

# The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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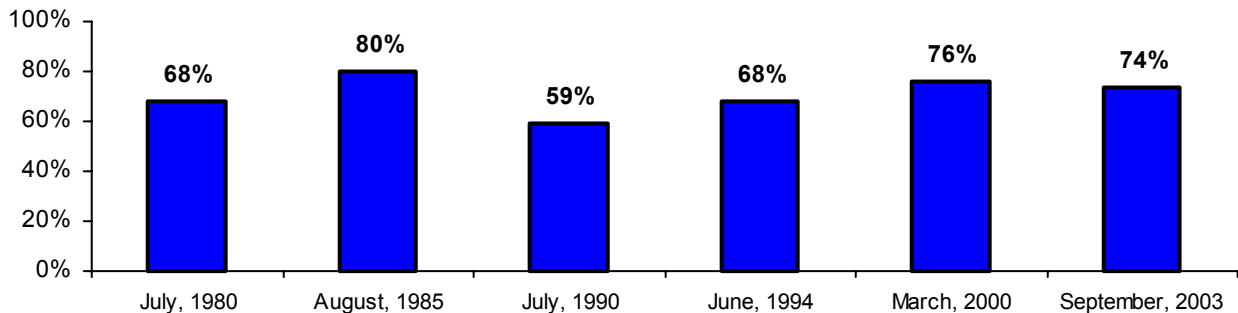
## TAKING NEW JERSEY'S PULSE

The mission of the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* is to gauge the pulse of New Jersey. The questions we ask on a typical poll include "snapshots" of our day-to-day activities and other issues that make us "New Jersey." These items generally appear on the *Star-Ledger's* editorial page each Monday in a feature called "Jersey Pulse." The following is a compilation of the Jersey Pulse items from the past few months.

### Only in the Garden State

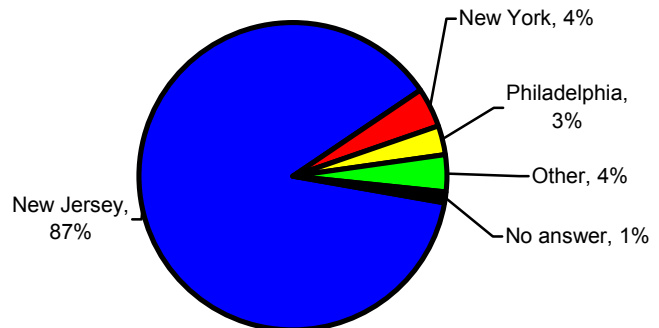
Hey, we're proud to call New Jersey home. Despite a dip in the early 1990s, most New Jerseyans over the past 23 years have been happy to live in the Garden State.

Overall, how would you rate New Jersey as a place to live?<sup>1</sup> (Those saying "excellent" or "good":)



In fact, most residents identify themselves as "from New Jersey" while traveling away from home. When asked where they're from, nearly 9-in-10 will say "New Jersey" while only 1-in-10 refer to themselves as "living near" New York, Philadelphia or someplace else.

When traveling out of state, do you usually tell people you are from New Jersey, or from near New York, near Philadelphia, or something else?<sup>3</sup>



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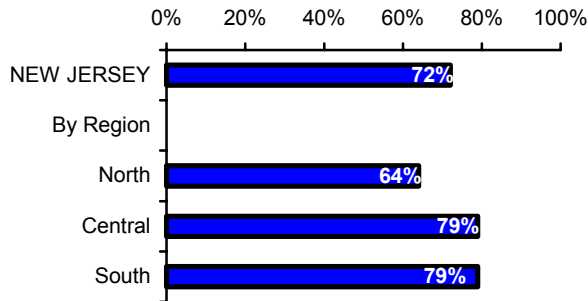
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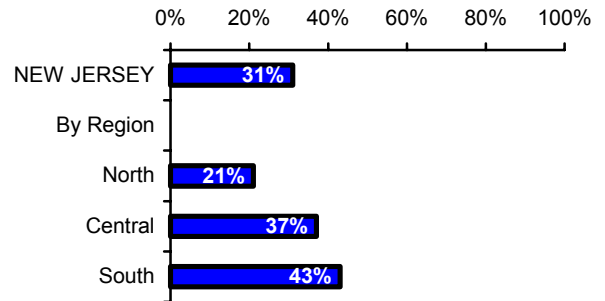
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When choosing a spot to visit within the state, the Jersey shore is more popular than our state capital. If this year is anything like the last, nearly 3-in-4 of us will be strolling on the boardwalk at least once this summer. By comparison, only 3-in-10 New Jerseyans (31%) have ever stood under the rotunda of the capitol building in Trenton. Residents of South Jersey (40%) are twice as likely as their northern neighbors (21%) to have paid the state house a visit. New Jersey residents with at least some college experience are also more likely to have visited the capitol: 40% of college graduates and 35% of those with some college have made the trip, compared to 24% of those with a high school diploma or less.

Have you walked on a boardwalk at the Jersey shore in the past year?<sup>3</sup>

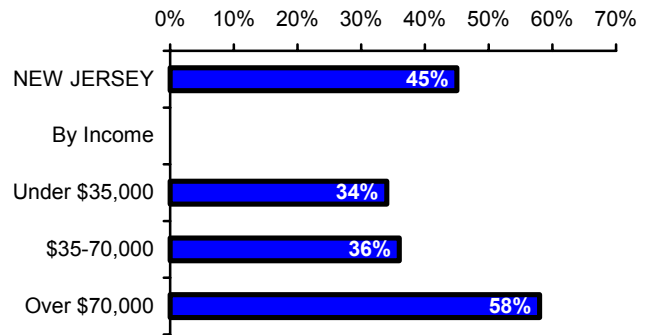


Have you ever visited the State Capitol building in Trenton?<sup>4</sup>

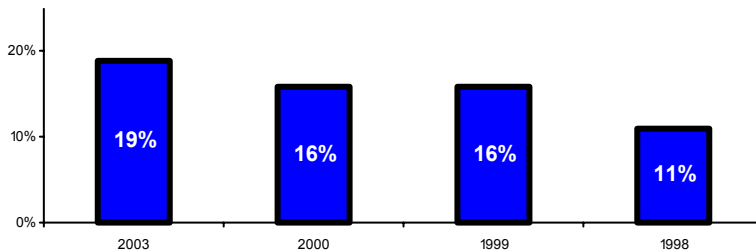


We also like to patronize the arts in New Jersey. Just under half of us have attended an in-state theater production in the past year. Predictably, wealthier and better educated residents are more likely to patronize local theaters. Interestingly, those describing themselves as liberal (55%) hold a ten-point edge over those describing themselves as moderate (43%) or conservative (45%).

Have you attended a play, concert, or other event at a theater in New Jersey in the past year?<sup>3</sup>



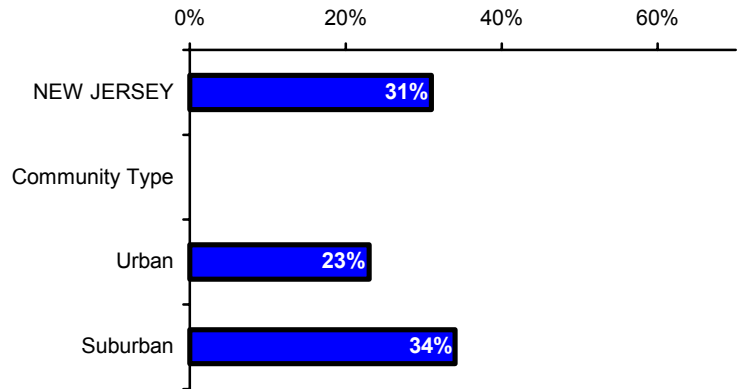
Have you gone to a minor league baseball game in New Jersey this year, or not?<sup>1</sup>



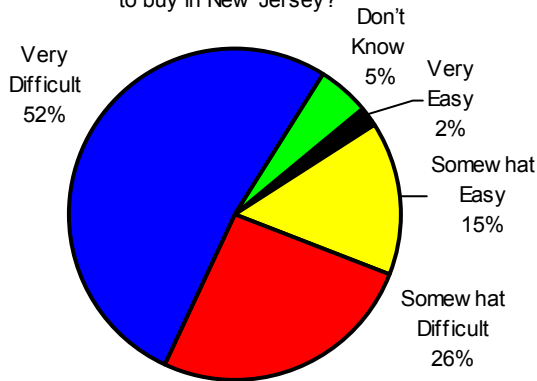
And for culture of a different sort, nearly 1-in-5 state residents watched one of the state's baseball franchises play this year, nearly double the number of five years ago.

Closer to home, nearly 3-in-10 New Jerseyans devote part of their backyard garden to one of the state's most ubiquitous icons – the Jersey Tomato. Older New Jerseyans are more likely to carry on this tradition: 37% of residents aged 50 or older are tomato growers along with 32% of those 30-49, compared to just 15% of those 18-29. Not surprisingly, suburban residents are more likely than urban residents (34% to 23%) to grow this vegetable (or is it a fruit?).

Did you grow your own Jersey tomatoes in the past year?<sup>3</sup>



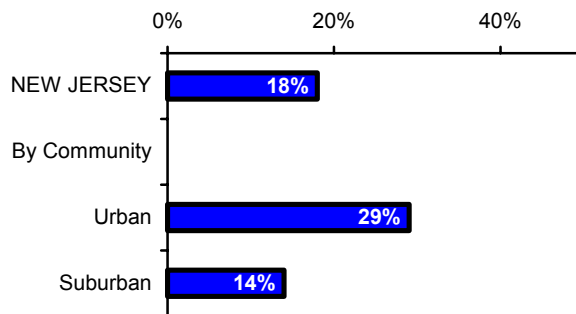
Do you think it is easy or difficult for most families today to find an affordable home to buy in New Jersey?<sup>2</sup>



Unfortunately, for many Garden State residents, the American dream of home ownership is becoming out of reach. With housing prices reaching record highs, nearly 4-in-5 New Jerseyans feel that families today are having a difficult time finding a home they can afford in this state – including more than half who say that finding an affordable home is very difficult for the typical Garden State family.

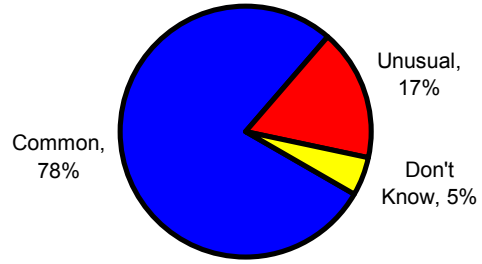
And in more bad news, living in New Jersey carries risks. Nearly 1-in-5 New Jerseyans report ever having a car stolen, including 2 percent who had their car taken in the past year.

Have you ever had a car stolen in New Jersey?<sup>3</sup>

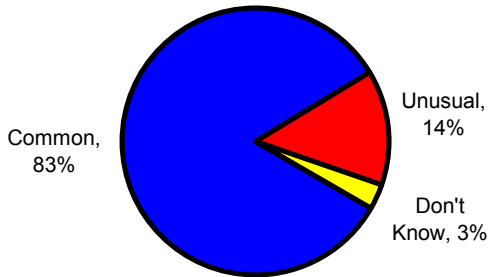


Some common sights in New Jersey include: interracial couples – more than 3-in-4 of say this is a common sight...

Is it common or unusual to see interracial couples in New Jersey?<sup>3</sup>

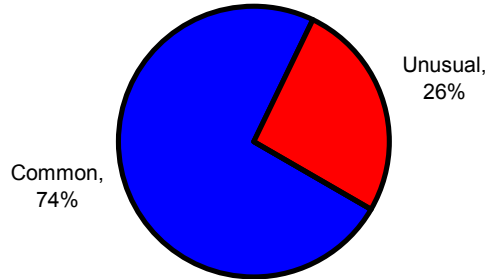


Is it common or unusual to see men with earrings in New Jersey?<sup>3</sup>



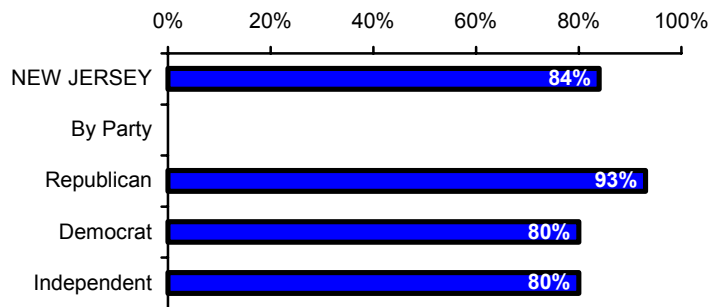
...men with pierced ears – more than 4-in-5 of us say this is a common sight...

Is it common or unusual to hear different languages spoken in your neighborhood?<sup>3</sup>



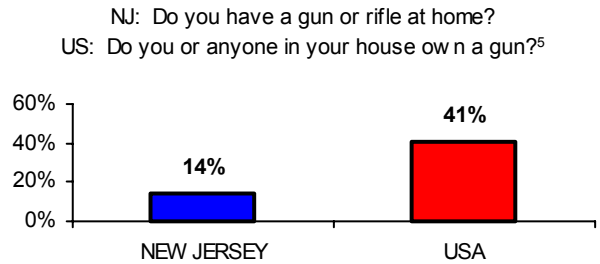
...different languages spoken when you walk down the street – just about 3-in-4 of us say that multilingual neighborhoods are common in the state.

Do you have an American flag?<sup>5</sup>



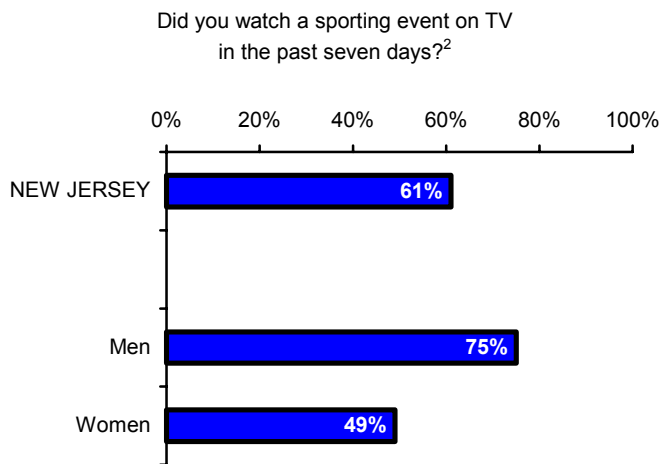
Old Glory is a common sight as well. From High Point to Cape May, New Jerseyans are proud to wave the red, white, and blue. In fact, 84% report that they have an American flag at home. Interestingly, 93% of Republicans own a flag, compared to 80% of both Democrats and independents.

However, gun ownership is not all that common in the Garden State. Only 1-in-7 New Jersey households have a gun or rifle compared to 41% of other American homes which include a gun owner.



### A Week in the Life of New Jersey

So just what do we do all week? Over the last year, we asked several questions about what New Jerseyans are up to at home and while we're out and about. We wanted to

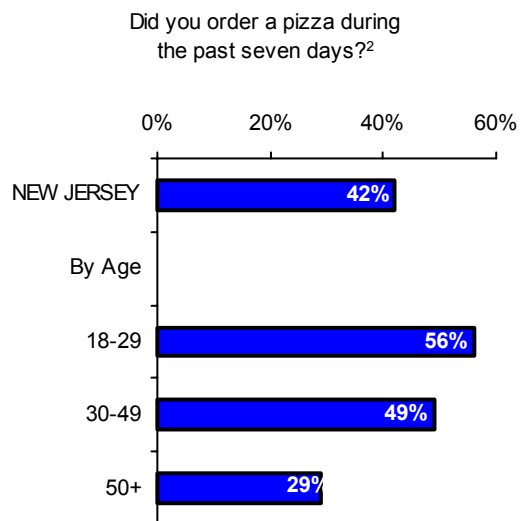
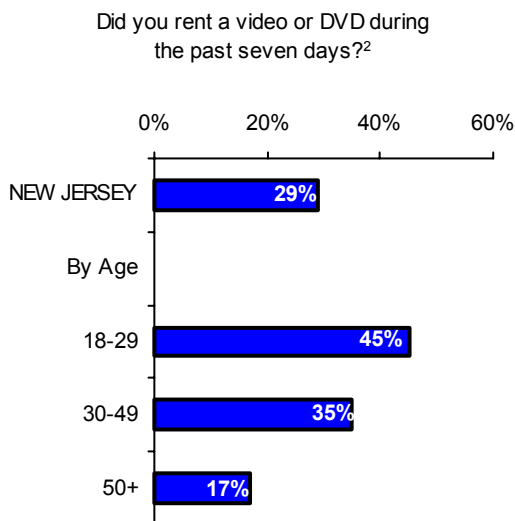


know what we do for fun and what matters enough that we take time for it during the week. Here are the findings:

We like to watch sports. 6-in-10 of us tuned in to a sporting event on TV in the past week. Not surprisingly, 3-in-4 men watched a game on the tube. However, about half of all women in New Jersey joined them.

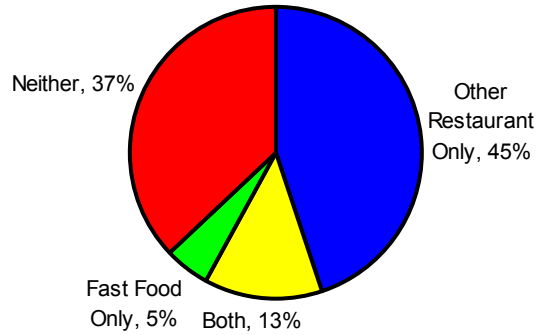
Nearly 3-in-10 of us did just that, and rented a video or DVD in the past week (60% of us own a DVD player, by the way). So pass the popcorn. Or, perhaps, hand over a slice of pizza: 4-in-10 New Jerseyans also ordered a pizza during the week.

We watch movies at home.

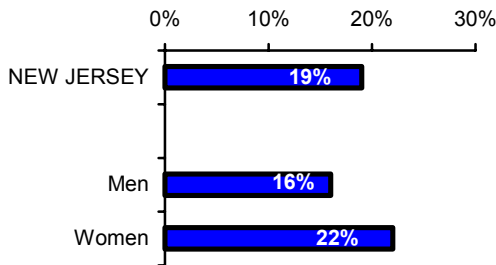


That's when we weren't going out to eat. New Jersey dined out in the past week—63 percent ate somewhere other than the kitchen table. Only 18 percent admitted that their culinary choice is “fast food.” Nearly 4-in-10 stayed home for their meals. Higher income households (70%) are more likely than lower income households (55%) to eat out at least once per week. And men (23%) are also more likely than women (16%) to have eaten fast food once in the last week.

Have you eaten out at a restaurant in the last 7 days?  
Was this at a fast food restaurant, other type of restaurant, or both?<sup>4</sup>



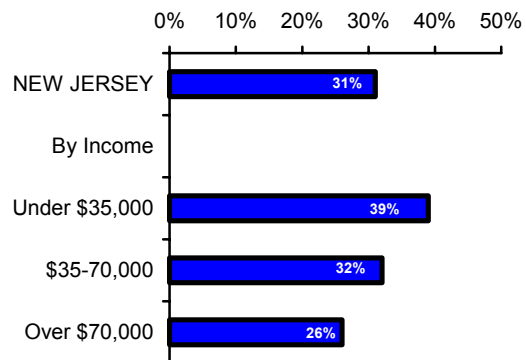
Did you have a fight with your spouse or partner in the past seven days?<sup>2</sup>



New Jerseyans argue, but not that often. Most New Jersey couples appear to live in harmony, with only 1-in-5 residents saying they had a fight with their partner in the past week. However, the battle of the sexes seems to be an uneven one. Women are somewhat more likely than men to report having a tiff.

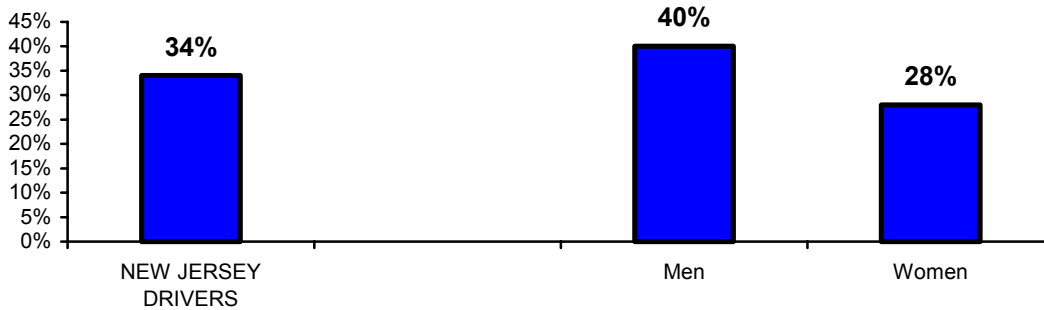
We play the lottery. The chance of winning a multi-million dollar jackpot is too tantalizing to pass up for many New Jerseyans: 3-in-10 adults report playing the lottery in the previous week. Even one-quarter of those in the highest income bracket have a go. Forty percent of residents over the age of 65 bought tickets, perhaps hoping for a more luxurious retirement.

Did you buy a lottery ticket during the past seven days?<sup>2</sup>



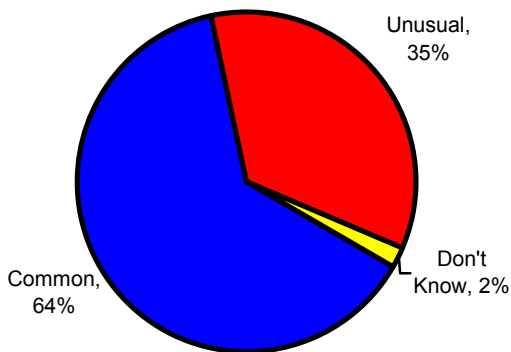
We're usually in a rush. Sure, nearly every driver in New Jersey speeds a little bit, but how many really put the pedal to the metal? One-third of Garden State drivers admit they exceeded the posted speed limit by more than ten miles an hour in the past week.

While driving your car this past week, did you ever exceed the posted speed limit by more than ten miles?<sup>4</sup>

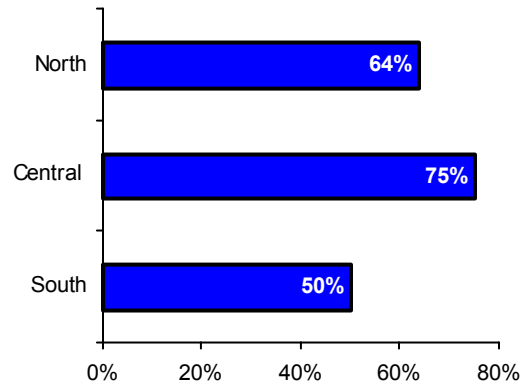


When we're not speeding, we're often stuck in traffic—even during off-peak hours. Nearly 2-in-3 of us say that this experience is all too common in the Garden State. But 3-in-4 residents from the central part of New Jersey find congestion common, more than those living in the north or south.

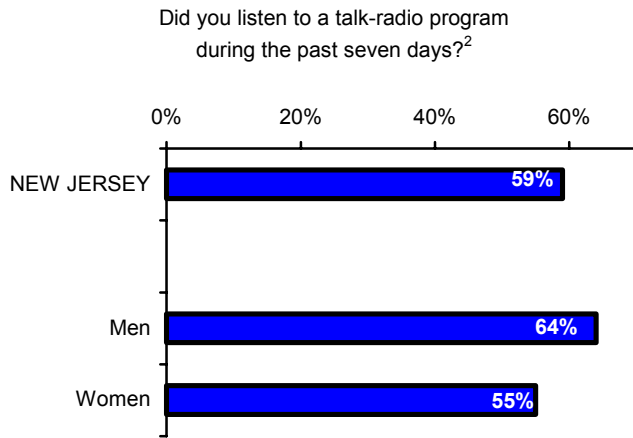
Is it common or unusual to get caught in a traffic jam when it is not rush hour?<sup>3</sup>



Common occurrence by region of state:

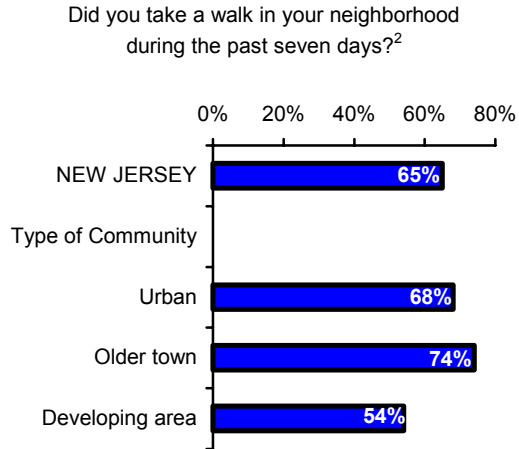


With all the time we spend in the car, it's not surprising that many New Jerseyans are talk-radio fans. In the past week, 6-in-10 residents gleaned information from a talk-radio

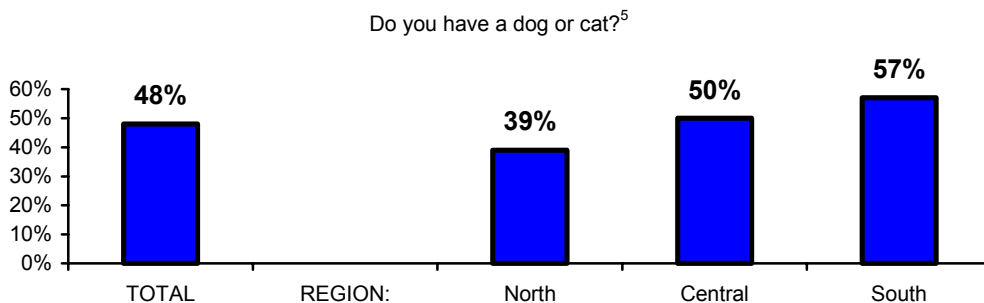


program. In New Jersey's media market, many voters hear about the key issues of the day through local radio outlets. Men are more likely to tune in than women (64% to 55%). Advertisers take note: Talk radio has a big audience-of high income listeners, garnering 69 percent of New Jerseyans with incomes over \$70,000.

Maybe because of all that traffic, we like to take walks, too. In fact nearly two-thirds of New Jerseyans stroll around the neighborhood at least once a week. This past-time is more popular in older established towns than it is in communities with high numbers of new housing developments.



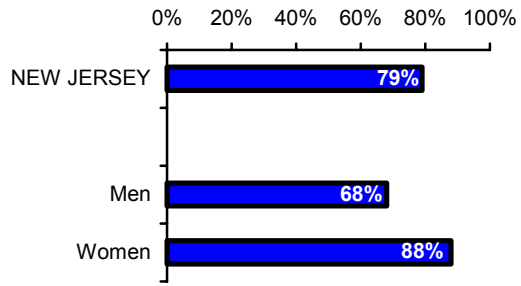
In fact, we may be out walking the dog. Nearly half of us share our lives with a canine or feline companion. You're more likely to see a doggy or kitty in the window of a Southern New Jersey home than a Northern New Jersey home.



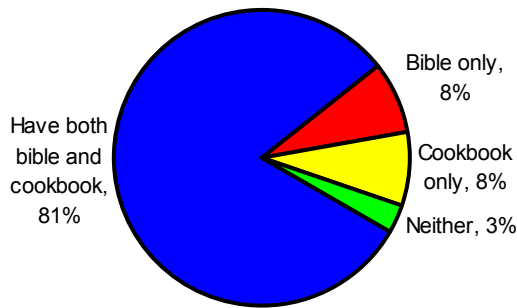


New Jerseyans also pray. We report speaking with a higher power on a regular basis. 4-in-5 adults report saying a pray in the past week.

Did you pray during the past seven days?<sup>2</sup>



Do you have a bible? Do you have a cookbook?<sup>5</sup>



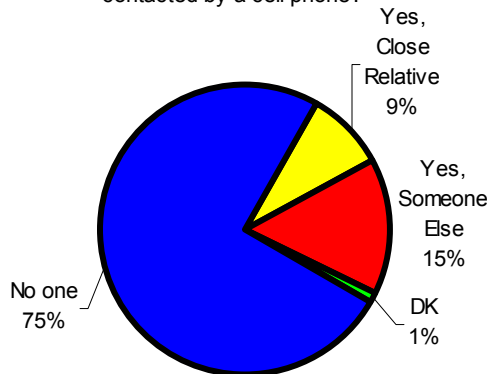
And judging by what's on our bookshelves, nourishment of both the spiritual and physical varieties are in high demand in the Garden State – 8-in-10 New Jerseyans say they have both a bible and a cookbook in their homes.

### New Jersey and Technology

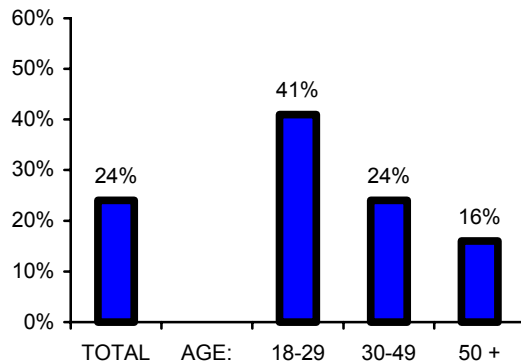
We asked New Jerseyans about their access to recent technology, including cell phones and the internet.

Many of us are shedding the old telephone cord – 1-in-4 New Jerseyans say they know someone who can only be reached by a cell phone. Younger folks – more than two-fifths of them in fact – are most likely to know someone without a traditional land line.

Do you know anybody who can only be contacted by a cell phone?<sup>6</sup>

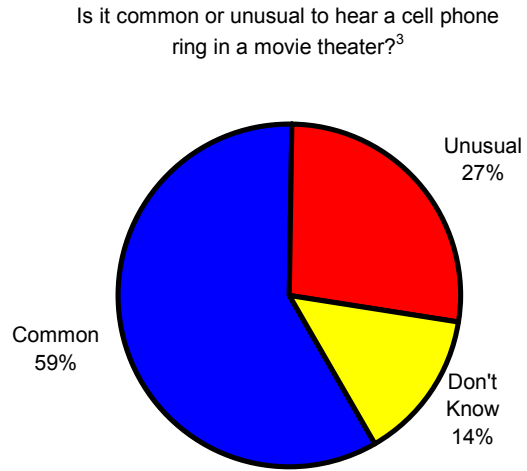


Know someone who can only be reached by cell phone?

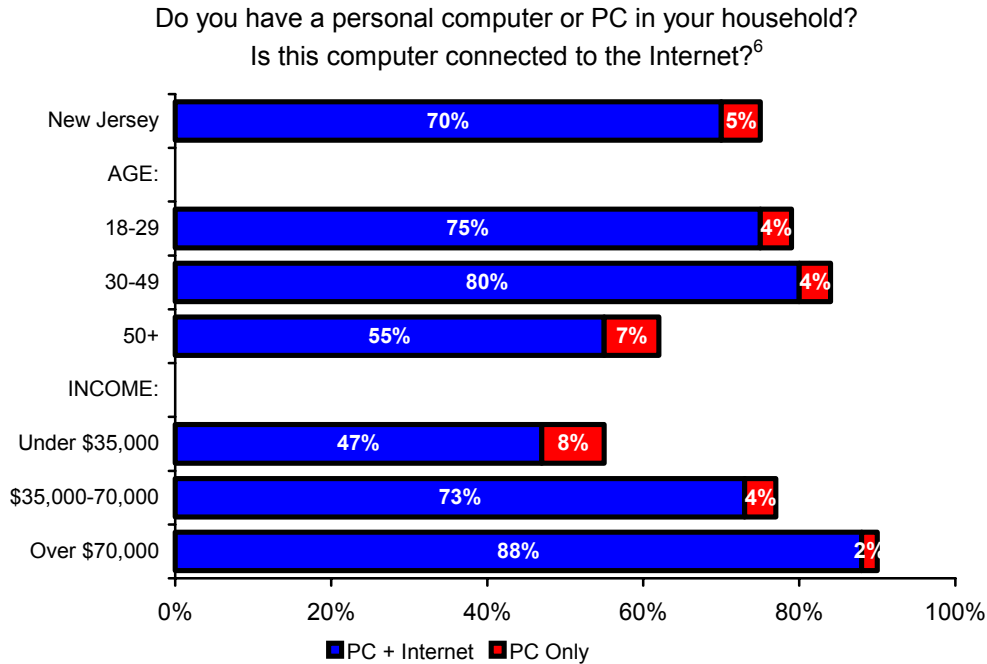


As a side note, look for more cell phone users in the next generation. Nearly 4-in-10 New Jersey parents (38%) report that their school-age children, age 6 to 18, have cell phones.

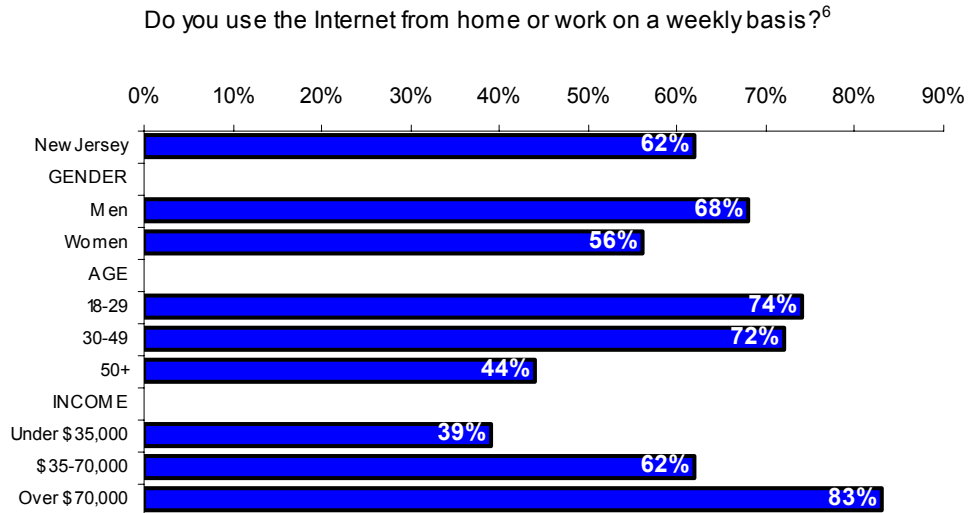
On top of that, think about how often a cell phone goes off while you are watching a movie. Nearly 3-in-5 of us say such disturbances are common in New Jersey cinemas. Perhaps due to differences in movie-going patterns, younger New Jerseyans are much more likely to be aware of this annoyance: 77% of 18-29-year-olds say it is common to hear a cell phone in a movie theater, compared to only 44% of those in the 50+ age category.



One-in-four New Jerseyans buck the PC technology trend and don't have a computer in their home. Interestingly, 5 percent of state residents own a PC but aren't connected to the Internet. Perhaps surprisingly, PC ownership is highest not among 18-29-year olds (79%), but among 30-49-year-olds, over five in six of whom own a computer (84%). Unsurprisingly, PC ownership is highest when income is highest, with a 90% ownership rate in the highest income bracket. A similarly predictable split can be seen along education lines: 90% of college graduates own a computer, compared to just 63% of those with a high school education or less.

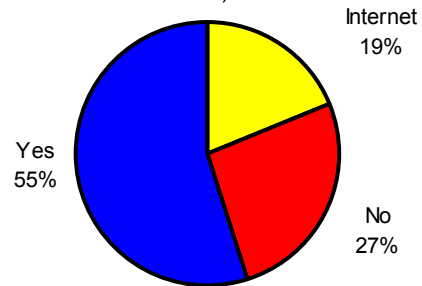


More than 6-in-10 New Jersey adults use the Internet from home or work on weekly basis. Those under age 50 lead the way, with nearly 3-in-4 being weekly Internet users, compared to less than half of adults age 50 and over. Men use the Internet somewhat more than women, 68% to 56%, a 7% edge. There are also wide income and education gaps, with wealthier and better educated New Jerseyans significantly more likely to be regular Internet users.



Internet use may be even heavier in homes that have kids. Eight-in-ten New Jersey homes with school-age children are connected to the Internet. And more than half of all parents report that their kids use these home PCs to go on-line at least once during an average week. The incidence of children using the Internet at least once a week is nearly two times higher in homes with household incomes greater than \$70,000 (71%) than it is in homes with household incomes lower than \$70,000 (34%).

Have your children used the Internet in the past week? (Asked of parents of children 4-17 years old.)<sup>7</sup>



1 – From the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll conducted by telephone from September 2 to September 8, 2003, with a scientifically selected random sample of 802 New Jersey adults. The sampling error is +/- 3.5 percent.

2 – From the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll conducted by telephone from September 2 to September 8, 2003 with a scientifically selected random sample of 401 New Jersey adults. The sampling error is +/- 5 percent.

3 – From the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll conducted by telephone from April 24 to May 4, 2003 with a scientifically selected random sample of 501 New Jersey adults. The sampling error is +/- 4.5 percent.

4 – From the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll conducted by telephone from February 5 to 9, 2003 with a scientifically selected random sample of 401 New Jersey adults. The sampling error is +/- 5 percent.

5 – From the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll conducted by telephone from January 30 to February 2, 2003 with a scientifically selected random sample of 401 New Jersey adults. The sampling error is +/- 5 percent.

6 – From the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll conducted by telephone from January 30 to February 9, 2003 with a scientifically selected random sample of 802 New Jersey adults. The sampling error is +/- 3.5 percent.

7 – From the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll conducted by telephone from January 30 to February 9, 2003 with a scientifically selected random sample of 274 parents of school-age children. The sampling error is +/- 6 percent.