

Membership Trends from 2005-2007

Report Date 2.20.2007

Overview

Since 2005 we've been collecting data in a Filemaker database across many parameters including, gender, place of residence, contribution level, and methods of payment. While still too small a sample to conclude much about our supporters, the data is worthy of scrutiny if only to see where our principle base of support has been and how that base has changed over this crucial three year period. Equally, the data can be used to learn who has left our membership and to chart a course towards winning these members back.

Methodology

The data was parsed by town. The principle towns with highest membership were separated out from "others." The principle towns are Bellows Falls, Walpole, Putney, Westminster, Alstead, Brattleboro, Saxtons River. Together these seven towns make up more than 60% of our membership in all three fiscal periods starting in 2005.

The numbers represented in the tables are derived from the creation of membership records during each period beginning January 1 and ending December 31. Members without addresses in the database – and there are more than 20 such members over the years – are categorized with "others" and undoubtedly skew the data slightly towards the prominence of "others."

Similarly, there are several members for whom we have no record of gender and no attempt to reconcile this was made.

Attrition is defined as members leaving, upon the date of expiry. In all cases this is 12/31. This definition is complicated by the fact that memberships purchased after September 1 in any calendar year do not expire until 12/31 of the subsequent calendar year. Nevertheless, the data shows creation and expiration of membership during each calendar year, regardless of the continuation individual membership into the new year. Members in and members out is all that is analyzed here.

Lastly, the towns chosen as principle were chosen because of generalized superiority of membership numbers. Towns not chosen may have had a brief flowering but didn't sustain it. The cut off is therefore arbitrary and based on general assumptions about our membership and listening area. In a sample so small as this we need to be careful about our conclusions.

Executive Summary

Without a doubt, our initial membership drive leading up to and including 2005 was our most successful period of fundraising. The reasons for this are impossible to discern from the data but our membership was highest that year in all towns, with the exception of Walpole, NH which, though still a small percentage of total membership, has increased to its highest level in the current period ending on 12/31/2008.

With this sole exception, new membership in the subsequent years was considerably diminished with the worst decrease taking place in Bellows Falls itself and, in a general sense, in the uncategorized towns represented by “others.”

As a consequence, revenue generated from memberships has decreased from the first year, dropping from 2005’s membership revenue of \$9885 to the 2007 revenue of \$3140. This change is not to be taken lightly. Curiously, the 2006 revenue was very much on a par with 2007 and totaled \$3221 but a two-year stability is not necessarily indicative of a trend.¹

Our membership skews slightly male with 189 male members and 158 female members registered.²

Of particular interest is the financial impact on the station when members choose not to renew. Based on the assumption that, had these members renewed, they would have done so at the previous year’s donor level, this impact over three years totals \$10,618.00. a sum more than 140% of our two-year revenue total from 2005-2007. This amount is shown as “Lost Revenue” on the tables that follow. Convincing one-time donors to renew their memberships should therefore be a key strategy in fundraising since membership revenue currently accounts for the majority of our overall operating funds.

On a positive note, memberships that expire on 12/31/2008 and not represented on the attached charts total 95, nearly 20% higher than those expiring on 12/31/2007. More importantly, the total revenue is already at \$4277 up 27% from the previous year.

Worthy of note is the fact that sustaining memberships (formerly founding memberships) have regained strength after a three-year slide, as follow: 2005: 17, 2006: 15, 2007: 10, 2008: 25. Sustaining memberships now make up more than half our revenue in the period expiring 12/31/2008.

Data from the Putney area is somewhat contaminated by school participation and it is perhaps unwise to draw any conclusions from these numbers. The students from Compass School whose membership is sometimes ambiguously recorded are worthy of our attention as we develop long-term relationships with our young members.

¹ Revenue numbers based on the same formula of memberships purchased 1/1 – 12/31.

² The total database of membership – whether or not expired – totals 393 leaving 46 members unregistered by gender.

Bellows Falls, which had initially represented more than 30% of our membership, has now declined to just over 20% though in the current period membership in Bellows Falls has recovered from the precipitous drop in 2006 to only 11 new members and 24 leaving. It is worth noting which towns have negative growth: Bellows Falls, Saxtons River, Putney, Alstead, and Westminster.

The reasons for negative growth, particularly in the towns at the edge of our listenership, are understandable. Without the presence of our signal, some towns are bound to lose some interest in our activity. By documenting the cost of this attrition it's hoped that the value of each of these towns and its members will not be underestimated. Most troubling perhaps is the steep decline in membership from Bellows Falls whose attrition rate is the most perplexing. Conversely, the staying power of members from Walpole, for example, is interesting and might lend some insight into our strategy to combat attrition over all.

Further dialog among our board, hosts, and members might illuminate the reasons for these numbers as we chart our way forward with programming, marketing, and fundraising. Further analysis of the data is possible though it's hoped that this first round of information will set us on a path to repatriate some of the lost lambs of WOOL.

The attrition of members is not only problematic for our fundraising efforts; it's likely indicative of an erosion of our impact on the area. More importantly, this attrition deprives us of the richness and relevance that our station could enjoy if we continue to engage our members' attention, capture their imagination, and make permanent their loyal support.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Smith", with a stylized, cursive script.

Gary Smith

Membership Trends 2005- 2008

An analysis of membership data over a 3-year period

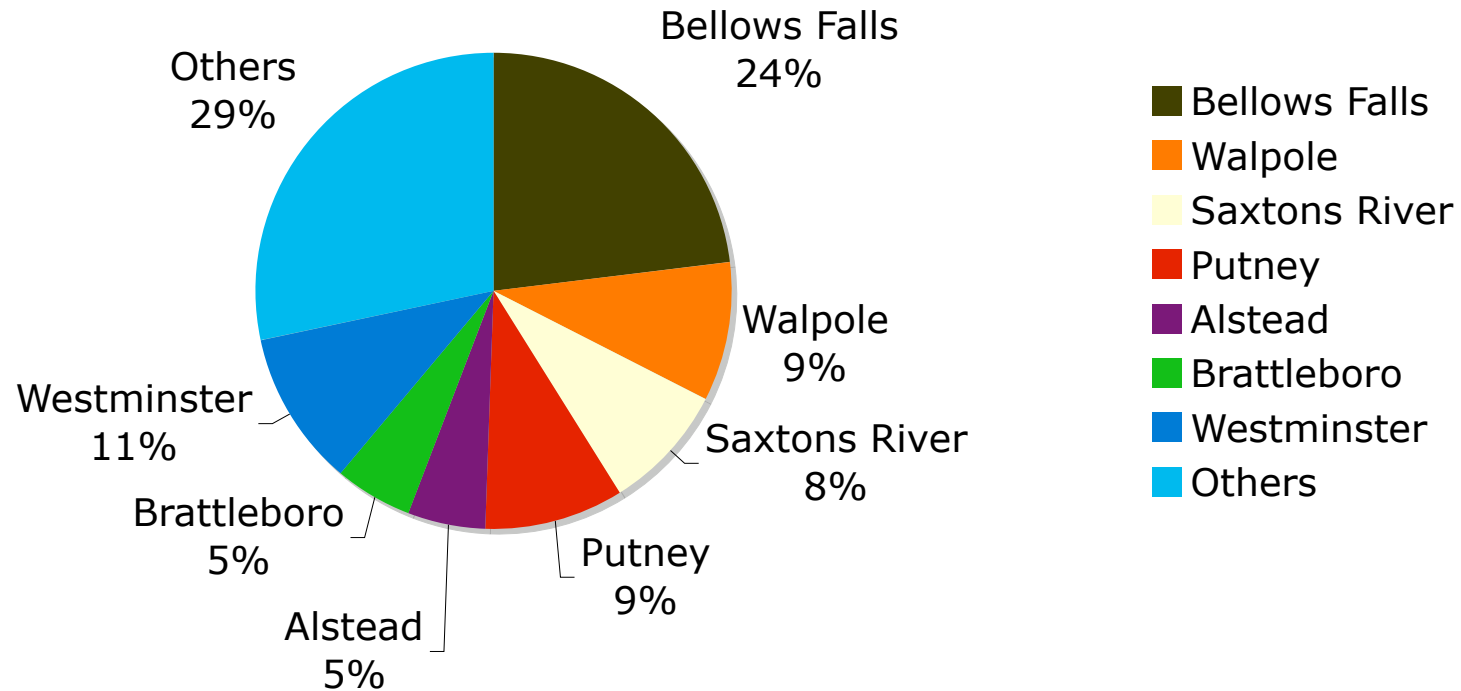
- Survey represents 7 towns with largest membership.
Survey represents approximately 63% of total membership.

	2005	2006	2007	Average	Total	Current
Joined	208	97	73	126.00	378	95
Total Revenue	\$ 9,885.00	\$ 2,470.00	\$ 2,306.00	\$ 4,887.00	\$ 14,661.00	
Attrition	79	95	113	95.67	287	
Lost Revenue	\$ 4,257.00	\$ 3,221.00	\$ 3,140.00	\$ 3,539.33	\$ 10,618.00	
Bellows Falls	Joined	63	11	16	30	90
	% Joining	30.29%	11.34%	21.92%	21.18%	64%
	Attrition	28	24	24	25	76
	% Attrition	35.44%	25.26%	21.24%	27.32%	82%
	Lost Revenue	\$ 1,310.00	\$ 855.00	\$ 590.00	\$ 918.33	\$ 2,755.00
Walpole	Joined	9	7	10	9	26
	% Joining	4.33%	7.22%	13.70%	8.41%	25%
	Attrition	1	2	5	3	8
	% Attrition	1.27%	2.11%	4.42%	2.60%	8%
	Lost Revenue	\$ 10.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 131.67	\$ 395.00
Saxtons River	Joined	20	5	6	10	31
	% Joining	9.62%	5.15%	8.22%	7.66%	23%
	Attrition	7	7	9	8	23
	% Attrition	8.86%	7.37%	7.96%	8.06%	24%
	Lost Revenue	\$ 225.00	\$ 205.00	\$ 270.00	\$ 233.33	\$ 700.00

Putney	Joined	12	28	8	16	48	9
	% Joining	5.77%	28.87%	10.96%	15.20%	46%	
	Attrition	4	7	12	8	23	
	% Attrition	5.06%	7.37%	10.62%	7.68%	23%	
	Lost Revenue	\$ 160.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 315.00	\$ 188.33	\$ 565.00	
Alstead	Joined	4	8	3	5	15	5
	% Joining	1.92%	8.25%	4.11%	4.76%	14%	
	Attrition	1	5	4	3	10	
	% Attrition	1.27%	5.26%	3.54%	3.36%	10%	
	Lost Revenue	\$ 100.10	\$ 270.00	\$ 185.00	\$ 185.03	\$ 555.10	
Brattleboro	Joined	8	5	1	5	14	5
	% Joining	3.85%	5.15%	1.37%	3.46%	10%	
	Attrition	2	4	3	3	9	
	% Attrition	2.53%	4.21%	2.65%	3.13%	9%	
	Lost Revenue	\$ 125.00	\$ 335.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 168.33	\$ 505.00	
Westminster	Joined	17	3	5	8	25	10
	% Joining	8.17%	3.09%	6.85%	6.04%	18%	
	Attrition	3	4	8	5	15	
	% Attrition	3.80%	4.21%	7.08%	5.03%	15%	
	Lost Revenue	\$ 75.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 220.00	\$ 116.67	\$ 350.00	
Total Represented Here		133	64	44	80.33	241	
Percentage Represented		64%	66%	60%	63%		

Current Membership Breakdown

All memberships expire 12.31.2008



Annual Joining By Town

