

Five College Learning in Retirement

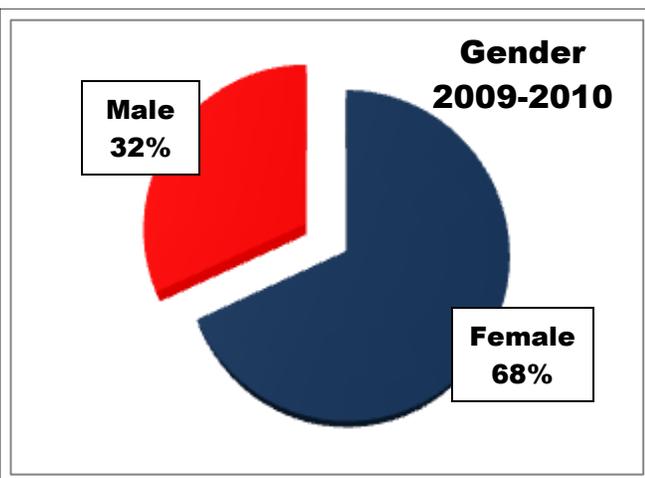
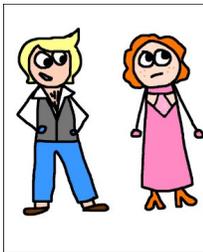
Amherst College * Hampshire College * Mount Holyoke College * Smith College * UMass Amherst

A Special Report: Who Are We? The Results of the Member Survey (An addendum to the May, 2010 5CLIR Reporter)

By Chuck Gillies and Hy Edelstein

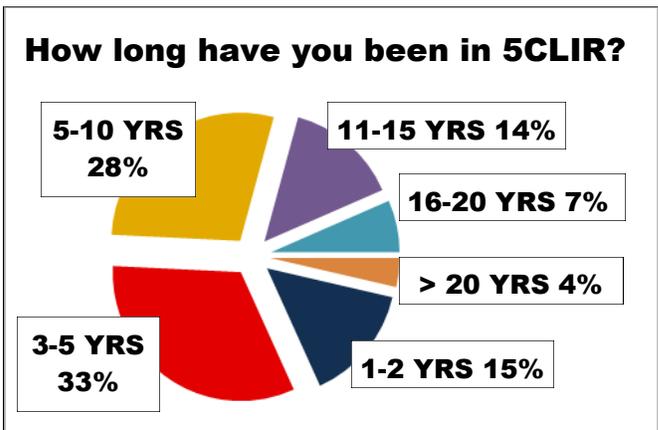
In the fall of 2009 Sara Wright, our President, asked all 5CLIR members to fill out the 'Survey of Current Members.' Almost all members complied, and in this Special Report we share the results. This gives us a profile of our membership as Council and various committees make plans for the future and we search for better methods of outreach to our community.

Gender. The first item of interest was an obvious one, our gender balance. It is no surprise that we are about two thirds female, although we all know that some seminars and activities may be mostly male. Here are the actual results, which have been pretty consistent over the years:



When did you join 5CLIR?
Answers ranged from 1987 (5CLIR'S beginning!) to 2010. The median was 2005,

meaning, of course, that half of our members joined in 2005 or later and the other half joined earlier than 2005. Here are the results:



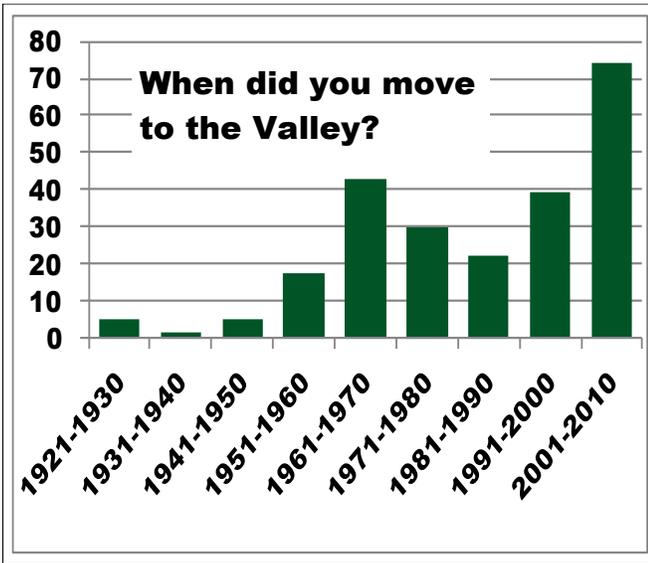
When did you move to the Valley?

We asked people to remember when they moved to the Pioneer Valley. As suspected, the data appears to support the hypothesis that we are two overlapping groups—those that have “lived in the Valley forever,” raising their children and having their careers here, and those who moved to the Valley in retirement, because of children or grandchildren, the attractions of “Happy Valley” or other reasons (the weather?). The graph on the next page shows the results.



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A simple green tree with a brown trunk, standing on a small patch of ground.



The age question raised a couple of other questions in our discussions: how does the age of our newer members compare with our total population? And how does the leadership of this organization compare on the age score? Results are shown in the graphs below, but we were especially pleased when we grouped Council members, moderators, committee heads and officers to find that they were 'average' on this score, proving our point that keeping our brains active keeps us vigorous in all activities!

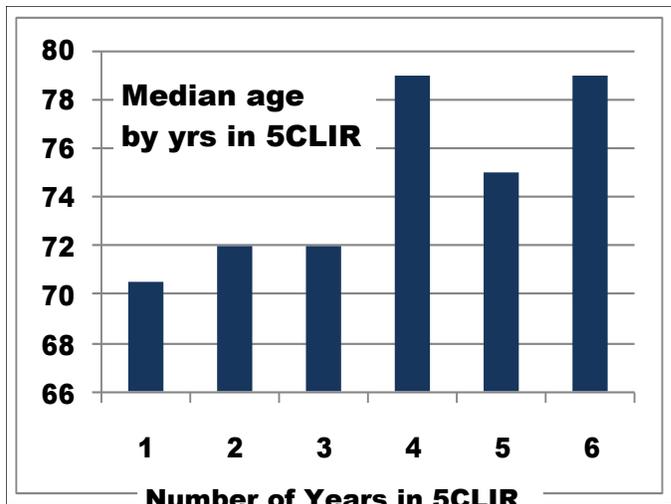
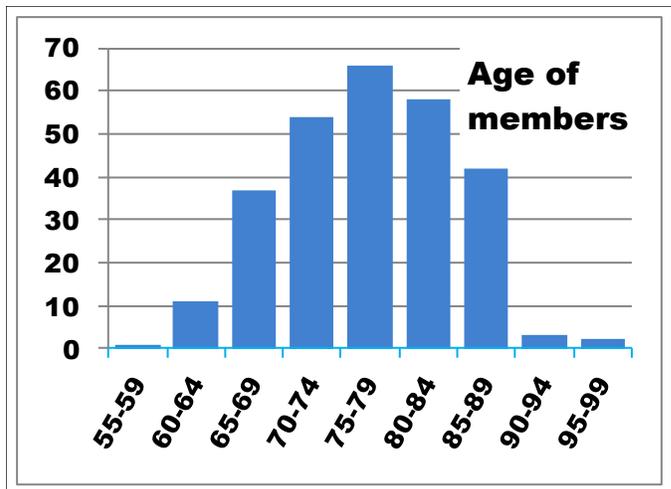


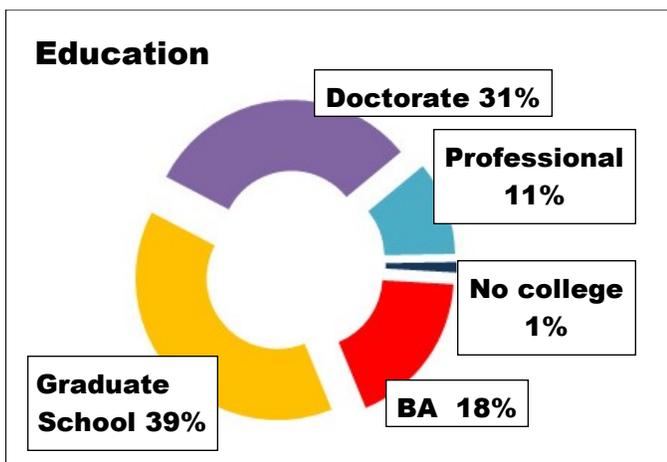
Birth Year and Age The topic that engendered the most discussion when this material was presented to the Tech Committee and the 5CLIR Council was the birth year of our members. The important questions are, "Are we growing older as a group?" and "Are we attracting younger mature people to keep the organization vital and healthy for the long haul?"



The answer to both appears to be "yes," as our median age, 77, has barely budged in the ten or more years that we have been tracking this.

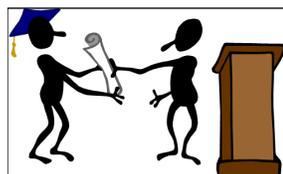
We are especially proud, though, that age-wise we span 41 years—the normal period from finishing college or graduate work to normal retirement. We also know that it is some of our older members who are most active in seminars, on committees and in leadership positions. Long ago we knew and committed this organization to the idea that keeping our brains active was one of the best tonics for the aging process.





What is your highest educational level?

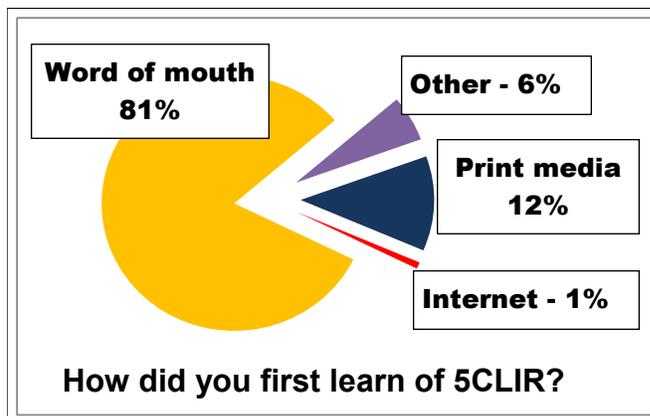
No surprise, we found that our membership is a highly educated bunch with over 80% having some post-BA education.



But on many scores our membership is a highly diverse group—nurses, philosophers, kindergarten teachers, administrative assistants, theoretical scientists, ministers, engineers, editors, brain surgeons and many others. All share an interest in learning and keeping the mind active. Lawyers talk to doctors, scientists talk to lay people and ministers, businessmen talk to activists as we learn and socialize.

How did you first learn of 5CLIR?

We believe that our programs are of great appeal and value to the mature community, and have endeavored to expand our offerings beyond the original seminar program in the last few years. Yet, to keep us healthy over the long haul, we need a constant influx of new blood. This depends on our outreach efforts. While most people report that word of mouth led them to 5CLIR, they may forget that they first heard of us on a WFCR fund raiser, at the Rotary or some public meeting, read of us in the Gazette, or picked up our brochure at a library or Chamber of Commerce, or heard of us at their college’s alumni or human resources office.



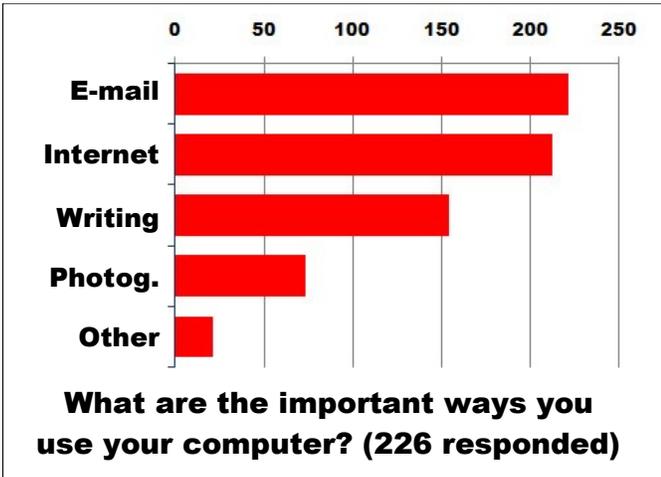
What are your connections to the five colleges?

Most of our seminars and other activities take place on the five college campuses. They generously share their libraries, computer facilities and even office space with us. Over 55% of our membership (163) have some kind of connection with one or more of the colleges:

College Connections	Alum	Faculty	Staff	Family	Totals
Amherst	6	3	7	12	28
Hampshire	1	2	2	11	16
Mt. Holyoke	8	4	3	15	30
Smith	13	12	9	22	56
UMass	42	31	13	48	134
Totals	70	52	34	108	264

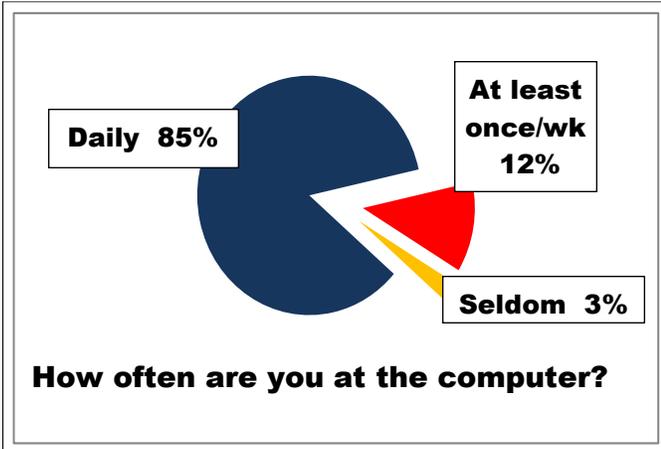
Computer Usage

We asked our membership three questions about their use of computers; 94% of our members now have a computer. This is a drastic change—encouraged by our Tech Committee—from only five years ago:



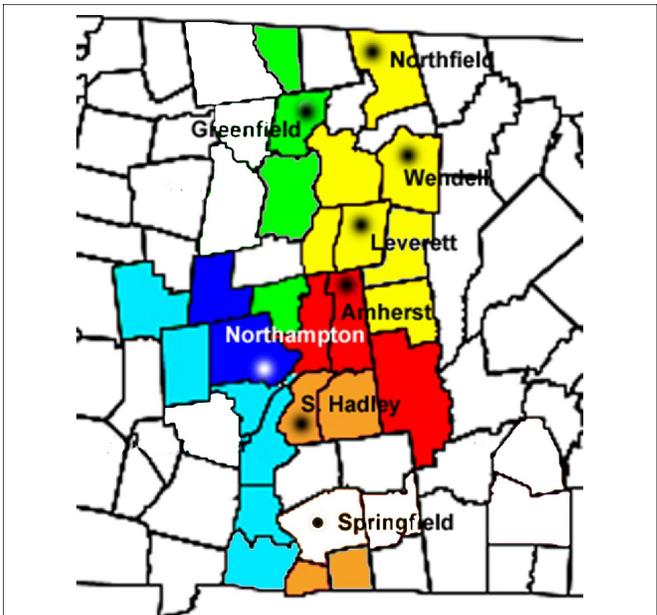
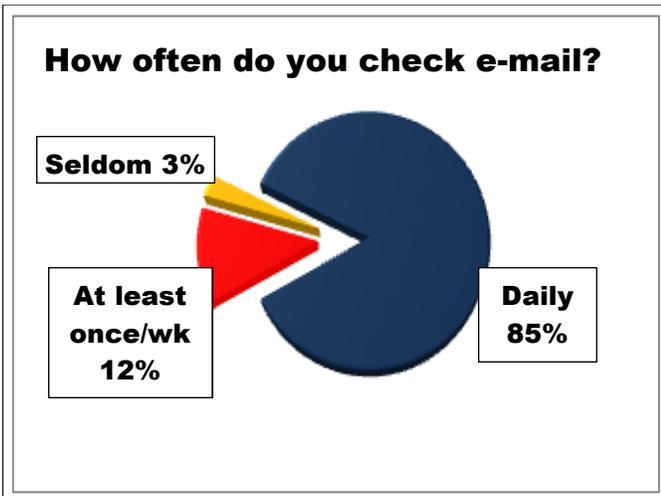
Our Growth

The growth of our 22-year-old organization has leveled off in the last few years:



Where do we live?

All over Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden counties—from Northfield to Agawam, from Belchertown to Chesterfield; 44% are West of the River, 56% East. Most, of course, come from Amherst (41%) or Northampton/Florence/Leeds (34%).



5CLIR and the Pioneer Valley
(we live in the shaded areas)