We are again pleased to report the results of the Anonymous Questionnaire. Of a total of 512 active classmates, 35 percent, or 178 of us, responded to the questionnaire (though 50 percent, or 257 of us, submitted entries to the Class Report). Five years ago 42 percent of 708 active classmates (295) responded to the Anonymous Questionnaire.

Retirement

By the time we’ve reached our age, one might expect that most of us have fully retired, but it turns out that only 54 percent (ninety-seven) of those responding to the questionnaire have fully retired (this compared to 132, or 45 percent, of the then-respondents five years ago). Forty percent are now semi-retired (thirty) or retired but active in volunteer work (forty-two); and 5 percent (nine) are still working full-time. Of those not fully retired, 6 percent (eleven) plan to retire. Nine percent (sixteen) plan not to retire, and 8 percent (fifteen) haven’t decided. For those retired, 74 percent of the class (133) expect future income to meet their needs, 3 percent (six) do not so expect, and 12 percent (twenty-three) said they can’t be sure. (Seventeen did not answer this question.)

Prior Work

As to our occupations, now or before retirement, only 138 of the questionnaire respondents answered this question. Doctors,
including professors of medicine, both researching and practicing physicians, psychiatrists, and psychologists numbered twenty-nine. There were twenty-three lawyers, including law professors, tax experts, and two judges. Seventeen classmates engaged in some variety of investing, money management, financial planning, and/or the stock market. Fifteen respondents were involved in some form of “business” and consulting. We had fourteen professors, teachers, and others engaged in education, including one college president and one university president; seven of us were architects or real estate developers; and seven more were in government, including foreign service officers and one career military man. We had six in literature and the arts—a poet, writer, artist, actor, editor, and publisher—and six involved in computers, whether information technology or telecommunications; another five were a mathematician, physicist, scientist, scholar, and a “board member.” There were also two CPAs and two clergymen. The class also had one each who were or are: an actuary, a reinsurance man, a rancher, an instructor pilot, and a person engaged in “pro bono work in my specialty.”

Things have shifted a bit since our last Reunion, when of course there were more of us. At that time, lawyers outnumbered doctors. Now it’s the other way around.

How We Spend Our Time

Most of us love to read. Sixty percent of us (108) spend the largest proportion of our waking hours reading, whether exclusively (fifty-two), along with other endeavors (forty-six), or along with writing (ten).

With a reminder that the following pursuits can overlap, here’s more information on how we spend our time:
Twenty-three percent of us (forty-one) spend time on hobbies, whether exclusively (sixteen) or along with doing other things (twenty-five).

Sixteen percent of us (twenty-eight) spend time working or working along with other things.

Seven-and-a-half percent of us spend time on good works, both exclusively (one) and along with other efforts (thirteen).

Writing is popular with 11 percent of us, whether exclusively (two) or along with other things (seven).

About 10 percent of us like to travel, though only 1 percent (two) can do this to the exclusion of other things.

Other pastimes ranged from photography to childcare; from making music to managing a cemetery; from “keeping up with darn paperwork” to learning languages. One wag said his answer is “to be determined.” Another said he spends time “enjoying life.”

Our Marital Status

Most of us—63 percent (114)—are married, including 12 percent of us (twenty-two) who are remarried. None of us is separated, but 3 percent of us (five) are currently divorced. One percent of us are single, 5 percent of us are widowers, and 3 percent of us are living with a partner.

Our Dwellings

We’re a pretty suburban bunch. Forty percent (seventy-two) of us have our principal abodes in the suburbs, 31 percent (fifty-five) in
cities, and 14 percent of us (twenty-five) live in the country. Twenty-seven people didn’t answer the question.

Most of us (seventy-eight) didn’t specify whether we live in a house, apartment, or retirement community, but for those of us who did specify, 35 percent (sixty-two) of us live in houses, 8 percent of us (fifteen) in apartments, and 13 percent (twenty-four) in retirement communities. Twenty-seven percent of us (forty-eight) live part of the year in a second home. Those forty-eight are far-flung: 8 percent (sixteen) own another home in New England, mostly in the mountains or on the coast; 3 percent (seven) in Florida; 2 percent (four) in New York City or in the nearby Hudson Valley; 2 percent in the Mountain West or Southwestern desert; 1.5 percent (three) in Europe (London, Paris, Aix-en-Provence); 1.5 percent in California; 1 percent (two) in the Bahamas; another 1 percent on the shores of the mid-Atlantic.

Other second homes are all over the map, with one apiece in Japan, Canada, the Adirondacks, northern Wisconsin, Seattle, and Hawaii.

Current Annual Income

If we look at our current income from the point of view primarily of those of us who are fully retired, a plurality—27 percent (fifty)—reported annual unearned income of between $100,000 and $249,000. Nine percent of us (sixteen) reported income of between $250,000 and $500,000 from such sources; 5 percent (nine) reported unearned income of more than $500,000. Eight percent of us (fourteen) reported unearned income of between $75,000 and $99,000; 2 percent of us (six) reported unearned income of between $50,000 and $74,000; and 1 percent (three) of us reported unearned income between $25,000 and $49,000, while another 1 percent reported unearned income of less than $25,000.
Another four of us who are still working reported only earnings: two of us between $29,000 and $45,000, two of us between $50,000 and $74,000.

For those of us receiving both earned and unearned income, almost 7 percent of the class (twelve) reported earned income of $25,000 or less; almost 3 percent (five) reported between $25,000 and $49,000 and another 3 percent between $50,000 and $74,000. Still another 3 percent (six) reported earnings between $75,000 and $99,000; 5 percent (ten) between $100,000 and $249,000; 1 percent (two) between $250,000 and $500,000; and another 2 percent of us had more than $500,000.

Almost 1 percent of the class from the same group reported unearned income of up to $25,000; 1.5 percent (three) up to $49,000; 2 percent (four) up to $74,000; 3 percent (six) up to $99,000; 5 percent (ten) up to $249,000; 4 percent (eight) up to $500,000; 2 percent (six) more than $500,000.

Among those reporting more than $500,000 in unearned income were the lucky four who reported the same amount of earned income.

Eighty percent of us (144) consider our current income to be adequate; 11 percent of us (nineteen) do not; 10 percent of us (eighteen) didn’t answer or didn’t answer clearly. Asked if we contemplate any significant future “lifestyle change,” 85 percent of us (153) answered “no,” and 10 percent (eighteen) answered “yes.” Eight of us didn’t answer.

The Best Years of Our Lives

One of us said that his peak annual employment earnings was $100,000,000. Eleven more claim $1 million or more for peak
earnings, placing between 5 and 6 percent of our class in the millionaire club. Another 6 percent of us (twelve) claim $500,000 as peak earnings; and 3 percent (five) claim amounts between $500,000 and $1 million.

Almost 13 percent of us (twenty-three) claim peak earnings of between $250,000 and $500,000; 26 percent of us (forty-eight) claim peak earnings between $100,000 and $249,000; almost 4 percent of us (seven) claim peak earnings between $75,000 and $99,000; almost 7 percent of us (twelve) claim between $50,000 and $74,000; 5 percent of us (nine) of us claim between $25,000 and $49,000, and two of us claim peak earnings below $25,000.

Children, Grandchildren, Great-Grandchildren

As a class, we seem to favor two children—36 percent of us (sixty-five) had two. Then comes 27 percent (forty-eight) with three, and 15 percent (twenty-six) with four children. Five percent (nine) had no children, 8 percent (fifteen) had one child, 7 percent (thirteen) had five, and 3 percent (six) had six.

All but a few of our children have moved out of home—89 percent (159) no longer have children living with us, and 6 percent (eleven) have children who either never left or have moved back in. Twenty-five percent (forty-five) of us have one married child, 84 percent (sixty) have two married children, 13 percent (twenty-four) have three married children, and 12 percent (twenty-two) have four married children. One percent of us (two) have five married children. There are 13 percent (twenty-three) of classmates who have one divorced child, 3 percent (six) with two.

Twelve percent of classmates (twenty-one) have one child living with a partner, and .5 percent (one) have two such children.
The number of grandchildren we have ranges from one (7 percent of us, or thirteen classmates) to fourteen (.5 percent, or one of us). No classmate answered “none” or “0” to the question, so there’s no information on classmates without grandchildren. In ascending order, the records appear as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Grandchildren</th>
<th>Number of Classmates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>12% (twenty-one)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>11% (nineteen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>17% (thirty-one)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>12% (twenty-one)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>8% (fourteen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>4% (eight)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>5% (nine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten</td>
<td>2% (four)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven</td>
<td>3% (five)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve</td>
<td>1% (two)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As to great-grandchildren:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Greats</th>
<th>Number of Classmates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>6% (ten)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>4% (seven)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>2% (four)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>1% (two)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One classmate has six great-grandchildren, and two have seven greats.
Health and Habits

Five years ago we collectively thought ourselves healthier than we do now: not surprising, given advancing decrepitude. Then, 30 percent (eighty-nine) rated their overall health as “excellent”; now only 21 percent (thirty-eight) think so. Now 56 percent (one hundred classmates) say they’re in “good” health, a slight percentage hike from five years ago when it was 54 percent (157). Twenty percent (thirty-seven) claim “fair” overall health; 2 percent (four) claim “poor” health. In our own minds, though, 57 percent (102) considered their health about the same as before, 38 percent (sixty-eight) thought it worse, and only 5 percent (nine) thought they were healthier. One of us commented, “have been on a plateau, but beginning to develop more problems”—a sentiment, we suspect, shared by many.

But boy, do we think we’ve defeated one of America’s major public health problems: 87 percent (156) of us say that his physician has not advised him that he is “overweight” (let alone “obese”), compared with 81 percent (152) five years ago. Twelve percent (twenty-two) admitted to such advice. And almost everybody, to one extent or another, worries about diet (although one classmate wrote that he eats everything, and another advised simply “moderation”): 44 percent of us (seventy-nine) made (or his wife urged him to make) “a consistent effort to eat foods that are” low-fat; 34 percent (sixty-one) low-sodium; 25 percent (forty-five) apiece for low-sugar and low-cholesterol; low-calorie 23 percent (forty-two), and organic 12 percent (two).
Bitter Pills to Swallow

We’re very medicated. Some of us even take twelve or more types of medicine daily. Of that group, comprising 4 percent of the class, one takes eighteen types of medicine every day.

Another one of us, who takes nine medications daily, wrote that he’s not even counting his over-the-counter medicines.

The largest group of us, 16 percent (twenty-nine), takes up to four types of medicine daily. Fifteen percent of us (twenty-seven) take five each day; 8 percent (fourteen) take six; almost 12 percent (twenty-one) take seven; 5 percent of us (nine) take eight; almost 3 percent (five) take nine; and another 5 percent (nine) take ten. Two of us take eleven pills a day.

A lucky 2 percent of us (four) don’t take any medicine, and a lucky 7 percent (thirteen) take only one type each day.

Bad Habits

Our classmates have also sobered up: five years ago 45 percent (132) drank hard liquor only, and this year only 7 percent (thirteen) still drink hard liquor only. Twenty-two percent (thirty-nine) drink both hard liquor and beer/wine, and 53 percent (ninety-four) drink beer/wine only. Seventeen percent (thirty-two) don’t drink alcohol at all (compared to 16 percent five years ago). To the question, “Do you smoke?”, only 2.5 percent (five) (including two medical men) answered “yes.” Ninety-six percent (172) answered “no,” and 4 percent (eight) said they’d never smoked. Of those who once smoked but quit, 89 percent (160) said they’d quit more than twenty years ago (including one who quit seventy years ago, one fifty years ago). About 2.5 percent (five) quit either ten years ago
or less than five years ago. Five years ago only 143 of us answering the questionnaire did not smoke.

Exercise

Five years ago 9 percent of us followed the maxim: “When I get the urge to exercise, I lie down until it goes away.” This year only 7 percent (twelve) did so; so we’re improving. Twenty-seven percent (forty-eight) exercise daily; 51 percent (ninety-three) exercise several times a week, and 12 percent (twenty-one) exercise once a week. For 62 percent of us (111) walking is the preferred form of exercise; a distant second at 17 percent (thirty-one) is weights, and then cycling at 10 percent (eighteen). Hiking, swimming, golf, and tennis is each the favorite form of exercise for about 7 percent (eleven to fourteen) of us. Jogging, once very popular, is now the favorite for only three classmates (who deserve congratulations!). Various endeavors in the gym are the most popular for most of us: eighteen choose the stationary bicycle or the treadmill; ten of us describe our exercise as only “gym”; Pilates, gyrotonics, aerobics, isometrics, and stretching are all mentioned; four of us use “calisthenics,” and three of us say only “exercises.” One classmate uses a personal trainer.

Religion

As to religion, 78 percent (141) of us have remained about the same in our religious beliefs/lives; 15 percent (twenty-seven) have become less religious and 11 percent (nine) more so. These percentages are roughly the same as five years ago.
How We Get Our Information

Who cares if millennials find it quaint? Eighty-seven percent of us (156) read newspapers. That’s not to say we’re totally old-fashioned: a respectable 53 percent of us (ninety-seven) sometimes use the internet to stay abreast. There’s overlap with the newspaper readers, of course, since most of us consume news in more ways than one. Television is also popular, with 77 percent of us (138) watching some news, while 55 percent of us (one hundred) read magazines.

Radio is our least favorite means of keeping informed; only 35 percent of us (sixty-three) sometimes get our news this way, and one of us said he listens to public radio exclusively.

One classmate wrote that he reads the *New York Times* plus his local daily every day. He said he also consumes about a dozen magazines across the political spectrum, though presumably not on a daily basis.

Most of us do use multiple facets of the internet, so these answers overlap. Ninety-four percent (170) of the respondents use email; 52 percent (ninety-four) each use the internet for research or for news or both; 43 percent (seventy-nine) shop on the internet; and 23 percent (forty-two) use it for work. Five years ago 35 of us didn’t use the internet at all, and this year 11 percent (nineteen) didn’t use it. We’re learning, although perhaps a few of us might qualify as Luddites (comments: “None!” and “I avoid it like the plague!”). Of those using the internet, 37 percent (sixty-seven) use Google; 13 percent (twenty-three) use Facebook, and only three of us use Twitter.
Our Feelings About Harvard

Most of us, 76 percent (136), feel much the same about Harvard as we did five years ago and reported “little change” in our sentiments. Eighteen percent of us (thirty-two) said our feelings have changed for the worse, while 4 percent (eight) said the opposite.

As to whether Harvard is headed in the right direction, 49 percent (eighty-eight) answered “yes,” and 23 percent (forty-two) answered “no.” Twenty-seven percent (forty-nine) said they were “uncertain.”

Some added handwritten comments. One “right direction” person wrote: “Better control of asinine, stupid student reactions than at Yale.”

Harvard president Drew Faust garnered mostly positive reviews, with 33 percent of the class (fifty-nine) giving her a grade of “good” and 24 percent (forty-three) grading her as “excellent.” Fourteen percent said “fair”; 6 percent said “misguided”; 3 percent said “bad.”

Twenty percent of the class (thirty-five) didn’t answer.

Exactly half of us (ninety) said we’d want a grandchild to attend Harvard, and another 26 percent (forty-six) checked “probably.”

Eleven percent (nineteen) said “probably not,” and one wrote of Harvard, “too big, too frantic, too many cracks to get lost in.” Four percent (eight) said “no.” Nine percent (sixteen) didn’t answer.
Advanced Degrees

We’re certainly highly educated, as 82 percent of us (147) have advanced degrees. Thirty-eight percent of us got that degree from Harvard.

Our Politics

Liberal Democrats are the largest group in our class, with 27 percent (forty-nine) describing themselves that way. Another 26 percent (forty-six) described themselves as moderate Democrats, and 3 percent (six) identified as conservative Democrats.

Among Republicans, 12 percent (twenty-one) identified as moderates, 8 percent (fourteen) as liberals, and 7 percent (twelve) as conservative. Another 5 percent (nine) chose “other,” with one of them writing that he is a libertarian, another a progressive, and another wrote “independent.” One moderate Democrat said moderate Republicans are “an endangered species.”

One possible reason liberal Democrats are ascendant in our class might be that 16 percent of us (twenty-eight) identified ourselves as more liberal than we were five years ago. Twelve percent of us (twenty-one) reported being more conservative, and 70 percent of us (126) reported no change. One person in that last category wrote that liberals and conservatives “seem much farther apart now.”

Our Views

Seventy-four percent (133), said we need stronger laws to protect the environment (n.b., the third most important initiative in the opinion of the class appearing in the last category of this questionnaire); 90 percent (161) said women should have the right
to choose abortions; and 87 percent of us (156) said the government should have the right to regulate handguns.

Disagreeing with these views were 20 percent of us (thirty-seven) on the environment, 6 percent of us (ten) on abortion, and 12 percent (twenty-one) on handguns.

On federal funding for the arts and humanities, 87 percent of us (154) said it should continue, and 11 percent (thirty) disagreed. As a class we’re ambivalent on marijuana legalization, with 41 percent of us (seventy-four) saying its sale and use should be federally legalized and 50 percent (eighty-nine) disagreeing.

We’re almost split as a group on capital punishment, with 49 percent (eighty-eight) saying it should be banned and 44 percent (seventy-nine) disagreeing.

Forty-two percent of us (seventy-six) want to abolish the electoral college, while 50 percent (eighty-nine) disagree. And 83 percent of us (149) said we should provide a path for illegal aliens to get citizenship; 11 percent (twenty) disagreed.

Seventy-nine percent (141) support universal health care, while 15 percent (twenty-seven) do not. One supporter qualified his “yes” by adding “with significant reservations.”

One of the people who wrote “no” wrote the words “too costly” in the margin, and one classmate who didn’t answer wrote “not sure yet.”

Most of us take a dim view of the current US Congress. Fifty-eight percent of us gave it a grade of outright “shameful,” and 23 percent (forty-one) gave it a grade of “bad.” Sixteen percent (twenty-eight) said it was “fair,” and 1 percent (two) said it was “good.”
If the Class of ’53 Ran the Country. . . .

Improving education in the US is the initiative our class ranked most important out of ten possible opportunities offered to you to improve the state of the Union.

Here’s how the class ranked the remaining nine initiatives, in descending order of importance:

2  Improve bipartisanship in US politics;
3  Strengthen US support for reducing harmful effects of climate change;
4  Reduce poverty in the US;
5  Improve the job growth in the US;
6  Reduce the harmful effects of gerrymandering;
7  Restore the Glass-Steagall Act or similar restraint on Wall Street;
8  Reduce the US debt;
9  Reduce federal income taxes on the middle class;
10 Export democracy.

Five years ago eight of the same initiatives were offered. Also included then were the subjects of US dependence on foreign oil and same-sex marriage. This year those two were omitted, and the questions about climate change and gerrymandering were added.

Our class recorded opinions this year only slightly different from those expressed five years ago. Improving education in the US and bipartisanship are still the two most important initiatives, with climate change replacing job growth (now number five) in the number three position. Reducing poverty is more important now (number four) than five years ago (number seven); reducing gerrymandering, a new initiative this year, is number six; restoring Glass-Steagall jumps from number nine five years ago to number seven this year. Reducing the US debt is now number eight (was
number four) and reducing taxes on the middle class (then number seven) is now ranked ninth. Both years, exporting democracy is least important.

We hope that what you have sent us and what we have recorded here will interest and amuse you, and we thank again those of you who took the time to respond to our questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Storey and Chuck Wade