

The Magazine

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Come Feel the Love

Alaska's magic and the ultimate experience of a Princess® cruisetour awaits.

Why Cruise to Alaska With Princess

You'll enjoy all the things Princess is known for: spectacular multicourse meals, Broadway-style shows, bands that keep you on the dance floor, and comfortable staterooms featuring the Princess Luxury Bed. And though **Princess offers big-ship amenities, it provides personalized service that makes you feel special in countless ways**, like being able to board in a breeze, and a crew that makes an effort to remember both your name – and how you like your martini before dinner.

What To Expect on a Cruisetour

A Princess Alaska cruisetour combines a cruise, rail travel, and lodge stay. You'll **experience the best of Alaska's untamed wonders** with two glacier-viewing experiences, shore excursions that immerse you in local culture, wildlife and outdoor adventures, and accommodations at wilderness lodges near Denali or other national parks.

Cruisetour Your Way

Sail on a seven-day voyage plus enjoy 2-10 days on land. Options include the *Denali Explorer* itinerary—an **inspiring encounter with Alaska's nature and history**. Observe Alaska's "big five"—bears, moose, caribou, Dall sheep, and wolves. *Off the Beaten Path* brings you deeper into Alaska's interior. *Connoisseur* features a tour director escorting your land experience. *On Your Own* offers independence, flexibility, and affordability.

What Makes Princess #1 in Alaska

Sailing to Alaska for over 50 years, Princess offers exclusive experiences like a salmon bake, axe-throwing competition, or a walk on top of glaciers. And, their *North to Alaska* program brings local experiences onboard. **No other cruise line immerses you in all things Alaska like Princess.**

Whether it's your first time visiting Alaska or you've been to the Great Land before, every trip offers a **unique adventure filled with delight and awe**. That's especially true when you travel with Princess, the destination leader year after year.

What do you
love?

There's an excursion for that!



Food Enthusiasts

Juneau:
Juneau Foodie Walking Tour



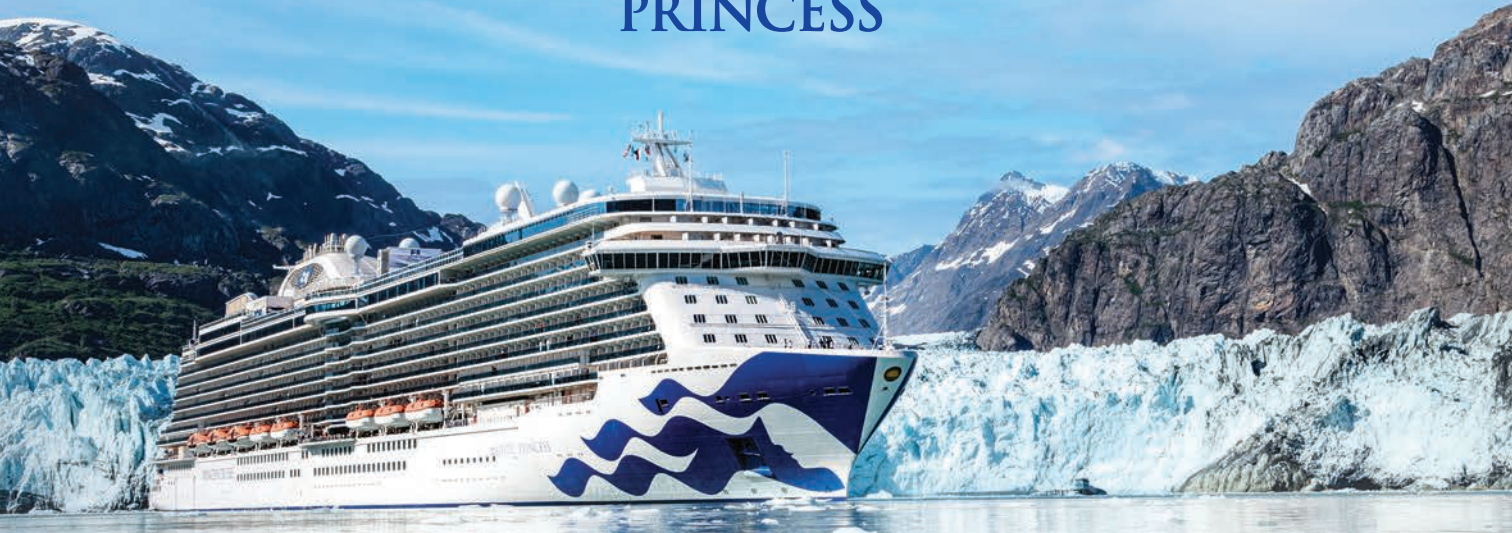
First-Time Visitors

Ketchikan:
Best of Ketchikan — Totems
& Wildlife Cruise



Adventure Seekers

Skagway:
Sip & Summit — White Pass Rail
& Skagway Brewing Co.



Connect with the heart of Alaska

on a Princess® cruisetour



Come feel the ***love***
in Alaska.



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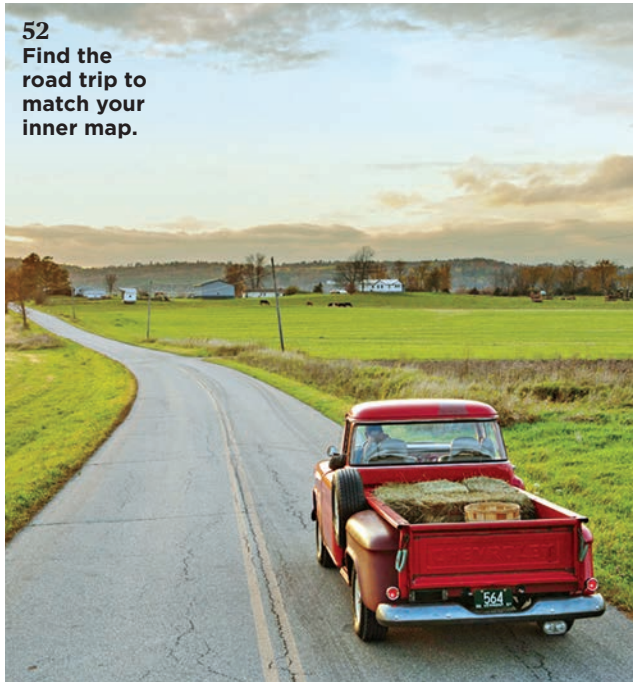
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Get a full workout with this one simple prop.



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Forty years of fronting one of rock's biggest bands left his voice damaged. How the pride of Jersey is fighting back

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Is olive oil healthier than coconut oil? Quinoa better than brown rice? Salmon superior to tuna? Our nutritionists put many of today's most popular health foods to the test.

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Rising sea levels and fiercer storms threaten the homes, hopes and lives of older Americans. We investigate.

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Some of us love the open road. Others want out of the car and into the wilderness (or café, or museum). Whatever your personality, we have the perfect journey for you.

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Mary was stressed out and discouraged. With help from friends and pros, she changed her outlook. You can too.



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76 Big 5-Oh Baseball's Derek Jeter! And Sandra Bullock is 60?!



ON THE COVER: Jon Bon Jovi photographed by Gavin Bond in New Jersey, on February 28, 2024, for AARP THE MAGAZINE. Producer: Anthony Moschini; VP Industrial Color; wardrobe stylist: Deborah Watson; groomer: Loraine Abeles. Wardrobe credits on page 75

Clockwise from top: Tom Corbett; Chris Buck; illustration by Liam Eisenberg; Robert Asvort; Corey Hendrickson; Gallery Stock

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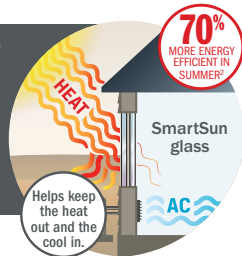


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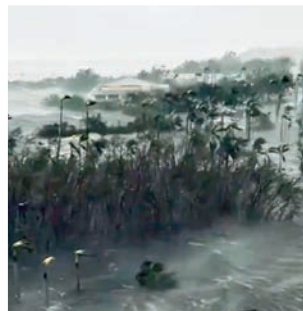
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After the Storm

Telling the story of new threats from an age-old foe



JUNE IS THE start of hurricane season, and older Americans are especially vulnerable to harm from coastal storms. For our feature “Washed Away” (page 44), veteran environmental journalist Craig Welch traveled to Florida and New Jersey to meet people whose lives have been upended by hurricanes. As Fort Myers, Florida, resident Martha Shaw watched the storm that totaled her home, she told Welch she was overwhelmed: “I was numb, in limbo...”

A dogged reporter, Welch details the new normal of ever-more-frequent extreme weather events, and the hard choices we must now face.

At aarp.org/washedaway, you’ll find a longer version of Welch’s story, along with a rich variety of extras: video interviews with Shaw and others, photos and drone footage of affected

AARP photo and video teams followed in our writer’s footsteps to capture images of hurricane recovery, which is still going on years after big storms.

areas, and graphics representing the striking rise in the number of people over 65 moving to America’s coastal areas. The presentation is part of a new initiative by our digital team to tell high-impact stories in more “immersive” ways. My colleague Michelle Davis, who led this effort, says her team “wanted to bring this important story to life, so readers can see the devastation and hear the voices of those impacted.” Our social media channels, including facebook.com/aarp, will also feature original content related to the story. Congratulations to

magazine executive editor Margaret Guroff for making this happen.

But wait, there’s more! In the June issue of the *AARP Bulletin*, you’ll find advice on how to make your own home more resistant to flooding, wherever you live. Flooding damage costs the U.S. \$32 billion annually—and that’s rising. A single inch of water can cause \$25,000 worth of damage to a home. So please read, view, watch, listen and share this important work now.

Bob



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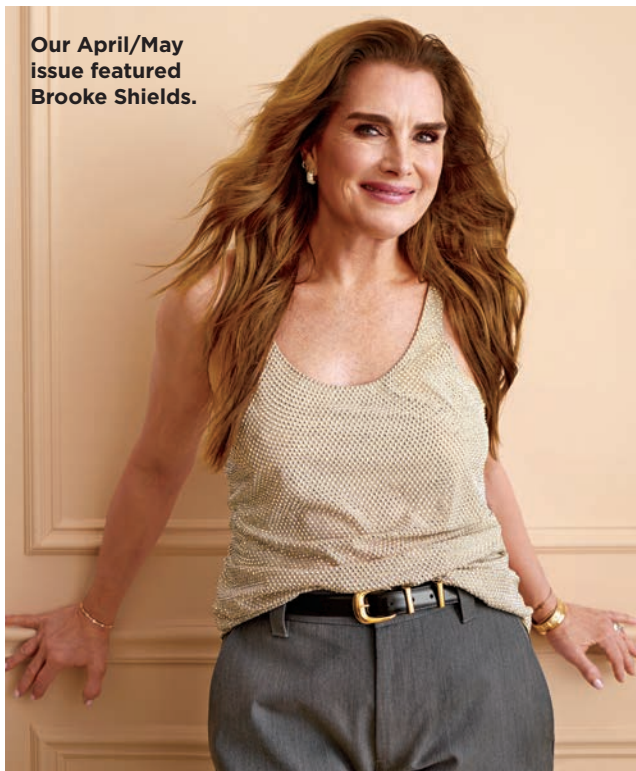
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Our April/May issue featured Brooke Shields.



SHIELDS OF STRENGTH

I just read the interview in AARP THE MAGAZINE with Brooke Shields [“Brooke Shields Is Just Fine”]. Thank you for all your honesty, Brooke. I’m 64, and I really appreciate your public figure. None of us come out unscathed in this life. You are beautiful, recognized and worthy.

ANNELIESE MEIER
Facebook

I’m proud of how far Brooke Shields has come. She faced her relationship with her mom and being a beautiful child star. She’s grown through her experiences. And like she said, they helped mold her into the happy and confident woman we see today. She’s a light for others!

JOSHUA BELL
Facebook

MEMORY LAPSES

After I read “Dodge Your Biggest Health Risks,” I bought a copy of the book it mentioned: *Am I Dying?!*: A



Fabulous Brooke!
Michele Arco,
Facebook

She’s overcome her challenges and remained beautiful in soul and spirit.
Lanora Wicken Hubbard, Facebook

So beautiful.
Richard Seevers Robert, Facebook

Such a strong woman. Keep doing great things!
Sonia Adams, Facebook

Love her.
Sandra Hart, Facebook

Complete Guide to Your Symptoms—and What to Do Next. What a fabulous read. It’s informative and entertaining. The book made me realize that my senior moments are a normal part of aging and not something major. I recommend it for AARP members. I’ve already consulted mine several times. Fortunately, it showed me my concerns were really nothing to worry about.

VALERIE K. KING
Jacksonville Beach, Florida

FUNCTION OVER FASHION

The article “No Bars, No Problem” was eye-opening. It demonstrates that no matter how old your phone may be, it still works to call 911 in an emergency. Old phones may go out of style, but they are still good.

CORRIE HARRIS
Chicago, Illinois

A TIME TO REMEMBER

How could you not include *Carrie* in the novels turning 50 [“1974: A Year to Remember”]? Stephen King hit the ground running 50 years ago on April 5. He deserves as much recognition as any of the other authors you included.

SCOTT SHARRITT
Bountiful, Utah

You missed the extended implementation of daylight saving time that winter, beginning in January, to save energy. I walked to school in the dark many mornings in ’74. Also, HP released a programmable pocket calculator for \$795. My math teacher showed the class his. We were awestruck.

GARY CHARLES METZ
Facebook

COUNT ON US

Your magazine is often full of inspiring stories, but “Retirees to the Rescue” was the most inspiring one I’ve read. I’m glad these women got recognition for speaking out and showing others what is possible.



LAUREN CARLY
Elk Creek, California

THE BEST

Brooke Shields, Kelsey Grammer and Marcia Gay Harden, all in various parts of the same issue of the magazine! It’s as if you know all my favorites.

NANCY SIKES
Oneonta, New York



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> TIGER, REVEALED

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> MORE ROAD TRIPS! If you enjoy our menu of journeys on page 52, you'll discover even more itineraries in the digital edition.



> FIGHTING CHRONIC PAIN

Learn about new ways to understand and treat your pain in the June issue of the *Bulletin*.



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Upfront The **A**List

6 Surprising Things About Diane Lane

1 Her Parents Called It Quits Soon After She Was Born

They basically rendezvoused to procreate me, and I never knew them as a couple. Their various custody things felt to me like being a football in someone else's game. You just think, *Why the drama, people?*

2 Her Mom Was *Playboy's* Miss October 1957

My mother was one of nine kids, and Grandma was a Pentecostal preacher. Mom went to New York and was basically funding the church with her sin money. One photograph that sums it up: Hugh Hefner's standing with me and my mother, and her face says how uncomfortable she's feeling. I have so much compassion for her experience now.

3 She Wanted to Play *Pretty Woman*

I auditioned for it along with every actress in my age bracket with two legs. But you shake off the dust and keep moving. When you're in show business, so many people get to control your outcome.

4 She Takes Fame at Her Own Pace

I was on the cover of *Time* magazine at 14, and I had already been in a film with Laurence Olivier and was having pizza with Andy Warhol. I'm grateful for all that, but it's weird to be singled out. Once you have the world's attention, what do you do with it? So you step away for a bit. When you return, they call it a comeback.



“In my profession, I can only ever play the age that I am, at least until AI takes over completely. Then the plastic surgeons will be out of a job.”

5 In Another Life, She'd Be a Shrink

I'd be a therapist if I wasn't an actor. I really enjoy analyzing the way the mind works. Your conscience exists for a reason. People build up defenses so they don't have to feel things too intensely. But if you peel back the layers, you see, “Oh, it's because I didn't apologize to my dad before he died” or whatever. What's that saying? “If it's not one thing, it's your mother.”

6 After Twice Marrying and Divorcing, Being Single Is OK

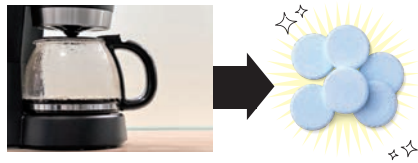
I'm good on my own. I was grateful to go through the pandemic and not be in a relationship, because I think that would have been very challenging to navigate. All that time that many couples were irritated with each other, I got to have space and freedom to figure out: Who am I? —As told to David Hochman

Acclaimed for her authenticity and emotional depth, actress Diane Lane, 59, stars in the Netflix series A Man in Full, based on the Tom Wolfe novel, and in the FX series Feud: Capote vs. The Swans, both now streaming.



That Cleans What?

Skip the industrial products. In some cases, household items can do the trick



TO CLEAN: A COFFEE MAKER
USE: DENTURE TABLETS

Fill the tank with warm water, then drop in and dissolve two tablets, says Leanne Stapf of the Cleaning Authority. Run through a regular cycle, then again using only warm water.



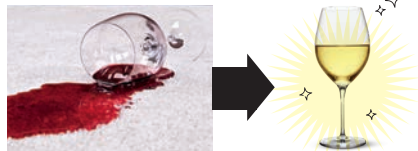
TO DEEP CLEAN: A TOILET
USE: VINEGAR

Pour a cup or two of white vinegar in the bowl and let it sit overnight, says Michael Green of Benjamin Franklin Plumbing. In the morning, use a toilet brush to scrub the bowl.



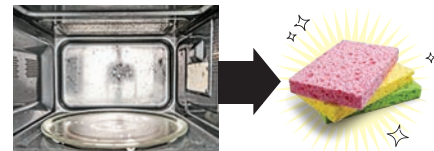
TO CLEAN: SOAP SCUM
USE: GRAPEFRUIT (AND SALT)

Pour a layer of salt over half a grapefruit. "Then rub the grapefruit on the affected areas, and you'll see the soap scum start to lift," says Kathy Cohoon of Two Maids & A Mop.



TO CLEAN: RED WINE STAINS
USE: WHITE WINE

As soon as possible, blot white wine onto the fabric to dilute the stain, then follow up with a clean, wet cloth to get out the rest. Be sure not to rub the stain into the fabric.



BEFORE CLEANING: A MICROWAVE
PUT: DAMP SPONGES INSIDE

Run the microwave on high for one minute with a few sponges inside, Cohoon says. The moisture makes it easier to wipe down food splatters. Use the warmed sponges to wipe.



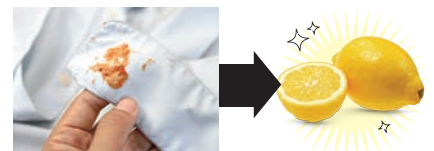
TO CLEAN: A GARBAGE DISPOSAL
USE: ICE CUBES

"These will remove any food scraps that are stuck under the disposal blades or impellers, as well as the grind chamber," Green says. You should use just a handful; too many ice cubes can clog the drain.



TO CLEAN: CRAYON ON WALLS
USE: MAYONNAISE

"Mayonnaise consists of oils that help break down the wax in crayons," says Stapf. "Apply a small amount to the stain and let it sit for a few minutes before wiping away with a damp microfiber cloth."



TO CLEAN: PASTA SAUCE STAINS
USE: LEMON

"Soak a cloth in cold water and blot," Stapf says. "Then grab a slice of lemon and rub it into the stain. Once the splatter seems mostly gone, pour on water to cover the area and blot again with a clean cloth." —Samantha Lande

Do Our Pets Experience Grief?

They provide us with comfort, but sometimes they need it too

BEFORE HE recently passed, my husband would tell me how much he loved the two of us. Meaning me and Maple. Our dog.

He and Maple were inseparable. Even as Jerry lay on a hospital bed



and food. Like me, she was suffering from grief. How could I help Maple?

we had placed in our family room, Maple would pop up and lick him. That made Jerry smile when he had little else to smile about in the throes of Lewy body dementia.

After Jerry died, Maple wasn't interested in things she used to love, such as toys

Kathryn Dench, chief veterinary adviser at Paw Origins, which sells pet supplements online, offers tips: **►Maintain normalcy.** Routine is key. Keep walks and feedings consistent. **►Provide extra attention.** Give your pet more cuddles and pats. **►Socialize.** Interaction with other dogs and people can lift spirits.

Maple is doing much better. Each morning at 7 a.m., she licks my face, reminding me that she's hungry and wants love. Now we are the two-some. —Judy Mandell

Flavor Your Water

ADDING EXTRAS to your H2O can make it easier to sip and stay hydrated. But flavored water isn't only a spa-day treat; you can make it at home using these easy recipes from Adrienne Willis, director of Spa Fjör at Hotel

Viking in Newport, Rhode Island. Serve any of these recipes—which make about a gallon of water—immediately over ice. For stronger flavor, steep for three to four hours in the fridge. —*Kelsey Ogletree*

CUCUMBER MINT

- Thinly slice 1 whole cucumber and add to a water pitcher. Roughly chop ½ cup of fresh mint leaves, add to the pitcher and fill with water.

STRAWBERRY LIME

- Thinly slice 2 limes and 3 cups of strawberries and add to a water pitcher. Squeeze the juice from 1 more lime into the pitcher, then fill with water.

WATERMELON BASIL

- Chop 1 small seedless watermelon into small cubes and add to a water pitcher. Add ½ cup of fresh basil leaves, roughly chopped, and fill the pitcher with water.

APPLE CINNAMON

- Bring 3 cups of water to a boil, then remove from the heat and pour into a jar with 4 or 5 halved cinnamon sticks. Let cool. Slice 4 large apples into thin wedges and add to a water pitcher, then pour in the cinnamon water and fill the pitcher to the top with water.

BLUEBERRY LEMON

- Lightly crush 3 cups of blueberries and add to a water pitcher. Add 2 lemons, thinly sliced, then squeeze the juice from 1 more lemon into the pitcher. Fill with water.



Food and prop stylist: Rebecca Lukevich
Illustration by Lucy Kirk



MY FAVORITE INGREDIENT

ORZO PASTA

This small, rice-shaped pasta cooks quickly. Serve it warm, or chilled in a salad. Orzo takes on great flavor from ingredients like chicken stock, and it's a nice side for shrimp or scallops with a sauce. Try orzo soup with Italian sausage as a week-night main course. —*David Mallard, personal chef, West Palm Beach, Florida*



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More of the Music You Love

Making a streaming service work for you requires a little digital manipulation

EVERY TIME my daughter plays music in our kitchen, I cringe. Not because of her choices—well, partly—but rather because of what those selections will do to my streaming account. In the future, the service will try to serve up more Juice WRLD when I’m in the mood for something off the Who’s classic album *Who’s Next*. The algorithms that factor in your behavior to determine what you hear on Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora or other services can be a source of frustration. But you can take steps to find more music you’ll like.

Be careful who you let use your profile. Streaming services don’t know whether it’s you or a friend or family member making the choices. Instead, sign up for a family account so that each person gets their own separate listening profile.

Use the like/dislike buttons. This is the best way to let the service know what type of music you enjoy. And don’t limit those likes/dislikes to just songs. If there’s an album or artist you have especially strong feelings about, express that. Also, if a song you dislike plays, skip it quickly. The longer you let it run, the more the algorithm thinks you might dig it.

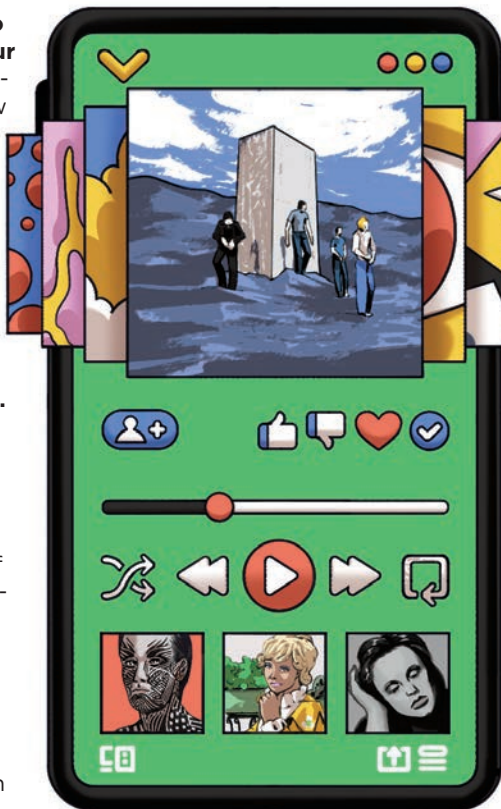
Use the suggested playlists from your streaming service. Consider them a training tool for the algorithm. Like or dislike the songs there, or add in others you enjoy, to make your own playlists.

Make exclusions. Some services allow you to keep a playlist off your main taste profile. If, for example, you have a calming playlist you listen to at bedtime, excluding it will reduce the impact of those songs on the service’s suggestions.

Click the follow button for artists you love. You’ll get additional songs from those artists as well as songs from musicians with similar styles.

Weed your playlists. Is there a song you once liked that has lost its appeal? Don’t just skip it; actually remove it from the list.

Songs that auto-play after a playlist are similar to music from that playlist. So it’s smart to have several playlists for your musical interests, such as country, classic rock or pop. Make a list of your favorite songs in each genre so you don’t have a song from Tammy Wynette’s *The First Lady* coming on after the Rolling Stones’ *Tattoo You* or Adele’s *21*. —Chris Morris



WHAT I'M LISTENING TO

THE ARTIST: Singer and percussionist Sheila E., 66, who struck it big in the '80s with “The Glamorous Life” and released her first salsa album, *Bailar*, in April.

SHE RECOMMENDS: Sy Smith and Yebba. “Smith is a young artist, kind of underground. She’s amazing; she sings like Minnie Riperton. Yebba’s sound is very powerful, but then delicate when she wants to be in control. She can vocally do runs if she wants to, but she doesn’t always have to. Her voice is just incredible. It’s amazing to be able to be encouraged and inspired by young people.” —Gayle Jo Carter

Listen to a collection of songs by Sy Smith, Yebba and Sheila E. Search for AARP’s account on Spotify to find the playlist, or launch the Spotify app, tap on Search and scan the code below.



Beyond ‘Blue’

IT’S BEEN 100 years since *Rhapsody in Blue* debuted. But George Gershwin’s work extends far beyond that iconic composition. Other notable pieces, according to Susan Reigler, a journalist and orchestral musician:

An American in Paris The orchestra paints a sound picture of busy Parisian street life.

Concerto in F Gershwin incorporates musical references to jazz, as he did in *Rhapsody*.

Cuban Overture Cuban rhythm and dance themes, such as the rumba, evoke the atmosphere of Old Havana.

Clockwise from top left: Illustration by Mojo Wang; Leon Bennett/Getty Images; Rick Kern/Getty Images; Debra L. Rothenberg/Getty Images; Illustration by John P. Deserreau

What's on Your Wrist?

Today's fitness trackers do more than count your steps

FITNESS TRACKERS have been popular for over a decade. But newer models have much more functionality, to the point where they now resemble smartwatches, though usually at a lower price. Some are even referred to as hybrid or semi-smart watches. —J.D. Sartain

HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

Some products can monitor breathing, heart rate, sleep patterns and stress levels. The **Garmin Vivomove Sport hybrid** (about \$180) includes "incident detection," which can send an automatic message with your location to your emergency contacts when it detects a sudden impact.



NOTIFICATIONS AND ALERTS

Your watch can tell you that it will rain soon or that there's an incoming call to your phone. The **Fossil Gen 6 Wellness Edition Hybrid** (about \$230) has Amazon's Alexa voice assistant built in (available in select markets). The **Raptor PRO** (about \$215) has "on-wrist calling," which lets you make and receive phone calls.

TIMER AND STOPWATCH

Keep track of your workout or set a timer while you're cooking. The **Kospet Tank T3 Ultra** (about \$150) has a compass for hikes, and it's water-resistant, with a barometric altimeter for swims or scuba dives.

WHAT A HYBRID WATCH TYPICALLY CAN'T DO

If any of these features are important to you, consider a smartwatch, such as an **Apple Watch** or a **Samsung Galaxy Watch**.



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ASK THE TECH GURU

Texts are my main source of communication. But they disturb me when traveling. Can I use an "on vacation until ..." message like I do for email?

Sherlyn Freeman, a personal tech trainer for Senior Planet From AARP, answers: You can use a feature that is intended for a different purpose but works here too. On an iPhone, use the Driving Focus mode (you don't need to be driving) to send automatic text replies. Go to Settings, tap on Focus, then the + sign, then Driving. Tap Auto-Reply and select All Contacts. Write a message, such as "I'll get back to you later." If you have an Android phone, you can use a third-party app, such as Pulse SMS or SMS Auto Reply, to implement this.

Summer Blockbusters

Hilderbrand, Crichton, Questlove and more

Michael Crichton Returns

Though the *Jurassic Park* author passed away in 2008, his unfinished manuscript has been revived by literary collaborator extraordinaire **James Patterson**. There's seismic buzz around the resulting thriller, **Eruption**, the story of an imminent massive volcanic eruption on the Big Island of Hawai'i whose lava flow may unearth a deadly secret. (June 3)

The Tiny Slice

"For many people ... [c]oming to love her is akin to achieving enlightenment: a shocking moment of insight that transforms the world."

—From **Traveling: On the Path of Joni Mitchell** by **Ann Powers** (June 11)



Smaller Names, Great Reads

How to Age Disgracefully by **Clare Pooley** This humorous, heartwarming story features members of the Senior Citizens' Social Club in London who join up with a neighborhood day care to keep their community center running. (June 11)

The Road to the Country by **Chigozie Obioma** In this novel from the acclaimed Nigerian author of *The Fisherman* and *An Orchestra of Minorities*, a university student is drawn into the chaos of the Nigerian civil war while dealing with past trauma. (June 4)

Reviews

Middle of the Night by **Riley Sager**

In this absorbing, suspenseful story, Ethan Marsh returns to his suburban childhood home, where he's—maybe literally—haunted by the disappearance of his friend 30 years earlier as he tries to reconstruct what happened that terrible night. (June 18)

Swan Song by **Elin Hilderbrand**

This will be the last of Hilderbrand's beloved summer novels set on the island of Nantucket. It's a dramatic tale featuring a recently arrived, ostentatiously wealthy family whose presence sets off some strange happenings, including a possible murder. (June 11)

You Like It Darker by **Stephen King**

The always masterful King's latest collection of short stories includes a range of eerie and/or mysterious tales. Among them is a novella-sized story about a vivid dream that turns out to be a psychic glimpse of reality. (May 21) —Christina Ianzito

ALSO OF NOTE



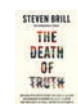
NOVEL
The Atlas of Remedies by **Paul Jaskunas** (March 5)



MUSIC
Hip-Hop Is History by **Questlove** (June 11)



NOVEL
Days of Wonder by **Caroline Leavitt** (April 23)



TECHNOLOGY
The Death of Truth by **Steven Brill** (June 4)

Now Playing

AARP critic Tim Appelo's picks of upcoming movies and shows to watch



BAD BOYS: RIDE OR DIE

📺 In theaters • What are you gonna do when detectives Mike Lowrey and Marcus Burnett (Will Smith, 55, and Martin Lawrence, 59) come for you in their fourth action romp? Probably, you'll help push the film franchise's ticket sales over a billion dollars. The guys are out to burn cars, bicker over Skittles and clear the name of their old police chief (*The Sopranos*' Joe Pantoliano, 72)—and their own.



PRESUMED INNOCENT

📺 On Apple TV+ June 12 • If you liked *Big Little Lies*, try the latest twisty mystery miniseries from producer David E. Kelley, 68, about prosecutor Rusty Sabich (Jake Gyllenhaal), whose office is upended when one of their own is accused of a lurid murder. "The new *Presumed Innocent* will be just that—new," says Scott Turow, 75, who wrote the 1987 best-seller that spawned 1990's Harrison Ford film and this show. "DNA was not commonly used in court in 1987. Kelley came up with a new approach that borders on genius."



HIT MAN

📺 On Netflix • In a screwball comedy/thriller, a meek philosophy professor (Glen Powell, *Top Gun: Maverick*) pretends to be a stone-cold undercover assassin, in cahoots with the New Orleans Police Department. The film is loosely based on a true story.

THE BIKERIDERS

📺 In theaters June 21 • A nice girl (*Killing Eve*'s Jodie Comer) falls for a motorcyclist (*Elvis*' Austin Butler) in a violent Chicago gang whose leader (Tom Hardy) is obsessed with Marlon Brando in *The Wild One*. The '60s soundtrack—Cream, Them, the Shangri-Las—will take you back.



DISCO: SOUNDTRACK OF A REVOLUTION

📺 On PBS June 18–July 2 • Remember when disco divas like Donna Summer rocked the boat of American culture? This docuseries traces disco's origins in the era's Stonewall uprising and a recession that freed New York City warehouses to become sweaty dance halls.



Meet the New Action Star: She's 94

AT 30, June Squibb debuted on Broadway as a stripper in *Gypsy*. At 84, she was Oscar nominated for *Nebraska*. Now, at 94, she's got her first lead, in Josh Margolin's highly entertaining *Thelma* (in theaters June 21), about a scam victim's quest to get her \$10,000 back.

"It's based on Josh's grandmother Thelma Post," says Squibb. Post was fooled by a phone scammer. Inspired by Tom Cruise, 61, in *Mission: Impossible*, Squibb's Thelma grabs the scooter of a friend (the late *Shaft* star Richard Roundtree) and sets out to reclaim her money. Like Cruise, she did her own stunts. "We had such fun riding around L.A.," she says.

Not all scam victims are old, Squibb notes. "Everybody has weak moments. Older people are capable of more than anyone realizes." She's nabbed more than a dozen on-screen roles since turning 90, and stars in Scarlett Johansson's upcoming *Eleanor the Great*. She's also bonded with the real Thelma. "I've had the grit that Thelma has, and that has been good for me." —T.A.



Bobby Cannavale

The actor outta Jersey riffs on fatherhood, musicals—and the power of hypnotism

Seeking out challenges

I have three sons. I would do anything for them. So in *Ezra*—about a father who kidnaps his autistic son from his ex-wife—I was interested in this idea that this guy would do anything, including taking his son away, until he could figure out exactly what the best thing was for him.

Collab on the kids

Rose [Byrne, his partner and costar in *Ezra*] and I are not always on the same page. We tend to not argue in the moment, particularly with two boys [ages 6 and 8] who are always around. They're like court reporters—they remember everything, and they will play us off each other. So we put it aside and then have a conversation about it later.

There's no plan B

Acting was always it for me. I flirted

with being a firefighter after my oldest son was born [actor Jake Cannavale, 29, whom he had with his ex-wife, Jenny Lumet]. I was 24. I had been a bouncer and then a bartender, because I felt like being a door security guy was unsafe now that I had a child. But I thought I should get serious, be thinking of things like benefits and pensions. That didn't last long, though. My buddy [writer-director] Tom McCarthy was, like, "Dude, what are you talking about? Acting is all you ever wanted to do."

All those firefighters are going to know you're an actor, acting like you're a firefighter. What are you going to do when the building's burning?"

Young dad vs. old(ish) dad

I used to be a workaholic. Then I had these two little boys in the last eight

years. It's just that old cliché about how time flies.... One minute, they won't get out of your bed, the next, they're not calling you back. And that happens like that. I can testify to that having gone through it with my first child 20 years ago. So I feel really lucky I'm getting another shot at it. I start to get really anxious, and my stomach starts to hurt if I'm not home by 5:30 or 6, where I'm supposed to be.

Singing and dancing? Sure!

Generally, in this business, people want you to do the same thing—the thing that they think you're successful at doing. And that's OK for some people. But I'm just trying to flex every muscle that I don't even know I have. I'm 54, and to be asked to do the off-Broadway musical *Here We Are* was a tremendously flattering thing. I sang and—I wouldn't say I danced ... but I moved! [Laughs.]

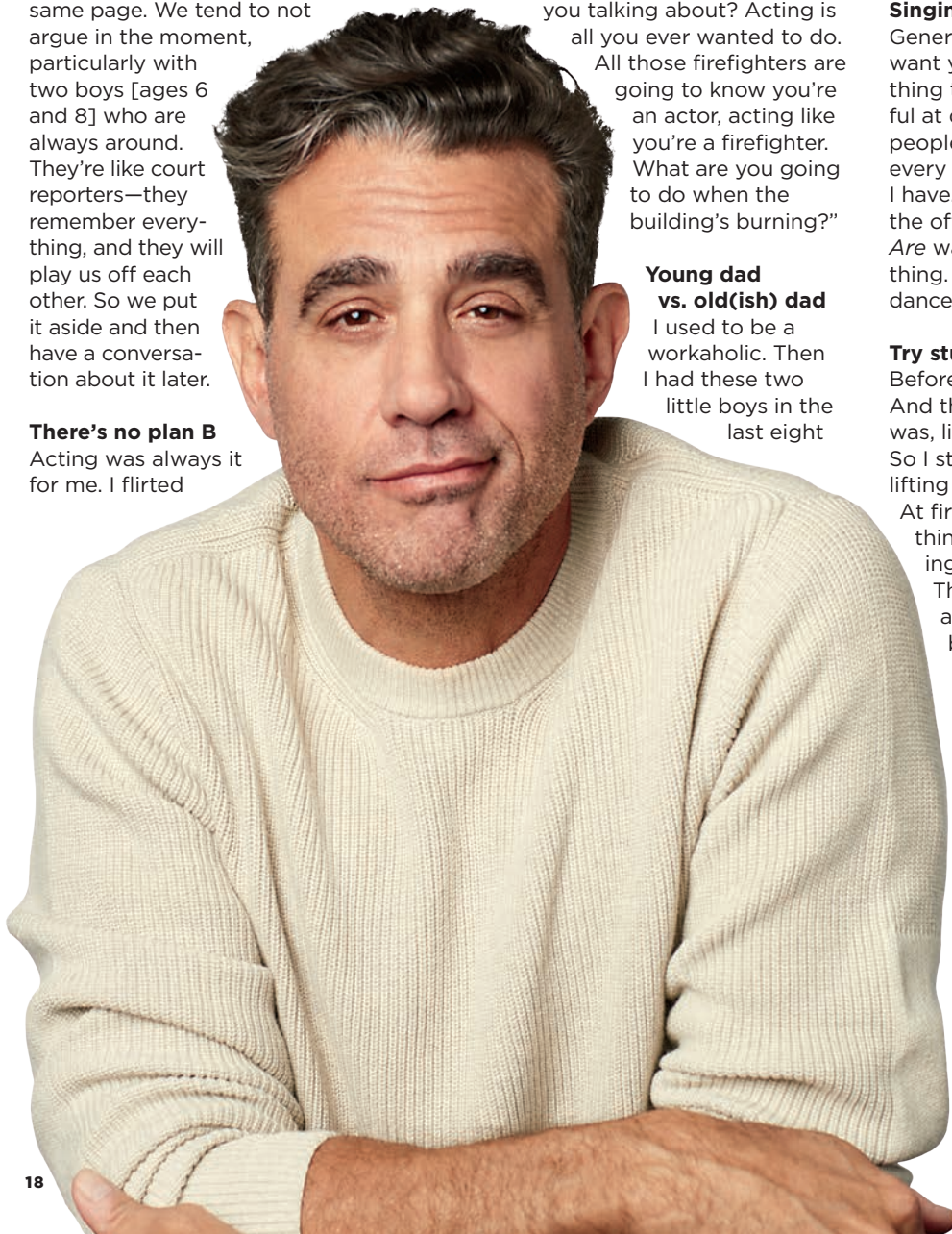
Try stuff to get healthy ...

Before, I smoked. I never worked out. And then we had these kids, and I was, like, I want to try to live forever. So I started eating better. I started lifting weights. And I quit smoking. At first I couldn't do it. I tried everything. I was always that guy leaving functions to sneak a cigarette. Then I went to this hypnotist, and I guess I was susceptible, because after the third or fourth session, I never had the desire to smoke again.

Most important thing I tell my kids

"Think the best of people; if somebody doesn't treat you well, don't take it onboard. Assume that there's something going on with them. Just try to lead with compassion—life is hard, and you guys have got it kind of easy, but most people don't." —As told to Judith Newman

Emmy Award-winning actor Bobby Cannavale, 54, stars in the film *Ezra*, in theaters now.





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MoneySaver

Burger-nomics

Rising hamburger prices have been in the news of late, often to show how a few years of high inflation have affected us all. But as with real estate, what you'll pay for a burger this summer depends on location, location, location. BY MARGIE ZABLE FISHER

MCDONALD'S

Hamburger

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Oklahoma City | \$1.99 |
| Kona, Hawaii | \$3.19 |
| Paris, France | \$2.87 (€2.70) |

Sometimes McDonald's France sells a two-patty McBaguette (€6.20). Ooh-la-la!



SHAKE SHACK ShackBurger

The restaurant chain, which grew from a single location that opened in a New York City park 20 years ago, now has more than 300 locations nationwide.



MINNESOTA STATE FAIR Wild Rice Cheeseburger

The rice is mixed into the beef; it's a foodie favorite. Not coincidentally, Minnesota grows more wild rice than any other state.

BOSTON LOGAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, TERMINAL C

Shojonator Burger

Sold by Shojo, a purveyor of "modern Asian cuisine," this quarter-pounder features "kimcheese," a combination of kimchi, pork sauce and American cheese.



MALLIE'S SPORTS GRILL & BAR, SOUTHGATE, MICHIGAN 10-Pound Monster Burger

They're not exaggerating. If you can finish it solo within an hour and a half, your burger is free, and you'll get \$100 too. Use the money for your copay at the gastroenterologist.

THE PIERRE HOTEL,
NEW YORK CITY

The Pierre Burger (Delivered to your room)

For this price you get a short rib and brisket blend with Gruyère cheese, plus fries or salad.



This page clockwise from top left: Courtesy, McDonald's; Courtesy, Shake Shack; TC Burger; Courtesy, The Pierre Hotel; Courtesy, Mallie's Sports Grill & Bar; Dan Nguyen and Andrew Kubisa; Opposite, from top: David Lopez; Ousman; Courtesy, Slater's 50/50



BURGERLORDS, LOS ANGELES

Double Vegan Cheeseburger

The patties in this burger, named a PETA favorite in 2019, include mushrooms, eggplant, chickpeas, celery, leeks, barley and cashews.



SLATER'S 50/50 LAS VEGAS

The Whale Burger

Live large with 1 pound of Australian Wagyu beef, fried lobster and gold-dusted bacon on a gold-dusted bun. You can wash it all down with the included half bottle of premium champagne.

Illustration by Liam Eisenberg

MONEY REPORT

Open Up Your Marriage (the Money Part, That Is)

What to do when only one spouse handles the finances

BY TAMARA E. HOLMES

I T'S ALL TOO common: After the spouse who was managing the household finances dies, the survivor is left with no idea of how to manage money. Even before then, the knowledge gap can cause problems, like poorly thought-out choices and vulnerability in a divorce. Here are some roots of the divide, along with ways you can bridge it.



“You wash the clothes, and I’ll do the ironing.”

Division of labor around the home makes sense. Until it doesn't.

YOU KNOW how in marriages one spouse tends to make dinner and the other cleans the dishes? Over time, one becomes a skillful cook while the other can barely boil water. That happens with money management: The spouse who does it gains expertise while the other one knows less, according to a study from the University of Texas and the University of Colorado.

“If you’re driving with your partner and you’re the one who’s in charge of retirement, you’re way more likely to notice the financial planning billboard,” says study coauthor Adrian F. Ward.

“Your partner doesn’t have to worry about any of this stuff, which is awesome as long as you both stay alive the exact same amount of time and you stay in love forever.”

Bridge the gap: Just as the family cook might fill a notebook with recipes, the money manager could create a binder listing accounts, bills and adviser contact info so that the other partner can step in, Ward suggests. Or have the less-involved partner manage the finances for a month or so, says Danielle Davis, founder of the Money in Matrimony online community. “By switching roles, they can do a dry run.” →

“I’m no good at this money stuff!”

A belief that you can’t manage money because you don’t know enough about it can discourage you from ever trying to sharpen your financial skills.

NEARLY ONE-FOURTH of women surveyed by Bank of America in 2022 said they regretted not educating themselves more about money, and a third said a lack of knowledge held them back from investing. A lack of confidence can be exacerbated if a person has run up credit card debt or made financial mistakes in the past, says Michele Paiva, a finance therapist based in Downingtown, Pennsylvania.

Bridge the gap: In an ideal situation, the partner who has been in charge would be open to teaching the less-knowledgeable spouse about finances, says Lindsey Hoskins, a Bethesda, Maryland–based therapist who does couples financial counseling. “As a first step, have the uninvolved person just sit with the person who’s managing the money and watch them pay the bills, watch them balance the checking account, watch them put the money in the retirement account,” Hoskins says. “‘Every time I sit down and do anything with the money, I’m going to invite you to come and sit with me so you can start to understand how it works.’”



“Don’t worry, I got this.”

It isn’t always the less-knowledgeable spouse who’s the obstacle.

SOMETIMES ONE person in the relationship doesn’t want the other to have any control or knowledge about the finances. This might stem from a desire to keep certain spending or destructive habits a secret. The motivation isn’t always that sinister, though. Maybe the spouse in charge of finances was lied to about money by an ex-partner, and the resulting distrust has spilled over into the current marriage. Or maybe that spouse just feels they’re the better person for the job. “I’ve had a lot of couples where one person is controlling the money and they will say to me, ‘But I’m keeping it safe,’” Paiva says. “You might be keeping things safe for the money, but you’re not keeping things safe for the relationship.”

Bridge the gap: If your spouse is hesitant to give up control of the finances, go slowly. Ask for a portion of the responsibilities to handle each month, suggests Hoskins, like paying some of the bills and keeping an eye on your bank account balances. Set a time limit for the experiment, such as three months, to give the controlling partner time to get comfortable with the idea that you can contribute. If your partner doesn’t want to share anything about your investments or accounts, that could be a red flag. “If your partner is trustworthy, they’re going to be transparent,” Paiva says.

Tamara E. Holmes has written about money and careers for publications including USA Today, Working Mother and Essence.

Need to Know

To avoid nasty surprises and other problems, both spouses should be familiar with all these elements of their financial life:

- ▶ Bank accounts
- ▶ Retirement accounts
- ▶ Investments
- ▶ Mortgages
- ▶ Credit card balances
- ▶ Other loans
- ▶ Car titles, real estate and other assets
- ▶ Wills and other estate planning documents
- ▶ Insurance policies
- ▶ Tax returns
- ▶ Online account user names and passwords
- ▶ Financial advisers



Jean Chatzky
TO THE RESCUE

Out of Work and Worried

An interior designer wonders how she should manage her cash flow



THE PROBLEM

You're over 60 and suddenly jobless. How do you stay afloat until you really want to retire? That's what Janice Young, an interior designer near Minneapolis, needed to know. After losing her \$100,000-a-year job last September, Young, 63 and divorced, began to doubt she'd find a comparable position. Should she take a pension she was due? Tap the \$560,000 in her traditional and Roth IRAs? Claim Social Security? "I'm sure I'm not the only divorced woman in her early 60s with these questions," she wrote.



Janice Young wants a financial backup plan.



THE ADVICE

The first thing Young had to do was cut her spending. Her healthy-sized emergency fund was dwindling at the rate of \$4,500 a month. Some expenses, like her mortgage and car payment, were nonnegotiable. But she put a stop to discretionary home improvement projects, eating out, traveling and—reluctantly—charitable donations. She also contacted the Affordable Care Act exchange for health insurance pricing; with no income, she would qualify for a zero-premium plan in Minnesota once her old insurance ran out. Young lowered her monthly spending to about \$3,000.

The second challenge was harder. If she wasn't working, where should she pull money from? Any source

she might pick—her pension, Social Security, traditional IRA, Roth IRA or a lower-paying job, if she could get one—would affect her financial security, health care costs and tax burden. It's complicated, said financial planner Wade Pfau, author of *Retirement Planning Guidebook*.

To help Young, I also consulted financial advisers Isabel Barrow of Edelman Financial Engines and Michelle Patello of TIAA. Here's what they and Pfau recommended.

1. Grab the steady pension. Barrow found that waiting to take the pension wouldn't result in a higher benefit. That gave Young two options: a \$1,000 initial monthly payment that might possibly increase but never decline, or a \$1,350 initial payout

that could fall in future years if the underlying fund underperformed. Based on Young's good health and expected longevity, Barrow recommended the \$1,000 option.

2. Tap the traditional IRA. In general, the longer you can let a Roth IRA grow, the better, Patello explained, since withdrawals, unlike those from a traditional IRA, are tax-free. That said, Young would need to keep her taxable income under \$29,160 this year in order to maintain free health insurance through the state of Minnesota. Because she would already be getting \$12,000 from her pension but would also get the 2024 standard IRS deduction of \$14,600, she could pull \$31,700 from her traditional IRA. After taxes, she would have a little over \$3,200 a month—enough for her lower monthly needs. If she were hit with unexpected expenses, she could pull money tax-free from the Roth.

3. Find a job. The benefit would be huge, Barrow noted. Replacing even a fraction of her former salary, when combined with the pension, would allow Young to stop pulling from savings, leave the retirement accounts alone and delay Social Security, allowing her benefit to grow by up to 8 percent each year until age 70.



THE OUTCOME

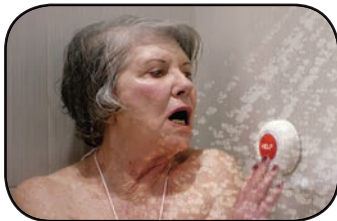
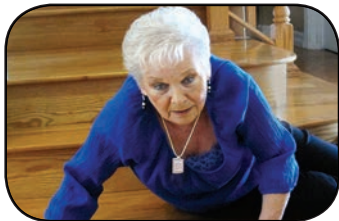
After months of job hunting, Young had good news. In late February, she landed full-time work as a kitchen designer at a home improvement chain—with a salary of about \$46,000 and a health plan. She'll tap her pension, because waiting won't boost the balance, but she'll put off Social Security until at least 67 and let her IRAs continue to grow. Young is happy she has a plan to fall back on in case she's jobless again. "I know I do have options," she says. "I'm going to be OK." ■

! Want Jean Chatzky to write about helping you sort out your financial problem? Email rescue@aarpp.org.

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Healthy You

Please Remain Seated

Even if injuries have you chairbound, you can still improve your fitness BY NICOLE PAJER

FOR THOSE of us who love staying active, lower body discomforts—foot pain, achy knees, a sore hip—can be frustrating. But you can still stay mobile and keep your muscles strong by turning a chair—the natural enemy of fitness—into your own personal gym. A 2021 review of studies found that chair exercises can improve balance, gait speed and grip strength.

“Chair exercises are an excellent option for beginners and those with mobility issues,” says Richard Dupee, M.D., chief of geriatrics at Tufts Medical Center. Use a sturdy chair with a firm back. Exercises should be challenging enough that you feel like you need to take a break after 8 to 10 repetitions, says physical therapist Rachel Prusynski. (Ask your doctor before starting any exercise program.)



TRAINER TIP
Always exercise on a firm chair, such as a dining chair, instead of a folding chair or recliner.



Chair Push-Ups

Sit in a chair with armrests, knees bent at a little more than 90 degrees. Lean forward and push with your arms and legs until your hips lift off the seat. Now use your arm and leg strength to lower yourself back down as slowly as you can—try for a count of 3.



Floor to Sky

Move your butt to the front edge of your seat and spread your feet wider than hip distance apart. With both arms, reach down between your knees as far as you can and try to touch the floor. Then quickly bring your arms back up and sit up all the way, reaching overhead as high as you can.



Sit to Stand

Start by leaning forward to get your nose over your toes, then stand up all the way to your full height. Sit back down slowly, with good control; try not to flop down into your seat. Repeat. You can cross your arms to try to avoid using them for help. → **Make it harder:** Wear a weighted backpack.



Band Pull-Downs

Sit up tall and hold an elastic band with your hands shoulder-width apart. Lift your arms overhead. Keeping your arms straight, move your hands away from each other as far as you can until the band touches the top of your head. Slowly return.



Row Your Boat

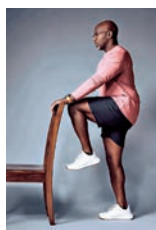
Move to the front edge of your seat and sit up tall. Hold a broomstick or other dowel in front of you at shoulder height. Now twist and drop one arm to bring the dowel down next to your hip as far as you can, like you are paddling a kayak. Bring the dowel back up to the middle, then row on the other side.



Seated Marching

Sit up straight and tall. Lift your knees quickly, one at a time, as fast as you can while pumping your arms. Try to march for 20 to 30 seconds before taking a quick 10- to 15-second break. Repeat 8 to 10 times. → **Make it easier:** Lean back against the chair for support.

Nicole Pajer writes on health for The New York Times and other publications.



▶ For a variety of fitness and workout videos, including chair exercises, scan this code, or check out aarp.org/stayfit.



Clockwise from top: Illustration by Anuj Shrestha; Eli Meir Kaplan (2); Illustrations by Agata Nowika

Health in Hand

HANDS ARE, by definition, pretty darn handy. But one of their hidden talents is divulging potentially subtle health problems that need a doctor's attention. Here are eight things your hands and fingers may be trying to tell you.



A weak handshake

CONDITION:
INCREASED FRAILITY

► Grip strength reflects overall body strength and health, and has been linked to dementia, cardiovascular disease and even mortality, says Mark D. Peterson, a professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation at the University of Michigan.

Grip strength correlates with changes in a person's DNA that indicate how fast they are aging, Peterson explains.

WHAT TO DO: Strength training. Says Peterson, "Strength preservation is the most important thing one can do when they pass their 50th birthday."



Swollen, painful fingers

CONDITION:
ARTHRITIS

► The two most common types are osteoarthritis (OA), often called the wear-and-tear form of the disease, and rheumatoid arthritis (RA), the autoimmune condition.

"RA is usually symmetrical—affecting both hands—and often involves the joint where the fingers meet the hand," says Stuart D. Kaplan, M.D., chief of rheumatology at Mount Sinai South Nassau in Oceanside, New York. With RA, the

joints are swollen and spongy, he adds. By contrast, OA may affect a single hand (or digit) and often leads to bony overgrowths at the finger's middle or last joint.

WHAT TO DO: "We have great drugs for RA, called biologics, that can change the course of the disease and stop it in its tracks," says Kaplan. "The key is catching and treating it early enough, before the damage is done." For OA, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and topical anti-inflammatory creams can help ease the discomfort.



Yellow knuckle bumps

CONDITION:
HIGH CHOLESTEROL

► Hard yellow bumps under the skin of the joints are often deposits of fat called xanthomas, says Shari Lipner, M.D., associate professor of clinical dermatology at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York City. "People who have them may have high lipid levels in their blood." Xanthomas may signal diabetes, liver disease or an underactive thyroid.

WHAT TO DO: Consult a doctor. You can usually get rid of these bumps by tackling the elevated lipid levels with cholesterol-lowering drugs.



Downward-curved nails

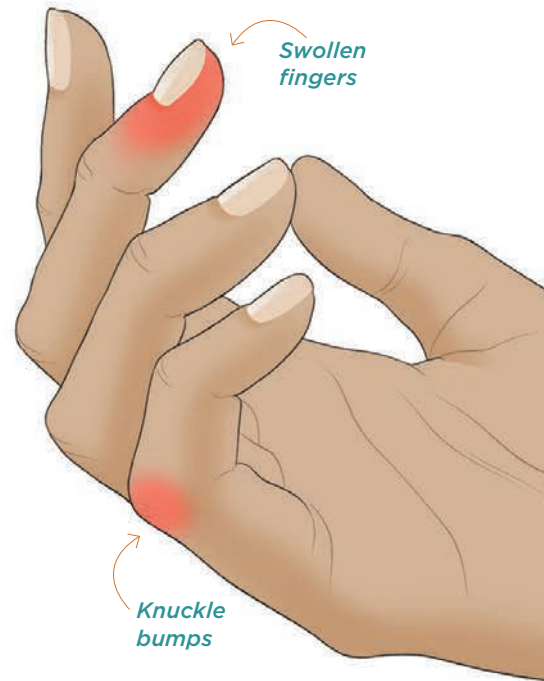
CONDITION:
LUNG DISEASES

► Nails that curve down and bulging fingertips are signs of a possibly serious health condition involving the lungs.

"The most common association is with lung disease, including lung

These surprising health clues are within your grasp—if you know how to recognize them

By BETH HOWARD



cancer," Lipner says, but they may also indicate COPD, tuberculosis or other health issues.

WHAT TO DO: See a doctor as soon as you notice a change, she advises, since treatment may require speed.



Hand tremor

CONDITION:
A NEUROLOGIC DISORDER

► The two most common—and concerning—causes are Parkinson's disease and essential tremor, says Mark Hallett, M.D., former chief of the Medical Neurology Branch at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. The difference? With essential tremor, the hands are still when at rest. "People will notice the tremor

when they are doing something like handwriting, grabbing a cup or eating with a fork,” says Hallett. With Parkinson’s disease, however, the tremor occurs when the hands are at rest and stops when they’re in motion, though that can change as the disease progresses.

WHAT TO DO: See a neurologist to get to the bottom of your symptoms. A hand tremor is occasionally a sign of other rarer neurological conditions or hyperthyroidism, Hallett notes.



Spoon nails

CONDITION:
**AN IRON
IMBALANCE**

► If your fingernails are raised on the sides, creating an indentation, you may have a condition known as koilonychia, or spoon nails. “To test for this, you can put a drop of water on the nail,” says Lipner. “If the water stays on the nail, you’ve made the diagnosis.”

The condition has long been associated with an iron deficiency, but it can also indicate an excess of the mineral, as well as both hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism. Your doctor may need to run some tests to determine the exact cause of the issue.

WHAT TO DO: Start by consulting your general practitioner, especially if you’re also experiencing fatigue and anxiety, which can be symptoms of both iron imbalances and thyroid problems. Says Lipner, “If you treat the underlying cause, the spooning usually resolves.”



Joints that pop

CONDITION:
TRIGGER FINGER

► Finger joints that stick or lock, accompanied by a pop or clicking sound, are clues to this common condition, which happens when the tendon that allows a digit to bend gets stuck and can’t glide smoothly in its sheath. The condition, which often occurs in the middle and ring fingers, can be quite painful, says Kaplan.

“Trigger finger usually happens in people who have underlying osteoarthritis due to some overgrowth of the bone irritating the tendon,” he explains.

WHAT TO DO: Rest, splints, gentle stretching and NSAIDs are helpful in quelling the pain. If these don’t work, your doctor may recommend a steroid injection. Surgery to release the tendon is a last resort.



Nail pitting, red-brown lines under nails

CONDITION:
PSORIASIS OR SKIN CANCER

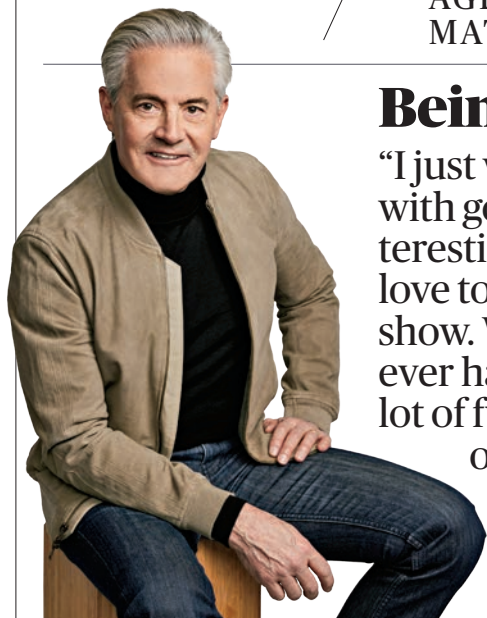
► “Commonly, we see [nail issues] in association with psoriasis as well as psoriatic arthritis,” says Lipner.

While you might expect to see skin problems with psoriasis, sometimes pits in the nails are the condition’s only sign. But they may be accompanied by splinter hemorrhages (red-brown vertical lines under a nail that look like splinters), and the nail may be lifted from the nail bed. Dark streaks under the nails can, in rare instances, indicate skin cancer.

WHAT TO DO: Consult a dermatologist about the possibility of psoriasis or skin cancer, the latter of which can be deadly if not treated. ■

Beth Howard writes on health for The Wall Street Journal, Prevention and other publications.





Being 60

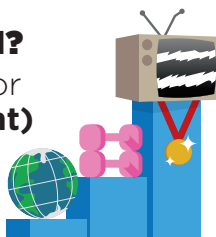
“I just want to keep working with good material and interesting, creative people. I’d love to do an action-adventure show. Who knows if that will ever happen, but it would be a lot of fun to drive a car real fast or have a sword fight.”

—Actor **Kyle MacLachlan**, 65, stars in *Fallout*, streaming on Prime. Read his interview with Linda Childers at aarp.org/quickquestions.

BY THE NUMBERS

THE BOOB TUBE RETIREMENT PLAN?

Before they retired, people’s top plans for retirement included traveling (**79 percent**) and exercising (**71 percent**). But once they’re retired, what’s actually the top activity? **Watching TV (83 percent).**



DO YOU REMEMBER ...

THE EASY-BAKE OVEN?

I **KNEW MY** gift request was weird as soon as the words left my lips. “Mom,” I said, “I’d like an Easy-Bake Oven for Christmas.” She was wondering, no doubt, why little Peter didn’t yearn for something more gender normative—a cap gun, perhaps, or some toy soldiers. But I wanted to make cake, not war. Kenner was there for me. In 1963, the toy company released the Easy-Bake Oven and sold 500,000 of them for \$15.95 that first year. Presumably 499,999 were gifts for girls—plus one more for me. I trusted that the provided cake mix, when subjected to heat from two 100-watt light bulbs, would deliver Betty Crocker-level confections on demand. I set up my oven in my bedroom, dumped the mix in a little round pan, added water, slid the pan into the slot and then stared through the oven



window for freaking ever, waiting for signs that cake was happening. The cake itself was a letdown, and I’m not even sure I ever flipped that light on again. Reports of injuries ensued, and after one led to a poor girl losing part of a finger, the brand melted down—not so Easy, after all. But that toy opened an oven door for me, and I’ve felt at home in the kitchen ever since. In the end, I had my Easy-Bake cake, and I’ve eaten it for a lifetime too. —Peter Moore

TIP SHEET

TURN YOUR BACKYARD INTO AN AVIARY (FOR CHEEP!)



WE LOVE DOGS and cats, but it’s work keeping them fed, walked, watered and healthy. Instead, how about a colorful menagerie that flies in on its own, changes with the seasons and sings as well? Here’s how to build your backyard bird haven for little more than chicken feed.

➤ **Set up feeders.** A quick internet search (“DIY bird feeder ideas”) can help you fashion a bird feeder from a grapefruit rind, a milk carton or a flower pot. Emma Greig, a project leader for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, suggests scattering seed on a tree stump as a platform feeder. You’ll attract all sorts of critters, but that’s where the fun lies.

➤ **Roll out the bird buffet.** Greig recommends black oil sunflower seed to attract a range of birds. A 20-pound bag costs about \$15 and lasts a couple of months. Attract woodpeckers with \$1 suet cakes in a \$3 cage. Avoid birdseed mixes with red milo—a filler most birds eschew.

➤ **Know your guests.** The Cornell Lab’s Merlin app IDs birds by sight and sound, and its Project Feeder-Watch engages citizen ornithologists (you!) to track changes in bird populations over time.

➤ **Provide cover, water and an edible landscape.** Bushes, native seed-bearing plants and a water dish provide shelter, food and drink for backyard birds. No backyard? No problem. A window-mounted seed feeder costs less than \$20. —P.M.



Clockwise from top left: Matt Sjailes/Getty Images (2); Alamy; AARP



LIFE 6.0

Mind the Gap

Or not: Maybe age is just
a number

BY RACHEL TOOR

FOR A FEW MONTHS, I nursed a ridiculous, hopeless crush. First, some backstory. Married and divorced in my 20s, I'd lived with a few good men and dated for decades. My sharp brand of humor and athletic shape led some tolerant dudes to put up with a bunch of less appealing stuff, including pickiness. For those brave enough to want to go out with me, I had a long list of requirements.

Including zero interest in getting remarried. Life was good, and I knew how to be alone. The secret: books. Another secret: nonhuman companions. A serial monogamist, I've been in love with dogs, cats, horses, a donkey, a mouse, a rat and a pot-bellied pig.

In my 50s, I had a relationship with a kind man with multiple graduate degrees who dressed in cashmere sport coats and had the chiseled good looks of a movie star. He loved me, but I could not commit. Before I figured out how I really felt about him, he died in a car accident. Grief-addled, I paid full price for a pair of pants for the first time in my life. *Carpe freaking diem*, I thought.

My crush on Toby was ridiculous because he checked none of the boxes on my list, and hopeless because no way would he ever be interested in me. A hipster with colorful tattoos, a shaved head and earrings, Toby wore thrift store

clothes and commuted by bike to his job as a cook in the tiny bakery where I went every morning to write.

He was tall, hot and fit—and nearly 15 years younger than me.

I admired him from a distance until we discovered we had the same taste in literature. I fell hard. Then COVID hit. The bakery shuttered; Toby emailed me: The libraries had closed. Did I have books he could borrow?

Did I have books. We got together for an epic walk.

Remember when every day was Blursday? During that weird, scary time, we had to negotiate if Toby could come inside my house. We chided each other: “You’re touching your face!” We had to talk about whether we were seeing

other people. Literally seeing: “Who’s in your bubble?”

We chatted about everything—values, politics, families, favorite candy. So much in common. The least important discussion had to do with our age gap. When I asked Toby what he thought about it, he said it wasn’t an issue. It was for me, at first. I had a major Zoom freakout with college friends. “People are going to think I’m his mother,” I wailed. “Don’t be silly,” they said.

So I stopped being silly. How wrong I was about what I thought mattered. I left my list of relationship must-haves outside on the stoop. After our first long walk, we spent every single day—and soon, every night—together. Toby moved in that August, and in October 2020, we married.

When we met, he was a cyclist and I was a distance runner. He started running; I got an e-bike. We camp, hike up and down mountains, and love the same movies and shows (though his brow is higher—I’m on my own for *Love Is Blind*). Toby cooks and cleans and takes our dog for early morning walks. I gush appreciation and strive to provide comic relief.

The only time I feel our age difference is when I come home and he’s blasting hip-hop. Over teenager-deafening volume, I giggle and bellow, “Will you turn that crap off?” While he could identify all the singers in a recent documentary about the making of 1985’s “We Are the World,” I was shocked to discover he’d never heard the Steely Dan song “Deacon Blues.”

A college friend likes to quip, “Rachel won the pandemic.” Nothing like catastrophe to help you understand how true the cliché is: You only live once.

Rachel Toor, 62, a professor of creative writing at Eastern Washington University, lives in Spokane with Toby and Harry, their rescue mutt.

My FIRST...
CROSSWORD TOURNAMENT

THINK FAST! What's a five-letter word for "multipurpose utensil"? I blanked. My pencil was sharp, my brain not so much. Finally, with the clock ticking down at the 2024 American Crossword Puzzle Tournament, the answer came to me: SPORK!

It came to me because my daughter wrote it into the puzzle we were sharing. Lily Lady, a filmmaker and poet who is smarter than I am, turned her mom and me into empty nesters when she grew up. Today we live far apart but often text back and forth about the *New York Times* crossword, a shared passion that helps us keep in touch. A quick text—*Can u believe that clue?*—can be another way to say, *Hi—I love you.*

Crosswords are good mental exercise. Better yet, they're fun. My favorite recent *Times* clue asked solvers to name a "writer's reference" that's also what's missing after "stego," "bronto" "allo" and "tyranno." Answer: THESAURUS. [For AARP THE MAGAZINE's crossword and other brain games, see page 69.]

Lily, who is 26, dared me—I mean "invited" me—to join her for my first ever (gulp) crossword tourney. We were part of the inaugural pairs competition at the 46th annual tournament, a festive three-day event in Stamford, Connecticut, with almost a thousand competitors.

Dreaming of the tournament's first prize of \$7,500, we convened in a ballroom that smelled of pencil-sharpener shavings and flop sweat. Lily zoomed through most of a Broadway-themed puzzle, including a female taxi driver (MYFARELADY) and a dishonest monarch (THELYINKING). We coulda been contenders, but I got grid-locked in my corner of the puzzle, which



featured a taxi queue (CABARRAY). I was holding us up, with Lily filling squares while I sat there like a lump, until she reached a Gen Z stumper: perennial presidential candidate Harold. I knew that one. "Stassen!"

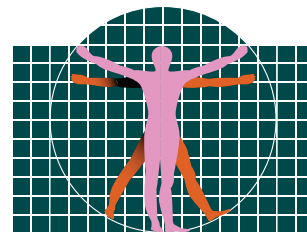
She wrote it in and gave me a tactical tip: "You don't have to shout."

We improved as we went along, with Lily filling in most of our answers while I whispered the occasional rock 'n' roll title or ballplayer's name. The famously difficult fifth puzzle, as fun as a sharp stick in the IRIS, beat us up, but we aced the sixth, Lily raising her hand to signal that we were done with time to spare. That night I checked our place in the standings and spewed a few four-letter words. "Calm down," Lily said. "We're having fun."

On the last day came the main event: the final puzzle. We tried to solve it along with the finalists, who used Sharpies to fill in giant puzzles mounted on easels. In the end, Paolo Pasco, a young crossword pro from San Diego, took top honors, to a standing ovation; Lily and I finished in the back of the pack. I said I was sorry for messing up on CABARRAY.

"It's OK, Dad" she said. "We'll get 'em next year."

Kevin Cook, 67, is the author of Waco Rising, Tommy's Honor and 10 other books.



FIX YOUR BODY

Help for Bad Posture

GOOD POSTURE can boost well-being. But if you are starting to slump, ask your health care provider what's causing this kyphosis (the rounding of the back). Postural kyphosis is fixable with the right exercises.

Jordan D. Metz, M.D., a sports medicine specialist and author of *The Exercise Cure*, suggests:

1. Build core strength. Do several planks a day. Hold the up position of

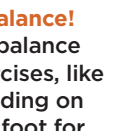
a push-up for 60 seconds. Then switch to side planks, making sure to do both sides. These will help stabilize your spinal muscles.

2. Get flexible. Try yoga and/or Pilates. Both help elongate the muscles.

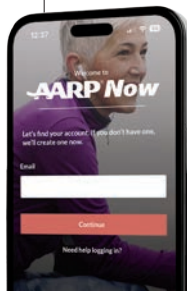
3. Balance! Try balance exercises, like standing on one foot for

30 seconds, then switching to the other foot. Be sure to have something nearby to hold on to, like a chair, if you are unsteady. Tai chi also helps improve balance.

4. Pinch your shoulder blades. While sitting or standing, keep your head and neck straight and squeeze your shoulder blades together. Hold for 20 seconds. Repeat throughout day. —*Barbara Hannah Grufferman, host, Age Better podcast*



Clockwise from top left: illustration by Dave Urban, illustrations by AARP, AARP



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Personal Checklist:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis | <input type="checkbox"/> Dry Skin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility Issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lower Back Pain | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Circulation |

Then read on to learn how a Safe Step Walk-In Tub can help.

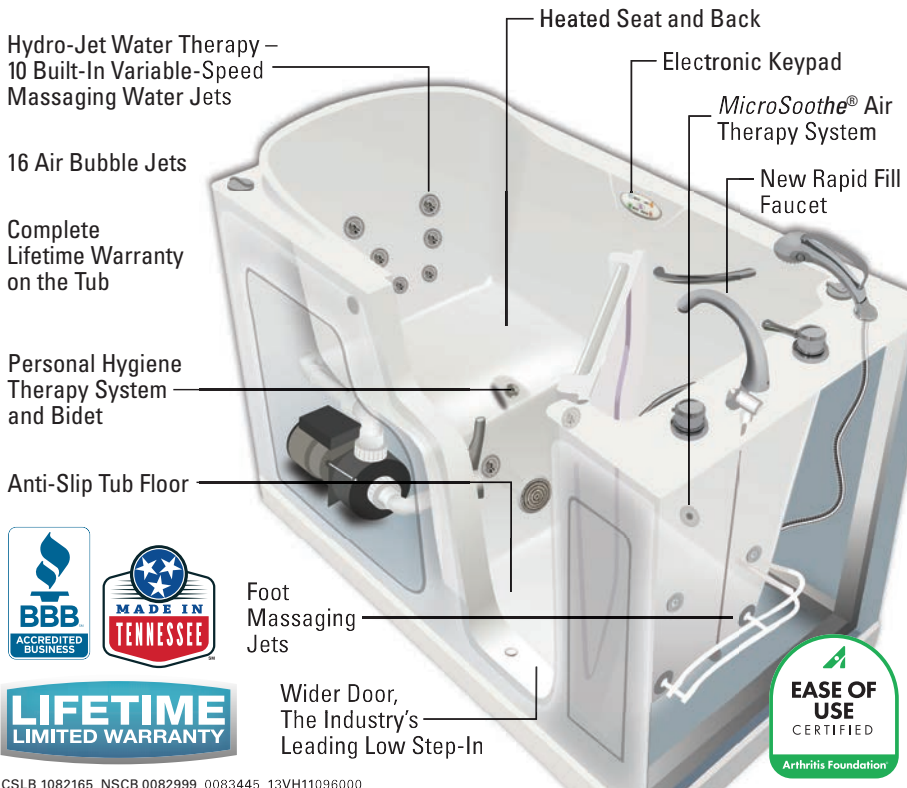
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◀ Scan me

A black and white photograph of Jon Bon Jovi walking on a set of train tracks. He is wearing a dark leather motorcycle jacket over a black turtleneck and dark pants. He has a slight smile and is looking towards the camera. The background shows utility poles and bare trees under an overcast sky.

JON BON JOVI'S LONG JOURNEY BACK

**HOW THE KID PHENOM OF JERSEY ROCK HAS
HANDLED 40 YEARS OF FAME—AND THE POTENTIAL LOSS
OF HIS MOST PRECIOUS INSTRUMENT: HIS VOICE**

BY JOHN COLAPINTO PHOTOGRAPHS BY GAVIN BOND



Jon Bon Jovi
photographed near
his New Jersey home,
February 28, 2024

In the spring of 2022, Jon Bon Jovi led his band on what they hoped would be a triumphant return to live performing after a two-year pandemic break. They had booked a 15-city U.S. arena tour. By the third or fourth show, however, critics were asking, “What’s going on with Jon Bon Jovi’s voice?” Known for the power, range and precision of his hard-rock belting on hits like “Livin’ on a Prayer” and “Wanted Dead or Alive,” on this tour the singer was often flat, reedy, choked. The band’s longtime keyboardist, David Bryan, who’d been playing with Bon Jovi since they were 16, says: “Something was wrong. It was scary as hell for all of us and for him.”

Legendarily driven, Bon Jovi pushed on with the tour. But after a show in Nashville, he came offstage and his wife, Dorothea, told him flat out, “It wasn’t great.” Jon and Dorothea had met and started dating in high school; they married in 1989 and have been together ever since, a remarkable feat in the music business. He knew he might be staring down the barrel of retirement, the end of a career he had worked extremely hard to build.

It was a fate he could not quite accept. That June, Bon Jovi underwent surgery on his throat, which gave him, and his band, considerable hope. Since then, they have recorded a new LP, *Forever*, their 16th studio album, released this June during the band’s 40th anniversary year. But when—or even whether—Bon Jovi’s voice can withstand the rigors of another multicity arena tour remains up in the air. His doctor is hopeful. Dorothea knows that her husband has the grit to confront the challenge—as she makes clear in a new four-part Hulu documentary titled *Thank You, Goodnight: The Bon Jovi Story*, which chronicles not only the band’s rise to fame but Jon’s vocal struggles. “He’s used to controlling everything,” Dorothea says. “I always say, by sheer will, he will make it happen.”

I met with Bon Jovi in late February, a few days before his 62nd birthday. He greeted me in the kitchen of his home, a French château-style house in New Jersey. As he prepared us some tea with ginger honey (“My crack,” he said, flashing his billion-watt smile), he immediately off-footed me with an unexpected show of modesty. I complimented him on more than 1 billion Spotify streams of “Livin’ on a Prayer,” and he waved away the praise, saying Taylor Swift and The Weeknd regularly rack up more. (For all his diplomacy, Bon Jovi holds his own in such company, with worldwide record sales of more than 130 million.)

We sat in his personal office, which was crammed with memorabilia and musical instruments. Dressed in a pale

blue T-shirt and faded jeans, he looked fit and healthy. He has allowed his hair to go gray, and his once *Teen Beat*-pretty face is all the more handsome for its smile lines and wrinkles. His speaking voice is grainier than it used to be, and he is careful with it. There's an awful lot riding on those vocal cords.

WE CAN BE HEROES

BON JOVI'S STRUGGLE has perhaps been particularly hard on a man who, by his own admission, has been extraordinarily lucky. He was born John Bongiovi in 1962, the eldest of three sons, and raised in the modest suburban community of Sayreville, New Jersey. His parents—dad, a hairdresser; mom, a florist—had met in the Marines, and they encouraged his rock 'n' roll dream from the start. “They were like, ‘You can do this,’” he recalls. “And you believed it.” At 16 he formed his band the Atlantic City Expressway, and they landed a regular gig at the Fast Lane, a bar on the Jersey Shore where his heroes Bruce Springsteen and Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes had cut their teeth. He jumps up and shows me a photo of the band in matching satin tour jackets. “Look at those jackets!” He laughs with irony and nostalgia. “Emulating Southside Johnny!”

Skipping college (“There was no plan B,” he says), he was working as a gofer at a Manhattan recording studio when he wrote “Runaway,” his wide-eyed response to the teenage streetwalkers who thronged the Port Authority bus terminal on his commute into the city. Recorded after hours at the studio, the single was picked up by a local radio station and was soon being requested at affiliated stations across the country. Record labels scrambled to see the band live. But there was no band. Bon Jovi reached out to acquaintances that included a guitarist and songwriter named Richie Sambora, for what all of them assumed would be a short promo tour. It would extend to four decades.



Bon Jovi (the person and the band) in Tokyo, 1985; with wife, Dorothea, 2002

In 1983, he signed with the Mercury label of PolyGram Records, which suggested a name change from “Bongiovi” to “Bon Jovi” because it looked like “Van Halen.” After releasing two passable albums, songwriters Bon Jovi and Sambora sought fresh inspiration from the pro Desmond Child, who pushed the pair to extend their themes beyond “hot girls and cars” to tell actual stories. The trio pumped out “You Give Love a Bad Name” and “Livin’ on a Prayer”—irresistible sing-along mega anthems that powered the band’s third LP, *Slippery When Wet*, to No. 1 on the Billboard album chart. Global arena tours ensued. Asked about the moment when he first realized, *Wait, I’m an actual rock star*, Bon Jovi shakes his head. “You always say you’re a rock star. I played in that club in that satin jacket, and I thought I was a rock star.”

Many of the songs Bon Jovi writes are strikingly inspirational, with soaring choruses: songs about the underdog prevailing, the long-shot triumph, the star-crossed lovers who defeat the odds. And then there are songs like “Bed of Roses,” off the band’s fifth LP, *Keep the Faith* (1992), which hints at the temptations of living out of lonely hotel rooms on the road. It includes the lyrics: “Cause a bottle of vodka’s / Still lodged in my head / And some blonde gave me nightmares / Think that she’s still in my bed ...” He and Dorothea were married when he wrote those words, which begged a nosy journalistic question.

“Those lyrics to ‘Bed of Roses,’” I start to say, delicately, “are very—”

“Honest,” he cut me off. “I don’t hide behind anything. I’ve never lied to my wife’s face. We were 18 when we met and started dating. Life has happened.”

Keep the Faith was released at the height of the gloom-laden grunge movement led by Nirvana, Pearl Jam and Soundgarden—a style of indie rock music that made big commercial pop bands like Bon Jovi obsolete overnight. Many of Bon Jovi’s contemporaries (then in their 30s) adopted the look, sound and attitude of grunge. “I watched my peer group suddenly buy flannel shirts and run to that,” Bon Jovi recalls. “I said, ‘This is a big mistake. Why would you chase something?’ ... I realized: Be who you are, tell your truth.”

The band survived and was still charting in 2013, when its 12th studio album, *What About Now*, instantly went to No. 1 and spawned the year’s top-grossing tour. But there were problems brewing—problems that would ultimately end up impacting Bon Jovi’s voice. Sambora, who had been in and out of rehab over the previous decade, quit the band suddenly during the first leg of the tour. Together, Bon Jovi and Sambora had been a powerhouse vocal team. Bon Jovi found himself “singing for two” for the rest of the shows, he recalls—some 80 dates. “It was after that when everything started to go south,” he says. “I couldn’t figure it out. Was it psychological,

Clockwise from left: Koh Hasebe/Shinjo Music/Getty Images; Michael O’Neill/Corbis via Getty Images; Koh Hasebe/Shinjo Music/Getty Images



was it physical—what was it?” He was especially mystified because he had, since his teens, always taken assiduous care of his voice, performing not only warm-ups before concerts but also cool-down exercises after shows. He had long eschewed drugs and smoking, in part to preserve his voice. But after the 2013 tour, an increasing breathiness, diminished volume and moments of uncertain pitch made singing increasingly fraught for Bon Jovi. He got through tours from 2015 to 2019, but upon his return to performing after the pandemic break, he discovered that his voice had further deteriorated—to the point where Dorothea had to speak up.

ROCK STAR VS. AGING

SINGING IS A mysterious activity. It has mystical connections to the deepest part of ourselves as individuals and as a species. For a book I wrote in 2021, *This Is the Voice*, I spoke with Julie Andrews about the botched vocal surgery that destroyed her singing voice. Singing, she said, had afforded her an “ecstasy” that was unbearable for her to think “would never come my way again!” Another former singer, an opera tenor forced to retire because of vocal cord scarring, told me, “When you sing, you’re giving voice to your soul.” For Bon Jovi, the potential loss was devastating. “People had to talk me off the ledge,” he says. “Because

you’re like, ‘I didn’t do anything wrong! What’s wrong?’”

Lip-syncing to a prerecorded vocal track in concert was out of the question for him. So was relying on Auto-Tune, a digital technology that can tweak voices to perfect pitch in live performance. “I’d rather get hit by a bus on the highway,” he told me.

It was not until he spoke to singer Shania Twain, who detailed how she overcame her own voice problems in the February/March 2020 issue of this magazine, that he found hope. Bon Jovi consulted Twain’s voice doctor, Robert Sataloff, a leading voice surgeon in Philadelphia. Sataloff was struck by the care Bon Jovi had taken of his voice.

“Jon has worked, throughout his career, harder and more diligently than most of his fans would ever have guessed,” Sataloff told me. But now Bon Jovi was facing something he could not control through hard work alone: the natural aging process. “Eventually it catches up with all of us,” Sataloff says. Despite the overwork on his 2013 tour, there is no specific vocal injury that Bon Jovi suffered, no disease or illness. His voice problem is mainly the result of aging, and like all aspects of aging, some people are more susceptible to vocal diminishment than others. Over time, Bon Jovi began to experience the thinning of his vocal cords—or, as they are properly called, vocal folds: bands of tissue composed of

muscle, mucous membranes and connecting structures.

When singing or talking, we produce sounds by bringing our vocal folds together across the opening of our windpipe and blowing air through them, like blowing a Bronx cheer through our closed lips. Our fluttering vocal folds actually chop the airflow from our lungs into pulses that we hear as a musical note or a spoken vowel. A strong, clear, effortless-sounding voice results from vocal folds that meet flush and firmly across the top of the windpipe but can also vibrate freely and symmetrically. However, with age the folds can lose mass, just like the muscles in the rest of our body.

“When that happens,” Sataloff says, “the vocal folds fail to meet firmly. People naturally and unconsciously work harder to squeeze their vocal folds together so they can get a strong voice. However, that kind of excess muscle tension is counterproductive, inefficient. It causes muscle strain that makes it more effortful to talk or sing and leads to fatigue of the voice and sometimes to the vocal fold injury.” All the more so if your job involves singing to packed arenas every night. That muscle strain can also lead to the flattened notes that Bon Jovi was suffering from—as well as an overall physical exhaustion. Most people don’t know that we sing with our entire bodies, from planting our feet, to using our diaphragms to compress the lungs, to engaging our abdominal and back muscles to sustain a note, to manipulating our neck and throat muscles to shape its tone. A seemingly tiny problem in a single vocal fold can lead to a cascade of compensatory muscular exertion that affects the entire body.

For Bon Jovi, Sataloff recommended a surgery called

thyroplasty, in which a shim of Gore-Tex is placed in such a way as to move the vocal folds closer together. Surgery alone, however, was not sufficient to restore Bon Jovi’s voice to its former power and precision. Post-surgery, Bon Jovi

follows a gym regimen to keep his core and back strong, and works with speech-language pathologists and singing-voice specialists to retrain the muscles of his vocal tract. Of his own accord, he also undergoes regular laser treatment in hopes of promoting blood flow through his vocal folds and the nerves that control them. Sataloff and Bon Jovi are optimistic that the singer’s voice will continue to strengthen—so optimistic that Bon Jovi is eyeing a return to touring at some point. “Whether or

not I can ever do a 100-show tour again, I don’t know,” he says. “But if I can have joy on the stage on night one, that would be great.”

IS HIS WHOLE NEW ALBUM ABOUT AGING? “MOST DEFINITELY,” BON JOVI CONFIRMS. ITS MESSAGE: DON’T TRY TO BE WHO YOU USED TO BE. “I HAVE NO DESIRE TO BE THAT KID,” HE SAYS.

LESSONS FROM A F---ING BEATLE

ALONG WITH HIS vocal struggles, Bon Jovi has faced the conundrum of how to age gracefully in a young person’s game. In this, he has some help; some of his friends have set an inspiring example. Bruce Springsteen, who is almost 13 years Bon Jovi’s senior and a longtime mentor, has never sacrificed his integrity as a musician. (The two take regular drives together to talk.) Another is Paul McCartney, who has, to Bon Jovi’s delight and astonishment, become a close friend. The rocker shows me a recent photo of the two of them eating and talking animatedly at a picnic table on Bon Jovi’s

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR VOICE

Some vocal aging—in the form of weakness, breathiness, quavering or raspiness—may be inevitable. Still, there are things you can do to keep your voice strong and clear longer.



TONE YOUR CORE.

Being able to draw

in and expel a good amount of air depends on the muscles that drive respiration. Regular core-strength exercises, such as push-ups and squats, can help. So can aerobic exercise like walking or running.



HUM A TUNE.

Speech pathologists have

an array of exercises for keeping the vocal membranes strong and pliable, including humming into a straw. Note: If your voice changes suddenly, see a laryngologist to rule out growths on the vocal folds.



HACK THESE HABITS.

Smoking and alcohol

rob the vocal folds of crucial moisture and hence pliability. Drinking plenty of water is key. Fried foods, hot spices and (again) booze can cause reflux, which harms the delicate organs of speech.



TAKE IT EASY.

Overuse can age the voice. And to

go from zero (silence) to 60 (“O sole mio!”) in an instant is to risk vocal fold bruises that can cause a permanent rasp. Thus it can be said of vocal health: everything in moderation, even speech and song. —J.C.



property in East Hampton, New York. “We do this all summer,” he says, his tone tinged with disbelief. “I’m sitting there with a f---ing Beatle. He comes to my house often, I go to his beach house often, and our wives are very close.” What most impresses him about Paul is the enthusiasm and love of songwriting that the Beatle still possesses. He slips into an imitation of McCartney’s Liverpool accent and childlike enthusiasm: “‘Oh, I’ve got new stuff!’ he tells me. At 81. Crazy.”

Bon Jovi may well keep writing into his 80s, too, because he has seen how aging has deepened his songwriting. “I have a grander palette to write from,” he says. “More life experience. I think that every record reflects somehow who I am at that time.” The band’s previous studio album, *2020*, covered tough subjects like COVID, school shootings and the killing of George Floyd. It was overlooked by critics, perhaps because the band could not tour to promote it. Still, “I think it’s one of my better records,” Bon Jovi says.

The new record, by contrast, he says, “is about joy”—although the first song he wrote for the album is one that, to my ear, sounds uncharacteristically despairing. “Hollow Man,” sung in a low rumble, has brooding lyrics about a man bereft of inspiration. Bon Jovi casts an entirely different light on it, one that reflects his spirituality. The song, he says, is an appeal to God. “It says, ‘Fill me up. I’m a vessel. What do I want to say? And how do I say it?’”

Another song on the album, “Kiss the Bride,” also reckons with age and change, dealing, as it does, with how parenthood inevitably makes us aware of the passage of time. He and Dorothea have four children: three sons and a daughter, ranging in age from 20 to 31. “Kiss the Bride” is about giving away their daughter at her wedding and stepping aside.

“Cried writing it and cried recording it,” he says.

Is the whole album about aging? I ask.

“Most definitely,” he says. “‘Don’t try to be what you used to be: I don’t want to be the kid from *Slippery When Wet*. I have no desire to be that kid.’”

Who Bon Jovi wants to be is who he has become—who he has, by force of will, turned himself into. He points to the album’s opening track, “Legendary.” The lyrics evoke the audacity of his own dream of escaping his blue-collar beginnings (“Who are you and who am I / To think that we could ever fly?”) and offer an ecstatic celebration of dear friendships and his long marriage. “Got my brown-eyed girl / And she believes in me,” he sings—a line he rhymes with a single word made all the more emphatic because the band drops out and he sings it into silence: “Legendary.”

Bon Jovi had debuted his post-surgery voice in live performance just a few weeks before our meeting, when he was honored by MusiCares at an annual event in Los Angeles that acknowledges the philanthropy of musicians. (For



Bon Jovi with the Boss and, inset, with Sir Paul at the 2024 MusiCares gala

13 years, Bon Jovi’s Soul Foundation has run JBJ Soul Kitchen, a restaurant for paying customers and those who can’t afford to pay, with four New Jersey locations.) To a packed audience in the Los Angeles Convention Center, Bon Jovi sang a duet with Springsteen, a version of Bruce’s “The Promised Land.” McCartney was in the audience. For Bon Jovi, the performance represented far more than just a good show. It was a return to himself.

We—all of us, singers and nonsingers alike—identify with our voices to a degree we rarely acknowledge. A voice’s pace and timbre and volume, its accent and texture, are all a result of physical attributes and innate and acquired habits of temperament and personality that are as unique as a fingerprint, instantly recognizable to all who know and love us. For two difficult years, Bon Jovi lost that acoustic signature and gained a head full of negative thoughts about his future as a performer.

The best thing to come out of the MusiCares event, for him, was the silencing of those thoughts. When he was onstage, he tells me, “doubt wasn’t there. Fear wasn’t there. It was just the old me.”

And even if he has no desire to be his “old” young self, he wasn’t sorry to catch a fleeting glimpse of that long-lost kid. “Ohhh, I liked seeing him,” he says. “It was good.” ■

Journalist John Colapinto is a longtime contributor to The New Yorker and Rolling Stone and author of As Nature Made Him and This Is the Voice. He wrote about music and memory in the December 2023/January 2024 issue.



The *Forever* album

This page, from top: Getty Images for The Recording Academy (2); Courtesy Bon Jovi/Universal. Opposite page: Kevin Mazur/Getty Images for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame

SUPERFOOD



Groceries can be expensive. Healthy groceries can be even more expensive. To help you make the smartest choices at the supermarket, we put the top good-for-you foods to the test

By Carrie Havranek

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TED CAVANAUGH

EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL (EVOO)

VS.

COCONUT OIL

LATELY, COCONUT OIL has been touted as some kind of fat-based panacea, with people adding it to everything from their skin-care routines to their morning coffee. It's also easy to cook with because it has a high smoke point. But coconut oil has a hidden downside, in the form of a whopping 12 grams of saturated fat per tablespoon. Compare that to extra-virgin olive oil, which carries a mere 2 grams of saturated fat. When it comes to saturated fat, less is more.



WINNER: EVOO

“Extra-virgin olive oil is a wonderful source of mono-unsaturated fatty acids and polyphenols, and has powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties,” says Serena Poon, a chef and certified nutritionist in Los Angeles. And while it has a lower smoke point than many other oils, you can still cook with it on higher heat. Studies are busting the long-running myth that cooking destroys its beneficial compounds.

SMACKDOWN!



ACAI BOWL

VS.

GREEK YOGURT WITH GRANOLA

FIRST, REALIZE that in this battle of superfoods, it's quite possible that neither option will qualify as "super." Acai bowls usually contain honey or some other form of added sugar, while yogurt with "fruit on the bottom" is often really "syrup on the bottom" and the granola itself can be high in sugar. But there is a way around all that sweetness.



WINNER: Greek Yogurt With Granola

By virtue of its protein content, Greek yogurt is likely the best bet. But there's a better choice. "Make your own yogurt bowl with unsweetened Greek yogurt, no-sugar-added granola (or chopped nuts) and a sprinkle of acai berries," says New Jersey-based registered dietitian Erin Palinski-Wade, author of *2 Day Diabetes Diet*. If you're buying a convenience food, look for real fruit added on top, not syrupy fruit on the bottom.

QUINOA

VS.

BROWN RICE

QUINOA AND RICE are both suitable for those who need to avoid gluten, says Poon. "Either grain is an OK choice, assuming quinoa [which contains more fiber] doesn't affect your digestive system." Other fiber-rich, gluten-free grain options include millet, amaranth and wild rice.



WINNER: Quinoa

"Quinoa contains twice as much protein as brown rice while also being a complete protein, meaning it contains all nine essential amino acids. It also has slightly more fiber, allowing it to be more blood-sugar-friendly," Palinski-Wade says.



**ATLANTIC
SALMON**

VS.

TUNA

WE NORMALLY think of fat as a bad thing. But when it comes to fish, the fat is the good stuff. “The omega-3 fatty acids found in fish help prevent cognitive decline in older adults,” says Poon, and those healthy fats are abundant in both salmon and tuna. But fat is also where fish accumulate toxins like mercury, a pollutant that can reach concerning concentrations in large predator fish like tuna, marlin and bluefish, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). “If you do eat tuna or other large fish, it is recommended to do so in moderation,” says Poon.



WINNER: Atlantic Salmon

Atlantic salmon is the clear winner in this battle of the big fish. However, if you do decide on the tuna, Palinski-Wade recommends opting for pole-and-line-caught varieties, since they tend to be younger and smaller and they typically contain less mercury. “Look at options: canned in water and those labeled ‘low sodium’ or ‘no salt added,’ when possible,” she says. (For more information on seafood sustainability, consult NRDC.org or seafoodwatch.org.)

In the battle of the faux burgers, low-sodium veggie patties are best.



**VEGGIE
BURGER**

VS.

**IMPOSSIBLE
BURGER**

WHAT'S THE BEST choice if you're trying to eat less meat: a plant-based burger that pretends it's beef or a plant-based burger that tastes like plants? “I'm not a fan of packaged substitute meats,” says Poon. “They are usually highly processed and high in sodium. Bodies don't metabolize sodium as well later in life.” And while faux meat is typically higher in protein (about 20 grams per 4-ounce serving) than veggie burgers (which average fewer than 16 grams per patty), it also has more saturated fat.



WINNER: Veggie Burger

A plant-based burger that tastes like plants is the better choice, but read the label to make sure your brand doesn't pose sodium problems. “Look for veggie burger brands made strictly from a mix of beans, lentils and vegetables,” says Palinski-Wade. (Dr. Praeger's, Hilary's and Actual Veggies are among several vegetable-driven brands.) If you crave real meat, “one made from 100 percent lean turkey meat will be your best bet,” she says.



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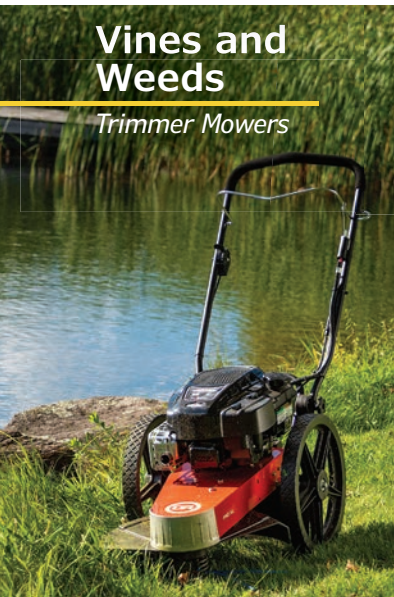
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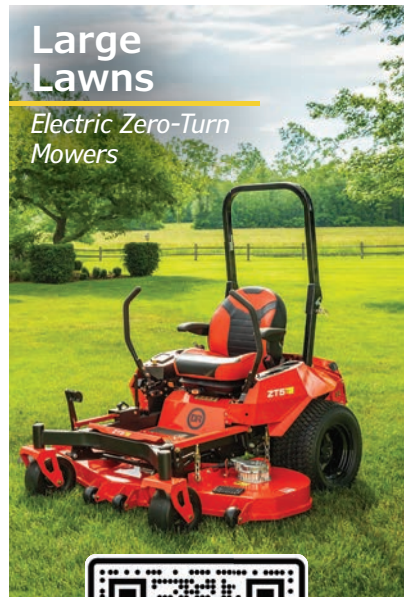
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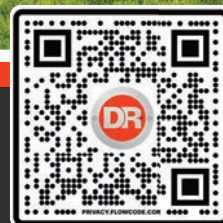


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**ALMOND, OAT
AND SOY MILK**

VS.

DAIRY MILK

GIVING UP DAIRY also means giving up the protein and calcium that come with it. And milk alternatives often can't replace those crucial nutrients. Among common plant-based milks, soy milk contains the most protein, followed by oat milk and then almond milk, Poon says. Soy milk also contains phytoestrogens, natural compounds that may help support cognitive function in older adults and may be linked to lowering the risk of some cancers. But read the label: Is that milk substitute fortified with



calcium and vitamin D? Does it have added sugars? How about ingredients like carrageenan, which is added for texture but can cause digestive upset in some people? There are so many choices, but one best option.

|||||



Winner: Cow's Milk

When it comes to the nutritional needs of older adults, protein is paramount, advises Mark Tarnopolsky, M.D., director of the neuromuscular and neurometabolic clinic at McMaster University Medical Center in Hamilton, Ontario. For those who can't tolerate dairy, soy is the next best choice.

POMEGRANATE

VS.

GOJI BERRIES



GOJIS ARE HIGH in the carotenoid zeaxanthin, which may protect against macular degeneration. They also contain melatonin, which supports sleep. Pomegranate seeds are high in vitamin C, fiber and other nutrients that give them cardioprotective, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and anticarcinogenic properties, says Poon. It's really a taste preference: Pomegranate is a little sweeter than tart goji berries. But is one better than the other?

|||||



WINNER: It's a draw!

You're best served by eating a variety of different fruits, including gojis and pomegranate. "Both are packed with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. You can't go wrong with either, fresh or dried," says Palinski-Wade, who advises aiming for about a quarter cup a day of each. ■

Carrie Havranek writes on food and health for Eating Well, Reader's Digest and other publications.

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WASHED AWAY



AWAY



Higher sea levels aren't coming: They're already here. And older people are losing their homes as a result. What will it take to keep people safe?

By Craig Welch

PART 1 A RETIREMENT NIGHTMARE

Martha Shaw was ready. As forecasters in September 2022 warned of a storm bearing down on Florida's Gulf Coast, she grabbed a blanket and her cane, stuffed a suitcase with clothes and loaded a kennel for her toy poodle, Andre, into her silver SUV. Shaw, who had just turned 84, had been through this before. Hurricane Charley in 2004 had damaged the roof and siding on her mobile home in Fort Myers. But inside, everything had stayed dry.

This time, Shaw planned to drive inland to a rest stop on Interstate 75, sleep in her car and return the following



A Fort Myers Beach, Florida, resident, *left*, after 2022's Hurricane Ian. *Above*, Sunrise Mobile Village during the storm.

morning. But as warnings about Hurricane Ian grew more dire, she realized her plan was unsafe. In the pelting rain, she drove instead to an emergency shelter and watched out a window as the monster raged.

Ian's winds approached 150 miles per hour, churning up a massive 14-foot storm surge. Water roared inland. Flooding overtopped houses, crumpled bridges and drove boats across roadways. More than 60 people drowned in the storm—some in their cars, others in their attics. Watching a small part of this disaster unfold, Shaw felt she was floating outside her body. "I was numb, in limbo," she later told me, her voice cracking. "I didn't know how to feel."

When the skies finally cleared and a friend drove Shaw back to the plot she owned at Sunshine Mobile Village, Shaw couldn't believe her eyes. Half a mile inland from Fort Myers Beach, Ian had pushed fetid water nearly to her ceiling. The place was uninhabitable.

I met Shaw last September, a year to the day after Ian hit. I liked her immediately. She's tall and funny, with an open

smile, a big laugh and the quiet confidence of someone who spent her career ruling elementary school classrooms. When I asked about the storm, she sobbed briefly, so I apologized. “Oh, you didn’t upset me,” she said, graciously. “I mean, that’s how it hits me—in a little wave.”

Stories like Shaw’s have always been part of living in coastal areas. But today those stories are growing more common, especially for people over 50. Flooding of all kinds is increasing along much of the nation’s shoreline. Due to rising sea levels tied to climate change, high-tide “nuisance” flooding now occurs three to nine times more often than it did 50 years ago, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). At the same time, hurricanes are getting stronger, bringing more rain and creating surges that push farther inland than ever. This means more damaged property, more shattered and lost lives.

And increasingly, the people in harm’s way are older. Between 1970 and 2022, the number of people over 65 living in counties along the country’s East, West, Gulf and Great Lakes coasts rose 159 percent. Over the same period, the percentage of younger people living in those areas dropped.

Water doesn’t discriminate by age, of course. In the devastating floods that hit Southern California in February—caused by a record-setting “atmospheric river” of rain—people of all ages lost power, lost their homes. Nine lost their lives. But the impact of flooding on older people is “often underappreciated,” says Anamaria Bukvic, a Virginia Tech assistant professor who studies that impact. Even minor floods can be disastrous, preventing access to food, medicine or emergency care; shutting off power, heat or air-conditioning; or draining limited savings. Some people can’t—or won’t—evacuate. Or if they do, relocation may trigger anxiety and loneliness.

“Their whole world is often right in their home,” says Erin McLeod, who runs Senior Friendship Centers in southwest Florida. “And they wonder: If they leave, will they be able to get back? Will that home still be there?”

As a journalist who specializes in climate reporting, I’ve tracked our changing planet for much of my adult life. Over decades, I’ve seen scientists fine-tune their ability to link emissions from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas to the changes we see all around us, including flooding. Not everyone is comfortable with this, but the evidence keeps growing stronger. Last year was the Earth’s warmest since NOAA’s recordkeeping began in 1850,



Clockwise from top left: Martha Shaw in her Fort Myers neighborhood; Fort Myers Beach today, photographed by drone; Shaw’s living room after Hurricane Ian, which left a waterline across the framed prints on the walls

and the last 10 years were the warmest 10 on record.

I have witnessed the damage this change has wrought. In 2017, weeks after Hurricane Harvey dumped up to 40 inches of rain on Houston, several of the nation’s top experts told me that excess warmth had increased Harvey’s rains. NOAA scientists later published research highlighting another factor: Thanks to atmospheric warming, tropical cyclones like Harvey have been moving more slowly, allowing them to deliver more punishing blows. Research showed that up to half of the 106,000 properties damaged by Harvey’s floods would have been spared if the climate had not been changing.

So, wanting to understand the burdens hitting older

What We’re Doing ...

AARP works to help communities prepare for and recover from major floods and other disasters.



When a storm is looming: AARP’s state offices can quickly reach members with critical warnings and safety information. Our offices also help local governments consider the needs of older adults in the lead-up to a storm.



In the aftermath: AARP helps with immediate and long-term relief efforts. For example, when Hurricane Ida struck Louisiana in 2021, AARP Foundation granted more than \$1 million to local relief organizations serving older adults.



Before the next one: The AARP Disaster Resilience Tool Kit (aarp.org/DisasterResilience) outlines steps local leaders can take to prepare. AARP’s Community Challenge grants fund local projects to restore flood-damaged areas.



Even minor floods can be disastrous for older Americans, cutting off their access to food, water, power or emergency care.

people on the coasts, I made my way to two of the hardest-hit regions in the U.S.: New Jersey and Florida's Gulf Coast.

In five counties across New Jersey, at least half of people 65 and older live in flood zones. In Cape May, one Category 2 hurricane could flood half of older residents' homes.

The Sunshine State, on the other hand, has one of the country's highest percentages of citizens over 65—and 1.8 million properties facing “substantial” flood risks. Fully 99 percent of dwellings in Naples, for example, have a 1 in 4 shot at being flooded during the span of a traditional mortgage.

That danger is only growing. Every major scientific body, from NOAA to the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has concluded that flooding risks will keep ticking up. As polar ice caps melt, for example, and oceans absorb heat and expand, global sea levels have risen at least 8 inches since the 1880s. Roughly half of that increase has come since the early 1990s.

A few inches of sea level rise may not sound like much, but those few extra inches can make rivers overflow their banks, levees give way, or floodwaters enter a business or home. Just look at Charleston, South Carolina. Through the 20th century, Charleston faced at most 35 floods a year. But coastal waters there have risen more than the global average, and in 2019, the city saw 89 floods. “When I moved here 20 years ago, no one was talking about climate change or sea level rise,” says resident Susan Lyons, 80.

In 2015, monster rains and an extra-high “king” tide left 3 feet of water pool in the crawl space under Lyons' house, which is two blocks from the Ashley River. She spent thousands of dollars fixing duct work. Floods returned in 2016 and 2017, when Lyons helped to found a local group to press city officials to take flooding seriously. As her group pushes for drainage improvements, she says, “I'm just a senior anxiously waiting for the next storm.”

MARTHA SHAW SURVEYED the damage after Hurricane Ian. Her home looked like a dollhouse ransacked by an angry child. An oak spinet piano was flipped on its back. Floodwaters had tipped over bookshelves and crushed her jewelry box. A muddy waterline smeared a print of the Madonna hanging on a wall.

Shaw was shattered. She felt she'd done everything right. As a teacher in San Bernardino, California, she'd been careful with her money, so when she retired in 2002, she was able to move to Florida and pay cash for her home. She was a single woman, living alone, and she knew where everything was—her puzzles, her Christmas ornaments, her Hummel figurines. Every morning, she and Andre would meet two neighbors and their dogs, Otis and Rocco, near a bench by a tree. It had been a terrific life, but it seemed to be over.

The days that followed came as such a blur that Shaw

felt as if they were happening to someone else. A nephew and some volunteers came by and saved what they could, including figurines and a few clothes, which she salvaged by scrubbing them with vinegar and dish detergent. But most of Shaw's pants and blouses looked and smelled as if they'd been stored for weeks in a ditch. She tossed them, along with her furniture. Looters made off with her generator, her mother's silver—and an engraved pistol her father, a highway patrolman, had received as an award for valor.

Within weeks it became clear that Shaw's home could not be saved. She couldn't even step all the way inside the house; the carpet was too slick for her unsteady legs. Below the carpet, the floorboards were waterlogged—neighbors feared they'd collapse. A vile-smelling mold had taken root.

Older Americans Living on the Coasts

The population age 65 and over has soared

1970 **8,366,185**

2022 **21,628,497**

The number of people 65 and older living in coastal shoreline counties increased 159 percent, while the number of children living in those areas decreased.

It didn't take long for panic to set in. Shaw was paid up on her homeowners insurance, but it didn't cover floods. Since water had never entered her home before, she'd let the flood policy lapse. That's not uncommon, especially because the cost of flood insurance has been going up. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), through which most people buy flood insurance, is in debt to the U.S. Treasury from paying out claims. So under pressure from Congress, the agency has raised rates. That has driven hundreds of thousands of homeowners to drop coverage, according to Politico's E&E News. In fact, less than one-third of the 1.8 million households in counties in Ian's path had flood insurance at all.

Shaw was eligible for some assistance from FEMA, but not enough to rebuild. Like thousands in southwest Florida, she was stuck. Volunteers moved her to a shelter inside an old Sears store, but she had to house Andre with the other pets at the building's far end. Shaw could visit him only when an aide found a wheelchair and the time to push her there.

She learned that rules to protect homeowners during future floods meant any new building in her neighborhood would need to be on stilts. Given her cane, that meant adding an expensive elevator. Even with insurance—which paid for the wind damage—and grants, she'd need a mortgage and, during construction, a rental to live in. It slowly dawned on Shaw that if she rebuilt, she'd be out hundreds of thousands of dollars for a life that weeks earlier had cost her almost nothing. She felt overwhelmed. By late fall of 2022, workers at the shelter were trying to nudge her into assisted living, but she didn't want to live in a group setting. Shaw considered living in her car. Even if her place was gone, this area was still her home. Where else was she supposed to go?

Shaw could feel herself shutting down and giving up. All day at the shelter, she sat and did puzzles. Then one day, she recalls, "I finally said, 'You've got to get out of the chair.'"

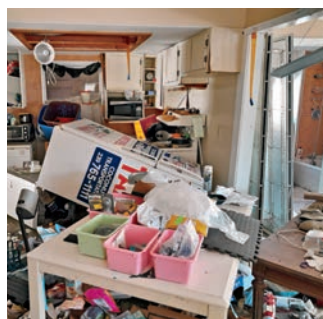
PART 2 OR YOU CAN LIVE IN YOUR CAR

Not far from Shaw's old neighborhood, Joe Prigun had tried riding out Ian at home. He'd quickly found himself standing on a bathroom sink, neck-deep in rising water, worried about running out of air. He escaped through a window and huddled on his roof until rescue crews zipped up in an airboat. When we spoke last September, a year later, he was living in an apartment in a former Ramada Inn that FEMA had rented for flood survivors.

Prigun, 71, had been trying to repair his home. Because he's on a fixed income and reputable contractors had more lucrative options than taking on clients for whom money's tight—"the good ones don't want to hear that, when they can be working on million-dollar homes," he told me—Prigun had been doing much of the work himself. Unfortunately, after we spoke, Lee County determined that the house had sustained too much damage from the storm and ordered it demolished.

I met Jose Guzman, 71, in Fort Myers' Harlem Heights neighborhood while he cooked dinner on a charcoal grill in his carport. Guzman had been living in his low-slung

Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Left: Courtesy Joe Prigun (2)



Clockwise from right: Joe Prigun on the plot where his home formerly stood; wreckage of the home being shoveled away; its condition after the 2022 storm

'80s ranch home for a quarter century. Four miles from the coast and a mile and a half from the Caloosahatchee River, he, too, had never once been flooded—until Ian. The 2022 storm filled Guzman's house to his thighs and turned his neighborhood into a lake. A year later, his furniture was still pushed into a circle in the middle of the living room as he slowly repaired the floors and walls.

Danielle Lisiecki, 61, also thought she had life figured out. She had taught nursing at a community college outside Chicago until retiring in May 2022. She and her husband, Mike, 64, paid cash for their dream retirement home on a Cape Coral lot on the Caloosahatchee. The Lisieckis had saved and invested; a financial planner had calculated that they could live 40 more years without running out of money.

During Ian, 150-mile-per-hour wind gusts and just 6 inches of floodwater upturned their lives. The water destroyed the drywall, flooring and electrical system in their home. The repairs cost more than half of the structure's value, triggering rules requiring the 45-year-old house to meet new building standards, which would require elevating the home. "It's a complete teardown," a furious Danielle Lisiecki told me. Before Ian, she'd been happily adapting to the rhythms of life on a fixed income. By 2023, with a temporary rental and a new mortgage, she was back to working again.

Still, in real ways, the Lisieckis were lucky. The vast majority of the 150 Floridians who perished because of the



Jose Guzman on his Fort Myers property. He is slowly repairing Hurricane Ian's damage to his home of 25 years.

hurricane were over 65, many because they lost access to supplemental oxygen or kidney dialysis machines. And as of January 2023, homelessness was up 70 percent from the year before in Fort Myers' Lee and neighboring Collier and Charlotte counties. Even a year and a half after the storm, a residential community in Cape Coral that was once home to 132 members, many of them older adults, would be down to 82. "We still have 50 residents homeless or living with family, or living on the couches of friends," one of them told a local television station. Martha Shaw's two closest friends were forced to move away.

PART 3 EVERYONE STILL WANTS TO LIVE AT THE JERSEY SHORE

Twelve hundred miles to the north, Jody Stewart intends never again to be surprised by a storm. When I visited coastal New Jersey, Stewart took me for a ride in her red Corolla, motoring around Little Egg Harbor, a marshy, working-class township of homes backed up to canals, north of Atlantic City's glittering skyline.

Stewart, 66, is pint-size and frenetic, with an ex-smoker's rasp and a former bartender's wizened charm. She wanted to show me how much had changed since Superstorm Sandy swamped this region in 2012. But she kept interrupting her train of thought with angry outbursts about what she saw around us.

Stewart's husband, William, 73, a builder, had bought their bungalow here in Mystic Island in 1996 for \$52,000; he and Stewart married in 2002. She sold bait and tackle—live minnows and crabs—at the local marina and made extra money cleaning houses. Their home had been their nest egg. "Our plan had always been to retire, sell it and move away," she says. Stewart had flood insurance but wasn't prepared for Sandy, which hit in October 2012. Floodwaters peaked at 43 inches in her living room. All of her furniture save one antique was destroyed. Silt from the sea coated every surface. "I remember the horror of



Jody Stewart, below, at home in Little Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey. Her neighborhood of Mystic Island, right, is defined by canals that residents use for boats.



seeing the bottom of the ocean everywhere—even on my kitchen countertops,” she says.

Those, like Stewart, who saw more than half of their home’s value wiped out were required to elevate their structures to avoid future floods. But many who had slightly less damage just fixed things up and sold. Post-flood, the real estate market had exploded, for elevated and ground-level properties alike.

On every street during our drive, Stewart pointed out houses on pilings, a dozen feet off the ground, right next to spiffed-up bungalows still flush with the pavement. A real estate website listed one cute 780-square-foot ground-level cottage at \$375,000. “Yeah, figure that one out,” Stewart smirked. Another ground-level home had been bought by a retiree who told Stewart the area would never flood again. “Good luck, then,” she said, with a dismissive wave. “Everyone wants to live at the shore, and they want to own a home.”

Instead of retiring, Stewart now works to pay the bills she accumulated rebuilding her life. As a staffer at the New Jersey Organizing Project, she helps flood victims from around the country unravel the bureaucracy they confront. But to her dismay, she may now be better positioned to move than ever: The value of her home has ballooned. She’s struggling



“Part of me still really wants to leave,” Stewart says. “Morally, I wonder, though, *How could I sell this house and let someone else go through this?*”

to decide what to do. “Part of me still really wants to leave,” she confides. “Morally, I wonder, though, *How could I sell this house and let someone else go through this?*”

Stewart has earned her skepticism. Two days before our drive, I’d taken an elevator several stories up to a grassy patio amid the sparkling glass of Atlantic City’s Ocean Casino Resort. Kimberly McKenna, interim executive director of Stockton University’s Coastal Research Center, had been helping me understand the region’s flooding problems. Atlantic City sits on a barrier island, Absecon, and has battled water for a century by dredging canals, reworking drainage systems, adding sand to beaches and building up bulkheads. But the city has never fully mastered the situation.

McKenna nodded toward the boardwalk at one of the region’s oldest landmarks, a steel pier packed with amusement park attractions. Below it was an instrument that helped explain why the city can’t get out ahead of its water problems: a tide gauge. Installed a dozen years after the pier opened in 1898, the gauge has tracked sea levels as they’ve risen at twice the national average. (In part that’s because land here has been sinking since the last ice age.)

The impacts are noticeable. The nonprofit communications group Climate Central reported that roughly \$8 billion of Sandy’s \$62.7 billion in damages incurred in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut could be attributed to the portion of sea level rise brought about by warming temperatures. Those changes helped surge-driven floodwaters reach 71,000 more people. Nuisance floods in Atlantic City, which came less than once a year in the 1950s, now happen, on average, eight times annually. Rutgers University researchers project that in 2030, the area could see up to 75 days of flooding. Jacques Howard, Atlantic City’s director of planning and development, wrestles with these issues regularly. A state program called Blue Acres has bought

...And What You Can Do



At home: Do you have everything you’d need if a major flood struck, including water, nonperishable food and meds? Consult our guide to emergency preparations for older adults (aarp.org/disasterprep) and make sure you—and your loved ones—are ready.



In your town: Does your area have appropriate disaster plans in place? Consult your AARP state office, or type your zip code into the online AARP Livability Index (livabilityindex.aarp.org) to find out whether your town has a local hazard mitigation plan.



Martha Shaw and her dog, Andre, in front of her new, elevated double-wide mobile home

and destroyed 1,100 repeatedly flooded homes statewide, including 18 in a community adjacent to Atlantic City. But city officials aren't "all that enthusiastic" about the prospect of flood-prone properties being demolished, Howard told me. The city is \$375 million in debt. "When we lose properties, we lose a percentage of our tax base," he says. And that leaves less money in the coffers to clean up the mess after the next big storm—a storm Howard knows is coming.

PART 4 I'M LOSING MY HAIR

What does all this mean for older Americans who live in coastal areas—or who may be dreaming of a seaside retirement? It means facing the reality that floods are in their future.

Michael Savarese, a professor of coastal geology, climate resilience and preparation at Florida Gulf Coast University, spent a morning showing me Hurricane Ian's path. We toured Sanibel Island, where waves had washed onto the second story of beachfront condos. We drove through working-class Dunbar, a dozen miles from the coast but adjacent to the Caloosahatchee River. There, even one year later, some homes had furniture stacked outside.

When Savarese pulled onto Estero Boulevard in Fort Myers Beach, Ian's legacy was overpowering. In between open-air restaurants and construction crews rebuilding

motels, lot after lot of waterfront properties sat vacant, some piled with gravel and cement rubble, most cleared to their sand-strewn foundations. Flapping tarps exposed kitchen appliances in gutted pastel-colored homes. "So that's what's left of the pier there," Savarese said, waving at a row of concrete pilings stretching into the water.

And yet people still want to move here—perhaps, in part, because the public isn't always given clear information about what's at stake. More than one-third of U.S. states, including Florida, don't require flood history disclosure in real estate sales. (New Jersey was another, until the state passed a law in 2023.) Nationally, maps identifying

at-risk regions are out of date and haven't kept up with climate threats. Nearly 6 million properties nationwide face legitimate flood dangers not identified on official documents, according to an analysis by the First Street Foundation. FEMA itself conceded that Hurricane Ian's floodwaters "extended far beyond" mapped areas and exceeded projected heights by several feet. Property owners need not live in flood zones to buy coverage, though without a designation, they'd have little reason to suspect they might need it.

Sooner or later, though, we'll all face the consequences. Damage costs from hurricanes and floods after storm surges are projected to grow faster (CONTINUED ON PAGE 74)



For video interviews and other interactive features related to this story, visit aarp.org/washedaway.



Road Trips

For Every Personality

Americans have had a long love affair with the open road. So much so that the road trip has become a favorite form of travel. But how we attack the asphalt varies; some of us burn up the pavement, while others prefer to meander. Here are journeys for five distinct road trip styles.

Which one best fits you?

By RACHEL WALKER AND KATHY STRONG



Padre Island, near Corpus Christi



Cajun food

Thanks to its proximity to Louisiana, the area is rich in Cajun food.

Corpus Christi is renowned for its many beaches, as well as the Texas State Aquarium, one of the largest in the U.S., and a naval aviation museum aboard WWII aircraft carrier the USS *Lexington*. While in town, grab a bite at the only two-story A-frame Whataburger restaurant.

In San Antonio, an Alamo restoration project is underway; it will include a new museum and the re-creation of the original Alamo footprint.

Marfa, in the Big Bend region, is an art outpost surrounded by desert and rugged mountains. Before you hit the road, grab a cheese burrito from Marfa Burrito and some freshly made juice from the Aster Cafe and Bakery.



Cypress trees

► **Soak in the Scenery:** More than 79,000 miles of roads crisscross Texas. You can enjoy twisty mountain routes, jaw-dropping grasslands and piñon-juniper-oak woodlands.

► **Visitor View:** "Texas is enormous, and it's impossible to see all of it in a lifetime, much less one trip," says Cheryl White, a lifelong Texan. "West Texas, especially, has a lot of space in between towns."

The Road Warrior

This traveler finds joy in fifth gear on long stretches of highway, then pulls into town at sunset for a well-earned quaff and meal.



THE JOURNEY ULTIMATE TEXAS

(1,215 miles)

► **Top Stops:** Caddo Lake, east of Dallas, features thick cypress forests draped in Spanish moss. Beaumont is the home of Spindletop, an oil field celebrated as the site of the state's first big discovery of "liquid gold," in 1901. Today, visitors can wander the re-created site from those boomtown days.

THE ROUTE

Dallas
Caddo Lake
Beaumont
Houston
Corpus Christi
San Antonio
Marfa



The Nature Explorer

Soul rejuvenation is often the goal for this road tripper. Leave the daily grind behind and seek out pristine air, beautiful vistas and other joys of nature.

THE JOURNEY

THE NATIONAL PARKS OF UTAH (388 miles)

► **Top Stops:** Kanab, known as "Little Hollywood," was the setting for many Westerns and other movies, including *Stagecoach*, starring John Wayne, and *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, with Charlton Heston. Look for the white horse on Highway 89 to explore the Little Hollywood Movie Museum, which features actual film sets.

A Zion highlight is the canyon carved by the Virgin River. You can't drive through much of Zion, so park in a lot and take a free shuttle. Explore the Narrows, a famous gorge where the canyon walls rise up a thousand feet and the river is only about 30 feet wide.

Experience Bryce Canyon's hoodoos, thin spires that look like something straight from a fairy tale. Capitol Reef displays a trove of cliffs,



Kanab

THE ROUTE

Kanab
Zion
Bryce Canyon
Capitol Reef
Arches
Canyonlands



Cutler Cove, in Kanab

domes and more canyons.

You'll discover the highest concentration of natural stone arches anywhere in Arches National Park. Nearby is the expansive Canyonlands, with four distinct regions and hundreds of hiking trails.

Award-winning nature photographer Stan Ford, 70, owner of Fotos by Ford, considers Arches the top spot in the area to visit. "It is defined by the detail and texture of the rocks and the brilliance of the light reflecting on them. You also can't beat it for brilliant night skies."

► **Fuel Up:** Cool off with a milkshake from the old-fashioned soda fountain at Kanab Drug, which also serves up its "ultimate" series of



Bryce Canyon

fancy sundae concoctions. Stop by the Peekaboo Canyon Wood-Fired Grill, named after nearby Peekaboo Slot Canyon, with a spectacular trail that winds through a tall, narrow red-stone canyon. "I think we all believe the beauty of this area is its most valuable resource," says Silva Battista, the restaurant's co-owner. "It's irreplaceable."

► **Visitor View:** "Visiting Utah is like stepping back in time," says Barry Williams, 50, cofounder of Hiking My Feelings, a nonprofit dedicated to improving mental health through nature. "You'll find petroglyphs, pictographs from the Indigenous people, and discover a landscape that's taken thousands of years to create."



Methow Valley Farmers Market, in Twisp

The Food Lover

Who doesn't want great meals on a vacation? But this traveler takes it to the next level, building trips specifically to explore a region's unique cuisine.



Siren Song Vineyard, in Chelan

THE JOURNEY

FARM TO TABLE IN WASHINGTON STATE

(405 miles)

► **Top Stops:** Mallard Ice Cream in Bellingham serves artisan flavors, including rose, cardamom, turmeric and brown butter miso.

A must stop for oyster lovers is the Skagit Valley's Taylor Shellfish Farms, a fifth-generation business. From there, follow the Bow-Edison Food Trail, which links 18 artisan farms and food and spirits outlets.

Bellingham boasts

THE ROUTE

Bellingham
Skagit Valley
Methow Valley
Chelan
Leavenworth

17 craft breweries, while the Chelan area has more than 30 wineries. Find honey and orchard fruits at the Methow Valley Farmers Market.

Savor fresh fruit, cheese, cider and more at Wenatchee's Pybus Public Market and handcrafted chocolates at Schocolat in the Bavarian village of Leavenworth.

► **Soak in the Scenery:** From the flowering fruit trees of Leavenworth, Wenatchee and Lake Chelan to acres of farmland in the Methow and Skagit valleys, road trippers uncover serene, rural beauty at every turn.



More roads to travel. Find these trip ideas in the AARP Pubs app.

➔ Scan this code

The Road Warrior
Northwestern U.S. and the Middle South

The Nature Explorer
Alaska's scenic Kenai Peninsula

The Food Lover
The Barbecue Belt and beyond—Texas to Chicago



The Back Roads Wanderer
Vermont's small towns

The History Buff A space odyssey, from Cape Canaveral to Houston





The Back Roads Wanderer

Forget the interstate. This road tripper takes joy in meandering along country roads, visiting general stores, cafés and overflowing farm stands.

THE JOURNEY

MINNESOTA'S NORTH SHORE (110 miles)

► **Top Stops:** In Duluth, explore the Aerial Lift Bridge, which is raised for ships to pass, and walk along the canal. Then pick up provisions at the historic DeWitt-Seitz Marketplace for a scenic picnic at Brighton Beach Park, which offers unobstructed views of Lake Superior.

Northeast of Duluth is Two Harbors, which was once among the country's leading sources of iron ore. Today, one of Minnesota's oldest continuously operating city bands plays every Thursday in the summer at the bandshell in Two Harbors' Thomas Owens Park.

Grand Marais is an arts haven on the northwestern shore of Lake Superior, with quirky restaurants and interesting shops and galleries. The town has an events calendar packed with live music and festivals.

While there, try the Angry Trout Café, a small indoor/outdoor restaurant housed in an old commercial

fishing shanty. Crafters will love the North House Folk School, which offers classes and programs in blacksmithing, woodworking, bread baking and basketmaking.

Also allow some time for skipping stones and admiring the ships in the Grand Marais harbor.



North House

THE ROUTE

Duluth
Two Harbors
Grand Marais

where wilderness rules and civilization is the exception," says polar explorer and former Minnesota resident Eric Larsen, 53. "But the towns each have their own unique personalities, with great food and excellent shops."



Split Rock Lighthouse, Two Harbors



Grand Marais

Harriet Tubman mural



The History Buff

Discovering new parts of our country's past is the point for this traveler, who finds experiencing history deeply satisfying.

THE JOURNEY

TRACKING THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD (125 miles)

► **Top Stops:** At the Dorchester County Visitor Center in Cambridge, a mural brings the legend of Harriet Tubman to life. Visit nearby Brodess Farm, where Tubman lived and toiled, then head to the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Church Creek.

The Jane and Littleton Mitchell Center for African American Heritage in Dover includes nine historic buildings and more than 3 million artifacts.

In Philadelphia, take a walking tour with the 1838 Black Metropolis group.

► **Visitor View:** "It is so incredible to see written correspondence from [Underground Railroad conductor] William Still talking about how they're getting people to freedom," says Justina Barrett of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. "You're literally touching the past." ■



Philadelphia

THE ROUTE

Cambridge, Maryland
Church Creek, Maryland
Dover, Delaware
Philadelphia

Rachel Walker has written on travel for Outside and Sierra magazines. Kathy Strong is a travel book author and columnist who has also written for USA Weekend.

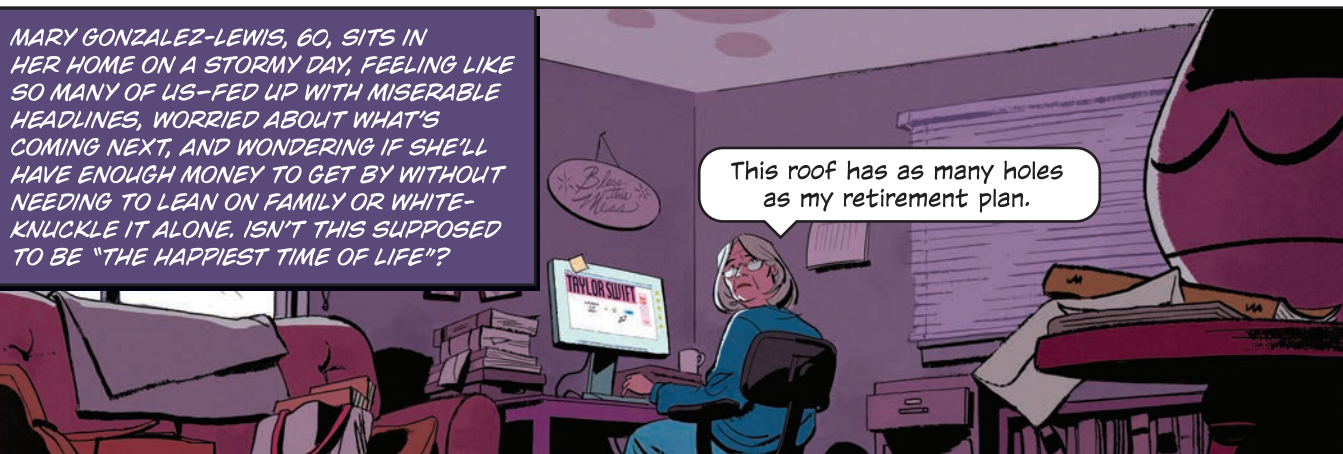
ONE WOMAN'S SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS

Mary's floundering gives way to flourishing after applying some practical, research-tested midlife interventions

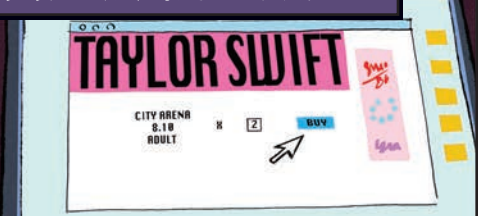
EDITOR'S NOTE: According to a 2024 report, while older Americans are happier than younger generations, even their happiness has dropped off since the first report a dozen years ago. AARP, as always, pledges to help you find meaning and joy in your life, and to that end we offer you Mary's journey to happiness. Mary is fictitious only in the sense that she is a composite of older Americans, and all the advice dispensed on her journey is based on hard science and facts, a smart guide to easing your way in the days to come. —Bob Love, Editor in Chief

CHAPTER 1: MARY'S STRUGGLE

MARY GONZALEZ-LEWIS, 60, SITS IN HER HOME ON A STORMY DAY, FEELING LIKE SO MANY OF US—FED UP WITH MISERABLE HEADLINES, WORRIED ABOUT WHAT'S COMING NEXT, AND WONDERING IF SHE'LL HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO GET BY WITHOUT NEEDING TO LEAN ON FAMILY OR WHITE-KNUCKLE IT ALONE. ISN'T THIS SUPPOSED TO BE "THE HAPPIEST TIME OF LIFE"?



IT'S NOT EASY BEING A PARENT, EVEN WITH A GROWNUP KID.



Heather would be over the moon. But, gah! So are these prices.

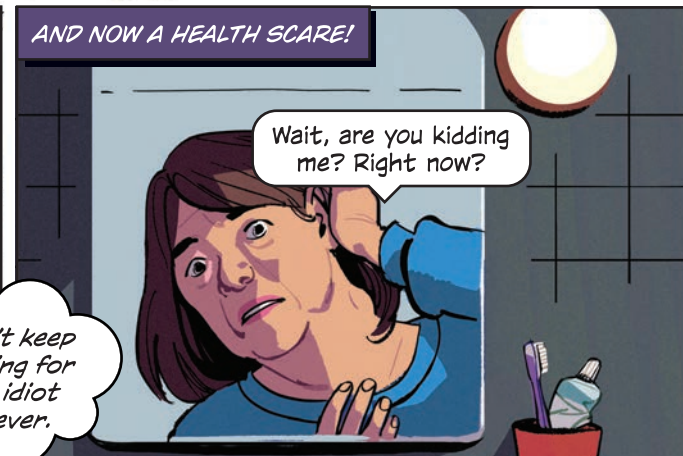


Then again, when was the last time I treated myself to anything?

WORK STRESS ISN'T HELPING HER SENSE OF CONTENTMENT AND EASE.



AND NOW A HEALTH SCARE!



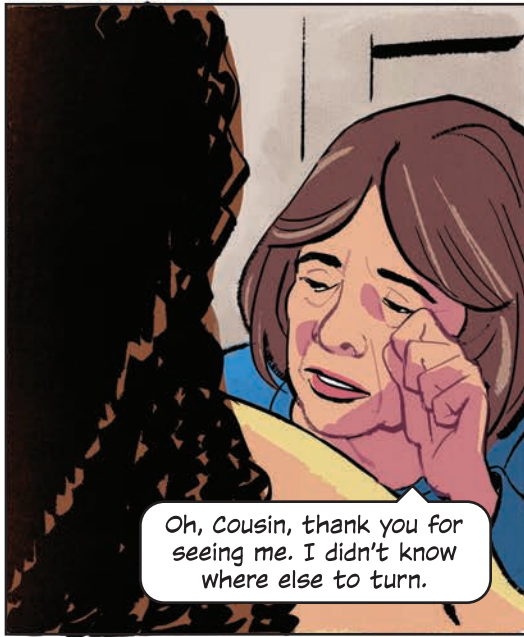
CHAPTER 2: HUNGRY FOR CHANGE

MARY ARRIVES AT HER COUSIN CANDACE'S OFFICE. SHE KNOWS HOW IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS ARE AND THAT EXPRESSING YOURSELF IS BETTER THAN SUFFERING IN SILENCE—EVEN THOUGH BEING VULNERABLE CAN BE REALLY CHALLENGING.

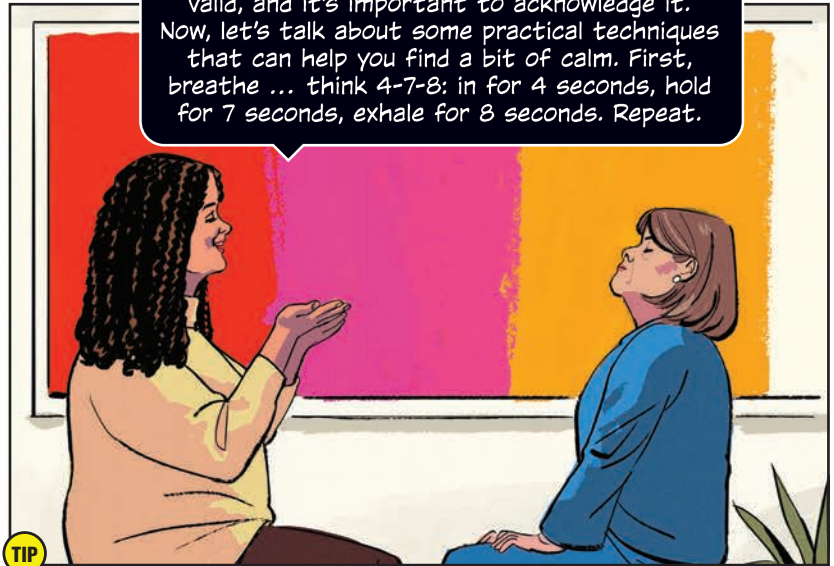
Dr. Candace Rosales
BEHAVIORAL THERAPIST



Mary, the stress you're feeling is completely valid, and it's important to acknowledge it. Now, let's talk about some practical techniques that can help you find a bit of calm. First, breathe ... think 4-7-8: in for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, exhale for 8 seconds. Repeat.

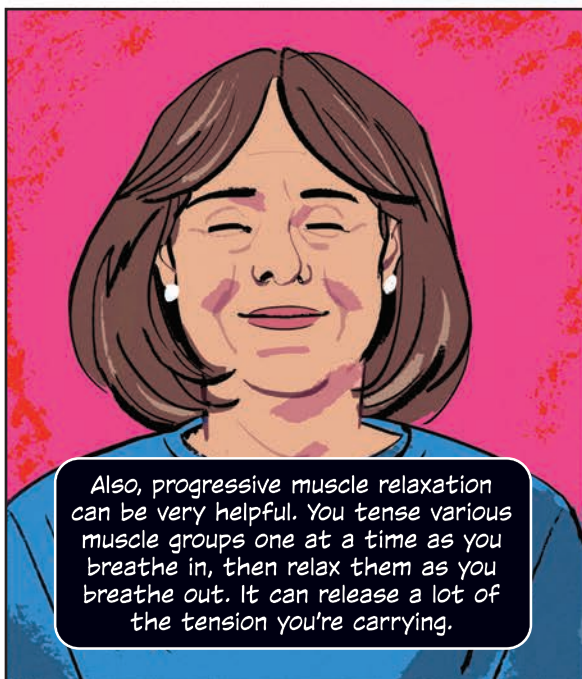


Oh, Cousin, thank you for seeing me. I didn't know where else to turn.

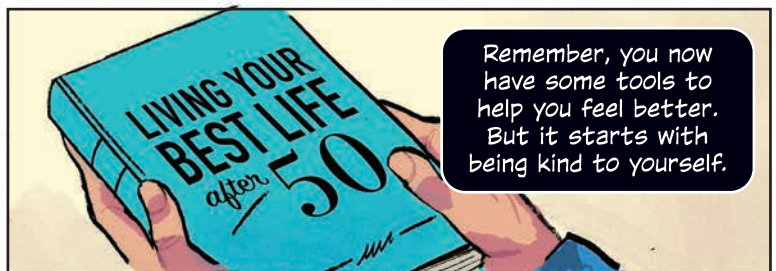


TIP

Improving yourself by learning something new is one of the best ways to feel more vibrant and in control of life as you age, experts say.



Also, progressive muscle relaxation can be very helpful. You tense various muscle groups one at a time as you breathe in, then relax them as you breathe out. It can release a lot of the tension you're carrying.



Remember, you now have some tools to help you feel better. But it starts with being kind to yourself.



You're truly a lifesaver, Cuz!

CHAPTER 3: MARY'S MIDLIFE EMERGENCY KIT

A WEEK LATER, MARY VISITS WITH HER BEST FRIEND, ELSA, WHO IS EAGER TO HEAR ABOUT THE NEW HABITS OF MIND AND BEHAVIOR THAT MARY IS PUTTING INTO PLACE IN HER LIFE.



My cousin told me to write down three funny things I notice every day, since that simple practice seems to work for some people. Or so she says.

Who knew you could find anything funny about getting a biopsy?

I even laughed about my stupid boss.

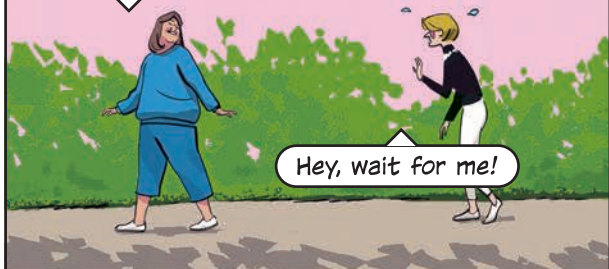


Hi, Mary, I'm Dr. Needleman.

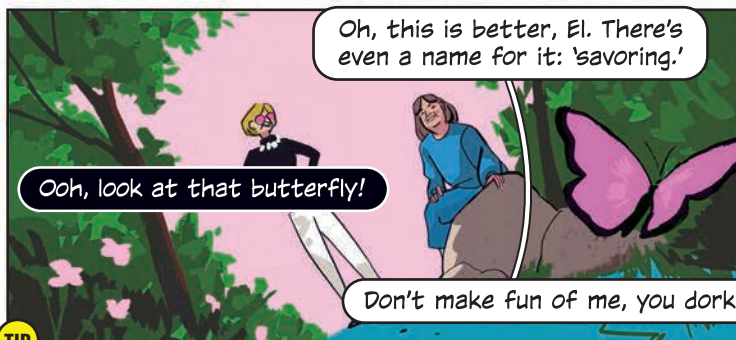
You're gonna do great!

This sales presentation is super important. Hold my calls.

Let's go, Elsa! I read that exercise isn't just for people Heather's age. Anything to get the body moving can really help with stress. And it's working a bit, I think.



Hey, wait for me!



Oh, this is better, El. There's even a name for it: 'savoring.'

Ooh, look at that butterfly!

Don't make fun of me, you dork.

TIP

People in a research study who took note of positive things on a daily 20-minute walk felt significantly happier after just one week.

THAT EVENING, MARY IS STILL EAGER TO GROW AND LEARN.



I always love your place, Elsa. I wish my space could feel like yours.

Huh?

Can I live more hygge?

It's not hard. It's hygge.

HYOO-guh. That's Danish for prioritizing life's good and simple pleasures. Soft lighting. Cozy blankets. This sunset. Quality time with friends like you.

You sure can!

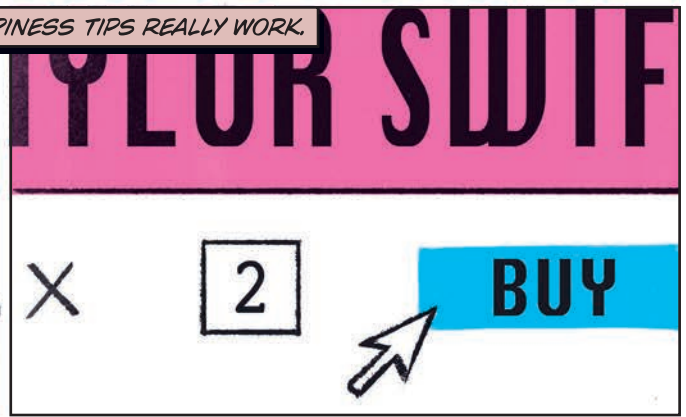
CHAPTER 4: SIMPLE FIXES, BIG PAYOFFS

TWO WEEKS HAVE PASSED, AND MARY IS EMBRACING HYGGE AT HOME: A FUZZY BLANKET, A FEW NEW CANDLES, SOME PRETTY CURTAINS ON THE WINDOWS. IT FEELS LIKE A NEW SPACE.

Wow, small changes really can make a difference.



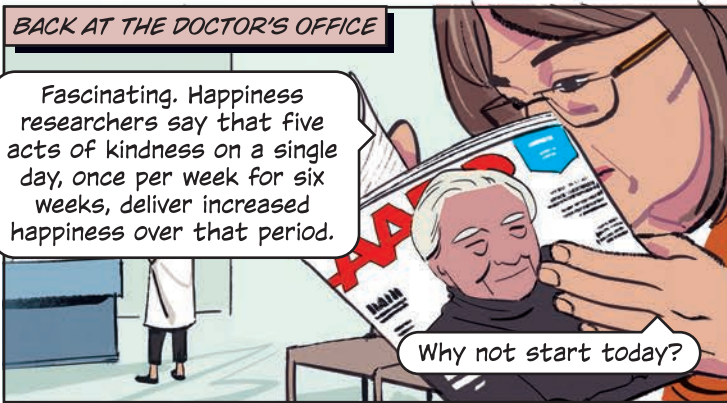
THOSE HAPPINESS TIPS REALLY WORK.



BACK AT THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

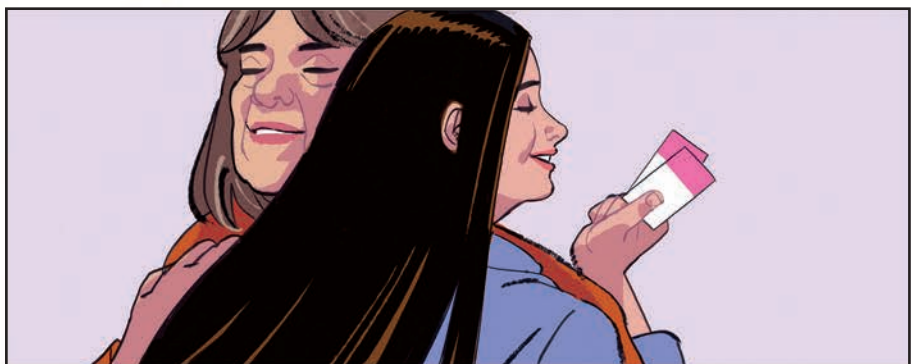
Fascinating. Happiness researchers say that five acts of kindness on a single day, once per week for six weeks, deliver increased happiness over that period.

Why not start today?



WALKING HOME ...

IF YOU WANT LOVE AND ABUNDANCE IN YOUR LIFE, GIVE IT AWAY. —MARK TWAIN



CHAPTER 5: SEEKING FINANCIAL AND HEALTH ADVICE

MARY, DETERMINED AND PROACTIVE, VISITS A FINANCIAL PLANNER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HER LIFE, AND WHY NOT? RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT PEOPLE TYPICALLY REGRET THE THINGS THEY DIDN'T DO MORE THAN THE THINGS THEY DID. NO FOMO FOR HER!

Honestly, I hate thinking about money and budgeting, but I know I can't keep ignoring it.

A budget is telling your money where to go instead of wondering where it went.

I put this off for so long. But getting clarity on my finances gives me peace of mind.

TIP

Americans with a more detailed financial plan are about three times as likely to report greater happiness in money matters, including goal setting, debt, net worth and financial allies.

Let's maximize your retirement plan contributions. At age 50 or older, you can make catch-up contributions to retirement accounts, such as 401(k)s and IRAs. For 2024, the limits of these contributions have substantially increased!

Asking for help is not a sign of weakness but a confident gesture of strength.

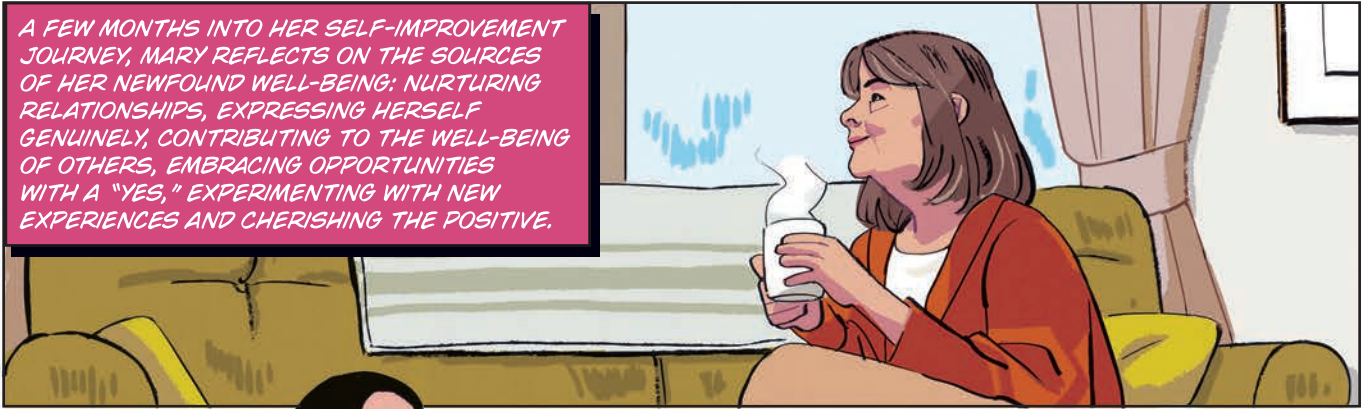
THE NEXT DAY AT DR. NEEDLEMAN'S WITH HEATHER

You're going to be okay.

I'm going to be okay.

CHAPTER 6: FROM FLOUNDERING TO FLOURISHING

A FEW MONTHS INTO HER SELF-IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY, MARY REFLECTS ON THE SOURCES OF HER NEWFOUND WELL-BEING: NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS, EXPRESSING HERSELF GENUINELY, CONTRIBUTING TO THE WELL-BEING OF OTHERS, EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES WITH A "YES," EXPERIMENTING WITH NEW EXPERIENCES AND CHERISHING THE POSITIVE.



Making connections helps change your life.



Sorry, I don't work on weekends anymore.



I'll never forget this, Mama.

Me neither, baby.
Me neither.

Imagine your ideal future. Hold that vision and take steps toward it every day. Flourishing isn't a destination but a way of being.



Life is good, if you allow it to be.

For more ways to get happier, go to aarp.org/gethappy, or scan this code.



TOP 7 MEMBER BENEFITS FOR — SUMMER —

The days are long, the sun is warm and the savings are hot. Your AARP membership is your passport to plan, play and save all summer long.

1 TRAVEL

Fuel your next trip with savings at Exxon™ and Mobil™ stations. Plus, save on major hotel and car rental brands like Hilton, Wyndham, Avis and Budget.



2 TECHNOLOGY & WIRELESS

Tune-up your tech skills this summer with free tips from the AARP Technology Resource Center. Plus, save 40% on how-to tech guides at AARP's online bookstore.



3 HEALTH & WELLNESS

Feel your best this summer with on-demand classes from Pilates Anytime. Get access with a free online account. Scan to try a class.



4 ENTERTAINMENT

Make summer magical with discounts on tickets for *DISNEYLAND*® Resort, *WALT DISNEY WORLD*® Resort, Universal Orlando Resort and Universal Studios Hollywood. Plus, save 10% on any Paramount+ streaming plan.

5 GAS & AUTO

Keep your car cruising with the AARP Smart Guide to Car Maintenance. Looking for a new car? Try the AARP Auto Buying Program powered by TrueCar.

6 RESTAURANTS

Find sizzling savings and local coupons at restaurants like Denny's, Outback and Papa John's.

7 MY SAVED BENEFITS

See benefits you like? Save your favorites to easily access them on the go. Plus, receive alerts on nearby discounts with the AARP Now app.



Explore even more benefits online, including featured benefits for you.

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REAL/PEOPLE



Fencing teaches kids how to succeed, Westbrook says.

Inspiring stories
of friends and
neighbors, in
their own words

INSIDE ▶ PHOTOGRAPHING THE
COUNTRY'S VANISHING THEATERS P. 66

FINALLY CASTING ASIDE FEARS P. 67

REPAYING ONE MAN'S KINDNESS P. 68



Good Sport

En Garde!

Former Olympian Peter Westbrook escaped poverty through fencing. Now he shares the sport with a new generation of champions

NO MATTER WHAT I do, I can never repay what I owe to the sport of fencing. But I keep trying.

My mother raised me and my sister in the housing projects of Newark, New Jersey. Mom was always trying to show me the world beyond the projects. When I turned 14, she encouraged me to try fencing. She was from Japan originally, and she told me, “We have samurais in the family.” At the time I thought, *What good does that do me here?* But I tried it and fell in love with the sport. In the end, I attended college on a fencing scholarship and was a six-time Olympian, earning a bronze medal in 1984. My father was Black, and I was the first Black man to ever win an Olympic medal in fencing.

Based on the brokenness within my family and community, I should not have been successful. The sport gave me a different way to deal with adversity and a new perspective, and I feel like I have a duty and a responsibility to pass that knowledge along. In 1991, I started a foundation to teach underserved kids in New York City about fencing—and life. We talk about emotions, and how to keep going even when faced with the most dire of circumstances.

Not everyone in our program is going to qualify for the Olympics, and that’s not our purpose. That said, some of the kids we work with do become Olympians. Since 2000, we’ve sent 16 athletes to the Games. Two won silver medals in Beijing in 2008, and one brought home a bronze from Rio in 2016. This year, one of our alumni will compete in Paris.

I often meet these kids when they’re in a broken state, not presenting the best first impression. Fencing lets them get out their aggression and pain. Then we can help guide them. I always practice with the kids what I practice in my own life: Have a positive attitude, be thankful, try to help others. —As told to Jennifer E. Mabry

Peter Westbrook, 72, a retired marketing executive, is founder and CEO of the Peter Westbrook Foundation in New York City.

The Last Picture Show

Photographer Benita VanWinkle travels the country to document vanishing theaters

FOR ONE OF MY first assignments as a photography major in college, I chose to document an old cinema near my hometown of Largo, Florida. The Carib was the heart of my community—a place of understanding, education and exposure to new ideas.

Two years after I'd photographed it, the Carib was torn down. I started thinking about how closely our identities are tied to the places we grow up in. That's how I started shooting other towns' old theaters. This was in the '80s, when these places were just starting to disappear, often replaced by malls or parking lots. In 1982, there were about 13,000 movie theaters around the country. By 2020, there were less than half that number.

I've shot 940 theaters to date, during breaks from my job as a college professor of art. Every time I go to a new (old) theater, I get to hear about its history from the locals. Documenting these community spaces is my life's work, a never-ending passion project. Even if these theaters are disappearing, there are still more than enough to last me a lifetime.

My hope is that people will see my work and realize how important it is to have a community space for everyone, regardless of religion, identity or political view. We need to preserve the kinds of spaces that bring people together, teach us to love one another in spite of our differences and anchor us to the places that raised us.

—As told to Julie Goldenberg

Benita VanWinkle, 64, is an associate professor at High Point University in North Carolina.



VanWinkle's photo subjects include, clockwise from below right, the Lincoln Theatre in Marion, Virginia; the El Rey Theater in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and the State Theatre in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Scan this code or visit aarp.org/theaterphotos for a photo gallery.





'I'm Not Brave. I'm Just Being Me.'

TV producer Caragh Donley came out as transgender at age 63

THIS ISN'T LIKE experimenting with new bangs. You don't wake up one day and say, *Let's give gender transition a shot.* I spent my entire life deciding whether to stay fearful and silent or risk everything on a chance to live whole and happy. It took until my 60s, but I finally made the choice.

As a kid, I had these recurring dreams that Tabitha from *Bewitched* turned me into a little girl. The dreams made me feel happy. But once puberty hit, I decided to ignore those thoughts. In my tightly wound world, the message was: "God never makes mistakes, so just keep quiet."

Somehow, I found a way to get a letter to Christine Jorgensen, the first trans woman most Americans had ever known about. She sent back a sweet and encouraging letter and an autographed copy of her autobiography, which I read and reread for years. I stashed it in my closet under a pile of *Sporting News* magazines.

In my younger years I kept a lot of therapists in business, searching for one who'd say, "Get over it." Instead, they all confirmed what I didn't want to hear. So I tried packing my secret away. Got married. Raised two beautiful kids. Divorced and dated up a storm. I honestly didn't think I was pretending. I thought the other stuff was a mistake.

Right before the pandemic, though, something shifted. I was turning 60. My son graduated from college, and my daughter finished high school. And I received a box of home movies from my aunt, my dad's sister. My father had died before I was born, and it was wild seeing him in motion for the first time. Knowing that that young man only had two years left to live was a wake-up call. I thought, *I don't want to die with regret.*



This time when I went to the doctor I said, "I'll take whatever you give me if you can make these feelings stop." But by the end of the session, he'd prescribed estrogen, and I have not turned back since. You might ask, why mess with things now? You've masqueraded for so long, what's the point? My answer is, I realized my time to do this was running out. And at an age when my skin is starting to sag and wrinkle, it has also gotten thicker, to deal with society's judgments.

But the only way I could've done this was with the incredible trans community that has welcomed me in

and, more important, the blessing of my kids. Their generation is open to letting people live as themselves, and that gives me hope.

People tell me I'm brave to have done this, but I'm not brave. I'm just being me. Everyone who befriends me, every salesperson who doesn't freak out when I show them my old license, they're the brave ones. I'm just doing what I have to do, but they have a choice, and they choose to be kind. I find that pretty courageous.

—As told to David Hochman

After decades as a print journalist, Caragh Donley, 64, is now a senior producer for The Kelly Clarkson Show. She lives in New York City.

KRYSTAL CABLE: I was born with a defect on my right leg, and it had to be amputated. My treatment growing up was at Shriners Children's hospital in St. Louis, about three hours' drive from where we lived in Indiana. Between fittings for new prosthetic legs and other appointments, I made that trip at least three or four times a year as a kid. That's how I met Dave.

Dave Polen: I belong to Hadi Shrine, an Evansville, Indiana, fraternal organization connected to Shriners Children's hospitals, which give free medical treatment. I started volunteering to drive kids to and from the hospital on my days off work. A lot of people don't have reliable transportation to get there, or the money.

Krystal: Dave and my mom would talk a lot when he drove. My mom was taking me by herself because my dad had to leave for work at 3 a.m. Dave was always so kind. Giving.

Dave: Krystal and her mom were outstanding. We stayed in touch. My wife and I attended Krystal's wedding in 2015. Then a few years later, I was diagnosed with end-stage kidney failure. I knew Krystal's husband had had a liver transplant, so when the doctors started talking to me about needing a kidney transplant, I reached out to Krystal to learn a little about the process. She asked what type of blood I had and I told her A positive, and she said, "That's what I've got." She offered to be a donor. But with

A Lifesaving Friendship

When Krystal Cable was growing up, Dave Polen helped her get medical care. Three decades later, she more than returned the favor



Two friends, united by two gifts of kindness

her being a young mother, I felt I couldn't ask her to do that.

Krystal: I wanted to, though. I had almost lost my husband to congenital liver disease. None of my family

were a match to donate to my husband, but a guy we worked with was perfect. He gave my husband the gift of life. It changed everything. So when I heard Dave might need a kidney, I was, like, "Yes." Anything to give someone else that gift.

Dave: They told me it could be a five-year wait for a cadaver donor. Some people die waiting. In the meantime, I went on dialysis.

It's exhausting and time-consuming, but it keeps you alive. Krystal kept pressing, and after a year of dialysis, I was ready to take her up on her offer. So she did all the tests, and it turns out she was right: She was a match. Last May, she and I had our transplant surgeries.

I can't thank her and her family enough. You never can repay what she did, as much as I want to.

Krystal: I had always pondered why Dave was so good to us.

When he would stop by and we weren't home, he would leave a stuffed animal or something. At the same time, I wondered, *Why was I born without a leg?* But if that's part of the plan, so I can meet Dave and do this, so be it. It gave me an answer to a lot.

Dave: I tell myself every day how blessed I am that Krystal gave me her kidney. I've never been real religious, but I do a lot more praying now. —As told to

Leslie Quander Wooldridge

Krystal Cable, 38, is a team leader for a company that builds custom fire trucks. She lives in Shafer, Minnesota. Dave Polen, 70, is retired from a career at a power plant. He lives in Petersburg, Indiana.

PUZZLES BY STANLEY NEWMAN

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CROSSWORD

At the Beach

ACROSS

- 1 Grouchy guy
- 5 Baseball Hall of Famer Boggs
- 9 Huge amount
- 12 Bundle of hay
- 13 Self-images
- 14 Ornamental vase
- 15 Spends, informally
- 17 Thumbs-down vote
- 18 Diminutive suffix for wave
- 19 Swimsuit or cover-up
- 21 Flash drive port, for short
- 24 Itinerary term
- 26 Meditative exercise with a Fish pose
- 29 Browsing online sites
- 33 Triple-decker cookie
- 34 ___-la-la (song syllables)
- 35 Director Spike or Ang

- 36 Old-timey "Oh my!"
- 39 Internet address: abbr.
- 41 "That's show ___!"
- 43 Wood smoother
- 48 Egggy sushi filling
- 49 Walk wearily
- 50 Slightest trace
- 51 Clip-___ (type of earrings)
- 52 Drift of events
- 53 Dollar, slangily

DOWN

- 1 *60 Minutes* network
- 2 Retro college cheer
- 3 Pub serving
- 4 Noisemaker on some buoys
- 5 Omni hotel alternative
- 6 "All Those Years ___" (George Harrison tune)
- 7 General MacArthur, to friends
- 8 "¿Cómo ___ usted?"
- 9 Annual El Paso football game
- 10 Historical period
- 11 Your pick of
- 16 Strauss of jeans
- 20 Sandwich bread
- 21 Military support group
- 22 "Big" California coastal region
- 23 Easy tasks, slangily
- 25 FBI operative: abbr.
- 27 "That's amazing!"
- 28 Prez on a penny
- 30 Mariner's hazard
- 31 Walk wearily
- 32 Angelic instrument
- 37 Aide: abbr.
- 38 Flamboyant Spanish artist
- 40 Not of the clergy
- 41 "Hey, dude!"
- 42 Lithium-___ battery
- 44 Silent assent
- 45 Office seeker, for short
- 46 Airport board abbreviation
- 47 Male in a meadow

WORDPLAY

SOUND THINKING

The consonant sounds in the word **DECOR** are "D," "K" and "R." What eight-letter word for something served in a glass is pronounced with the same consonant sounds in the same order?



NUMBER FUN

SIGNS HERE

Place one of each of the mathematical signs +, -, × and ÷ in the four spaces to get a result of 10, when calculated from left to right.



THINK!

STAR SEARCH

Rearrange the letters in **COSTUMIER** (a person who makes film costumes) to get the full name of a big movie star since the '80s.



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lunch sometime or coffee?” Emling says. “When we started noticing that members were meeting up organically, we created Facebook groups from which they could organize local events.”

So AARP launched the first The Ethel Gathering Groups in December 2023 as part of the organization’s work to combat loneliness and social isolation, which can bring a higher risk of physical and mental health ailments. “AARP is committed to encouraging social connection because of its critical impact on happiness and long-term health,” says Heather Nawrocki, AARP’s vice president of fun and fulfillment.

Within a few months, The Ethel Gathering Groups had launched in dozens of states. Organizers are AARP volunteers who receive training on how to moderate a group and grow an online community.

Armstrong, who leads the Murfreesboro, Tennessee, group, says her best friends live out of state, so it’s been rewarding getting to know women nearby she can call when she’s feeling lonely or bored.

Emling has been amazed at how much the Ethels have “been there for each other.” She says one woman posted recently about celebrating her 70th birthday alone, and within 10 minutes, there were about 700 comments on the post.

“Many of them said, ‘What city do you live in? I’d be happy to come by with a card for you or a cupcake,’” Emling says. “It’s beautiful to see.”

Finding Friends on AARP’s Virtual Ethel Circle

JANET Armstrong, 64, joined AARP’s The Ethel Circle Facebook community a year and a half ago to connect with other women her age.

Months later, she ran into a fellow “Ethel,” as the women in the group call themselves, while shopping. The woman recognized Armstrong from her profile picture, and they got to talking. The next thing she knew they were meeting for dinner.

Now they’re part of a larger group of women in central Tennessee who meet for lunch and other activities.

“These are like total strangers on a Facebook page, and now we’re friends,” Armstrong says. “It’s been phenomenal.”

More than 100 similar groups have since formed in cities around the country. Known as The Ethel Gathering Groups, they are creating friendships out of virtual connections made as part of The Ethel Circle Facebook community.

AARP launched the closed Facebook group in 2022 for readers of our free weekly e-newsletter *The Ethel* (named for AARP founder Ethel Percy Andrus), which targets women 60 and older. “The Circle aims to be a supportive space where older women can talk about the joys and challenges of growing older,” says Shelley Emling, AARP executive editor of specialized content.

“In the past, I’ve been a foreign correspondent. I’ve written books. But never have I felt as rewarded and excited as I have as moderator of The Ethel Circle,” Emling adds.

Many members of the group are lonely. Almost all are looking to make connections.

“Somebody would say, ‘Hey, I live in Cleveland. Does anybody else live in Cleveland? Would you like to grab



TO JOIN an Ethel Gathering Group near you, go to aarpethel.com, or contact aarpethel@aarp.org for more information.

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HOW WE'RE FIGHTING FOR YOU

AARP TAKES ON TECHNOLOGY

MANY OLDER Americans are thriving in a digital world. But some are still uneasy with technology. A new AARP survey finds that people 50-plus are about as likely as those under age 50 to own a smartphone, tablet or other device. Yet nearly 2 out of 3 people age 50 and older do not believe technology is designed with people their age in mind. AARP is taking on the challenge of eliminating the technology gap for older people. Here's how.

► **High-speed internet access.** For too many Americans, the high-speed internet they need is out of reach. AARP is fighting for laws that provide affordable internet service to Americans. Successes include the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which will distribute \$42.5 billion in federal spending to states to provide high-speed internet, and the Digital Equity Act, which allocates \$2.75 billion to expand digital devices in underserved communities.

► **Creating new products.** Since it began in 2021, the AgeTech Collaborative from AARP has worked with hundreds of start-ups that are developing products and services to help us age well. So far, AARP has invested in roughly 75 of the companies. The aim is not simply to see a financial return but to provide older adults with modern, useful and accessible products designed to help improve their daily lives.

► **Information and education.** AARP has free information and support available for people who want to learn more about digital technology. AARP's Personal Technology



Resource Center, at aarp.org/tech, has news, tips, reviews and videos to help both novices and savvy users get the most out of digital devices.

► **Refining skills.** Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) from AARP is a charitable affiliate whose flagship program, Senior Planet from AARP, consists of people 60-plus who are building technology skills. Senior Planet programs are offered free online and in person at Senior Planet locations in six states. Learn more at seniorplanet.org.

► **Fighting tech fraud.** The AARP Fraud Watch Network can help people stay safer online. Specialists with the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline can also provide support if you've encountered a scam or been a victim of identity fraud. Find out more at aarp.org/fraudwatch.

Staying connected to the world is becoming more important all the time. AARP is committed to helping you navigate the digital landscape.

—**Kamili Wilson is senior vice president for AARP's affiliate integration services**

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WASHED AWAY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 51

than the U.S. economy, increasing up to eightfold by 2075, according to an estimate by the Congressional Budget Office. Research last year led by economists at the nonprofit Environmental Defense Fund suggests that American homes at risk of flooding already are overvalued by \$121 billion to \$237 billion. (Scientists have dubbed it the “flood bubble.”)

In the meantime, at least nine homeowners insurance companies in Florida have gone belly-up or left the state in recent years. By Ian's one-year anniversary, those that remained had declined roughly 29 percent of claims.

And while Jody Stewart's New Jersey neighborhood is currently booming, credit ratings agency Moody's projects that the five U.S. states most likely to lose significant population because of climate change in the next 30 years are Arizona, Delaware, South Carolina, New Jersey and Florida. At some point, in other words, the bubble will burst, and there's no telling when that will be.

International efforts to limit greenhouse gas emissions might potentially slow future sea level rise, but they can't reverse what is already happening. And at the local level, the construction of new drainage systems and barriers comes at a cost—and with no guarantees. In Salisbury Beach, Massachusetts, in March, a group of property owners pooled their money and spent some \$565,000 to build a high sand barrier between themselves and the sea. A few days and one storm later, the 1.5-mile-long man-made dune was flattened.

Rather than wrestle with hard choices regarding how, and even whether, to rebuild, many policymakers focus on short-term recovery. And while Savarese believes the need for long-term planning is urgent, he says he understands the leaders' focus on recovery. “They are admittedly in a rush to put things back together,” he says. “Their economies are suffering; people have lost property and loved ones.”

A T THE SHELTER, when Martha Shaw came out of her funk and weighed her options, she decided to make her way home.

“I prayed and prayed and prayed,” she says. Then she secured a special hurricane-victim low-interest U.S. Small Business Administration loan and hired a contractor. A real estate agent found her a temporary rental.

We visited in the tiny living room of the rental, a boxy cottage on a street with no sidewalks. The place had come furnished, and Shaw, with biting humor, started introducing me to the items that weren't hers, which, it turned out, was almost all of them. She loves the sun, but we sat with the shades drawn, because the drafty windows let out too much cold air, and she was worried about money.

It hasn't been easy. Her rental is in a part of town she barely knows. Her neighbors are nice but pretty quiet, and given her mobility issues and temporary status, she has struggled to forge strong bonds with anybody.

Shaw misses the flowering plumeria trees that once towered above her old home. She longs for the company of her old pals. And she misses not worrying about money. In addition to building a new home on cement columns, she had to pay to haul off post-storm debris and to keep her lot mowed. Still to come: shopping for furniture.

“I'm literally losing hair,” she told me, laughing. “And that's nothing but stress and worry.”

Just one week before the storm hit, Shaw had installed her last hurricane window—the 11th, in her mobile home's sunroom—“and I paid them in cash,” she said, conspiratorially. I found that so maddening and ridiculous, given what she'd been through, that I laughed. And then I apologized.

Shaw waved off my apology. Smiling, she said, “I mean, I laughed too.” ■

Craig Welch has been reporting on the environment and climate change for more than a quarter century, including eight years with National Geographic. A former fellow with the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University, he lives with his family in Seattle.

CREDITS: Cover: Jacket: Tom Ford; sweater: Tom Snyder. **Upfront Watch Page 17:** *Bad Boys:* Frank Masi/Sony; *Presumed Innocent:* Michael Becker/Apple TV+; *Disco:* GAB Archive/Redferns; *Thelma:* Magnolia Pictures; *Bikeriders:* Focus Features; *Hit Man:* Netflix; June Squibb: Monica Schipper/Getty Images for IMDb. **Jon Bon Jovi's Long Journey Back Pages 32-33:** Jacket: Tom Ford; T-shirt and jeans: Todd Snyder. **Page 35:** Jacket, T-shirt and jeans: Todd Snyder. **Find Your Perfect Road Trip Pages 52-53:** Clockwise from top left: Kav Dadfar/eStock Photo; Nick de la Torea/Getty Images; Getty Images; Alamy; Getty Images; Alamy. **Page 54:** Clockwise from left: Getty Images; Juliet Kennedy/Rural Valley Life; Holly Brown; Courtesy Kanab Drug Soda Fountain. **Page 55:** Clockwise from top left: North House Folk School; Jonathan Newton/Getty Images; Lori Waselchuk; Getty Images (2). **Big 5-Oh Page 76:** Derek Jeter primary photo: Shareif Ziyadat/Getty Images. Clockwise from top right: *New York Daily News* Archive/Getty Images; Jim McIsaac/Getty Images; Linda Cataffo/Getty Images; Mike Stobe/Getty Images; Jim McIsaac/Getty Images; Jed Jacobsohn/Getty Images; Keith Torrie/Getty Images. Morissette: Noam Galai/Getty Images; Faison: Paras Griffin/Getty Images; Spade: Steven Simone/Getty Images; Bullock: Gary Miller/Getty Images; Fox: Amy Graves/Getty Images; Sotomayor: Alex Wong/Getty Images.

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SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES ON PAGE 39

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Derek Jeter

(JUNE 26) He may have retired from the New York Yankees in 2014, but the five-time World Series champion has stayed busy off the diamond.

LENDING A HAND: Jeter created the Turn 2 Foundation in 1996. The organization supports programs that help kids avoid drugs and alcohol.

★ **99.7%** ★
Share of sportswriters who voted Jeter into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

A REAL GAMER: Jeter led the Miami Marlins as CEO from 2017 to 2022. He has also been part of a trading card business, Arena Club, and a sportswear brand, Greatness Wins.

AS SEEN ON TV: While a player, Jeter appeared on *Seinfeld* and *Saturday Night Live*. In 2022, ESPN premiered *The Captain*, a bio-series. Jeter is also a baseball analyst on Fox.

HEADED FOR HOME: Jeter and his wife, Hannah, live in Florida with their four young children.

WORDS TO LIVE BY: "Being happy is winning," Jeter told GQ. "I want to be happy." —Whitney Matheson



MORE MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS

Courtney Cox
JUNE 15
Actor won a 2023 MTV Movie & TV Award for *Scream VI*. The category: best fight.



David Spade
JULY 22
Ex-*SNL* actor hosts the podcast *Fly on a Wall* with *SNL* alum Dana Carvey.



Sandra Bullock
JULY 26
Oscar winner also owns Austin, Texas, café and flower shop Walton's Fancy & Staple.



Kathleen Turner
JUNE 19
The Hollywood legend portrays a ... Hollywood legend in the noir mystery *The Long Game*.



Sonia Sotomayor
JUNE 25
Supreme Court justice appeared on children's animated series *Alma's Way*.



Pat Boone
JUNE 1
Singer celebrated his 70th year in show business last year with the album *Country Jubilee*.



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| 61 | \$30.50 | \$22.35 | \$60.00 | \$43.70 | \$89.50 | \$65.05 | \$148.50 | \$107.75 |
| 62 | \$31.45 | \$22.90 | \$61.90 | \$44.80 | \$92.35 | \$66.70 | \$153.25 | \$110.50 |
| 63 | \$32.50 | \$23.70 | \$64.00 | \$46.40 | \$95.50 | \$69.10 | \$158.50 | \$114.50 |
| 64 | \$33.50 | \$24.55 | \$66.00 | \$48.10 | \$98.50 | \$71.65 | \$163.50 | \$118.75 |
| 65 | \$34.75 | \$25.50 | \$68.50 | \$50.00 | \$102.25 | \$74.50 | \$169.75 | \$123.50 |
| 66 | \$35.90 | \$26.35 | \$70.80 | \$51.70 | \$105.70 | \$77.05 | \$175.50 | \$127.75 |
| 67 | \$37.05 | \$27.25 | \$73.10 | \$53.50 | \$109.15 | \$79.75 | \$181.25 | \$132.25 |
| 68 | \$38.70 | \$28.95 | \$76.40 | \$56.90 | \$114.10 | \$84.85 | \$189.50 | \$140.75 |
| 69 | \$39.75 | \$30.60 | \$78.50 | \$60.20 | \$117.25 | \$89.80 | \$194.75 | \$149.00 |
| 70 | \$43.85 | \$32.45 | \$86.70 | \$63.90 | \$129.55 | \$95.35 | \$215.25 | \$158.25 |

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