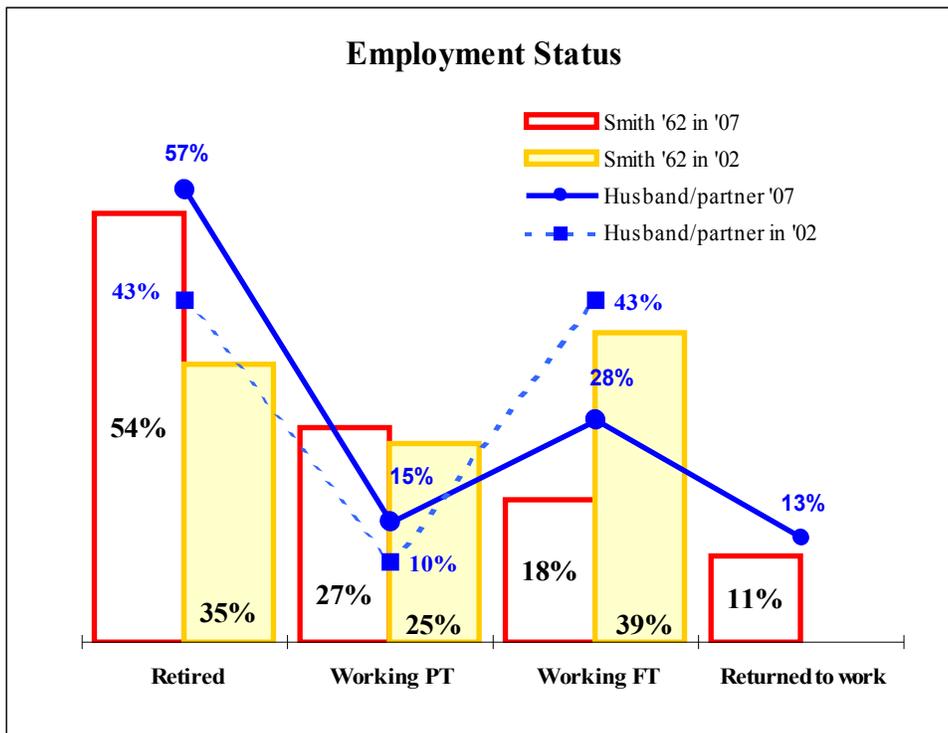


Our marital status hasn't changed appreciably in the last five years. Roughly six in 10 of us are married (25% of us twice or more) and one in four are divorced, widowed or single.

Our household characteristics reflect our marital status, and add further detail. Outside of the married majority, a few classmates (3%) live with a male partner, and

2% with a female partner, similar to '02 stats. From the last study to this one, the percentage of classmates whose children live with them (or vice-versa, perhaps) has declined by more than half to 4%, while the percentage of those living alone (24%) has increased significantly from 16%. Pets-as-housemates, reported as 22%, a slight decline from 26% in '02, may be understated, since that descriptor fell last in a multiple choice question, and I suspect many of you never got to that answer option.

If you came to our 45th reunion, you know how obsessed we've become with grandchildren – three in four of us (76%) are grandmothers now, to an average of 3.7 of the most adored children you've ever met. 10% of the class is still waiting to experience those joys, and 14% are figuring that for one reason or another, grandmothing won't be a role they'll be playing.



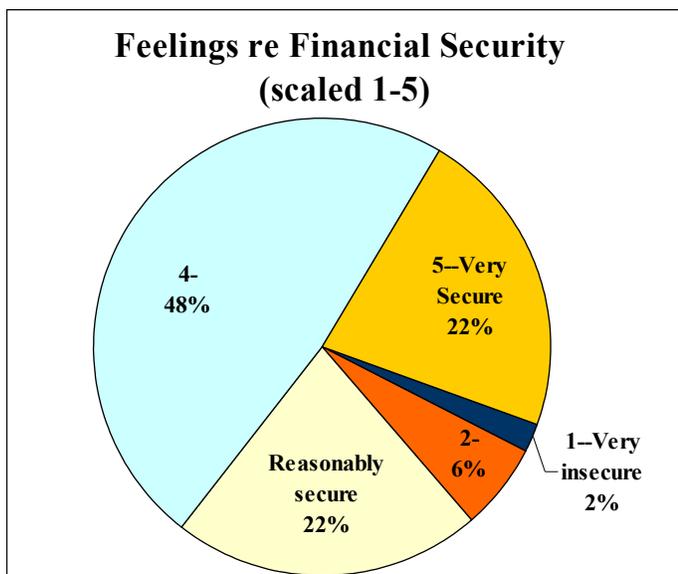
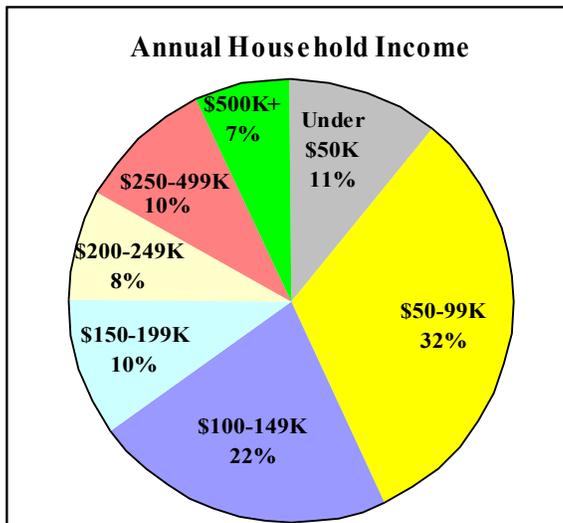
There's been a significant shift toward retirement since our 40th reunion, when 39% of us were employed full-time. At the time of this survey though, just 18% of us were still full-timers. Part-time employment remained almost unchanged: 25% in '05, 27% in '07. Our husbands/partners, too, are retiring (57% currently retired v. 43% in '02) but -- evidence suggests -- not *too* abruptly. Their part-time

employment went up from 10% in '02 to 15% this time, and 13% of them have returned to work after retiring, vs. 11% of us. The fully-retired contingent in our class, not surprisingly,

comprised high concentrations of married/partnered classmates, while the unattached among us were more likely to be employed, full- or part-time.

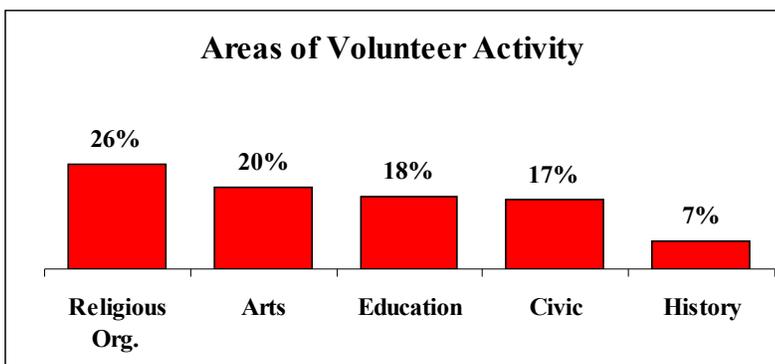
Our median annual household income (from all sources) of \$116,000 represents a decline from the \$126,000 we registered five years ago, and that doesn't take inflation into account. It almost certainly reflects our retreat from the work force, though, and hopefully a bit of financial planning (74% use a professional advisor in this regard).

(By the way, the "median" is the number that divides the class: 50% report more than \$116K, and 50% less.)



On a scale of 1 (very uneasy) to 5 (very secure), our feelings of financial security as we plunge into the future strike an average of 3.8, a slight uptick from 3.5 in '02. More than 1 in 5 of us feel very secure, 2% are feeling very insecure, and the rest scatter in between, skewing toward security. Of course, this survey was conducted several months before the economic disruption of late 2007, so these numbers may have suffered some "adjustment" along with the market.

Our home ownership profile shows us with an average of 1.4 homes. 58% of classmates own 2 or more homes, while 42% occupy just one address. One in five classmates (19%) have moved in the past five years and 24% anticipate a move in the next five years. Primary reasons for moving these days are triggered by desires to downsize, retirement, the appeal of gentler climates and the tug of families and grandchildren.



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72% of us are active volunteers today, about the same number as in '02 (70% then). We're logging fewer volunteer hours, though: 5.6 weeks in total annually, vs. 7.2 five years ago. Our churches and faith communities are the focus of volunteer efforts for

26% of us, while arts organizations, educational institutions and initiatives, civic activities, and history-focused endeavors of one sort or another were also frequently mentioned. 6% of respondents noted Smith as the beneficiary of their contributions of time and talent.

Service on non-profit boards declined noticeably between surveys, from 37% in '02 to 11% in '07. Perhaps we're kicking back a bit and becoming more careful stewards of our energies.

Leisure Time and How We Spend It

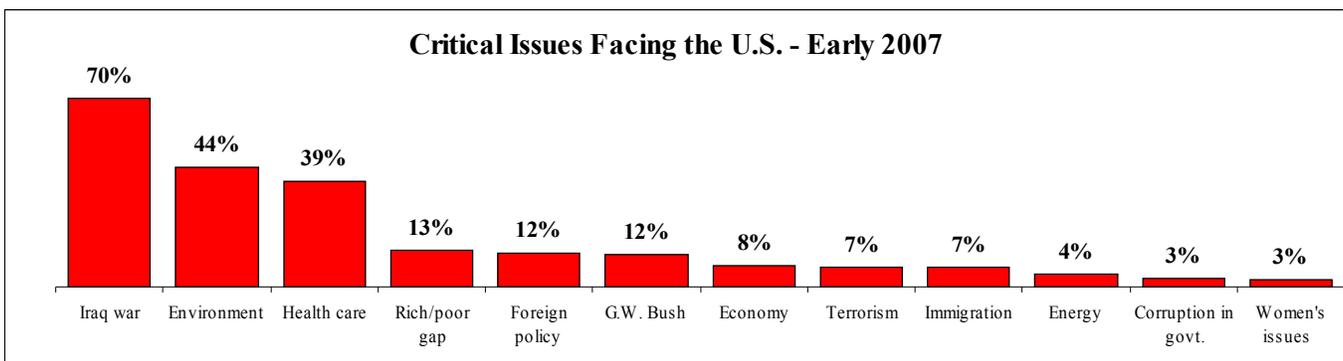
On a 0-5 scale, "0" correlating with "none" and "5" with "lots and lots," our assessment of leisure time available to us median-ed out at 3.5. A full 30% of respondents indicated leisure time poverty (0-2), while 36% fell at the other end of the spectrum (4-5). Our favorite leisure activities are: reading (71%), sports/exercise (46%), travel (30%), spending time with family -- especially those grandchildren (24%), time with friends (22%) and gardening (21%).

The most memorable trips we'd taken in the year preceding the survey were predominantly recreational (76%), trips to see family (18%), and a handful of business trips (6%). U.S. destinations accounted for 46% of the most memorable trips we took, Europe 34%, Central America 12%, Asia 9% and the Caribbean 3%. What makes a trip memorable for us? The experience of "place" and/or "people" for 47% of us, and special times with family for 30%. Friends (14%), also enrich our travel experiences, along with opportunities to pursue favorite activities (11%), and to study art and architecture (6%).

About the Public Sphere

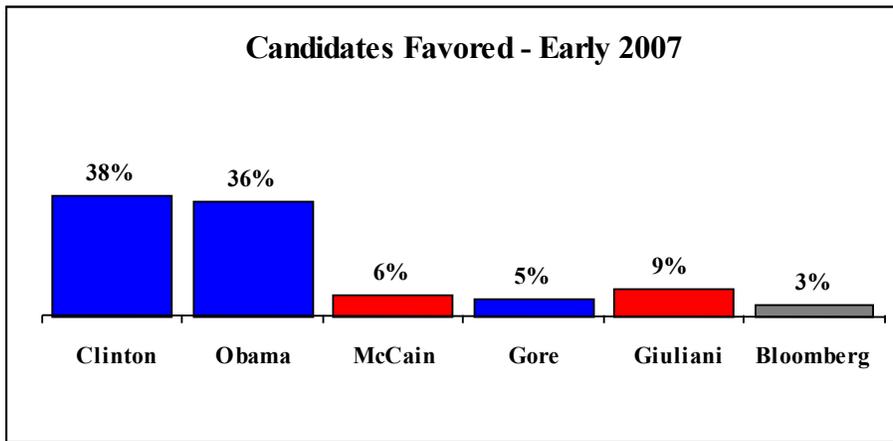
Today, our political party affiliations reflect dramatic shifts in our adult lifetimes. Looking way back at our encyclopedic survey of 1982, we were 35% Democrats, 31% Republicans and 29% independent voters. Today we're 60% Democrats, 16% Republicans and 23% independents. Our voting in the last presidential election (2004) reflects those shifts, as well as concerns of the day: 81% of us voted for John Kerry, 17% for George Bush and 2% for other candidates.

Our sense of critical issues facing the U.S. and viable presidential candidates early this year (2007) would be interesting to revisit as this report goes to bed (December, 2007). Several months of debate and discussion of national priorities might well have altered some of our preferences and issue rankings since this survey was conducted. In any event, early this year, we were most concerned about the war in Iraq (70%), the



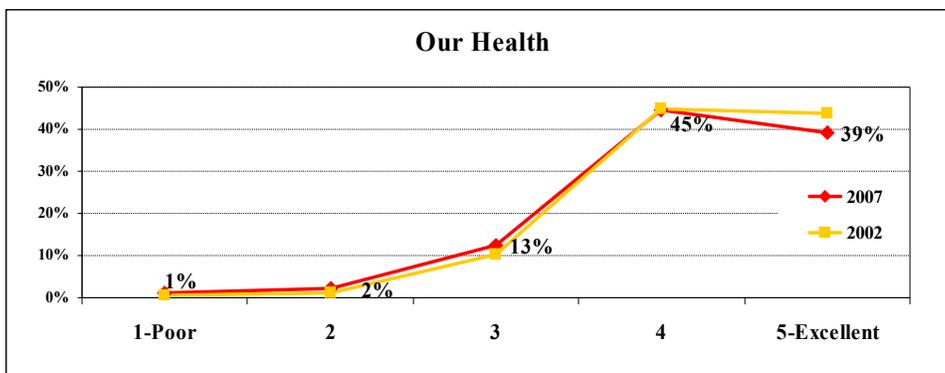
environment/global warming (44%) and health care (39%), with a sizable gap between health care and less nagging concerns. And we were decidedly favoring Democrats (Clinton and Obama) for President.

Many of us (67%) are political activists of one sort or another: 27% of the class actively campaigned for their candidates in '04 or '06. They and others also "showed up" in several



other ways to express their concerns, most frequently by contributing time, talent and financial resources (50%), signing petitions (46%), joining advocacy organizations (44%), contacting public officials (42%), and attending meetings or forums (34%).

Our Health



We rate ourselves not quite as healthy as we were in 2002, but not much worse for wear, either. In 2002, 44% of us reported tip-top health (down, by the way from 51% in '97). The corresponding figure in '07 slipped to 39%.

Things We Do to Stay Healthy		
	2002	2007
Healthful eating	70%	87%
Moderate exercise	n.a.	75%
Rest	61%	73%
Loving relationships	66%	68%
Weight control	36%	60%
Stretching	44%	46%
Weight training	34%	34%
Yoga	11%	16%
Vigorous exercise	65%	14%
Meditation	11%	14%
Pilates	6%	9%

Interestingly, despite the relatively numerous accounts of good-to-excellent health, 56% of us reported having medical conditions of some import, an increase from 45% in 2002. Most frequently mentioned afflictions were: arthritis (19%), osteoporosis (16%), obesity (13%), elevated cholesterol (12%), and hypertension (11%). 18% of respondents describe themselves as cancer survivors. A number of classmates noted that their illnesses are being well-managed, though, presumably not front-of- mind, when asked "How are you?"

We work at maintaining our health. Most of us watch what we eat and engage in at least moderate exercise. Rest, loving relationships, weight control, and stretching are important priorities for significant numbers of us. Among the more dramatic shifts in the past five years are: today's 87% concerned with healthful eating, up from 70% in '02; a 12 percentage point increase in classmates getting sufficient rest and sleep today; a great increase in the numbers of us watching our weight; and a huge drop in adherence to *vigorous* exercise programs, presumably in favor of moderate exercise regimens.

Things We Take/Use Regularly		
	2002	2007
Vitamins	81%	78%
Calcium	77%	76%
Caffeine	59%	67%
Alcohol	56%	57%
Chocolate	33%	37%
Osteoporosis meds	18%	30%
Other minerals	37%	28%
Ice cream	30%	16%
Pain killers	12%	14%
Antidepressants	9%	10%
Herbals	15%	9%
Sleeping pills	4%	8%
Cigarettes	4%	4%
Tranquilizers	1%	4%
Homeopathic remedies	6%	4%
Antiaging remedies	3%	2%
Recreational drugs	0%	2%

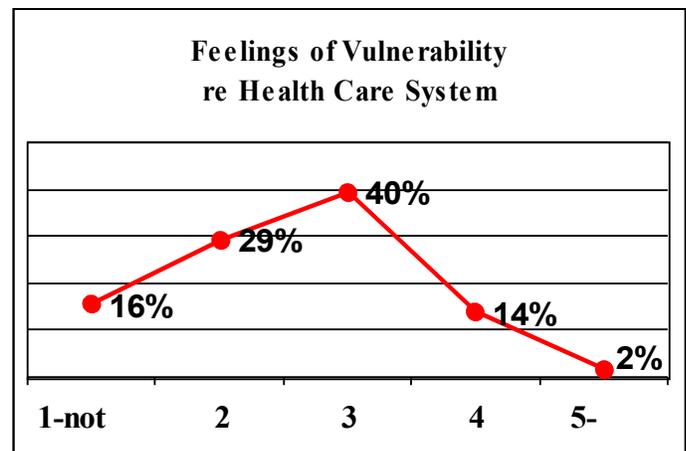
Then there are things we ingest and inhale, some with more proven efficacy than others when it comes to health maintenance. Our consumption of vitamins, calcium, alcohol, chocolate, painkillers and antidepressants remains at or close to 2002 levels. However, we do seem to be drinking more caffeinated beverages (which may explain some of the doubling of sleeping pill usage), and we're far more inclined than we were in '02 to be on osteoporosis meds. Minerals and supplements seem to be losing '02 adherents. In line with the increase noted above in weight control efforts, significantly fewer of us enjoy ice cream on a regular basis than once was the case. Smokers will be smokers, it seems, and 4% of us can be found wherever smoking is allowed these days, probably the same 4% who were smoking five years ago.

The Survey Queen ran a few factor analyses to see what variables correlated most closely with good health, and I'm sorry to report that regular consumption of chocolate didn't make the cut. Nor, I'm even sorrier to report, did a strong feeling of affinity with Smith. But weight control correlated, as did regular use of alcohol! Some of you may need a drink to process this: One of the most significant

correlations with good health that I measured was...voted for George W. Bush in 2004! Whether that cheers or dismays you, please be reminded that my analyses were far from scientific and I was being very playful in selecting variables for examination. In fact, GWB voters were also high on the income charts, and studies far more serious than this one show the wealth/health correlation in our underinsured nation. But my statistical exercise does show that data can be mined to prove just about anything—remember that in this upcoming election year as polls are reported.

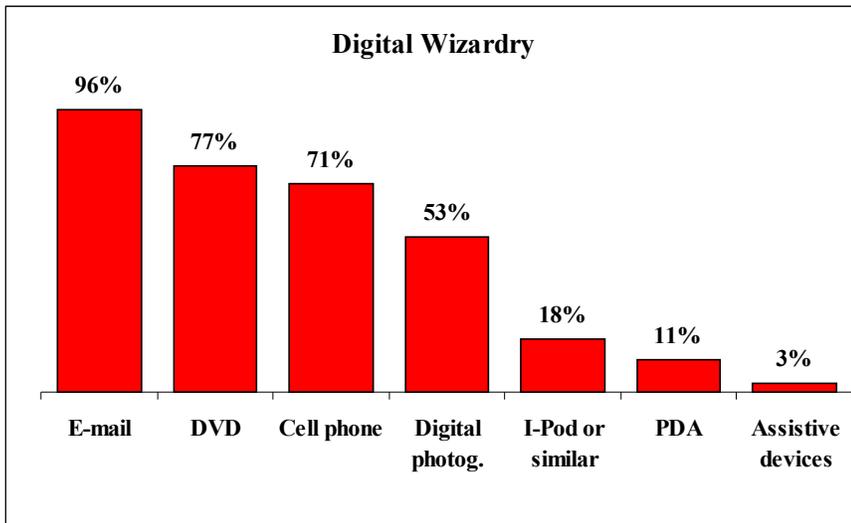
As we move into the years of greater need for health care -- and the health care system is reconfigured, for better or worse -- only 16% of us feel particularly vulnerable, and the same percentage feel quite invulnerable.

This year's study showed a decline in the percentage of the class that's ever had cosmetic surgery, from 12% in the '02 study to 10% this time, which caused some in the audience in May to wonder what tragic outcomes had befallen the unaccounted-for 2%. (Really, it's not a statistically significant difference.) The percentage planning to a little nipping and tucking, though, increased from 14% five years ago to 19% this year.



Joint replacement surgery is barely noteworthy in our class. Only 5% have had such surgery, replacing hips and knees. Good baseline data for the next study...

Creeping (Gallop?) Technologies



Our (probably modest) self-assessments re our mastery of today's technologies compared to the rest of the class nets out to a median ranking of 3.7 on a scale of 0 (none) to 5 (excellent), a short climb from 2002's median of 3.4.

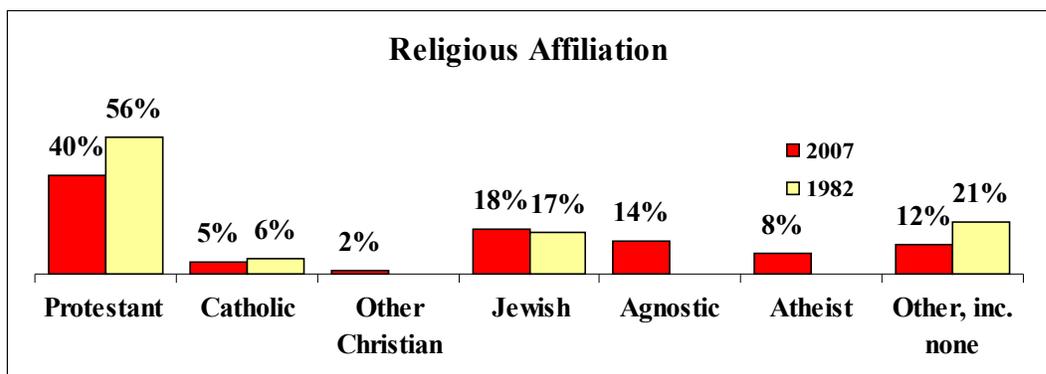
Nearly all of us are e-mailers now, more than three in four are comfortable with DVD players, 71% are cell phone users, and 53% are converts to digital

photography. You won't find too many of us walking around with i-Pods, though, or i-Phones, or Blackberries (*not* the kind you picked last summer), not yet. A small percentage (3%) of our classmates are using technologically sophisticated devices to manage physical infirmities, a number certain to grow as we celebrate more birthdays and stage more reunions.

[Get ready: This is the last survey that we'll ever conduct via U.S. Mail. I know lots of us still think better and express ourselves more brilliantly using ink on paper, but the tabulation of all your richly detailed input is an arduous and hugely time-consuming effort. When I finish this report, I'll begin to think about our 50th reunion project, which should be a very special look at our lives, backward and forward. All I can tell you now is that the questionnaire will be an exercise I hope you'll do online. Your input will be captured by a computer (in Bangalore, or Manila, maybe) and sent to me – and to you, for that matter -- all percentaged and charted. I can't wait...actually, I can. cs]

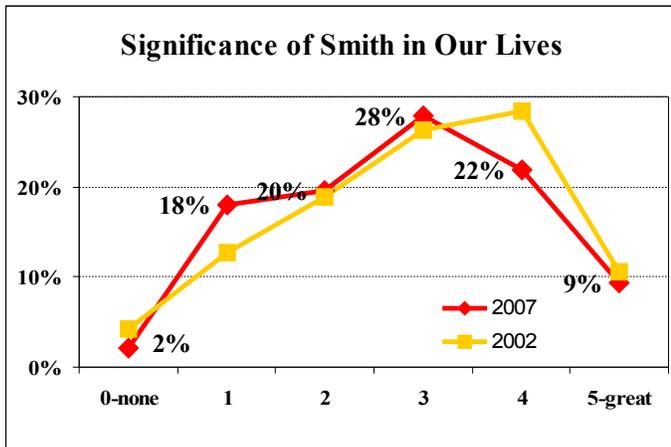
Ever on Sunday? Saturday? Friday?

The profile of our religious beliefs is relatively unchanged since



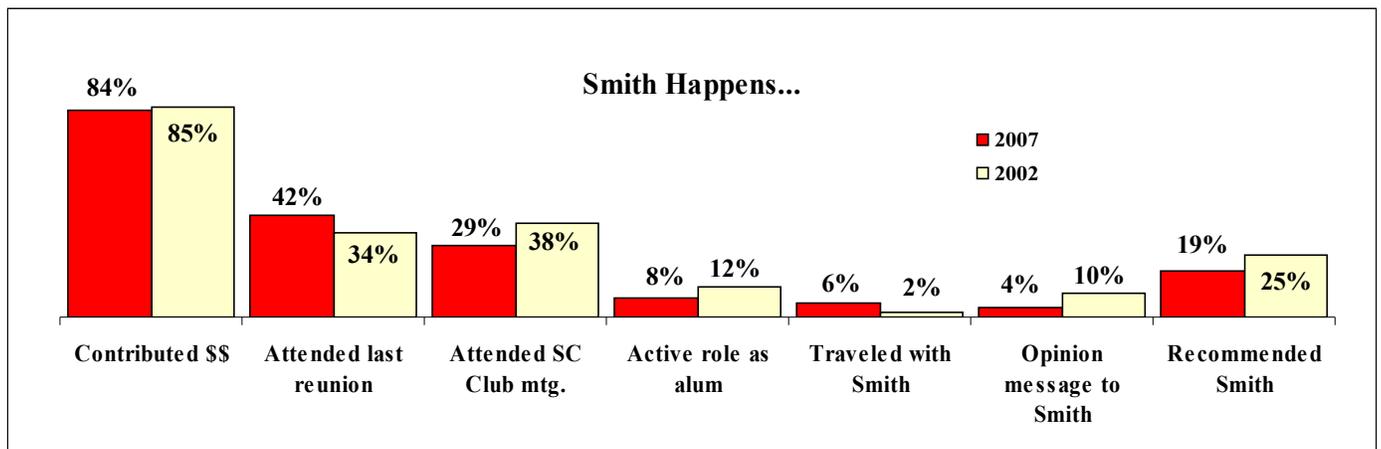
we looked at it back in 1982. Protestant denominations still predominate, but have experienced the greatest decline in '62 adherents. The design of the questionnaire doesn't lend clarity as to where the decline has re-surfaced, but it appears from write-in answers that organized religion in general has lost its appeal for a number of them. Just 36% of the class – for the most part Christians – attend religious services on a weekly basis.

Smith and the Class of '62



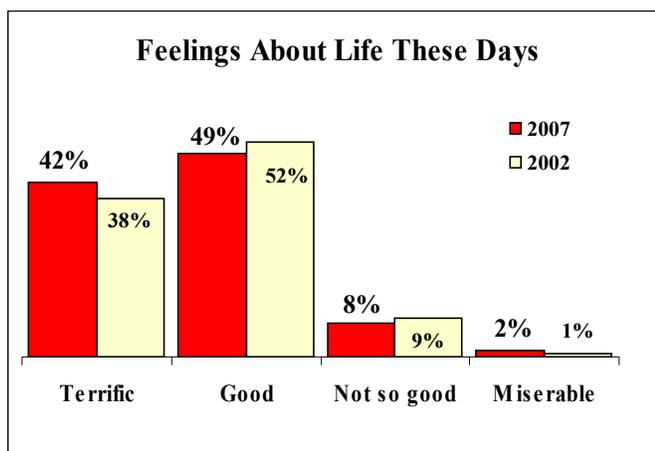
The significance of our Smith background and foreground in our lives today varies considerably. Our composite profile brings the average rating in a notch shy of 3.0, this year showing some diminution of strength compared to the '02 measurement. That may be a statistical quirk, or it may reflect the direction of our lives today, more defined by family and present-day community.

Again with reference to the '02 study, we seem to be pulling away somewhat from active Smith affiliation, with the exceptions of reunion attendance and Smith travel programs, both showing significant increases, and in our support of Smith fundraising activities, which remained constant. (Note: The study measures incidence of contributions, not dollar volume, which was record-breaking this reunion year.)



Despite our growing use of online communications, only one respondent said she visits the Smith website often. 60% have never logged onto it, and 39% say they stop by occasionally.

Reflections on Life Today



Generally speaking, we're feeling a little better about life today than we did in 2002: 42% feeling "terrific," compared to 52% five years ago. Our positive feelings derive from a variety of reflections, most often: family and loved ones are doing well, retirement is enjoyable, things are under control, and perhaps a troubling situation is now resolved. Darker feelings about the present moment were colored by concerns about illness, one's own or that of a loved one, and concerns about societal ills and the world situation.

The Essay Questions

Those of you who complete these survey questionnaires know that they wrap up with a series of "essay questions" – more accurately, questions that beg write-in answers, as brief or as lengthy as you wish to make them. The resultant input is impossible to chart or graph, but it does illustrate a sense of our joys and sorrows, issues and concerns at this stage in our lives. No summary I could ever write does your input justice, but here I go anyway...

In the inventory of **significant changes** we experienced in the five years leading up to this reunion, family circumstances figured most prominently, with particular emphasis on grandchildren – their arrival or just their happy presence in our lives. Of special note was one classmate's report that she's recently adopted two little girls! Illnesses (a few of our own, more often those of loved ones) and deaths more darkly colored the lives of many classmates. Retirement – generally happy -- was frequently mentioned as the most significant change, as were a number of instances of self-actualization such as "published a book," "diving," "working with a personal trainer," and "7 pounds" (upward or downward not specified). Changes in outlook were reported by a few respondents, e.g., "realization that not everything is working like it used to" and "sudden, unexpected boost in self-confidence." My personal favorite, though, was this entry: "Husband home all the time. I've taken up ice-skating." A statement of cause-and effect, or two unrelated changes? We can't know, but we can be amused by the juxtaposition of thoughts.

The **most delightful aspect of being where we are in life**, was most commonly reported as some sense of liberation, from work, from the expectations of others, and from self-imposed pressures of decades past. Among the more colorful expressions of liberation were: "It's OK to screw up, forget things, and say no," and "Curmudgeonliness is acceptable," and "So many battles no longer important." Grandchildren, too, ranked high as delights in our lives, along with expressions of appreciation of fortunate circumstances (good health, financial security, access to people we care about and activities we enjoy).

Then there are the most **troubling aspects** of ,well, being in our 45th reunion year. Health concerns, the prospects of decline, and loss of family and friends distress many of us. One classmate wrapped her concerns about aging into this lament: "Diminishing physical skills, no sports anymore, who IS that old lady in the mirror?" And another suggested this bundle of considerations: "Forgetfulness, imperfect eyesight, hearing, chicken neck, etc." And one of us put it very bluntly, "It's almost over." Significant numbers of classmates find that they're most troubled by the world we'll be leaving to our progeny and the culpability of the U.S in what they note as serious ills. Undaunted, at least one of us is "still marching for peace."

Things we're doing to stay sharp forever showed remarkable effort and consistency. A fairly complete summary includes: reading, puzzles (Sudoku and crossword), exercise, taking courses, playing bridge, staying current in any of several ways, going places and doing things we love to do, developing/using computer skills, and for some, continuing to work.

Something(s) special we carry with us all or most of the time include cell phones, family photos and reading glasses for many of us, but beyond those items, there's just no telling what you'll find in our purses, our cars, or on our minds. Of note: "my husband's ashes," "knowledge

that love is the answer," "my grandmother's necklace," "wampum earrings," "gratitude for wonderful family, parents and friends," "my Smith education," "pendant from an Egyptian friend," "my father's faithful encouragement," "my mother's engagement ring." Several mentions were religious or spiritual in nature: "a book of meditations," "St. Theresa's prayer," "my mother's rosary beads," "a cross my husband gave me," a reminder to pray for a child in Iraq." One of us carries "as little as possible," while another describes her purse as "a complete survival kit."

Our **persistent worries** focus on our health, families, our ability to cope with whatever is down the road, and (as reflected in other survey contexts) the world around us. Of particular concern as we contemplate our ultimate exit, are family members whose special circumstances we help to manage today, e.g.: a learning-disabled grandson, a developmentally-challenged daughter, a son in recovery from addiction, a seriously alcoholic husband. We worry about how we'll cope with disability should it strike us or our husbands/partners, and about how far in life our financial assets will take us. We wonder if our children (some of them) will ever walk the pathways we envisioned for them. One of us reports that she worries that she'll run over her cat, and *two* respondents worry about dying and leaving an untidy house for others to clean up.

Something(s) new we've taken up in the past five years are various exercise regimens from snowshoeing and martial arts to Curves routines, Pilates, yoga and plain old walking. We've also taken up arts and crafts (knitting and quilting, often), music and photography, as well as gardening and studies of one sort or another. "My husband!," one respondent wrote, and another, "slot machines!" And one classmate has taken up "gathering wild rice, making maple syrup, and kayaking."

Strenuous exercise -- particularly tennis and skiing, as well as "doing cartwheels" in one instance -- lead the list of **something(s) we've abandoned** in the past five years, probably forever. Work and work-related stresses (e.g., "PR events") we're noted by more than a few classmates. Some of us have appeared for the last time in certain articles of clothing, including skirts, pantyhose, high heels, short shorts, and bathing suits. And some have abandoned sex in the past five years, although not necessarily as a matter of choice.

Three in four of us are pursuing **major long-term goals**. In the main, they reflect intentions to complete work already underway or at least mapped, such as "publish my book," "finish new house," "keep growing as an artist." One classmate hopes to "address alcoholism in upper income women," and another to "complete education reform for incarcerated youth before retiring." Several classmates noted hopes to see more of the world over the longer term. Many of us can identify with classmates whose goal it is to outlive their assets, and with those whose goals have to do with aging gracefully, and as independently as possible. We may find it more difficult, however, to identify with the classmate who's hoping to hike the Appalachian Trail for the *second* time.

Our relationships with our husbands and partners are by far the **most important relationships** that involve us today, because they're our "best friends," they "understand" us, we've known many of them "forever," and we feel they need us as much as we need them.

Where a husband/partner isn't present, we generally cite as most important our relationships with children and grandchildren, for the many ways in which they enrich our lives and impart a sense of our best accomplishments.

The survey elicited snapshots of "moments" in the few days before completing the questionnaire. Our **virtuous moments** were largely instances of giving to, helping and caring for others in needy circumstances. There were several instances of virtuous restraint: resisting dessert and other temptations, "not flying off the handle when I usually would," "keeping my mouth shut re raising the grandchildren," "I haven't strangled anyone lately." Some classmates' virtuousness was exhibited in other ways such as "sinking a birdie putt," "making six no trump," "staying in an ice hotel in Quebec (husband's choice)," and "finishing this questionnaire." One respondent quipped, "I don't think I do 'virtuous.'"

Naughty moments reported revolved around impulsive eating, especially chocolate and desserts, and giving in to meanness around others ("running away from a complaining windbag," "telling a friend to buzz off," "took a shot at someone in gossip"). Then there were less easily classified moments such as "feeling homicidal thoughts about certain politicians," "tossing dog poop into a neighbor's dumpster," and "telling a telemarketer he'd called a murder scene/would he answer a few questions," and "playing the horses with my grandchildren."

Our **moments of annoyance** frequently entailed the irritating behavior of others, from family members to telemarketers and bad drivers. George W. Bush and the U.S. government were implicated in several answers, as were computers and other aggravating technologies. Occasionally, we included ourselves in our indictments, as in "anything around the house that's falling to pieces, me included."

Our **moments of contentment** are sparked by nature, books, quiet, easy times with grandchildren and family, as well as a sense of accomplishment – "making a dent in my to do list," or "placing first in duplicate bridge."

Loving moments – you might guess, are almost always populated with those people who figure in our "most important relationships," above. "Being called 'Nana,'" "a candlelit dinner with my husband," "being nice to my annoying mother," "husband's loving care of our dying cat." The moment can be as simple as an unexpected phone call or drop-in visit, or as elaborate as a family reunion in a foreign country – clearly it's the strength of affection that counts, not the scale of the encounter.

Moments of surprise frequently were triggered by a phone call, greeting card, or a visit. But not all. Sometimes we were surprised by our own reflections, the joy in a beautiful day, or "feeling so good, who ever thought?" or "how interesting people are," and "how much there is to do in retirement." "Touching my toes" startled one classmate. News stories were the stuff of some surprises: George Tenet's confession, an account of an elderly woman's recollections of being a call girl in World War II -- and liking it, and the disclosure that Anna Nicole Smith's husband was a Yale law professor.

Our sex lives

In every one of our surveys, there are those classmates eager to hear about our sex lives and those who find that line of inquiry annoying. About half the survey sample made substantive comments about their sex lives in response to an optional open-ended question. Judging from their comments, close to half of us aren't sexually active at this time, one in five are having highly enjoyable, even exhausting, sex lives, and the rest of us report activity ranging from "don't have much" to "it still happens but it ain't like it was at our hormonal peak" and "not as often, but better than ever." One respondent reflected, "My sex life is the pits – why didn't I have more fun at Smith?" On the happy end of the spectrum, a classmate wrote of having "wild rampant sex" with her husband on a recent trip, another says she "loves being a lesbian," and still another reported, "my vibrator keeps me contented and asks little in return." The Survey Queen enjoys the marginal notes that classmates sometimes address to her, such as this one: "Sex life is pretty non-existent, alas. Know anyone I might want to meet?"

Questions Not Asked

The final survey question is always an invitation to ask and answer a question that didn't appear in the questionnaire. Following are a few samples of this year's entries...

Q. How is your relationship with your adult children?

A. Good. They still sometimes need a mother, just not so often. They call to check up on me. I assure them I'm not decrepit.

Q. What did Smith do for you?

A. It gave me boundless self-confidence (a mixed blessing), and provided a network of dynamic, smart, caring women.

Q. What do you think about death?

A. Sometimes the certainty of it makes me sad. But it must be an interesting and liberating experience too.

Q. What's the bane of your existence?

A. Clutter. I never seem to get on top of it.

Q. Describe a recent sad moment.

A. The death of Molly Ivins.

Q. Any regrets?

A. Not learning to ski at Smith, not doing financial planning earlier.

Q. Do you wish you'd worked harder at Smith?

A. No.

Q. Are you caring for family members? If so, how are you coping?

A. Yes. Mother and ex-husband with severe dementia. Stressful.

Q. What have you learned most from the perspective of years?

A. How so many of the threads in my life can be explained by childhood experiences, family "secrets," and how the puzzle pieces fit together.

Q. Have you or your spouse ever had an affair?

A. Me – no. He is now. What do I do?

Q. Are you changing your lifestyle because of environmental reasons?

A. You bet. Alternative energy, public transport, efficient furnace, less driving/more walking. For the grandchildren.

Q. Will you ever marry again?

A. I never stop looking.

Q. Why are you going to reunion?

A. To be with amazing women. We get more interesting every time.

.....

Friends, as that last question-writer reflects, you *are* amazing. And you *do* get more interesting, if that's possible, with each survey. I hope this report captures and projects at least some the spirit of our 45th Reunion, especially for those of you who weren't there with us.

In closing, I have to thank my sister, Wilma -- who still introduces herself on occasion as "the one who didn't go to Smith"-- for helping me tabulate this year's data. Without her huge assist, I'd have had to stay home from Reunion and cancel my presentation. (I hope she gets this far in reading the report...bless you, Willie.)

Please get in touch with questions or comments about the survey. It's always fun to dive back into the data and rethink it from other perspectives.

Wishing you lots of good experiences to log in our 50th Reunion survey...

Peace,
CS

P.S. There's more...the comparison of certain of our findings to a much shorter reunion study I worked on with the Yale Class of '62 this year. My report to their class is attached as an appendix to this one.

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Appendix: Yale Report

Boys and Girls ... together?

Report to the Yale Class of 1962

Comparing 45th Reunion Surveys of Yale '62 and Smith '62

by Celine Sullivan, Smith '62 Survey Queen and Class Historian

June 2007

Background. This is the third study of the Yale Class of '62 (Y62) with which I've been involved, linking your surveys to a 25-year effort of mine with the Smith College Class of '62 (S62). The first of our paired studies was in 1982, the second in 1997, and the third this year.

In 1982, when Chris Cory (Y62) and I – then colleagues at *Psychology Today* magazine – piggy-backed our first surveys, we expected to document endless distinctions between our two universes.

Instead we found endless similarities. Then we reminded ourselves that we share so many determining factors: background, socioeconomics, respect for the liberal arts, same sex education. Some of us even married one another, maybe even divorced each other.

Nevertheless, differences did emerge in our survey and they continue to emerge: Differences in how we think about ourselves and our life roles, in how we spend our time, how we relate to family, to friends, and to work, how we think about money, how we age, and in how we talk about ourselves in these surveys – to cite just a few areas of distinction.

Before examining the 2007 results, an overarching and consistent Smith/Yale similarity merits attention: Both Y62 and S62 exhibit an enduring sense of group identity with our respective college classes. We look to our classmates as peer groups that are never irrelevant in our thinking about ourselves and where we are in life. The appeal of these surveys seems to lie in the opportunities they afford us to talk quite candidly about who we are and how we're feeling, then see how we compare to one another. The resultant class profiles in their many dimensions tend to reinforce our sense of ourselves. They bolster our pride in our accomplishments, ease our disappointments, validate critical choices (good and bad) that we've made, give permission to change direction or perhaps to stay the course – and certainly give us lots to talk about at reunions.

Should they matter that much? I can't answer that question dispassionately, since I've yet to encounter a group of women brighter, more driven, more engaged, more compassionate, or more admirable than my Smith classmates. My access to this peer group is priceless. Even those – and there must be some – who think this whole survey thing is a waste of time and talent are kind enough to go along with it. I plan to examine the peer group phenomenon more energetically before our 50th, and I welcome any insights.

Response rates and reliability of the data. These respondent samples aren't representative of anything, really, other than people who care enough to participate. That would be roughly 15% of Y62 this year, and close to 50% of S62. We don't know, and can't know from these studies, about classmates who are too disenfranchised, ill, overwhelmed by adversity, or otherwise disinclined to talk to us in this way. Most assuredly, the conversion of non-respondents to respondent status would have altered the class profiles, probably in directions away from "right" answering, from self-congratulatory answering, and from strong affiliation with our respective colleges.

Our methodologies differed in this go-around: Y62 was conducted online via your website, and the S62 study was done the old-fashioned way, by mail. The S62 questionnaire was considerably longer, soliciting many more "essay" answers which don't feed readily into digital data capture and statistical analysis. Some comparisons between the two surveys, as a result, are not as crisp as they might be, had we been more scientific in structuring the questionnaires.

A note about the numbers: Statistical detail presented here was current in early June 2007. As later responses are tabulated, some slight variation in specific numbers is likely to occur.

Some of the comparable highlights of the two studies follow.

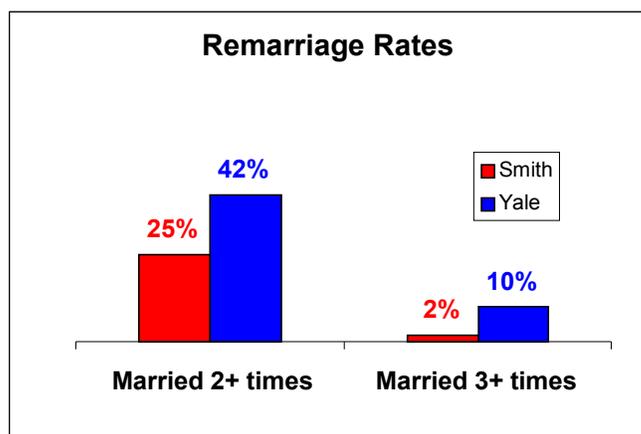
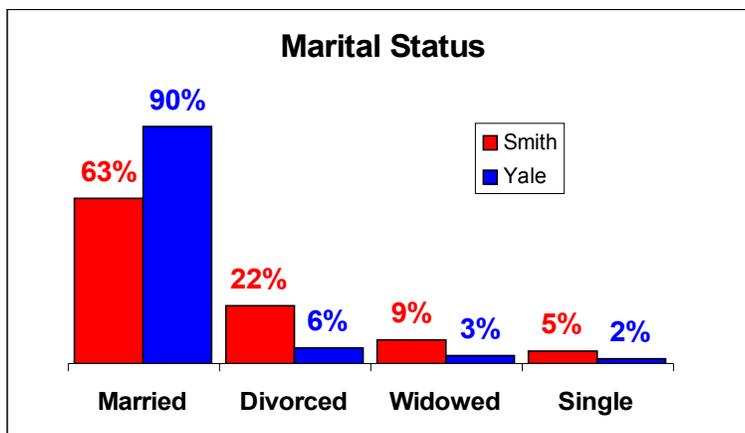
Y62 much more married, and more often, than S62.

Nine out of ten Y62 men are married, considerably higher than the percentage of S62 women (63%) who fall into that demographic. Of the currently unmarried in both classes, most have been married and today are divorced or widowed.

42% of Y62 men have been married two or more times, compared to 25% of S62 women. 10% of Y62 men have been married 3+ times, while only 2% of S62-ers have made more than two trips to the altar.

Who's at home?

Spouses are present in the households of nearly all who report themselves as currently married, in both studies.



3% of Y62 men live with a male partner, and 3% with a female partner, compared to 3% and 2%, respectively, among S62 women.

Reflecting the higher (and presumably more recent) remarriage rates among Y62 men, 11% have children living at home vs. only 3% of the Smith sample.

Grandparenting

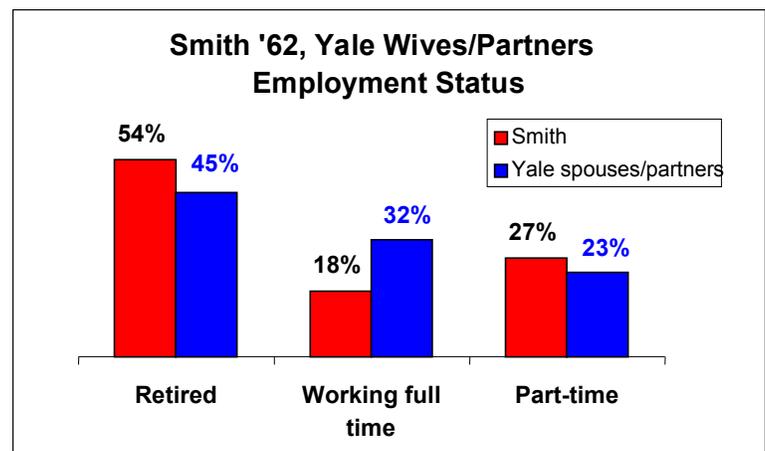
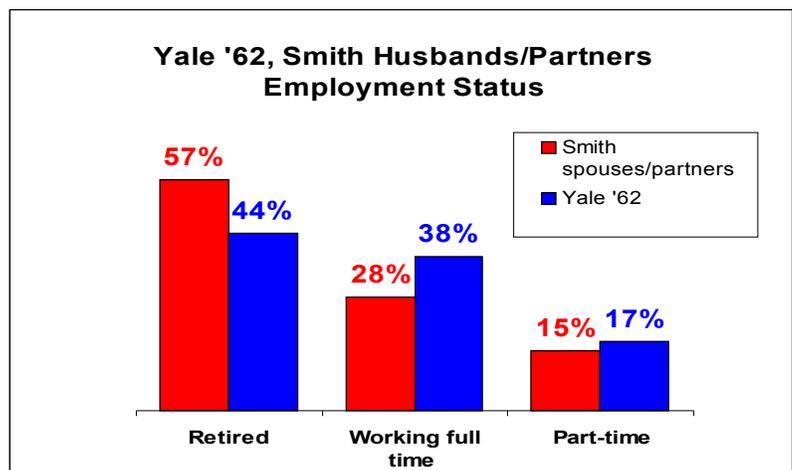
S62 women married younger, and began raising families younger than Y62 men, so it's not surprising that more Smith respondents claim grandparent status today (76% v. 65%). From replies to open-ended questions, it would appear that gender differences don't compromise the great pleasure grandchildren bring into our lives. S62 respondents, though, noted many more contexts in which grandchildren make everything better, whether it's a quiet moment on the porch or a trip halfway around the world.

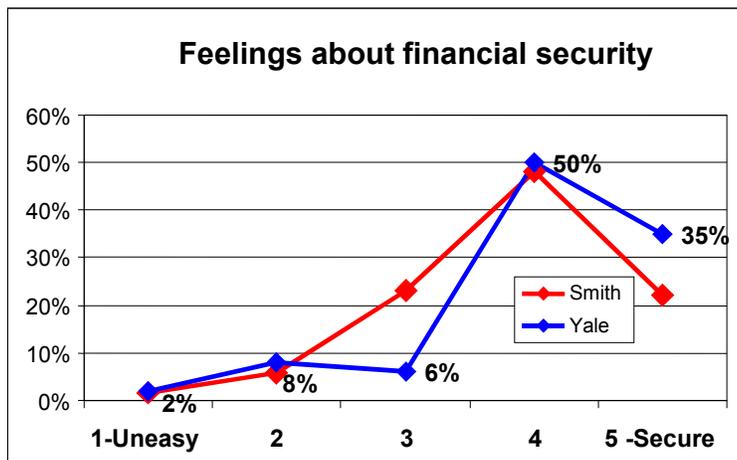
Work and wealth.

Y62 men are more likely to be working full- or part-time today (55%) than are their Smith counterparts (45%). For that matter, they're more likely to be at work than are S62 husbands/ partners (43%).

And comparing Y62 wives/partners to S62 women, the latter, having nearly all reached the age-65 benchmark, are more likely to have bailed out of the workforce.

While income alone isn't fully indicative of financial well-being, especially as we move into retirement, it is relatively easy to consider in a survey context, and useful for comparative purposes. Y62 reports higher 2006 household income than S62's (median: \$182K v. \$116K), consistent with higher levels of income-generating employment illustrated above.





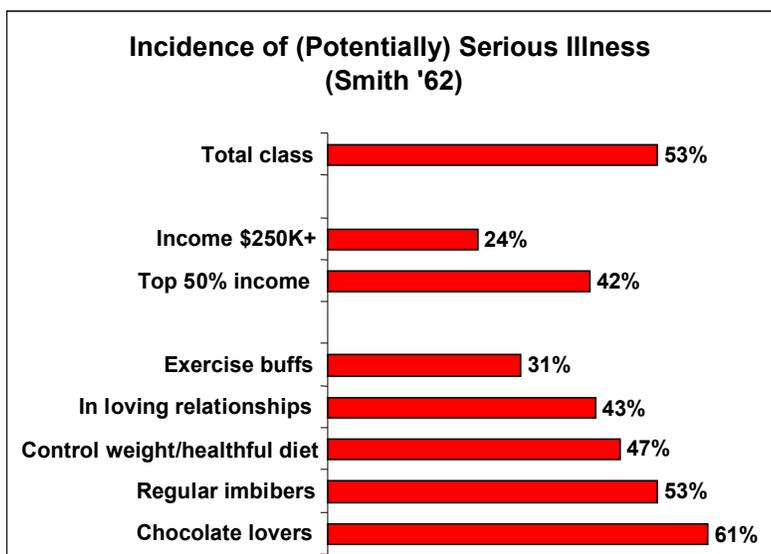
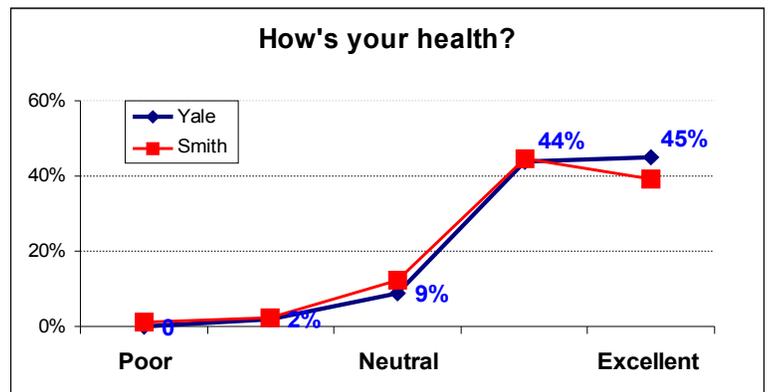
As we look ahead, feelings of financial security are confident in both classes. S62 skews a bit more markedly toward the center of the range; Y62 evidences more confidence at the very high end.

Volunteer work is a preoccupation of seven in ten members of both classes. Y62 men report more hours volunteering, averaging 9.2 hours per week, v. S62's 4.0 hours/week. The

S62 figure reflects a decline from 7.2 hours five years ago, quite possibly as S62 reorganized their lives around grandchildren and other post-career activities.

Health

Both survey samples reported exceptionally good health overall; roughly 9 out of 10 in each class rated their health in the good/excellent range. In further questioning, however, the incidence of serious or potentially serious illnesses was more apparent. Data are not comparable here, due to question design issues, but many respondents cited particular illnesses of some consequence, people who nevertheless would tell you that their general health is "great, thanks."



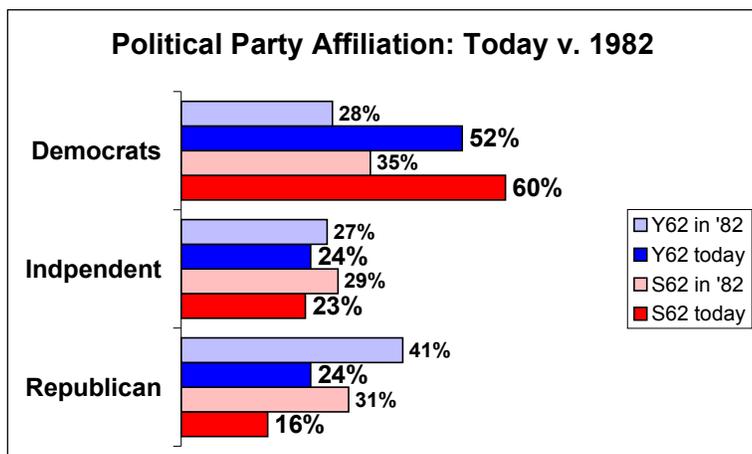
Findings concerning lifestyle indicators, cross-tabbed from the Smith study, might interest all students of this research. Factors that corresponded strongly with good health included adherence to *serious* exercise regimens, weight control/healthful eating, and being in a loving relationship. Regular enjoyment of alcoholic beverages, while not influencing overall health one way or the other, corresponded to slightly

lower than average levels of hypertension and arthritis, while regular enjoyment of chocolate, not surprisingly, tends to correlate with less robust health, and moderately elevated cholesterol. While higher levels of income correlated with more favorable reports of health status, cause-and-effect relationships can be confused in this regard. Health care can be prohibitively costly for those carrying other financial burdens, and illness in and of itself can seriously dent one's financial profile. Also, an unmeasured, but possibly related, factor pertains to our stage in life: Some uncounted number of classmates encountered difficulties in obtaining affordable health insurance in the years between group policy coverage and Medicare eligibility, and they may have felt reluctant to seek uncovered care for still-lingering health problems that other classmates would have had treated.

(Higher levels of income also correlated in the Smith study with Republican party affiliation *and voting for GWB in the last election*, causing one classmate to wonder if the election results had introduced an epidemic of stress-related illnesses among Gore voters.)

Speaking of politics...

Political party affiliations have, well, flip-flopped, within both '62 classes in the past quarter-century. The big gains went to the Democratic party, one in four voters moved that way in each survey, primarily away from the GOP.



At the time the recent surveys were conducted, in the Spring of 2007, Obama (31%) and Clinton (22%) were the Yale Democratic frontrunners, while Giuliani (13%) and McCain (7%) led the Republican field.

S62 preferences were similar: Clinton (38%) and Obama (36%) running

closer to one another with Clinton in the lead, and Giuliani (9%) and McCain (6%) leading the much less favored Republican hopefuls.

Three in ten Y62-ers (31%) and almost as many S62-ers (28%) actively campaigned for political candidates in 2004 or 2006.

Concerns about major issues

Concerns about major issues confronting the nation were explored in open-ended questions. It's tempting, but potentially misleading, to quantify these answers for comparison. By way of summary, however, both Y62 and S62 showed remarkable symmetry in their answering. The

Iraq war/terrorism/situation in the Middle East overwhelmingly dominated replies in both surveys, with the environment, health care, perceived crisis in leadership, misguided U.S foreign policy and the economy also prominent. An interesting distinction emerged in comments about the Bush presidency: Several Y62-ers noted with some distress that GWB is a Yale man; not a single Smith respondent, however, referred to the fact that GWB's mother is a Smith alum.

Sex...a major issue?

Y62 provided specific detail on satisfaction with their sex lives (59% satisfied, 31% not), while S62 was given the option of saying anything they wanted to, or nothing, about theirs. Half the S62 sample opted out of the inquiry. Among answerers, nearly half reflected that their sex lives were non-existent, a distant memory, or precluded for lack of a partner. 10% of Y62-ers answered "not active" to the specific inquiry. Several S62-ers filed rave reviews of recent frolics, while relatively few, active and inactive, expressed feelings of tristesse looking back over more thrilling moments in their sex lives. From answers to other questions, there is abundant evidence that S62-ers are carpe-ing their diems, and evenings, resourceful in substituting new delights for bygones of all sorts. Yale 62-ers tend more – but certainly not without exception -- to keep on keeping on with lifelong pursuits, at work and at play – this particular area of play probably included.

About being "here"

Gender differences aside, we are all enjoying the many aspects of "liberation" that we experience at this point in our lives. Liberation from work, for many. Liberating ourselves from the expectations of others. Enjoying (some, anyway) the liberation of becoming "invisible" in a larger, youth-driven culture. Self-actualization is seen at last as a possibility, and many are taking full advantage – whether it means wearing comfortable if unattractive footwear, speaking out boldly about touchy issues, or pursuing a long-postponed ambition to play a musical instrument or take up ice skating or sail around the world. Being with family, enjoying these people to whom we've devoted so much of ourselves, not to mention genetic material, delights us all on many levels, with grandchildren introducing us to new experiences of love. Most of us worry about our health, and about how we'll cope when it fails us. And we worry a great deal about the state of the nation and the world – aware that so much has gone adrift on our watch and that the consequences, if not checked, will comprise our legacy.

However that legacy may be taking shape, one Smith classmate wrote that the best thing about being "here" in life is ... "at least seeing how it all turns out."

Indeed.

Sincere thanks for so much documentation of all that. CS