

**DISCOVER  
YOUR  
HISTORY  
TRIPS THAT  
UNLOCK YOUR  
ANCESTORS'  
PAST**  
Page 38

**THIS IS 60**

# Best Face Forward

8 Easy Ways to Smooth Wrinkles  
Page 31

**PLUS**

**Lower Blood Pressure in Just One Move**  
Page 28

# Samuel L. Jackson

His Journey From the Segregated South to Superstardom in Hollywood  
Page 32

**MONEY**

## Slash Household Expenses by Thousands!

Page 23

**HEALTH**

## 23 Medical Breakthroughs!

- > Stop Cancer in its Tracks
  - > Control Diabetes
  - > Turbocharge Your Heart Health
- Page 46

## Do I Need a New Vaccine?

Your Guide to Staying Safe This Winter  
Page 56

**LIVING**

## MOVING OUT, MOVING ON

7 Older Homeowners Make Happy Shifts  
Page 58

**TECH**

## Fix Your Family's IT Problems Remotely

Page 14

**A VETERANS DAY SALUTE**  
True Stories of Vietnam War Valor  
**American Heroes**  
Page 42



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# Table of Contents

October / November 2024 • Volume 67, Number 6B

## Upfront

**7 Taraji P. Henson**  
On dropping out, working odd jobs and finding purpose



**8 Dig In to Dumplings**  
You'll discover a world of flavor.

**10 Roll the Dice!**  
Classic board games get upgrades.



**12 Portion Control**  
Can I order off the kids' menu?

**14 Fix Mom's PC From Afar**  
Take over your parent's tech and provide help when you're not there.

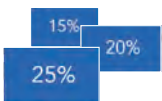
**15 Fall's Big Books**  
New reads from Al Pacino, Malcolm Gladwell, Stanley Tucci and more

**16 What to Watch**  
Reba, *Joker*, Wayans, Mirren

**17 Kathy Bates**  
On luck and lightness



## Money Saver



**22 When and What to Tip**  
Service workers tell all.

**23 Save Big Bucks** One woman's smart strategy, including negotiation

**25 Chatzky to the Rescue**  
Dealing with the financial fallout of a health crisis

## ANNUAL HEALTH SPECIAL

### 46 Medical Breakthroughs

Game-changing technologies offer new hope for tackling some of our most challenging physical issues.

> **A New Cancer Screening** Artificial intelligence is "like having another set of eyes" for colonoscopies.

> **Heart Monitoring** A combination of real-time tech and a regimen of four medications is helping to save lives.

> **Stroke Treatment** A new procedure targets blood clots.

**PLUS: Your Essential Guide to Vaccines as You Age**

A minimally invasive procedure can reduce brain injury.



### 32 Samuel L. Jackson

The 75-year-old is the highest-grossing leading man in movies—and still hard at work.

FROM OUR BONUS EDITION



### 38 Ancestry Travel

Three older Americans traced their family roots by visiting foreign lands and finding distant relatives.

### 42 The Bravest of the Brave

Vietnam War veterans recount the battlefield exploits that earned them the prestigious Medal of Honor.

### 58 In Search of a Home

Seven stories of people who decided to relocate to new communities, making better lives for themselves

66



## Real/People

### 64 A Beloved Brew

Turning Japanese sake into a family business in San Francisco

### 66 He's Got the Beat

A Holocaust survivor formed a band to raise spirits and touch hearts.

### 67 Super (Foster) Mom

After her two kids were grown, she volunteered to raise more than 40 more.

### 68 One Fateful Moment

While down on his luck, this man leaped to stop a runaway stroller and save a baby. That brave act gave him the confidence to turn his life around.

## Plus

### 69 Brain Games

**72 Your AARP Meet the Purpose Prize winners.**

### 80 Big 5-Oh

Leonardo DiCaprio! Underdog! And Danny DeVito turns 80!



**ON THE COVER:** Samuel L. Jackson photographed by Joe Pugliese in Los Angeles on June 21, 2024. Producer: Michael Klein at Circadian Pictures; set design: Ward Robinson for Wooden Ladder; wardrobe stylist: Jason Rembert; groomer: Autumn Moultrie at The Wall Group



# One Life's Journey

*"We travel not to escape life, but for life not to escape us." –Anonymous*

**I** AM NOT THE WORLD'S greatest traveler, but I've seen some of this world and I'm itching to see more. As a young man, I backpacked through Europe twice in the early 1970s. Those journeys exploded the worldview of a middle-class kid from the suburbs. On one trip, my buddy Todd and I hitchhiked through Germany on the autobahn. We picked up a lucky lift entering an incredibly long tunnel—through the Swiss Alps—on our way to Italy, in return for babysitting the well-behaved dachshund of our driver. In Florence, we overdosed on Renaissance art and bunked in Mussolini's mistress's villa, which had long before been converted into a youth hostel.

I was looking for love, but I fell into a different kind of romance on those trips, the reverie of an innocent abroad: scuffling across ancient cobblestones in my Frye motorcycle boots, inhaling history measured not in decades but in centuries.



The author and traveling companion Todd Ryan as sketched by Ryan in the early 1970s during one of their adventures

In the years since, I haven't done as much traveling as I imagined I would. Life is more complicated than it was zooming through the Alps with my only job as a dog sitter. But things are looking more promising in that area, for me and maybe for you too.

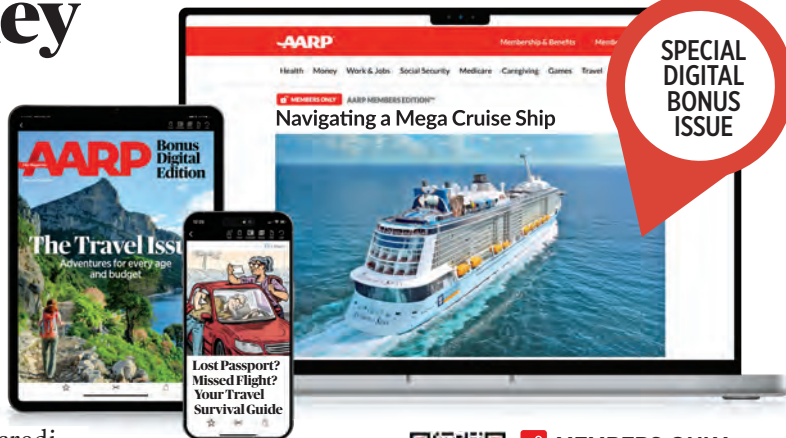
In the AARP Travel Trends survey, older adults told us they planned to spend an average of about \$6,700 on travel this year, and about 40 percent

of those traveling were planning an international trip. Where to? Europe is the most sought-after destination. Indeed, I visited Paris in May, this time staying in a fancy hotel, and I had only to look across the room to my lovely wife for romance.

So, yes, hail fellow travelers! In this issue you'll find a feature on "ancestry travel," the art of finding your roots. It's an excerpt from our new, special issue devoted solely to the joys of travel itself: [aarp.org/travelissue](http://aarp.org/travelissue).

In the digital-only Travel Issue, you'll find destination ideas for special occasions, thoughtful advice on managing your travel dollars (is that splurge really worth it?), secrets to great experiences that only people who work in hotels and on cruise ships know, an emergency guide to avoid travel disasters and more. Each story has you, the older traveler, in mind.

Let's get packing (we have tips for that too). Your life awaits.



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*Bob*

Clockwise from top right: Tablet; computer; phone; Getty Images; AARP; (2); Illustration by Lars Leetaru; Getty Images (3); AARP; (2); Europe illustration by Todd Ryan and Robert Love

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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
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66	\$35.90	\$26.35	\$70.80	\$51.70	\$105.70	\$77.05	\$175.50	\$127.75
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68	\$38.70	\$28.95	\$76.40	\$56.90	\$114.10	\$84.85	\$189.50	\$140.75
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Our August/  
September  
issue featured  
Kevin Costner.



## COSTNER'S CRAFT

Great read ["Kevin Costner Goes His Own Way"]! I loved both of Costner's "flops," *Waterworld* and *The Postman*. I know I'm not alone in that assessment. Hold your head high on those two as well, Kevin!

**HEATHER SPARKS**  
Yakima, Washington



## ESTATE EXECUTOR

I was the executor of my mother's estate ["My Mom Died. Then Came the Ordeal"]. She had a trust in place, prepaid for cremation, and I was on her credit union accounts, so that part was simple enough. But

the IRS chore (her final tax return and the estate tax return) wasn't. In hindsight, I wish I had explored hiring a CPA. I got caught in a slow process and had to keep the trust accounts open longer than necessary just waiting on the final refund to be deposited.

**LINDA TAYLOR**  
Luther, Oklahoma

Having your parent add you to their accounts is a great idea. My dad did that, and it made things so much easier for me. But be aware that these will show up on your credit report, even if you are not actively using the accounts. It can also give the impression that you live at two different addresses (in my case, in two states).

**CHRISTINE WYLLIE**  
Winfield, Illinois



Loved the first *Horizon* movie. Fantastic acting and the scenery was breathtaking!  
*Jean Gieraltowski*  
Facebook

He's brought incredible vision and insight to the movie industry.  
*Geoff Ready*  
Facebook

A genuine, cool and brilliant filmmaker, as if being an excellent actor wasn't enough!  
*Christine Levens Lynch*  
Facebook

## FOR A LAUGH

I enjoyed "SNL Hits the Big 5-Oh." One of the early highlights was the April 17, 1976, guest cameo by President Gerald R. Ford. Chevy Chase jokingly mocked Mr. Ford as clumsy and prone to falling. Mr. Ford's appearance demonstrated that he enjoyed a good laugh, even at his own expense. *SNL* continues to be a groundbreaking program.



**JAMES E. PATTERSON**  
Washington, D.C.

## INSURANCE NEEDS

Interesting article on the couple wondering if they should hold on to their whole life policies ["Stay Insured or Take the Cash?"]. I agree with the advice, but you left out one other option. There are companies that purchase life insurance policies, and in some cases, the insured will get more than the cash value from surrendering it. Might not be the right solution for everyone, but I felt it was worth a mention.

**LAURIE J. BRENNAN**  
Malibu, California

## GIVE ME STRENGTH

I just finished reading Jewel's story ["The A List"]. Talk about overcoming adversity! I've gone through hard times, too, such as an accident, the death of my mom and unemployment during COVID. Being mentally strong is just as important as being physically strong. (I like her suit too!)



**DAVID ALSTON**  
Iselin, New Jersey

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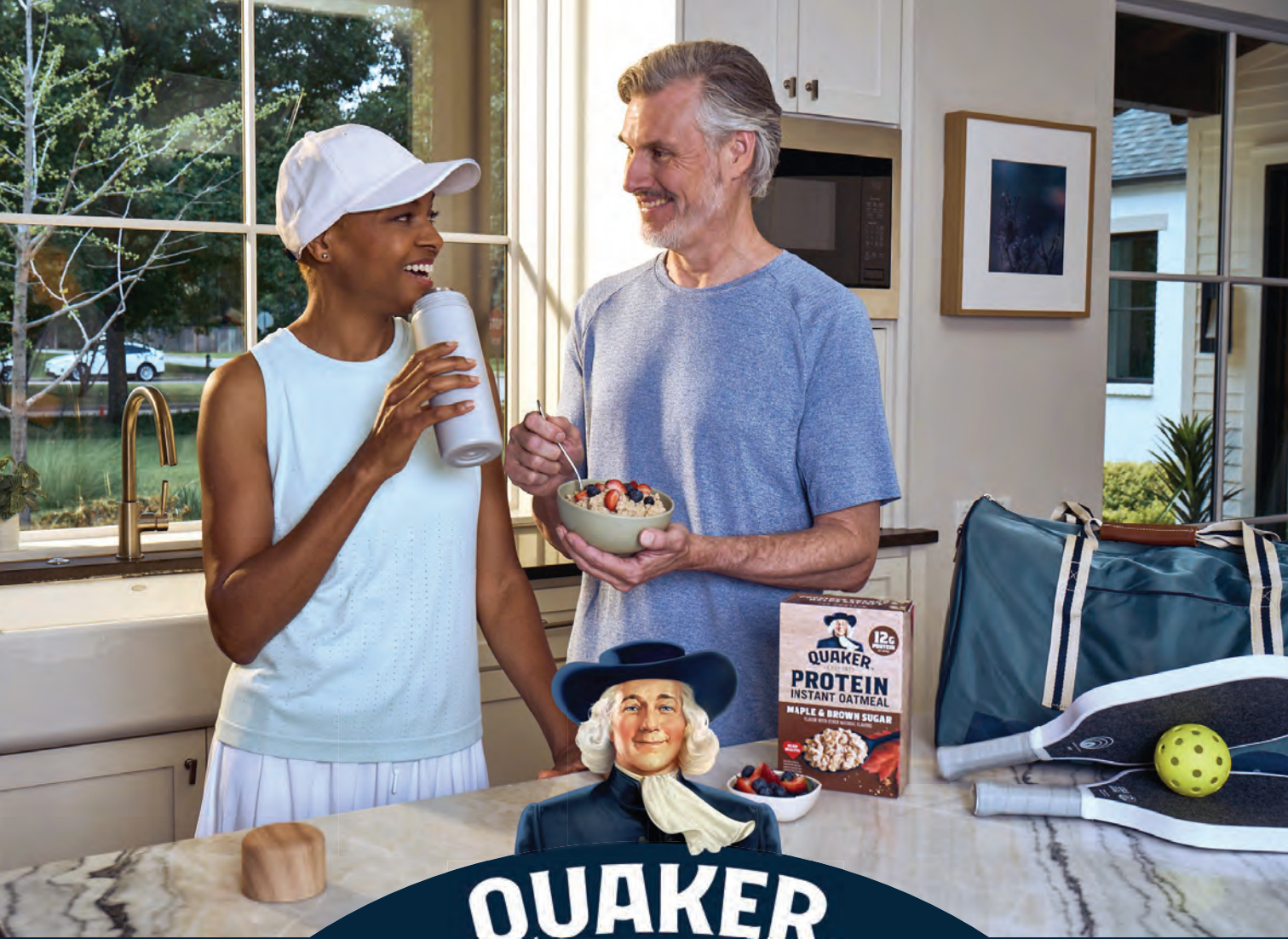
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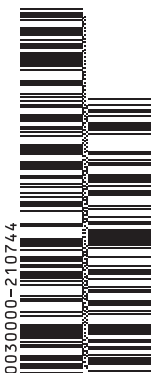


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# Upfront The **A**List

## 5 Surprising Things About Taraji P. Henson

### 1 She started out at North Carolina A&T State University, intending to study electrical engineering, but dropped out

I just followed my smart friend there. Then I failed pre-calc. Pre-calc! With two tutors. I called my dad and cried, and he was, like, “Now enroll in drama at Howard University like you’re supposed to be doing.” And I did.

### 2 While at Howard, she worked as a secretary at the Pentagon and as a singing-dancing waitress on a cruise ship

I owed North Carolina A&T some money. My stepmom worked at the Pentagon and told me about the Stay-in-School employment program. And then my best friend at Howard was, like, “Girl, I’m a waitress on this dinner cruise and the tips are amazing.” So I did both, because I was always a little hustler. “Proud Mary” was my song.

### 3 In 2011, she posed without clothes in an antifur ad

I saw a documentary on HBO and was so disturbed. Then it was like kismet: A week later, PETA called me out of the blue to ask me to do this ad. Now I have one of the most incredible faux furs.

### 4 She spoke before the Congressional Black Caucus about mental illness

I had to share my secrets. But it’s freeing. Because then you’re not alone. I’m always looked at



**“For you to think that of the billions on this planet, you’re the only one with mental health issues is fake news.”**

as strong, and people see this cape, but I’m, like, “Y’all don’t understand what it’s like when I go home and I fall down to my knees and it feels like the walls are closing in.” Money doesn’t make your problems go away.

### 5 Her father, Boris, was bipolar

He would turn into a whole other person, from good to mean. Also, he would reenact being in the Vietnam War. I’ll never forget him jumping up thinking bombs were going off and making us crawl around on the floor. He had a lot of work to do. But you know what I love about my dad? He wore it on his sleeve. He didn’t hide that he had issues. And he got the healing that he needed. —As told to Joel Stein

*Golden Globe-winning actor Taraji P. Henson, 54, will receive a 2024 honorary AARP Purpose Prize for founding and supporting the Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation, which is devoted to destigmatizing mental health issues within the Black community and supporting mental health treatments. For additional winners of the Purpose Prize, see page 72.*



For video of Taraji P. Henson and other Purpose Prize winners, scan this code or go to [aarp.org/purposeprize](https://aarp.org/purposeprize).

# A World of Dumplings

Your guide to 6 two-bite favorites around the globe

**I**CAN'T THINK of a more beloved and more versatile food than the dumpling,” says Kevin Pang, author of *A Very Chinese Cookbook*. Meat and/or vegetables stuffed into a dough wrapper resonates with almost every culture. —Kelsey Ogletree

## ◀ Wontons

**Country of origin:** China  
**Fillings:** Meat or seafood and vegetables, such as pork and bok choy  
**Cooking method:** Boiled, steamed or fried  
**Served:** In soup (boiled) or as a side dish or appetizer



## ▲ Pierogi

**Country of origin:** Poland  
**Fillings:** Meat and onions or mushrooms; potatoes, cheese and onions  
**Cooking method:** Boiled, then pan-fried  
**Served:** As a main dish with vegetables

## ▼ Ravioli

**Country of origin:** Italy  
**Filling:** Cheese  
**Cooking method:** Boiled  
**Served:** In broth or sauce



## ▼ Samosas

**Country of origin:** India  
**Fillings:** Mashed potatoes with spices like garam masala, turmeric and cayenne; some contain meat, such as lamb  
**Cooking method:** Fried or baked  
**Served:** As an appetizer or snack with chai



## Empanadas ▼

**Countries of origin:** Portugal, Spain, Latin American nations  
**Fillings:** Vegetables, cheese or meat  
**Cooking method:** Baked or fried  
**Served:** As an appetizer, lunch or street-food snack



PHOTOGRAPH BY VICTOR PROTASIO

Food stylist: Julian Hensler; prop stylist: Julie Bayless

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**App:** EarthCamTV

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**OUR FAVORITE CAM:** Sint Maarten, with gentle waves, white sand and swaying palms.

**App:** Explore.org

Check out 130 live cams. **OUR FAVORITE CAMS:** Katmai National Park Bear Cam. Watch brown bears fish for salmon. Or view the Northern Lights Cam at night to see the aurora borealis.

**App:** YouTube

You can find nature webcams through this app on your TV. **OUR FAVORITE CAM:** Live Deer, Bird & Wildlife Cam. Watch wildlife at Woodlands Critter Quest in North Carolina. —*JD Sartain*

## Let's Play It Again

Some of your favorite board games from years past have been reinvented for the 21st century

**CLUE: ESCAPE**

► This series blends the iconic mystery game with the escape room trend. Players set a timer, open the box and solve puzzles together. Several versions are available, each with a distinct name, such as The Midnight Hotel or The Illusionist's Club.

**YAHTZEE FRENZY**

► If you think Yahtzee is too slow, this is for you. Yahtzee Frenzy kicks the classic dice game up a notch. Instead of taking turns, players roll and score simultaneously, trying to be the fastest to roll the right results.

**SPIES & LIES: A STRATEGO STORY**

► Stratego is a chesslike game with pieces on a board. But in this version, players also use cards, placing them face down and going through rounds of guessing and bluffing in a complex battle of wits in addition to strategy.

**JENGA MAKER**

► This version upends the tower-toppling game. Jenga Maker puts players on teams. One member gets a card displaying a tower and must communicate to their teammates how to build the tower without sharing the card.

**CONNECT 4 SPIN**

► Players still try to get four of their color in a row, but instead of dropping discs, they insert them into a column. Then the player spins the entire plastic column around a horizontal bar. How it stops can change the board. —*Marc Musso*



Discount home stores promise low prices, but among the mix of high- and low-quality items, not everything is a bargain. What to know:

**Lamps** “Budget lamps look more expensive in muted colors and natural materials like wrought iron, wood, linen, glass or rattan,” says Vanessa Rhoades, author of *Just Right!: Easy DIY Home Staging*.

**Rugs** Count the knots or loops on the back of the rug. Decent rugs should have at least 150 knots per square inch, says Artem Kropovinsky, founder of Arsiteg, an interior design studio in New York City.

**Storage baskets** “Look for a metal frame, not a wire frame, which tends to become loose over time,” says interior designer Debbe Daley of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. —*Wendy Helfenbaum*



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55–59	13	18	38	65	94	157
60–64	17	24	58	94	148	233
65–69	21	31	81	128	213	323
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## Safer Than Jumper Cables

Restart a dead car battery with ease



REVIVING A dead battery used to mean having a pair of jumper cables on hand and finding a Good Samaritan with another vehicle to jump-start your car. These days you can do it all on your own.

A rechargeable battery pack has enough juice to kick-start a car's battery by hooking it up to the terminals. They are available from several companies, including Gooloo, Scosche and Noco. These devices are about the size of a paperback book and start at around \$100. Bonus: They often have connections that recharge a smartphone too.

You can also charge your battery from inside your car. Some chargers or adapters plug into a car's 12-volt outlet (formerly known as the cigarette lighter). It can be safer than popping the hood and standing outside. —John R. Quain



## Can I Order Off the Kids' Menu?

*This question has been making the social media rounds. For older people with diminishing appetites, the kids' menu might look like a tasty option*

### Adults Allowed

"IT SEEMS TO me that if customers are interested in lower-priced, smaller-portioned dishes that a restaurant already offers, they ought to be allowed to order those items, regardless of their age," says Brett Anderson, veteran food writer at *The New York Times*.

Many people agree. In a survey conducted earlier this year by OnePoll, 77 percent of respondents said adults should be allowed to order from the kids' menu. Twenty-one percent said they had done it.

Some major restaurant chains, such as Cracker Barrel, allow the practice, although you'll find that many other eateries and chains don't have a defined policy.



### You're Kidding Yourself

A THIRD OF respondents in the OnePoll survey said they had been denied when trying to order off the kids' menu. Why? Kids' menu items are priced low because they aren't meant to be ordered as stand-alone products. Restaurants expect kids to be accompanied by adults who will order full-price entrées.

Don Caperton owns the Shack in Benton County, Tennessee, an area with a large population of retirees; more than 47 percent of residents within 20 minutes of his restaurant are 50 and older. Allowing adults to order from a kids' menu would hurt his bottom line. "Operating costs [such as labor, equipment usage, utilities and prep time] are not significantly reduced when preparing smaller portions," Caperton says. —Kevin Spain



## STOP AND SHOP ... AND SHOP AND SHOP

Roadside stores now resemble suburban supercenters

THE FIRST TIME I visited a Buc-ee's, I felt like I'd walked into a retail carnival. Behold the jerky display. Feast your eyes on the fudge counter. Amaze yourself at the sandwich station. Explore the massive gift shop. Such is the trend in roadside stops, as travelers are eager to take a break from traffic to spend some time wandering miles of aisles or getting fresh-made food at chains including Wawa and Sheetz or truck stops Flying J or Love's. "What Buc-ee's and others have done," says Jeff Lenard, a vice president with industry trade group NACS, "is made the things you disliked about traveling—lengthening the time of a drive by having to stop to use the bathroom or get fuel—and changed the mindset to something you look forward to." —Chris Wadsworth

Photo illustration by Paul Speller; Illustrations by Kati Szilagyi; Buc-ee's: Brandon Bell/Getty Images



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# Provide Help From Afar

When someone needs aid with tech, you can access their device remotely

**Y**OUR MOM calls and says, “My computer seems broken. When I press the keys, nothing happens.” Your dad calls and says, “I was watching a movie when the power went out. It’s back on now, but the screen says: ‘Your TV is not connected to the internet.’”

If you live nearby, you can hop in the car and assist. But what if your parent lives across the country?

Dozens of computer applications allow you to access devices in other people’s homes (with their permission).

**Computer help** On a PC, a remote application is part of the Windows operating system in versions 10 and 11. Each user—the one helping and the one needing help—presses these three keys: Ctrl, Windows (logo key) and Q. The Windows Quick Assist app will appear. It creates a code that the helper shares with the person needing assistance to get access to their computer.

If you use an Apple computer or a PC with an older version of Windows, there are many free apps available to provide remote access, including DWSservice, AnyDesk, Chrome Remote Desktop and TeamViewer.



**TV help** You can access another television through your smartphone using a unique service called JubileeTV. From afar, you can switch channels, adjust the volume and change other settings. The required \$29 monthly subscription includes additional functions, such as video calling and the ability to send photos from a phone to a TV.



**Phone help** There are also apps that allow you to help others figure out their phones.

For Android phones, AirMirror includes screen mirroring, which lets you view the screen of another Android device from your phone, and remote control, which allows you to control another Android device. Other apps, such as TeamViewer and AirMore, can work between Android and Apple devices. —JD Sartain



**Watch a video to see how computer remote access works. Just scan this code with your phone or tablet, or visit [aarp.org/takeovertch](http://aarp.org/takeovertch).**



## ASK THE TECH GURU

**My landline keeps getting more and more expensive, and I wouldn’t mind dropping it. But can I keep this number that I’ve had for decades?**



### AARP tech writer Edward C. Baig:

The good news is that you can likely keep that landline number and funnel those calls to your cellphone. Yes, many cellphones can work with two lines. The process is called porting.

**STEP 1** | Make sure your cellphone can take two SIM cards or eSIMs. Those can accept calls to two different numbers on the same device. But you may incur charges.

**STEP 2** | Call your cell carrier and tell them the landline number you want ported. Your landline provider might also charge you a fee to release the number.

**STEP 3** | Cancel your landline.

→ *Have a question for the Tech Guru? Email it to [personaltech@aarp.org](mailto:personaltech@aarp.org). Select questions will be answered.*

## DIGITAL ETIQUETTE

### WHEN VOICE NOTES BECOME ANNOYING

How to deal with monologues people send to your phone

**HAVE YOU** ever received a text message with no text?

Many people are giving up thumb typing in favor of recording voice messages in their text app. Many recipients find the practice irritating. We asked Lizzie Post, co-president of the Emily Post Institute, for her tips.

#### For the sender:

**Consider context.** If you’re driving and need to be hands-free, OK. If your message is too long for typing, maybe. But Post says voice notes shouldn’t be your go-to form of communication.

#### Give warning.

Text your friend that you’ll be sending a voice message and explain why.

#### For the receiver:

**Express your concerns.** “If something has started to veer into annoying usage, I think it’s OK for us to say something,” Post advises. “It’s also OK to let someone know that a particular form of communication doesn’t work for you.”

—Julie Goldenberg



# Fall's Big Books

Pacino, Tucci, Erdrich and more

## Tiny Slice

"[Food] may be the only significant aspect of my life that brings me peace ... [a] beautiful, varied thing waiting to bring satiety and solace and offer hope while death and arithmetic haunt me."

—From *What I Ate in One Year*, by Stanley Tucci (October 15). See more fab foodies, below.

## Tip Talk

Malcolm Gladwell revisits his 2000 bestseller about the mechanics of social epidemics and change, *The Tipping Point*, in *Revenge of the Tipping Point: Overstories, Superspreaders, and the Rise of Social Engineering* (October 1), offering a new set of theories and stories about "the strange pathways that ideas and behavior follow through our world."

## Notable

### *The Mighty Red* by Louise Erdrich

The Pulitzer Prize winner focuses this absorbing novel on a young woman, Kismet, and her mother, Crystal, who face scrutiny in their small North Dakota farming community after Crystal's husband disappears with the local church's funds. Their problems grow when newlywed Kismet realizes her own marriage was a big mistake. (October 1)

### *Sonny Boy* by Al Pacino

Fans will enjoy the actor's nostalgic telling of his humble beginnings—he was raised by a single mom in the South Bronx—and stellar career. He recalls his early passion for the stage, which led him to bellow lines from Shakespeare into the New York night; his life-changing role as Michael Corleone in *The Godfather*; his thoughts on aging; and more. (October 15)

### *Karla's Choice* by Nick Harkaway

Novelist Harkaway, John le Carré's son, revives his father's iconic protagonist, spy George Smiley, with aplomb in this complex tale. It's 1963, and Smiley takes on a case involving a Russian defector who was sent to London to murder a now-missing man, and ends up on the trail of a dangerous nemesis in East Berlin. (October 22) —Christina Lanzito

## Nostalgia trips

New band biographies include *Dreams: The Many Lives of Fleetwood Mac*, by Mark Blake (Oct. 1), who interviewed Mick Fleetwood, Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham, among others, for this deep dive, and *The Name of This Band Is R.E.M.*, by Peter Ames Carlin (November 5), catnip for Gen Xers who came of age listening to these eccentric, groundbreaking musicians.



## FAB FOODIES



**Be Ready When the Luck Happens** by Ina Garten (October 1)



**I Love You: Recipes from the Heart** by Pamela Anderson (October 15)



**My Mexican Kitchen: 100 Recipes Rich with Tradition, Flavor, and Spice** by Eva Longoria (October 29)



**Willie and Annie Nelson's Cannabis Cookbook** (November 12)

# Now Playing

AARP critic Tim Appelo picks upcoming movies and shows to watch



## DISCLAIMER\*

📺 On Apple TV+ October 11 • Oscar winner Kevin Kline, 76, makes his miniseries debut as an unknown writer who gets even with a famous TV journalist (double Oscar winner Cate Blanchett, 55) by exposing her most shocking secret in a novel. Her husband (Sacha Baron Cohen, 53) also bears a grudge; Oscar winner Alfonso Cuarón, 62, directs.



## JOKER: FOLIE À DEUX

📺 In theaters October 4 • In the sequel to 2019's *The Joker*, the billion-dollar hit that won an Oscar for star Joaquin Phoenix, 49, the troubled clown falls for a fellow

inmate at Arkham Asylum (Lady Gaga), and mayhem ensues. Who says a psychologically bent action film can't be a musical too? The A-list cast also includes Oscar nominees Catherine Keener, 65, Steve Coogan, 58, and Brendan Gleeson, 69.



## POPPA'S HOUSE

📺 On CBS October 21 • A radio talk-show host (Damon Wayans, 64) finds himself still parenting his adult son (real-life son Damon Wayans Jr.), who's trying to be a responsible father himself without giving up his dreams.

## WHITE BIRD

📺 In theaters October 4 • To teach her grandson (Bryce Gheisar) a lesson about the importance of resisting the temptation to be a school bully, a famous French Jewish artist (Helen Mirren, 79) tells him the story of how her bullied classmate (Orlando Schwerdt) and his mother (*X-Files*' Gillian Anderson, 56) hid her from the Nazis in their barn. "We had both seen how much hate people are capable of, and how much courage it took to be kind," she says. "When kindness can cost you your life, it becomes like a miracle."



## NICKEL BOYS

📺 In theaters October 25 • *King Richard* Oscar nominee Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor, 55, could get her second nomination for playing Hattie, a hotel housekeeper whose beloved grandson (Ethan Herisse) is unjustly imprisoned in a barbaric Jim Crow-era reformatory. Peabody Award winner and Emmy and Oscar nominee RaMell Ross directs this adaptation of the Pulitzer Prize-winning, based-on-true-life, best-selling novel by Colson Whitehead, 55.



## HAPPY'S PLACE

📺 On NBC October 18 • Reba McEntire, 69, plays an heiress running her late dad's restaurant. Her Reba

costar Melissa Peterman, 53, plays a bartender. McEntire's also on the new season of the music competition reality show *The Voice*, with new judges Michael Bublé, 49, and Snoop Dogg, 52.

Clockwise from top: Niko Tavernise/Varnor Bros.; Sanja Dacko/Apple TV+; L. Kasimu Harris/Amazon; Larry Horricks/Longgate; Casey Durkin/NBC; Sonia Flemming/CBS

# Kathy Bates

How she lost weight, gained confidence and found a perfect gig as the lead in a new 'Matlock' reboot

## Make every day a success

I grew up in Memphis with older parents—my father was born in 1900—and I lived a very sheltered life. And I remember my father asking me, because he was concerned that I wanted to play the guitar and sing and do all of these artistic things, “Aren't you going to make a success of yourself?” I was very young and said, “I just want to make every day a success. That's as far as I can go.”

## Honor your parents' sacrifice

I've struggled with the fact that had I not been born, they would have had a happier retirement, instead of me being a millstone around their neck for 18 years. We had a hard time relating to each other, especially during the '60s, and my father had to keep working in order to send me to a rather expensive university. But if he hadn't done that, I wouldn't be talking to you.

## A professor's best advice

I knew I could act when I was in high school. But when I decided to go to Southern Methodist University, I didn't know what I was doing. At the orientation the speaker for the humanities school literally said, “You're in the wrong school. You're supposed to be in the art school. Go down the hall. That's where you're going to begin your life's work.”



## Let Lady Luck lead you

SMU had just created a proper conservatory for acting, and Bob Hope had just given us a theater. So it was a magical time to be there. Then a friend I made there wrote a play, *Vanities*, which ran off-Broadway and gave me my start in theater. Warren Beatty came to see us one night and introduced me to Dustin Hoffman. Years later, [the screenwriter] William Goldman [*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *All the President's Men*] came to see me in a different play. And they were casting *Misery*, so he recommended me to the director. I got my role in *Misery*. I've been lucky, but all of those stepping stones began at SMU.

## Character studies

Reality television is interesting to me because you get to see people living and behaving in ways that are real and quirky. You think, *Oh, that will be interesting to use in a character!* For a while I was hooked on *Dr. Phil*. I don't know if I offended him or not, but I was on his show and told him that a lot of times I'd watch it just to study people's mannerisms and body language.

## Find your path

In 2012 the series I was in, *Harry's Law*, was canceled. I was diagnosed with breast cancer that summer, a double whammy. And I was very, very heavy. I just thought, *I don't know that I have any future as an actor, and maybe no future at all as a human being.* I had seen my friend Jessica Lange



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## Upfront

on the first season of *American Horror Story*, and I thought the quality of the work was so good. I said to her, “Can you set up a meeting with me and [show creator] Ryan [Murphy]?” I did meet with him, and he pitched this character of Madame Delphine LaLaurie, who was a real person who lived in New Orleans in the 1830s. It was like jumping into a repertory company. For the first time in a long time, I felt excitement. I felt reawakened. Ryan brought me back to life. He gave me wonderful roles in his show and four years of real delight. I owe a lot to him.

### Eating mindfully

A few years ago, I was diagnosed with diabetes. It scared the crap out of me. So I decided I was going to finally do something about my weight. I was at 245 pounds. Over a period of about six years, I lost 80 pounds. There’s something in the brain that sends a message to our stomachs when we’re hungry, so we eat. Then after 10, 15, 20 minutes, depending on how fast you eat, another message has been sent from your brain saying you’ve had enough. I was used to eating a lot fast and eating the wrong things. But I just started pushing my plate away. I got my diabetes under control, then I lost the last 20 pounds with Ozempic. I’m down to 145. I always joke that I lost a Romanian gymnast.

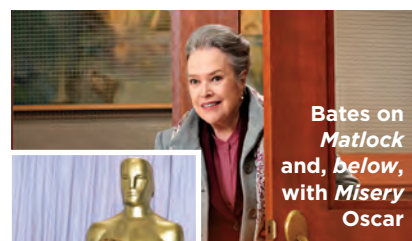
### The freedom of losing weight

I feel like the confluence of *Matlock* and this new weight I’m at isn’t just serendipity. I wouldn’t have been able to withstand the long hours and the discipline of learning lines that a series requires. I can tuck in my shirts and close my jackets on set. I can stand all day and move in ways that were previously restricted by my weight. I was in Paris a few years ago, and I couldn’t make it half a block without having to stop and breathe. I know it’s hackneyed, but for the first time in my life, I feel free of the sorrow and the burden—no pun intended—of being a woman who can’t move and breathe. If you are overweight, you are dismissed.

### Fighting ageism, on- and off-screen

Someone told me an anecdote about a famous actress being called in front

of the mucky-mucks that ran the studio and they told her, because she’d just turned 29, “This will be your last movie.” Women constantly fight that ageism, and I’ve been very aware that the page has turned for many of us older folks. That’s why I was so drawn to this role of Maddie in *Matlock*: It was written for a woman my age. And that kind of opportunity rarely comes along in Hollywood. But they created this magnificent character who is a driven, smart, funny, complicated older woman, so I can use all the things I’ve learned over the last 50 years in one character.



**Bates on  
*Matlock*  
and, below,  
with *Misery*  
Oscar**



### Zippering it, sometimes

Many of us who came into our careers in the '70s

and '80s and '90s had very salty lives and expressions. It was sort of a free-for-all. So it’s been a bit of a learning curve learning how to keep my mouth shut, think before I speak, so I don’t offend anyone on set. We had an HR meeting at the beginning of shooting *Matlock*. I slip up all the time, but I really try! [*Laughs.*]

### Finally being me

At one point I began to feel I needed to be something I wasn’t, this ballsy, funny creature—that being me wasn’t enough. But that’s changed a lot over the last few years. Age has given me confidence, as has the imposed isolation during the pandemic. It was as though the waters receded and all of the stones and things that were underneath—the problems I hadn’t dealt with—I suddenly had to face. And I did. —As told to *Margy Rochlin*

Academy Award-winning actor *Kathy Bates*, 76, stars in *Matlock*, a new show on CBS inspired by the original series.



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# MoneySaver

## Tipping Points

You may have some strong opinions about tips, like if they should be taxed or whether they're out of control. But what do waiters, drivers and others who live on tips want to tell you about them? Here's what some had to say.

By KIMBERLY LANKFORD AND JULIE GOLDENBERG

### Tour Guide

"Some tour companies will tell you that the tip is included. But that's not always accurate. There are too many instances where we don't get anything, and it's depressing given how much work and thought goes into our preparation."

—James Carr, president, Guild of Professional Tour Guides of Washington, D.C.

### Food Delivery Driver

"The tip is displayed up front, and that's a big [factor in] whether or not drivers end up taking an order, because the base amount you get from DoorDash is not enough. Customers complain about the fees, but they don't go to the driver."

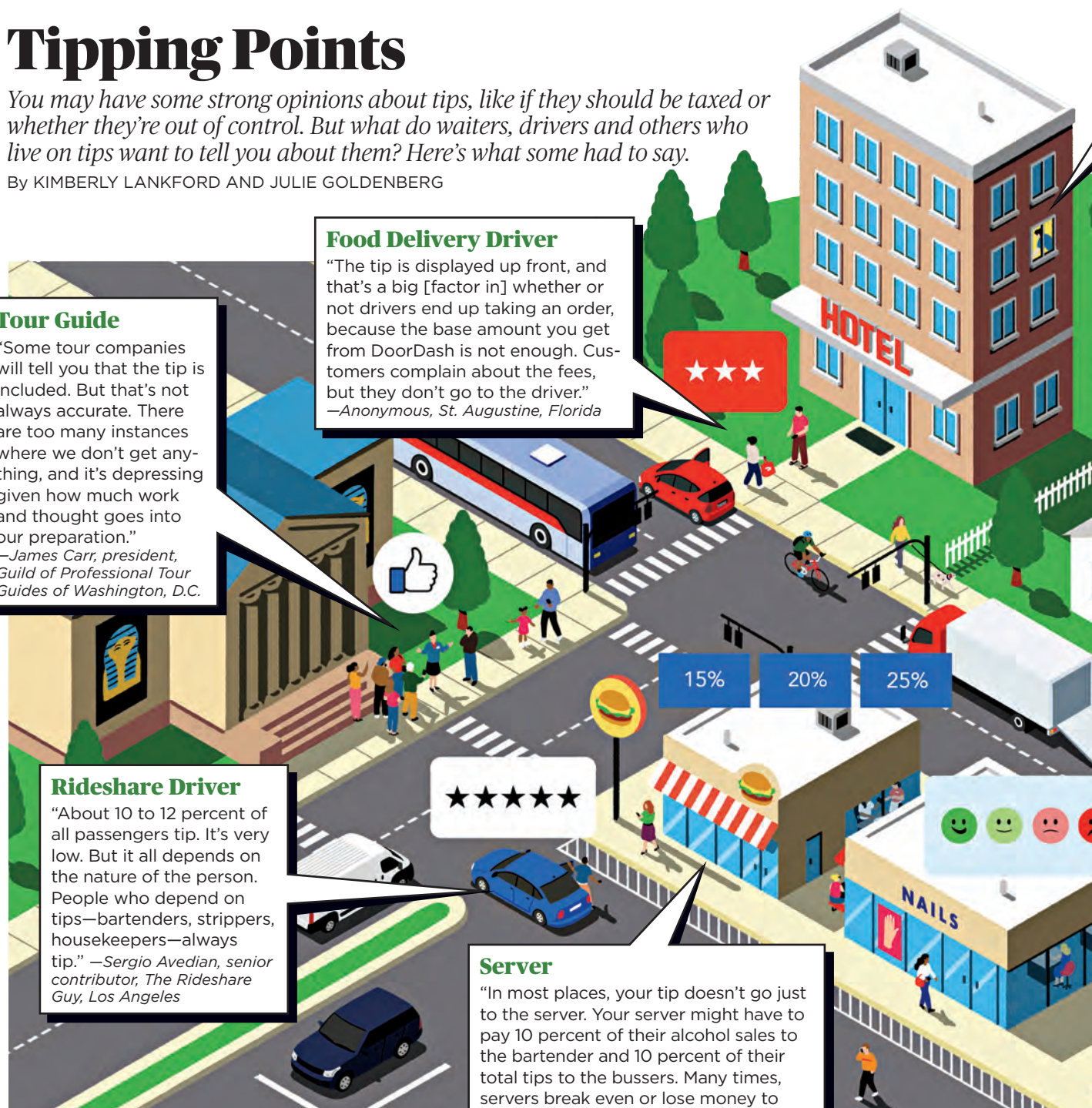
—Anonymous, St. Augustine, Florida

### Rideshare Driver

"About 10 to 12 percent of all passengers tip. It's very low. But it all depends on the nature of the person. People who depend on tips—bartenders, strippers, housekeepers—always tip." —Sergio Avedian, senior contributor, The Rideshare Guy, Los Angeles

### Server

"In most places, your tip doesn't go just to the server. Your server might have to pay 10 percent of their alcohol sales to the bartender and 10 percent of their total tips to the bussers. Many times, servers break even or lose money to tables that don't tip after ordering alcohol." —Anonymous, Lynchburg, Virginia





## Hotel Housekeeper

"Leave your tip every day. I may clean your room for two or three days in a row, but if you wait until check-out to tip and I'm not working that day, someone else gets the tip. Put it on the bed, or put it in an envelope and write 'Housekeeping' on it. But leave it in the room rather than taking it to the front desk."

—Maria Mata, *W Hotel, San Francisco*

## Mover

"If you can't afford a tip, good reviews on websites such as Yelp, Google and Facebook are much appreciated. And although most movers just want to focus on getting the job done, offering food or drinks is always appreciated." —Vojin Popovic, *Piece of Cake Moving and Storage, New York City*

## Nail Salon Technician

"Generally, about half a nail tech's income comes from tips. The technician usually receives only a percentage of the price of the service; the rest is paid back to the business. But the tip amount is 100 percent the nail tech's."

—Rasheedah "Rah" Muhammad, *Confessions of a Nail Tech blogger, Indian Land, South Carolina*

## MONEY REPORT

# How I Saved \$4,400 in a Day ... and (Maybe) You Can Too

*Some simple negotiation tricks and a little time can go a long way toward keeping cash in your pocket* By DIANE HARRIS

**H**OW MUCH money could you save if you spent one full day trying? I recently decided to find out, tackling as many money-saving tasks as I could in a nine-to-five workday—all the pesky stuff I kept meaning to do but never made time for.

The result for me: eye-popping savings, on an annualized basis, of precisely \$4,466.41.

Along the way, I learned some seriously valuable lessons. For one, it's easy to get a deal on almost everything; the real challenge is how big a price cut you can nab. Also, there's a simple formula to achieve the biggest savings. Finally, the benefits of this exercise go far beyond dollars and cents.

Here's what I did—and how you can do it too.

### Go for the easy wins first.

I spent the first hour of the day identifying my recurring bills and determining which ones to cut or renegotiate. This step revealed two streaming services I'd forgotten I had, a handful of subscriptions to magazines I rarely read and a mystery monthly charge from Apple. All told, I was spending about \$100 more a month on these services than I'd guessed.

I'm hardly alone. Consumers, on average, estimate they spend \$86 a month on subscription services,

while their actual outlay is \$219 a month, reports C+R Research.

Armed with my checklist, I started with the most straightforward task: canceling subscriptions. A pattern became apparent: I'd click to cancel, then get a reminder of how great the service was; click to cancel again, then get an offer with modest savings; click to cancel a third time and get a much better deal.

"The company's goal is to get you to stay on as a customer while giving away as little as possible, so they

will never offer their best deal first," says Yahya Mokhtarzada, cofounder of Rocket Money, a budgeting app that helps track and cancel recurring charges.

Although this was a useful strategy to

learn—hold out as long as possible!—I ignored the enticements and clicked goodbye in quick succession to five magazines and the forgotten streaming services. Then, scrolling through my phone, I figured out that the mystery Apple charge was for an app I no longer use. So I dropped that too.

**Time spent:** 2 hours, 10 minutes  
**Savings:** \$1,078.53 per year

### Deal with a human.

To get the best offers, pros had told me, you must talk to a person. So for services I wanted to keep, I hit the phone. →



## MoneySaver

I followed this basic script: “Say you want to cancel your service. That will get you to the retention department, where they have more liberty than a regular customer service rep to give you as much as you can squeeze out of them,” says Barry Gross, president of BillCutterz, a subscription-negotiating service. “Keep your questions open-ended, like, ‘What can you do to help me reduce my bill?’ and keep asking, ‘What else can you do for me?’”

First up was my \$498.88-a-year *Wall Street Journal* digital subscription. The rep quickly offered what seemed like a sweet deal: a three-year plan for \$99 for the first year, then \$299 and \$467 for subsequent years. I took it. That was a rookie mistake. If I had checked the *WSJ* website, I would have seen a new-customer offer for \$52 a year. Knowing that, I could have asked for the same price.

Resolving to do better, I checked the *New York Times* website before calling them. So when a rep offered to reduce my \$51-a-month charge for digital access and the Sunday print edition to \$25.52 a month for six months, I mentioned a new-customer promotion I’d seen: \$20 a month for a year. The rep countered with \$12.40 a month for six months, then \$24.80 for the following six months. Score!  
**Time spent:** 40 minutes  
**Savings:** \$788.68

### Save the thorniest bills for last.

Getting a price cut on cellphone service is tough, typically. “They keep you on the phone for a long time to wear you down and overload you with confusing details about different plan options that often don’t offer any real savings,” says Mokhtarzada.

That matched my experience with Brenda, a cheery Verizon agent who said she’d be happy to help lower my bill. She offered me—“don’t laugh,” she said—\$4 off my \$234-a-month family plan as a reward for my 20 years as a loyal Verizon customer.



Harris, pictured here, says you can cut a lot of bills in one day.

I laughed anyway. “What else can you do for me, Brenda?” I asked.

She then bombarded me with features of plans I could switch to, none of which would cut my bill more than a dollar or so. “I don’t need those features,” I said. “I just want to save money.” This went on for an hour until an exasperated Brenda asked, “How much do you need to save?” At least \$50 a month, I said. Then she magically found a new basic plan, which, along with dropping a hot spot on two lines and insurance on another, cut my monthly bill by \$51.

Later I learned I’d made another rookie mistake. “Typically you can get the discount without giving up anything in terms of service,” says Mokhtarzada.

The last item on my agenda took the most time but yielded the biggest savings: applying to have my Medicare premiums adjusted due to a “life-changing event.” For me, that event was my recent move from a staff job as deputy editor of *Newsweek* to freelance writing and editing work that pays far less. Since my Medicare

premiums are based on the income reported on my tax return from two years ago, my husband and I are paying \$1,987.20 per year more than we should pay, based on my current income. So I filled out an application for the adjustment, then uploaded it with the necessary documentation.

**Time spent:** 3 hours, 37 minutes  
**Savings:** \$2,599.20

### Keep the momentum going.

The most delightful part of my day wasn’t how much cash I put in my pocket. It was how exhilarated I felt and motivated I was to keep the game going. On my next money-saving day, I’ll tackle my cable and internet bundle and my homeowners insurance.

“There’s very little downside to trying; at worst, you’ll break even,” says LendingTree’s Matt Schulz, author of *Ask Questions, Save Money, Make More*. At best, like me, your savings may run into the thousands. Not bad for a day’s work. ■

*Longtime journalist Diane Harris was formerly the top editor of Money magazine and deputy editor of Newsweek.*



**Jean Chatzky**  
TO THE RESCUE

## First Came Health Crises, Then the Debt

*A woman struggles to recover from a series of personal setbacks*



### THE PROBLEM

Yvette Aviles had strong finances: a home she owned, a growing salary and retirement savings on the rise. Five years ago, all that changed. Aviles, a human resources manager in Teaneck, New Jersey, took time off to recover from foot surgery and help her father, diagnosed with Parkinson's. On top of a pay cut when she returned to work was her own back surgery, plus home and car repairs. She tapped a \$50,000 home equity line of credit (HELOC), then ran up \$110,000 in credit card debt. Even after getting a higher-paying job, she struggled, raiding her IRA with early withdrawals. "I've always been the person who lent other people money," Aviles, 57 and single, told me through tears. "I've been living under severe stress."



Yvette Aviles was overwhelmed by her bills.



### THE ADVICE

Some debt problems can be solved by reining in spending and funneling the excess into a pay-down strategy. Balance transfer credit cards with a 0 percent introductory rate can also help. Neither worked for Aviles. Just making minimum payments on her cards was untenable, with their interest rates as high as 32 percent. And the 3 to 5 percent fee for balance transfers felt too expensive.

Another option was to file for bankruptcy. "Hard pass," Aviles said. She could also work with a debt

settlement firm. Under such a plan, you stop paying creditors, save up for a lump-sum payment, and offer to pay only part of what you owe in the hope that creditors will accept that. But your credit score tanks, creditors may refuse to settle, the industry is prone to scams, and the IRS treats forgiven debt as taxable income.

Not-for-profit credit counselors offer what's called a debt management plan (DMP). These are arrangements with credit card companies to lower interest rates and waive late and over-limit fees. You pay counselors, they pass the money along to your

creditors, and your cards are closed. It typically takes several years to get through a DMP successfully.

Aviles chose the DMP. I connected her with Marla Puckett, a credit counselor with 21 years of experience who works at the nonprofit Money Management International (MMI). Puckett started by gathering enough information on Aviles' living expenses, income and debts to confirm that at reduced interest rates, she would be able to make payments on an ongoing basis. The verdict: On a five-year plan, she could do it. MMI's DMP required a \$25 setup fee and an ongoing \$59 monthly charge, but it would reduce Aviles' monthly credit card payments from \$3,300 (her total minimum) to about \$2,100.

But Aviles still had no reserves for home maintenance and future emergencies. So we took a hard look at her house. She owed \$97,000, plus the \$50,000 HELOC, on a home that a local broker, Steven Finkelstein of Russo Real Estate, estimated would sell for at least \$420,000. After commissions, closing costs and moving, Aviles could clear about \$240,000. Excluding maintenance and upkeep, carrying the property was costing her a little over \$2,100 a month. For roughly the same amount, she could rent an apartment. Would she consider selling and using the equity to pay off the debt, replenish her emergency fund and give herself a fresh start?



### THE OUTCOME

Aviles signed the DMP and began making the reduced payments. She also got ready to list her house with Finkelstein and asked him to find her an apartment. "I love being in a house," she says. But citing the repairs and upkeep, she adds, "I think not having the burden is the thing I'll enjoy most." ■

**Want Jean Chatzky to write about helping you sort out your financial problem? Email [rescue@aarp.org](mailto:rescue@aarp.org).**



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## Being 60

“I have three words for you: mobility, mobility, mobility. Use it or lose it.

I’m not necessarily the most disciplined person in the world, especially when I’m working. Walking has become my default form of exercise. So that’s what I really try to focus on.”

—Actor **Oliver Platt**, 64, is featured prominently in *The Bear*, on Hulu. Read his interview with Gayle Jo Carter at [aarp.org/quickquestions](http://aarp.org/quickquestions).



DO YOU REMEMBER ...

### THE MOD SQUAD?

**THE YEAR:** 1968. I was 12, with hormones to spare and an insatiable TV habit. I was primed to fall in love with Peggy Lipton, who with Michael Cole and Clarence Williams III made up *The Mod Squad*. Their characters’ backstories fit the times. Linc Hayes was a Black man arrested during the Watts riots in Los Angeles; Pete Cochran was a hippie car thief who was disowned by his rich family; and Julie Barnes [sigh] was a willowy blonde who ran away from her prostitute mom. They were blackmailed into becoming undercover cops mingling with the counterculture. When evil establishment types manipulated good-hearted hippies into breaking the law, the Mods brought them to justice, often driving to the scene in Pete’s “woody” station wagon. I was entranced, and not just by Peggy’s adorable freckles. The show built episodes around abortion, PTSD and racism. In one episode, Linc gave Julie a playful kiss, an early interracial TV smooch. The show aired until 1973, paving the way for cultural bellwethers like *All in the Family* and *M\*A\*S\*H*; *21 Jump Street* basically stole its premise 15 years later. Peggy Lipton, alas, died in 2019. I still miss her. —Peter Moore

### BY THE NUMBERS TALK IT OUT!

And if you don’t? A new Japanese study shows a marked increase in dementia in older people who do not converse much—if at all—daily.

SOURCE: JOURNAL OF ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE, 2024



### FIX YOUR BODY



## Lower Blood Pressure With One Simple Move

OVER 60 PERCENT of Americans age 60 or older have high blood pressure.

There’s no cure for hypertension, but regular physical activity can be as effective as medication in managing it, according to Heidi Skolnik, an exercise physiologist at the Women’s Sports Medicine Center at Hospital for Special Surgery. One way to lower blood pressure stands out: isometric exercises, which call for tensing muscles and holding the position. The wall squat is an excellent example.

### HOW TO DO A WALL SQUAT

**1** Stand with your back pressed against a wall.



**2** Your feet should be shoulder-width apart.

**3** Lower yourself down to a squat position until your thighs are parallel to the floor and hold, keeping muscles engaged.



Skolnik recommends:

- Hold a wall squat for two minutes.
- Rest for two minutes.
- Repeat for a total of four rounds.

The routine takes about 15 minutes. Aim to do this three times a week in addition to your other exercise.

**PRO TIP:** Never hold your breath when doing these exercises!

—Barbara Hannah Grufferman, host of the *Age Better* podcast and author of *Love Your Age*



DON'T WAIT TO ...

# SET A GUINNESS WORLD RECORD (IN ICE SWIMMING!)



Don Winters breaks through

**T**HE GUINNESS BOOK always fascinated me, but some records are more respectable than others. I'm not so sure about somebody watching a movie 4,000 times or growing the longest fingernails. But the mountain climbing and running records, the athletic feats—those are impressive.

A few years ago, I started swimming in Watauga Lake across from the Baptist church in the East Tennessee mountains where I'm a pastor. I wanted to see how late into winter I could swim, and I got into December. I saw those Polar Bear swimmers in New York plunging into the ocean and thought, *If people up north can stand the cold, why can't we Appalachian people?*

Last year, I heard about the "ice mile" and decided to try it. You swim a mile, but the water needs to be below 41 degrees. You can't wear a wet suit—only a bathing suit and a swim cap. I'd been doing short dips in cold water, but now I started working my way up to 20 minutes, then 35 minutes, three days a week. With age, my joints were getting a little stiff, and I felt this type of exercise would help. What really kicked this into gear was when I saw that the world's oldest ice miler, a guy from Ireland, was 66 years and 20 days old. I said to my wife, Lena, "Hey, look at that! I'm 66 and 100 days old. I can beat this!"

Getting into Guinness is an intense

process. You need to register and get guidelines. They told me I had to document the swim on video three different ways and get certified witnesses. My daughter was a college journalist, so she called the local newspapers. But it was on me to get in shape and practice.

People thought I was nuts. They called me the Watauga Lake Lunatic. I didn't care. I was just thankful the good Lord's given me the health and strength to get through this.

It's not until around Christmas that the water gets cold enough, and by January 23, the day of my swim, there was ice on the lake. Let me tell you, when you jump into icy water without a shirt on, it hurts.

You go through what's called cold shock. The first five, 10 minutes, your body's absolutely screaming at you. But somehow you acclimate. It helped to recite the Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm.

When things got really tough, I confessed all my sins. It was brutal, but after 53 minutes, the record was mine.

Lena and I have three adult children and 10 grandchildren and so many amazing memories and blessings. But you never know what life will bring. My kids and grandkids walk around now saying, "My pa set a Guinness record!" I gotta tell you, that sounds pretty good.

—Don Winters, as told to David Hochman



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LIFE 6.0

## You Kids Get Onto My Lawn!

*Staying engaged through the youths in the nabe*

BY JOHN FICARRA

**O**NE AFTERNOON a few weeks ago, my doorbell rang. I peered out the half-moon window at the top of my door but didn't see anyone. It was only when I stood on my tiptoes and looked downward that I saw my visitors, Nico and Ella, the 7-year-old twins from across the street, their mom in tow. Looking like characters from a Norman Rockwell painting, the twins held in their tiny hands a cardboard case filled with chocolate candy bars. It was fundraising time at their school. I quickly invited them in.

Nico and Ella were born about a month after their parents moved in, the first children in my neighborhood in 25 years. Watching from my deck, I saw them grow from being carried in their car seats, to taking their first steps, to slowly meandering up the hill to nursery school every

morning, returning clutching their latest piece of artwork.

Over time they began to recognize me. I went from being the bearded stranger to be avoided at all costs to the nice old man in the yellow house who invites them in to play with his cat.

Slightly up the street live two princesses, Mia, 8½, and Gianna, 7. Friendly and verbal, they always greet me with a big hello. I usually ask about school, their weekend plans or if either of them is married yet.

Often I'll pass by their house and see a hopscotch court drawn in chalk on the sidewalk, or flowers in bright pastels bedazzling their front steps. I stop, look and smile, sometimes even tearing up, lost in memories of my own daughter when she was their age.

While I was recovering from heart surgery last year, homemade get-well cards arrived from both girls. I still have them.

In contrast to many older Americans, I love having kids in the neighborhood, the joyful innocence they exude, the continuation of life they represent. They are a reminder to me of my own mortality and my obligation to help the next generation succeed, if only through example and generosity of spirit.

When my daughter was born, she was the only child in a neighborhood consisting of four couples over the age of 60. Fortunately, they all embraced her, becoming eight wonderful auxiliary grandparents.

I have many friends who have moved to adult communities partially to escape the chaos of kids. Their children grown, they now want some peace and quiet in their lives. That is their right. They've earned it. I understand and respect it.

But it's not for me.

I choose to remain an active participant in the circle of life, taking delight in its newest members—despite some of the annoyances and inconveniences they may bring—and to pay forward some of the love and enrichment my older neighbors brought into my daughter's life.

I figure once I'm gone, I'll have all of eternity to lie in quietness.

My hope is as Nico and Ella and Mia and Gianna grow older, they will remember me fondly as that friendly guy who lived across the street—rather than the character David Letterman used to occasionally invoke, the grouchy old neighbor who's constantly sticking his head out the window and barking, “*You kids get outta my yard!*”

*Freelance writer John Ficarra is the former editor of Mad Magazine. He lives in Staten Island, New York.*



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# WRINKLE BLASTERS: 8 PROCEDURES THAT SMOOTH AND TIGHTEN SKIN

IF YOUR MOISTURIZERS and serums aren't doing enough to give you the complexion you want, you might be considering a medical treatment. But which ones really work, and how much do they cost? We asked noted New York City dermatologic surgeon Dendy E. Engelman, M.D., to run down the options, although only your doctor can tell you whether one of them would work for you. —Anissa Gabbara

## DERMAL FILLER



**WHAT IT IS:** Injections to plump the skin, reduce fine lines and wrinkles, or subtly alter facial structure. Hyaluronic acid is commonly used.

**HOW LONG IT LASTS:** Six months to two years

**PROS:** Generally safe and low risk

**CONS:** Temporary bruising and swelling. May cause facial imbalance and lumps under the skin if it's done improperly.

**AVERAGE COST:** \$1,000–\$1,400

## MICRODERMABRASION



**WHAT IT IS:** Gentle exfoliation to remove dead skin cells, refine texture and even skin tone

**HOW LONG IT LASTS:** About one month

**PROS:** Noninvasive, generally safe and relatively quick

**CONS:** Can take a few treatments to see optimal results. There's also a risk of damaging the skin barrier.

**AVERAGE COST:** \$75–\$300 per session

## MICRONEEDLING



**WHAT IT IS:** A tool that pierces the skin with ultra-fine needles to stimulate collagen production

**HOW LONG IT LASTS:** Four to six weeks

**PROS:** Minimally invasive. Strengthens the skin barrier and minimizes scars and wrinkles.

**CONS:** Pain, sensitivity, redness, patchiness and bruising may occur.

**AVERAGE COST:** \$100–\$700 per session

## DERMAPLANING



**WHAT IT IS:** A scalpel or an instrument similar to an electric shaver that scrapes the skin to remove dead cells, sun-damaged skin and “peach fuzz”

**HOW LONG IT LASTS:** Three to four weeks

**PROS:** Noninvasive. Brighter and smoother skin can be seen immediately.

**CONS:** May take a few sessions to see a reduction in dark spots and other signs of aging.

**AVERAGE COST:** \$100–\$200 per session

## LASER RESURFACING



**WHAT IT IS:** A controlled laser injury that smooths and plumps the skin by triggering the body's natural healing process

**HOW LONG IT LASTS:** Three to five years

**PROS:** Can reduce acne and improve skin texture

**CONS:** May cause redness, sensitivity, flaking and peeling. May not be safe for people with darker skin tones.

**AVERAGE COST:** \$500–\$2,500

## CHEMICAL PEELS



**WHAT IT IS:** Chemical exfoliant applied to break down dead skin cells and reveal fresher skin

**HOW LONG IT LASTS:** Months to years (the deeper the peel, the longer it tends to last)

**PROS:** Can reveal a brighter complexion and address acne, aging and uneven skin tone

**CONS:** Burning, redness and sensitivity may occur.

**AVERAGE COST:** \$150–\$800

## RADIO FREQUENCY



**WHAT IT IS:** Electromagnetic radiation delivered to the dermal layer to stimulate collagen production and tighten the skin

**HOW LONG IT LASTS:** One to three years

**PROS:** Can reduce fine lines and wrinkles

**CONS:** May not be suitable for people with darker skin tones, as it can cause damage. Skin burning can also occur.

**AVERAGE COST:** \$1,000–\$4,000

## PLATELET-RICH PLASMA INJECTION



**WHAT IT IS:** Also known as a “vampire facial.” Plasma from the patient's own blood is injected into the face to accelerate skin healing and boost the production of collagen.

**HOW LONG IT LASTS:** One to two years

**PROS:** Can smooth and plump skin and reduce acne scarring

**CONS:** Requires drawing blood

**AVERAGE COST:** \$500–\$2,500



Samuel L. Jackson,  
photographed for  
AARP in Los Angeles  
on June 21, 2024



# Samuel L. Jackson's Next Act

*The superstar actor riffs on staying busy, becoming Gabonese, the art of quiet giving—and being forced to do stupid s---*

**By Carvell Wallace**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOE PUGLIESE

**O**N A QUIET morning in a conference room on Hollywood Boulevard, I await the arrival of Samuel L. Jackson. It is a little like waiting for the president of the United States; someone from an advance team announces his imminent arrival, as though Air Force One is touching down. When he sweeps into the room—tall and magnetic, with a confident walk and resplendent in a satiny blue Adidas tracksuit, a white T-shirt and a bright red bucket hat—he seems to change the quality of the air by his presence.

He and I, two Black men, are meeting up for a work engagement today, on Juneteenth, the irony of which does not escape us. “I’m supposed to be somewhere barbecuing,” he chides me in mock accusation. I try to deflect. “Hey, listen, I didn’t choose this date!” which, of course, is true. With celebrities of his stature, you sort of take the dates their teams offer. “Yes, you did, you wanted this,” he teases me, deadpan.

And it was here that I understood one thing about Samuel L. Jackson. If he makes a joke, it’s because it’s something that maybe needs saying. In other words, he’s a little impish.

Indeed, some of Jackson’s best work is arranged around this very specific quality of messing with you, making you wonder how serious he is and what exactly he’s serious about. Consider his standout performance as the wry but murderous hit man Jules Winnfield in 1994’s *Pulp Fiction* who baffles would-be victims with a series of non sequiturs and a Bible verse before committing the awful deed. Or as the sinister arms dealer Ordell Robbie in Quentin Tarantino’s follow-up, *Jackie Brown*,

whose affable but subtly mendacious smooth talking to his supposed friend, the thief Beaumont Livingston, right before he kills him goes down as one of the more chilling setups in cinema history.

In fact, there are very few actors who can titrate the qualities of menace and charisma the way Jackson can. In his latest projects, the playwright August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson* on Netflix and the Peacock limited series *Fight Night: The Million Dollar Heist*, he leverages this quality to reach two stellar but quite opposite performances. In *The Piano Lesson*, he reprises the role of the quiet patriarch Doaker, a part he played in the Broadway production two years ago, directed by his wife of 44 years, LaTanya Richardson Jackson.

In *Fight Night*, Jackson plays real-life underworld boss Frank Moten, who leads with menace, but you never quite know when or where it's coming from. Sporting a small Afro streaked with gray and a pair of throwback '70s glasses (has any performer made better use of the hair and wardrobe department than Jackson?), Moten threatens with a steady ease that makes us feel the existential dread with which Kevin Hart's fast-talking protagonist—a small-time hustler who gets in way over his head—must contend.

Jackson's oeuvre is as varied as the hairstyles he's sported in his films. He's worked with great directors—Tarantino, Martin Scorsese, Steven Soderbergh, George Lucas, Milos Forman, Paul Thomas Anderson, to name a few—and has held his own on-screen with such prominent actors as Dustin Hoffman, Joe Pesci, Geena Davis, Leonardo DiCaprio, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee and Jeff Goldblum.

But he has little shame about doing what might generously be called lighter fare. His list of one-star movies is longer than most actors' entire IMDb pages. He famously agreed to do *Snakes on a Plane* because he liked the title. It could be said that he picks scripts like a 10-year-old picking out candy at the concessions counter, with joy, abandon and, I can't help notice, a fair bit of gratitude.

**I**N SEGREGATED Chattanooga, Tennessee, Jackson was the son of a factory worker and quickly learned the rules of the world. He knew that there were people who meant him harm because of the color of his skin, and he adapted both his razor-sharp wit and constant vigilance accordingly. He got interested in acting in the middle grades and, around the same time, learned that his soon-to-be trademark utterance,



“motherf---er,” actually helped him ease his embarrassing stutter. Jackson attended Morehouse College, where he quickly joined a group of student radicals, who in 1969 held members of the board of trustees captive, leading to a 29-hour siege. Jackson was expelled for two years, but his fate was redirected when the FBI told his mother that her child was mixed up in some heavy stuff and that if she wanted him to live, she had to get him out of Atlanta. Jackson was summarily shipped off to live with relatives in Los Angeles.

When the acting bug bit him, he relocated to New York City, where he fell in with other ambitious Black actors, including his future wife, Denzel Washington and Laurence Fishburne. Jackson's career

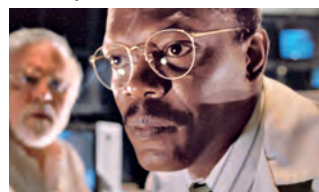
Previous spread: Producer: Michael Klein at Graceland Pictures; with: Jackson; Photo: Michael Klein at Graceland Pictures; Wooden ladder: groomer; Autumn Moudirle at the Wall Group

## Samuel L. Jackson's 15 Most Iconic Roles

**Goodfellas (1990)** Oversleep on Martin Scorsese's mobbed-up mean streets and it could cost you your life. RIP, Stacks.

**Jungle Fever (1991)** Jackson's big breakout at 42, courtesy of Spike Lee; wins best supporting actor at Cannes. Next stop, stardom.

**Jurassic Park (1993)** The chain-smoking brainiac engineer at the deadly dino-themed park. “Hold on to your butts.”



“I know a lot of people think I’m volatile. I guess I am. But I have a great compassion for the people that I see who are less fortunate.”

stalled when his drug and alcohol use reached a fever pitch, and in 1990, he found himself, at 42 years old, shipped off once again, this time to a rehab facility in upstate New York. He hasn’t looked back: His first role upon leaving rehab was as the crack-addicted Gator in Spike Lee’s film *Jungle Fever*, a performance impactful enough that the Cannes Film Festival revived the best supporting actor award just to give it to him.

From there the kid from Chattanooga, simply put, went on to become the highest-grossing leading man in movie history. [See “15 Most Iconic Roles,” page 34.] His credits, remarkably, number north of 250, and his movies are responsible for a staggering \$28 billion at the box office worldwide, not to mention a BAFTA, an honorary Academy Award and Tony and Emmy nods. Now 75 years old, the man is still youthful and spry, gracious and quick-witted, kept in shape by a strict diet and a regimen of golf, Pilates and acupuncture. His activism has morphed into the quieter type, and he is generous with his good fortune (he and his wife donated \$5 million to refurbish the fine arts building at Spelman College, for example; she is an alumna) but prefers to keep most of his generosity behind the scenes. I settle into a conversation with Jackson about his latest projects, his experiences with aging, his long marriage and exactly how he manages to stay so energetic.

**Q. Fewer and fewer people are alive who experienced segregation firsthand. What was that like?**

It was a village. I could go to different places in town and be safe because people knew who I was. And when we looked at the dominant culture, we knew how they felt about us, and they knew how we felt about them. And they were safer with us than we were with them.

When I was going to school, teachers often came to your house, so that they’d know where you came from. And they knew I had to go to college. That was the expectation.

When other kids were diagramming sentences, I was reading literature, because they knew I could diagram a sentence. I knew what a subject and a predicate were and all that other stuff. Or when I was in a math class, and the other kids were doing simple division, I was doing something else because the teachers knew I knew it. They protected us, and they gave us the information we needed to go into the world. They gave us our history too. Though I already knew what slavery was, and how it was, because my grandmother was one generation removed from slavery. Her mom was a slave. So when she talked to me about slavery and white people, it was painted with another kind of brush.

**Q. Tell me more about her.**

She worked for white people. She was raising white people’s kids, and they used to give me, like, a gift on Christmas, or some s---, you know? One year, I didn’t write a thank-you card fast enough, and they asked for one. They said, “Pearl, did Sam get that gift we gave?”

She’s like, “Yes, he did.”

“Well, I ain’t got no thank-you card. You all raising that boy right?”

She took her apron off, left and never went back to work. They came by the house every weekend for almost a year saying, “Pearl, we’re so sorry, please come back.” She didn’t look at them and never went back to work. My grandfather told her she didn’t have to work no more, and she didn’t.

So segregation, for me, is painted in those lessons that I got from my grandmother and my grandfather, how to survive in a world that was very, very dangerous—for insignificant offenses.

**Q. You’re a citizen of Gabon. How did that come about?**

When we were doing the documentary *Enslaved* about the ships that didn’t make it, my genetic ancestry came back as being Gabonese, and then my tribal destination came up. I went back to Gabon, and they had a whole initiation ceremony into the tribe, and they gave me a passport.

**Q. How was that for you?**

It was moving. I guess you don’t know what survivor’s remorse is

Additional photo and wardrobe credits on page 78

**Pulp Fiction (1994)**

Three things about Jules Winnfield: likes tasty burgers, has strong opinions on foot massages, cites Ezekiel.



**Die Hard With a Vengeance (1995)**

Sometimes even John McClane needs a partner, but that partner doesn’t have to be happy about it.



**A Time to Kill (1996)**

“Yes, they deserve to die and I hope they burn in hell!” The defense rests.



**Eve’s Bayou (1997)**

Kasi Lemmon’s Southern Gothic lets Jackson be very good at being a very bad doctor.

until you're standing where the slave ships had been sitting in the ocean just looking at the horizon. But it was crazy, too, because I met the chief of the Benga tribe, and he looked just like my best friend from New York. I looked down and I saw girls that I'd had relationships with from high school or wherever, and I saw me in different places. So it's a deep thing to find out that you belong somewhere.

**Q. You mention survivor's remorse. I was thinking about sobriety and what it means to turn your life around—to basically be living what feels like a second life. Talk a little bit about that decision to make a change in your life and what of that you carry with you today.**

I was tired. I was whipped, because of that first time I appeared in *Piano Lesson*, in 1990. I was Charles Dutton's understudy. I had to go to work every night and listen to him do the role that I had originated at Yale Repertory Theater in 1987, and it was making me crazy.

I don't know about deciding to get sober, because I was trying to get high. My wife and daughter found me lying on the floor. My best friend from high school was a drug counselor and my wife called him, and I was in rehab the next day. I didn't go kicking and screaming because I was tired.

I had a very palpable life change because of it. I played Gator, and then Whoopi Goldberg talked these people into creating this award at the Cannes Film Festival—best supporting actor—for the performance.

And then I got the call, because I always said I was never coming to Hollywood until they called me, and I got the call, and I ended up doing *White Sands*. I got another call to come to Hollywood and meet Harrison Ford and see if he was cool, and I did *Patriot Games* and then got a three-picture deal at Morgan Creek. Another two-picture deal at Paramount, and then *Pulp Fiction*. So my life changed significantly when I got clean.

In my mind, if I pick drugs and alcohol up, all this is going away. Because that's what kept me from getting here in the first place. I started to realize, like, *Yeah, maybe your eyes were a little too red when you went to that audition. Maybe you did smell like beer, you know? When you were smoking that weed on your way to the audition, got in there*

*and thought you turned it out, maybe you didn't.*

So I pray every day—I roll out of bed and get on my knees before I do anything else: “God, keep the desire to drink and drug from me this day.” That's all I need to say about that.

**Q. You've had a few second and third chances—I'm thinking of what happened at Morehouse. How do you experience and express gratitude around that?**

I have a different understanding of what my obligation is now. Why was I spared? Why was I given the opportunity to go from that to this? A lot of the things that LaTanya and

I contribute to, or I support in other ways, are opportunities for people to get second chances like that.

Like our support of the Children's Defense Fund—understanding that service is part of what we're here for and whatever that saying is, “people that have, they have to give back.” I don't know if people have to, because some people don't get it, you know. But I'm glad to be able to do it.

I know a lot of people think I'm volatile. I guess I am. But I have a great compassion for the people that I see who are less fortunate, and that's not just Black people. It's everybody.

**Q. This character of Doaker in *The Piano Lesson* was so interesting to me. You always want him to do more than he does. How did you come to understand his motivations? How did you make sense of him and his choices?**

He's like my grandfather. I was the only child in a house with three women—my mom, my grandmother and my aunt. My grandfather just didn't intervene because he knew he wasn't going to win. He let things play out. And when they got through with me, my grandfather would sit me down and tell me, “You know, look, do this, do that.” [Doaker] says something about that very same thing, about not engaging when people are raising a kid.

**Q. You also have *Fight Night: The Million-Dollar Heist* coming out soon. Talk a little bit about what it was like to work with another all-star cast.**

They're good people. I watched *Empire* a couple of seasons, so I know what Terrence [Howard] and Taraji



### 9 Things You Didn't Know About Samuel L. Jackson

For a video of the actor's less-known quirks and history, scan this code with your phone camera or visit [aarp.org/samuelsjackson](http://aarp.org/samuelsjackson).



**Jackie Brown (1997)** Jackson soars in his post-*Pulp* reunion with Quentin Tarantino. Love the long hair. Wait, did he just shoot Robert De Niro?!

**Deep Blue Sea (1999)** Ladies and gents, I give you the most unexpected (and most enjoyable) death scene in shark movie history.



**Star Wars (1999-2005)** Mace Windu—hands down, the coolest member of the Jedi High Council.

**Unbreakable (2000)** This may be M. Night Shyamalan's best, with Jackson as the very breakable villain.





Jackson appeared in *The Piano Lesson* on Broadway and in film.

[Henson's] kind of chemistry or energy was. [For more on Henson, see page 7.] I watched Kevin's rise. But one of the first things I said to Kevin when we had the initial conversation about what was going on in *Fight Night*, I said, "Every time you see me, you got to think I'm going to kill you."

**Q. It's going to be tense.**

So let's get tense with it. And he bought in from the beginning. I did have to let go of some things to make the work OK, because, you know, I don't do stupid s--- in movies, but they had me doing stupid s--- sometimes.

**Q. Like what?**

You know, I kill people in front of people that aren't my people. Smart gangsters don't do that. But OK, I said, "This is what you all want me to do, right? I'm just going to get right in my mind to do it." And I made it work.

**Q. Do you feel old for your age, young for your age?**

I pay no attention to that. I mean, I do pay attention to my

body because I've had things happen to it. I have to work at being flexible and sustaining myself, making sure I'm upright and not kind of bent, you know? So I have to think about those things, and I work on them.

**Q. What kind of stuff do you do?**

I use Pilates on a mat with exercise bands and a Pilates reformer machine. I watch my diet; I haven't had beef since October. I shot a movie in Montana and didn't have a steak.

**Q. That's a feat. Do you miss it?**

No, not at all. Way back in the '60s, me and my wife decided we won't eat pork. I was like, OK, fine. She used to tell my daughter that she was allergic

to pork. Then my daughter left home, and when she got to college, she's like, "I ate some bacon and nothing happened."

**Q. And you've been married to LaTanya for 44 years. How have you kept it going?**

A lot of tolerance, because everybody's got flaws, and not giving up when it would be easy to give up. I've done s--- in my marriage that's crazy, you know? She has, too, in her head, or whatever in reality, but you got to go, "Is that a breakup offense?" Or is it just that we need to spend a little time together and get some understanding about it?

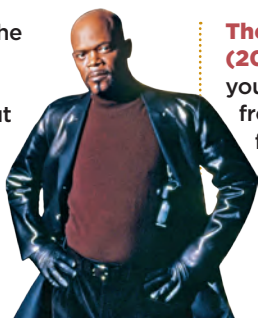
Or there are certain things that you learn to ignore about people—that she's learned to ignore about me.

And one of the things she had to accept is that I'm going to go to work. I'm going to go to work all the time until, you know, it's time. ■

*Writer and podcaster Carvell Wallace has written for Esquire, GQ, The New York Times Magazine, The New Yorker and other publications. His memoir Another Word for Love—which The New York Times praised for its "great beauty, teeth and vulnerability"—was published this past spring by MacMillan FSG.*

David Lee/Netflix

**Shaft (2000)** The baton is passed from Richard Roundtree. "Shut your mouth, I'm talkin' 'bout Shaft."



**The Incredibles (2004)** How do you keep Jackson from letting the f-bombs fly? Cast him in a Pixar kiddie movie as the heroic Frozone.



**Coach Carter (2005)** Want to stand out from all those inspirational inner-city school flicks? Just cast Jackson in the lead.

**Marvel Cinematic Universe (2008–present)** Meet Nick Fury, Cal Ripken of the MCU: 16 years, 10 movies, three TV series. —Chris Nashawaty



# Finding Your Family

Meet three people who explored their ancestral roots and discovered unknown relatives **By Ken Budd**

SPECIAL  
DIGITAL  
BONUS  
ISSUE

When the blockbuster TV miniseries *Roots* premiered in 1977, it fueled an explosion in genealogy research. Decades later, that interest has only grown, powered by easy DNA tests, access to online records and shows like *Finding Your Roots* on PBS (AARP is a sponsor). The global genealogy services and products market was valued at \$5.4 billion in 2023, and it'll reach \$15.8 billion by 2033, according to market research firm Fact.MR.

That includes spending on travel, an ancestry industry in itself. Numerous tour companies cater to that hunger to visit the homeland—planning the logistics, conducting research, even helping track down relatives.

For many Americans, visiting their native lands is not only an emotional quest but a logical step in their family-tree research. They want to learn what they can't at home, walk where their ancestors walked and meet relatives they never knew existed. Here are three travelers who did just that.

Illustrations by Alice Molton (2); Dana Sabre. Opposite: Courtesy Jon Arakaki (4); Map illustration by Ruby Taylor

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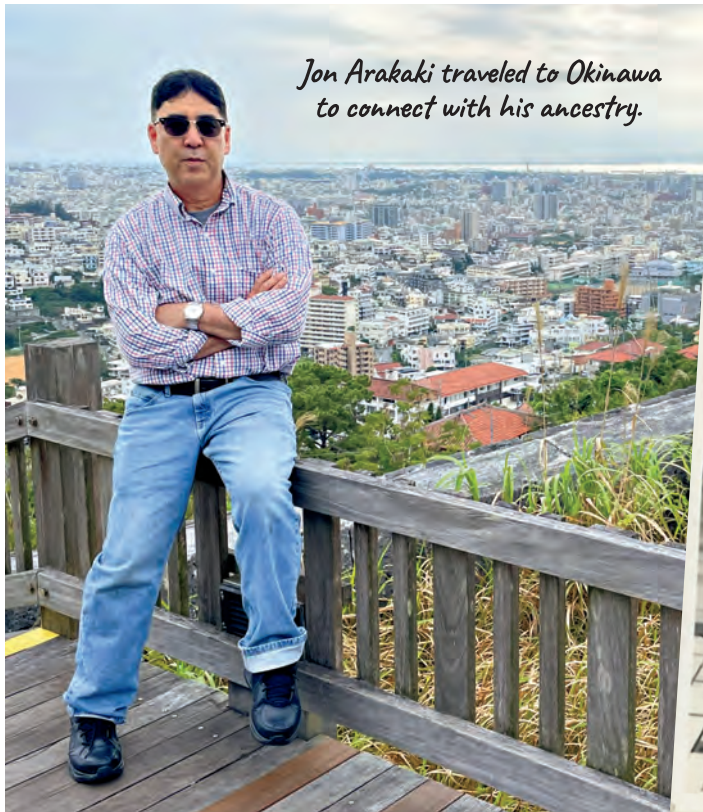
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*Jon Arakaki traveled to Okinawa to connect with his ancestry.*



*This image led him to his relatives.*

OREGON ••••• JAPAN

# ‘They bombarded me with questions.’



**Jon Arakaki, 60**

**Current residence:** North Plains, Oregon

**Connection:** His grandparents left Okinawa for Hawai‘i in 1906.

© **GENEALOGY BEGAN** to interest me in 2022. I started looking up information on my grandparents in Hawai‘i, building my family tree and collecting documents.

In April 2024, I traveled to Japan on an Ancestry/Kensington Tours Personal Heritage Journey with a genealogist, Yuzo Ochiai. We walked through my maternal grandmother’s city of Itoman with a photo of a dental office and

a prewar address we thought might be connected to my family. The building was gone.

We entered a hardware store and shared our information. The owner pulled up a map and said, “Go to this address and somebody should be able to help you.” No one was home, but three women came out from across the street. One of their husbands called a man who used



*Arakaki with relatives from his father’s side in the Kuba Community Center in Nakagusuku, Japan*



to live there and told him, “I’ve got a genealogist with a guy from Oregon who thinks he’s related to you.” When we met, his sister was there too. We discovered that their dad and my mom are first cousins.

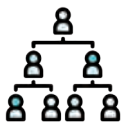
I had a picture of two parents and two young children. The back of the photo said the baby was named Junko. “That’s me!” the sister said. It was surreal: A few hours before, she was at home, minding her own business, and then she’s meeting a relative. It was like a reality show.

I didn’t consider how meeting my distant relatives would impact them. They bombarded me with questions. Even when the genealogist wasn’t available to interpret, we communicated and joked by pointing. It was like being with my cousins in Hawai‘i.

## Tips for Planning a Successful Genealogy Trip

### TO LEARN FAMILY HISTORY

► **Create a family tree.** You can find free templates online from sources such as the National Genealogical Society ([ngsgenealogy.org](http://ngsgenealogy.org)) and the National Archives ([archives.gov](http://archives.gov)). Senior Planet from AARP also offers genealogy courses. Go to [seniorplanet.org](http://seniorplanet.org).



► **Interview relatives.** The best starting point for learning family history is, yes, your family. Get info from parents, cousins, siblings and even family friends. Focus on four key items: names, dates, places and relationships.

► **Sift through closets.** Useful sources of information are lurking in your home, including family Bibles, newspaper clippings, military certificates, birth and death certificates, marriage licenses, naturalization certificates, diaries, letters, baby books and other documents, the National Archives suggests.

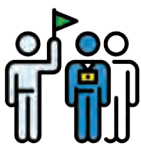
► **Take a genetic test.** To really learn your origins, test your DNA through companies such as AncestryDNA, 23andMe or FamilyTreeDNA. The results are accurate and sometimes surprising.



► **Start digging.** Top research options include Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, the National Archives and the Ellis Island Passenger Search database ([heritage.statueofliberty.org/passenger](http://heritage.statueofliberty.org/passenger)).

### WHEN TRAVELING ABROAD

► **Consider a tour company.** Those that specialize in genealogy trips, such as African Ancestry, Family Tree Tours and Kensington Tours, will not only book your hotel and manage your transportation but will also provide genealogical research. Debra Wolfe [page 41] says that Family Tree Tours found some ancestral homes in Germany that “I would not have found on my own.”



► **Bring photos.** Meeting a relative? Bring family photos and a copy of your family tree (both to share and to fill in the blanks). Family members are often as interested in you as you are in them.



Terri Reshard with her tour group in Sierra Leone

○ FLORIDA . . . . ○ SIERRA LEONE

## ‘Sometimes I was in awe; sometimes I was in tears.’



**Terri Reshard, 67**

**Current residence:** Niceville, Florida  
**Connection:**

A genetic test revealed her roots in the West African nation.

○ **MY KIDS GAVE** me an African Ancestry DNA test for a Christmas present in 2022. It showed that I’m from the Temne people in Sierra Leone. I was so excited, and in April 2023, I took a two-week tour with African Ancestry. Twelve of us were in the group: Some were Temne; others were from the Mende people.

The trip was profound. Sometimes I was in awe; sometimes I was in tears. We held a memorial on the shores of Bunce Island, where ships brought in and shipped out slaves. We dressed in white and stood in silence. Some prayed. Most of the slaves were shipped to South Carolina and Georgia, and I felt a connection: My mother was from South Carolina.

We met the Temne on a trip to Tasso Island. The ladies and children sang welcome songs as we left the boat, and we sat under a wide, beautiful tree. The chief attended, and we were inducted into the tribe.

I wanted to join the Tasso Island community long term. I’m learning the language, and I am now a chieftain. My title is *ya bomposseh*, which I have been told means “woman chief.” I’ll work with the head chief to help women and girls in the villages. My daughter and I returned to Tasso in November 2023 and brought food and baby formula. Now that I’m retired, I’d love to go back once a year. I don’t feel like a visitor there. I feel at home.



# 'I feel like I have a bigger family now.'



Debra Wolfe with her newfound Gensheimer relatives



**Debra Wolfe, 65**

**Current residence:** Fort Wayne, Indiana

**Connection:** Wolfe's maternal ancestors hailed from Amelsbüren, a small town in northwestern Germany. Her paternal ancestors were also from Germany. They all arrived in the United States in 1847.



Wolfe's cousin's farmhouse in Amelsbüren

ancestors came from. Family Tree Tours handled the logistics, helped with my research and found relatives. In the town of Offenbach an der Queich, I met about a dozen fifth cousins from the Gensheimer family, on my father's side, at the community hall. The mayor attended and gave us a tour. Three different Gensheimer families live there. My research showed

IN MAY 2023, my cousin welcomed me and my husband to his farmhouse in Amelsbüren. He held a round tray with tiny shot glasses and caramel liqueur. He couldn't speak English—our guides translated—but he toasted us, welcoming us to the family. We came here because I've researched my family history for over 40 years, and I'd exhausted the records at home. I wanted to see where our

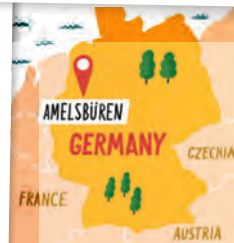
they're all related, which they didn't know.

Throughout the trip, I learned about my family. I received names and charts. I saw houses where my maternal and paternal ancestors lived. I learned that my cousin—the one who served us caramel liqueur—lives and farms on ancestral land, as our family has lived and farmed there for centuries. I learned that my maternal ancestors were in Amelsbüren before 1500. I discovered that one cousin on my paternal side works for the mayor, one is an elected official and other family members own a winery. I've been corresponding with some of my German cousins since our vacation, and we've exchanged names, dates and photos. I feel like I have a bigger family now.

As I walked through my ancestors' villages and met relatives, I felt awe and gratitude and amazement at their hospitality for someone they'd just met. And I felt happy. I was like a sponge, taking it all in. ■

*Ken Budd is a former executive editor for AARP THE MAGAZINE. He has also written for National Geographic Traveler, Travel + Leisure, Smithsonian magazine and other publications.*

Wolfe's souvenirs from her trip to Germany





# The Bravest *of the Brave*

Interviews by A.J. BAIME

The Vietnam War was nearing a painful end 50 years ago.

But the war that divided a generation also provided stories of the sacrifice and courage of the roughly 2.7 million Americans who served there.

Veterans of the fighting in Southeast Asia are in their 70s or older now. They endured disdain after returning from the war, and many have wrestled with physical and psychological problems since, ranging from exposure to Agent Orange to



post-traumatic stress disorder.

As a Veterans Day tribute to those who served in Vietnam, we've talked to some of the bravest of the brave—the 268 men who received the Congressional Medal of Honor for extraordinary gallantry. We also examined what life has been like after the Medal of Honor. While their deeds are exceptional, their lives reflect much of what happened to the men and women who answered the call to serve in Vietnam.

## “I Had to Go Get My Brother”



**Sammy Lee Davis, 77**  
Indianapolis

**I WAS BORN** in Dayton, Ohio. My dad was in the military. I joined the Army in 1966, and I remember stepping off the airplane in Vietnam. It was nice and cool in the plane, and it was 100 degrees outside. Stepping off the airplane, we soldiers looked at each other in amazement.

On the night of November 18, 1967, I was with Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Artillery, 9th Infantry Division, patrolling a firebase. We were told we were going to get hit that night, and the battle started at 2 a.m. There was a river, and we saw the enemy coming toward us on the other side, shooting at us. The Viet Cong fired an RPG [rocket-propelled grenade] to hit our cannon, and the explosion threw me, unconscious, back into my foxhole. They thought I was dead. My ears were ringing, and I couldn't hear much. When I came to, I could see the enemy running toward me, and I did my job as a soldier. I picked up my M16 and started firing.

That's when one of our guys, Wendell Holloway, of Stockton, California, waved his hat at me from the other side of the river, shouting, “Don't shoot, I'm a GI!” He screamed, “Come get me!” My back was broken, my ribs were crushed and I'd been shot in the right leg with an AK-47. But I had to go get my brother, because he would have done the same for me. I swam across the river, and when I got there, there were three men—not just Wendell—all wounded, one unconscious. I used an air mattress to help get us all back to the other side. I dragged everyone back across the river, and when I got there, my guys helped get everyone out. We all survived.

When I woke up in a hospital in Japan, I'd been unconscious for a few days. General William Westmoreland was standing beside my bed. He had some 30 beehives [pieces of shrapnel] in his hand that a surgeon had removed from my body. He said, “Son, we're going to retire you from the Army and send you home.” But I didn't want to go home. General Westmoreland understood. I needed closure—I needed it for my soul to be OK. So I went back to Vietnam.

I set foot back on American soil on March 13, 1968. You have probably seen footage of the ceremony when I received the Medal of Honor. In the movie *Forrest Gump*, when Forrest is receiving his medal, that is my actual film footage. They put Tom Hanks' face over mine. Every time I see *Forrest Gump*, it brings back memories.

I have often told people that if I hadn't received the Medal of Honor, I'd probably have become a cow thief or something. In other words, I probably would have been doing bad things. But because of the Medal of Honor and the respect that I have for it, I didn't want to do anything that would cause disrespect to it. It kept me doing right. In fact, when I learned that I was going



**Davis (and opposite) getting the Medal of Honor from President Lyndon B. Johnson**

to receive this medal, I thought right then, *I'm going to have to be good*. And I started trying to do better and better at everything I did. It worked.

After three years in the Army, I was medically retired. I couldn't do anything without hurting really badly, but I knew I had to have a job. I went to work for Champion Laboratories in West Salem, Illinois, a company owned by Andy Granatelli, who was a great man. I don't believe he was a veteran, but he acted like he was a veteran. [Readers may have heard of Granatelli, who was a legendary race car driver, CEO of STP and a major sponsor of Indianapolis 500 race cars.]

At the same time, the Medal of

Honor has become a way of life. It's a brotherhood. We all know what each other went through, and we encourage each other to stand up and be proud. The Medal of Honor has taught me how to express love for America and love for our fellow man.

I wear the medal when I am doing speaking engagements. I try not to preach politics, but I want every American to stand up for what they believe is right in their heart. I always open up to questions and answers, and I have found that I enjoy that most of all, especially when I am speaking to schools. There are some great questions you get from 10-year-olds.

When people ask me how the Medal of Honor changed my life, the first thing I say is that it kept me doing right my whole life, staying straight. It made me stand taller and walk prouder, always. Whenever I talk with people, I tell them the same thing: No matter what you're faced with, you don't lose until you quit trying.

## African American Green Beret Finally Receives the Highest Honor



**Paris Davis, 85**  
Alexandria, Virginia

**T**HE SPECIAL Forces was fairly new at the time. It was a small group, formed to be the eyes and ears of America in battle, and to help keep us safe. When I started my training, I had already gone through Army Ranger and Airborne school. Earning my way into the Special Forces was no bowl of cherries.

We did a lot of classroom work, we jumped out of airplanes, and we did all kinds of things with weapons. A lot of people did not like the idea of me joining the Special Forces, and they were hoping I wouldn't make it. But I wouldn't back away. The more I did to prove that I could make it as a

Green Beret, the stronger I became, the more friends I made and the easier it became. According to an article I saw in *The New York Times*, I was one of the first Black soldiers in the Special Forces.

In the spring of 1965, I was 26 years old and stationed in South Vietnam. We found out that there were a couple of places where the Viet Cong were sending troops down to about 25 kilometers from where we were located. We were going to have a showdown. The big battle at Bong Son was the result. It lasted a little over two days—mainly June 17 and 18, 1965.

I was with the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, and the commander of a small operation called Team A-321. There were four Americans in that operation—myself and three others. We were there training a force of local volunteers from Vietnam. The battle was on. According to my official citation, “Captain Davis’s advice and leadership allowed the company to gain the tactical advantage, allowing it to surprise the unsuspecting enemy force and kill approximately 100 enemy soldiers.”

Following an ambush, I had a situation where I went out to get three of my fellow Special Forces soldiers who got spread out and bring them back to safety. [Also from the official Medal of Honor citation: “Captain Davis constantly exposed himself to hostile small arms fire to rally the inexperienced and disorganized company. He expertly directed both artillery and small arms fire.... Although wounded in the leg, he aided in the evacuation

of other wounded men of his unit, but refused medical evacuation himself. Then, with complete disregard for his own life, he braved intense enemy fire to cross an open field to rescue his seriously wounded and immobilized team sergeant.”]



We fought hard for two days before we could put this behind us. I was shot up pretty bad, and I was in the hospital for a long time. I never asked any questions; I just let them take care of me.

Meanwhile, my fellow soldiers and others were concerned about what had happened at Bong Son, and they took it upon themselves to come together. While I was in the hospital, I didn’t know “s--- from Shinola,” as the saying goes. But people on my team made a big to-do about it, and I was nominated to receive the Medal of Honor.

What happened next will surprise you. It certainly surprised me. I don’t

want it to sound like braggadocio, so please don’t take my words that way. I was awarded two Purple Hearts, the Silver Star and any number of other medals. But the government lost my Medal of Honor paperwork—not once but twice. How did it happen? That’s a

question I have been asked many times. I don’t know! Don’t ask me, ask the government. When you find out, we’ll both know. But there was a lot of hulla-baloo, and people on my team went to Congress. They wrote letters and did whatever they could to let people know.

When I received the Medal of Honor in the White House on March 3, 2023, it changed my life in many ways. But number one is, it changed the [perception] of people that I knew. Because so many people I knew did not understand what had happened at Bong Son. When they had a chance to read and

hear the whole narrative as it is stated in my Medal of Honor citation, then they could understand—not just my story but the story of the people that were there with me. They knew that we had done something that was extraordinary.

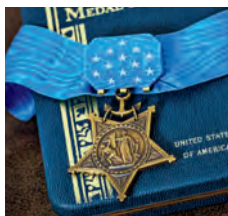
Second, I invited people to be there that day. People who had trained with me, and families of soldiers. That day in the White House, the “I” became “we,” and the “we” became “us.” And it continues.

I will tell you, from my point of view at this time in my life, we have some great guys and gals in the military today. Just top-drawer. I think America should pay homage to the people in our military, who are willing to go out there and stick their thumb in the air to see which way the wind is blowing, to make sure that America remains free.

*Paris Davis’ book Every Weapon I Had will be published by St. Martin’s Press next June.*



**MEMBERS ONLY**  
Read more tales about  
Medal of Honor recipients  
at [aarp.org/medal](http://aarp.org/medal).



## THE MEDAL OF HONOR AT A GLANCE

### Here are some facts about the Medal of Honor.

★ There were 1,523 Civil War recipients; 126 medals in World War I; 472 in World War II; 146 in Korea; 268 in Vietnam; and 28 in Iraq and Afghanistan.

★ One woman has received the medal: Mary E. Walker, who treated wounded soldiers in the Civil War.

★ Nineteen men have received two Medals of Honor.

★ Two sets of fathers and sons have won the medal: Theodore Roosevelt and his son Theodore Roosevelt Jr., and Arthur MacArthur Jr. and his son Douglas MacArthur Jr.

Find out more about the Medal of Honor and read citations for the recipients on the Congressional Medal of Honor Society’s website at [cmohs.org](http://cmohs.org).

## A Marine's Hell Commences a Storied Career



**Harvey "Barney" Barnum, 84**  
Reston, Virginia

**I**N DECEMBER 1965, I was attached to the 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines, as part of Operation Harvest Moon in the Que Son Mountains in Vietnam. On December 18, the enemy—well camouflaged and well dug-in—picked out our company commander. He had a map in his hand, and his radio operator was behind him. The enemy aimed, and all hell broke loose.

I hit the deck. This was the first time I'd ever been shot at. I looked up and all these young Marines were looking at me. I'd only been with this company for about four days, and they didn't even know my name. But I had a lieutenant's bar on my collar, and they knew: Officers give orders, and Marines follow.

These young Marines were scared. Anyone who says they're not scared when they're getting shot at is lying. We realized that not only were we ambushed, we were nearly surrounded.

I ran out and picked up our captain and brought him back to a more secure area. He died in my arms. I realized the radio was out there, and I was going to need it. So I ran out and took the radio off the dead radio operator. I strapped it on and contacted our battalion commander. Ultimately, the battalion commander told me, "You have to come out of there. We can't come get you." The battalion was fully engaged in the village of Ky Phu. "We're in one hell of a fight," I was told. "So if you can't come out yourself, you're

in there by yourself tonight."

There was no future in that. If we stayed into the darkness, the enemy was going to finish us off. It was starting to get dark, and we had to move fast. I had engineers blow down some trees to clear a zone for helicopters to land. We put the dead and wounded on the helicopters. We had a medic named Doc Wes, and he was wounded. But he refused a shot of morphine, and he guided us on how to treat the wounded. He was the last one on the



helicopter. As we put him on there, he was shot for the seventh time. Years later, I found out that he lived.

Those of us on the ground got ourselves organized, and I called in an airstrike against enemy positions. Ultimately, I told a group of Marines, "When you start going, you run as fast as you can, and don't stop unless someone gets shot. If someone gets shot, you pick him up and keep going, because Marines don't leave anyone on

the battlefield." It took a long time, but I got my Marines out. We were fired at all night long.

I received the Medal of Honor in 1967. I was told that the White House did not want to present the medal, and I believe it was because the Johnson administration was getting so much bad press over the war. I was decorated by the secretary of the Navy, Paul Nitze, in a ceremony in Marine barracks in Washington, D.C.

I was the first Medal of Honor recipient to go back to Vietnam. I was a professional Marine, and there was a war going on. I felt that was my duty and that was where I belonged.

I would be naive to think that the Medal of Honor didn't help me in my career. I served in the military for 30 years and always tried to use the medal as a platform to continue serving. I traveled the country, speaking to students, American Legion posts, all kinds of audiences. I took every opportunity to let people know how fortunate they are to live in the greatest country in the world, but also to tell them that freedom isn't free. You have to work for it, you have to contribute.

Before I retired, I had the privilege of serving my country as a deputy assistant secretary of the Navy. I have had a Navy ship named after me—a destroyer. I have met sports stars, movie stars, kings and

queens. None of that would have happened without the Medal of Honor. But the most important thing has been the opportunity to keep serving my country. When I retired from the military, I continued talking to audiences. To me, it is a chance to remind people—if they need reminding—that we live in the greatest country on Earth. ■

*A.J. Baime is a regular contributor to The Wall Street Journal and AARP publications and is the author of several books on American history and the auto industry.*

**CANCER 47**

**BRAIN HEALTH 48**

**DIABETES 49**

**HEART HEALTH 50**

**DIGESTIVE HEALTH 52**

# MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS 2024:

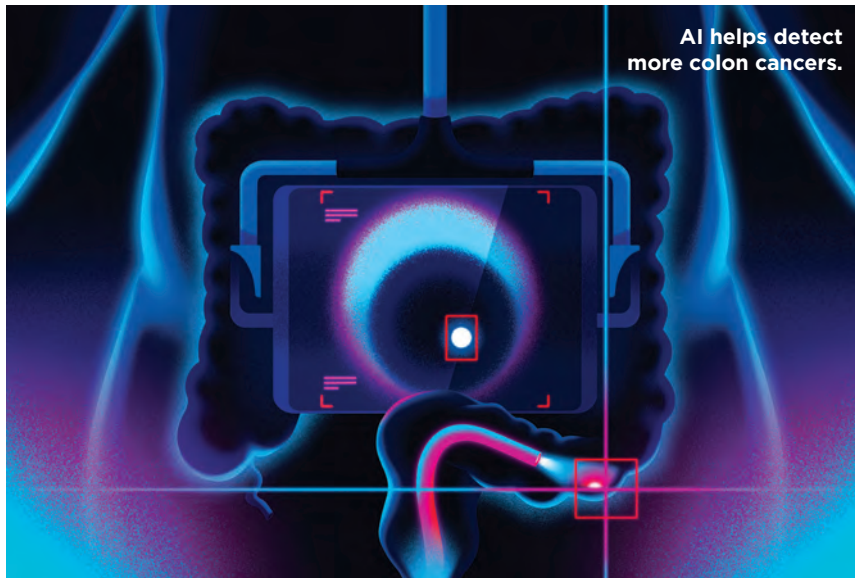
# NEW WEAPONS, NEW HOPE

**SOME OF THE MOST CHALLENGING  
HEALTH ISSUES FACING AMERICANS  
TODAY ARE SUDDENLY MANAGEABLE,  
AND EVEN CURABLE, THANKS TO RECENT  
GAME-CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES**

By Sari Harrar

ILLUSTRATIONS BY OLLIE HIRST





# CANCER

## Breakthrough: AI-Assisted Colonoscopies



John Lloyd

**JOHN LLOYD** put off colon cancer screenings for years. When he finally had his first colonoscopy, at age 56, it found a tumor the size of a lemon. “I was lucky,” he says. “It was stage 3 cancer that hadn’t spread beyond some lymph nodes.”

Chemotherapy, radiation and surgery wiped out his cancer. Now Lloyd, 72, president of an electrical contracting firm in Durham, North Carolina, gets colonoscopies every three years. But his most recent colonoscopy came with a high-tech twist: artificial intelligence to help spot polyps that can become cancers.

“It’s like having another set of eyes,” says Neeraj Sachdeva, M.D., of RMG Gastroenterology in Raleigh, North Carolina. “It allows you to do a more meticulous exam.”

A traditional colonoscopy relies on the eyes of the doctor, yet some types of abnormal growths in the colon can be hard to spot. GI Genius from

Medtronic, the first AI-assisted colonoscopy system available in the U.S., got FDA marketing authorization in 2021; others are coming out. The computer-aided system swiftly analyzes in real time the high-definition video images from a doctor’s endoscope (the tiny camera used to examine the interior walls of the colon during a colonoscopy). Potential trouble spots are highlighted in a green-edged box on the monitor viewed by the doctor.

It’s estimated that in 2024, 152,810 people in the U.S. will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer; 53,010 will die, according to the American Cancer Society. Colonoscopy lowers cancer risk by finding precancers and removing them, Sachdeva says. AI has made colonoscopies even more accurate: In

### ► Prostate Cancer Therapy Spares Healthy Tissue

A new treatment for one type of metastatic prostate cancer delivers radiation directly to prostate tumor cells and spares healthy tissue. Approved by the FDA in 2022, Pluvicto is a type of cancer treatment called theranostics, in which the body is scanned so doctors can identify where the cancer is, followed by treatment that attaches to the targeted cancer cells before releasing radiation. The median overall survival of those who received Pluvicto plus the best standard of care (BSoC) increased by four months compared with those who received the BSoC alone.



### ► A Better Way to Check Lymph Nodes for Cancer

Surgeons typically remove additional tissue during cancer surgeries so lymph nodes can be checked for cancer. It’s a challenging, time-consuming task, and lymph nodes are frequently missed. A new imaging system called InVision uses shortwave infrared light to highlight lymph tissue. In an ongoing study of about 100 patients, 4 percent were found to have cancerous lymph nodes that were previously overlooked by doctors.

one study, the technology boosted the discovery of growths from 33 to 42 percent by doctors who were considered experts at performing colonoscopies and analyzing results, finding early cancers and reducing the rate of future tumors. →

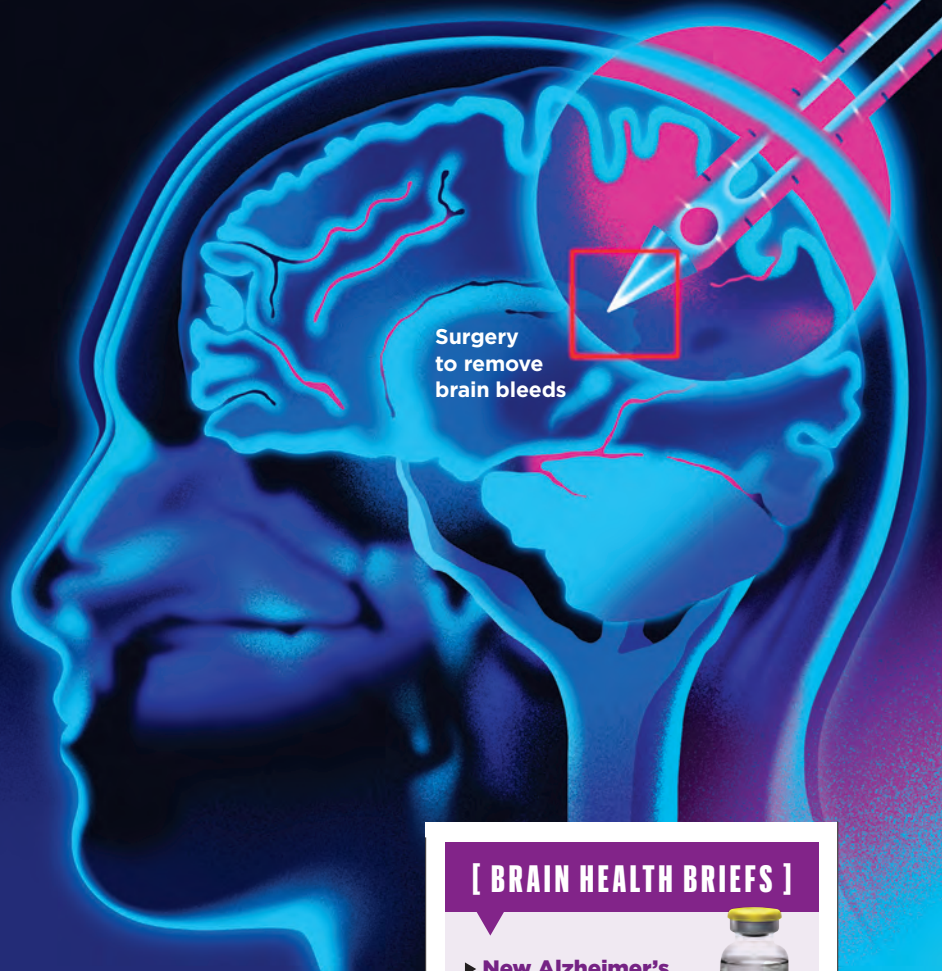


### Get That Colon Check—Now!

“Colorectal cancer mortality is going down because we’re picking up more cancers and precancers as more people get screened,” says Sachdeva. But some middle-aged and older adults aren’t getting checked. “The technology is there,” says Sachdeva. “If we catch your lesion early, taking care of it is simple. You can avoid chemotherapy, radiation and surgery.”

# BRAIN HEALTH

## Breakthrough: Lifesaving Surgery for Deadly Bleeding Strokes



**KAY WILLIAMS** felt “real, real strange.” Her head ached; her eyes grew heavy. As she slid out of her office chair, a colleague quickly dialed 911. “My headache turned to blackness,” says Williams, 63. “I guess that’s when the aneurysm in my brain erupted.”

It was May 2018. Williams was a healthy 56-year-old with three grown children and a successful career as a new-car salesperson in Atlanta. Suddenly, she was having the most lethal kind of brain attack—a hemorrhagic stroke caused by a burst blood vessel. With no effective treatments for this emergency that strikes more than 100,000 Americans each year, her chance for survival hovered at 60 percent and her odds for a lifetime of



**Kay Williams**

disability were as high as 88 percent. When a neurosurgeon at Atlanta’s Grady Memorial Hospital told Williams’ daughter about an experimental procedure to drain the blood clot from her mother’s brain, she said yes.

“There’s no more sensitive organ than the brain,” says neurosurgeon Gustavo Pradilla, M.D., chief of neurosurgery for Grady Health System, who performed the procedure. After a hemorrhagic stroke, every minute brings more damage. Blood accumulates and crushes delicate tissue. “The clots can be the size of a tennis ball, generating a tremendous amount of pressure in the

### [ BRAIN HEALTH BRIEFS ]

#### ► **New Alzheimer’s Drug Slows Decline**

In July, the FDA approved Kisunla (donanemab), a monthly infusion that reduces the speed of cognitive decline and levels of amyloid plaque, a hallmark of Alzheimer’s disease.



#### ► **On the Horizon: MRI-Equipped Ambulances**

Researchers at the Medical University of South Carolina are testing the feasibility of equipping standard ambulances with magnetic resonance imaging machines so that EMTs can evaluate stroke patients before they reach the hospital.

#### ► **Also on the Horizon: Early Test for Parkinson’s Disease**

A new blood test uses AI to find warning signs for Parkinson’s up to seven years before a person has symptoms. Early diagnosis may allow for treatments to delay or prevent the disease from damaging nerve cells that control movement.



### Stroke Symptoms? Act FAST!

It takes people who’ve had a stroke a median time of 140 minutes to get to a hospital, according to a 2024 study. Waiting to call 911 could drastically lower your odds for lifesaving treatments, says Pradilla. Wondering if you’re having a stroke? Use the American Stroke Association’s FAST guide: Facial drooping, an Arm (or leg) that’s suddenly impaired, Slurred speech or inability to communicate, and Time to call 911!

brain,” he explains. Treatment typically involves drugs to lower blood pressure and correct clotting problems, but those approaches can’t remove the clot itself. Conventional brain surgery is a risky last resort, Pradilla says.

He and a team instead approached Williams’ brain bleed with a procedure called minimally invasive parafascicular surgery (MIPS). First, they used brain scans to create a road map of Williams’ bleed. Then they threaded a thin, pencil-shaped device called BrainPath along brain folds to ground zero for her stroke. Guided by live, magnified imaging, the device gently nudged aside white matter connections between brain areas that carry signals for speech, memory and other vital functions. The surgeons then inserted a tool called Myriad that suctioned up the clot. “Clots can become fibrous, almost like rubber,” Pradilla says. “But no matter how hard, we can get it out.”

MIPS was tested over six years in 300 people with intracerebral hemorrhages at 37 medical centers across the U.S. Survival and recovery in the 180 days after a stroke were higher for stroke patients who had MIPS than for those who received medications alone, according to a 2024 study in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. “I have seen many amazing outcomes,” Pradilla says. “Patients came in unable to speak and walk, almost in a coma-like state with a breathing tube. [These patients] can now walk, speak and return to a normal life.”

Just four months later, Williams was back to selling cars, a job she’s loved for 38 years. Her only concession: wearing sneakers instead of high heels because she feels a little dizzy sometimes. She had a seizure a few months after returning to work and takes anti-seizure medication. “I feel better,” she says. “I think better with the medication too.” Williams now gives motivational talks to youth groups, including incarcerated young people. “I want people to know to always believe in God and have faith,” she says. “That research saved my life.”

Courtesy Tonya Crutchfield

# DIABETES

**Breakthrough:**

## Small and Easy Insulin Pumps for Type 2 Diabetes

**WHEN TONYA CRUTCHFIELD** went swimming in the scenic Buffalo River in Arkansas in June, she wore an insulin pump smaller than a deck of cards under her bathing suit. “Nobody could see it,” says Crutchfield, 54, who has had type 2 diabetes since her 30s. “I don’t have to carry needles and insulin or find a private place to give myself a shot.”

Like about 1 in 4 of the roughly 35 million Americans with type 2 diabe-

tes, Crutchfield uses insulin to help control her blood sugar. Giving herself four shots a day required pricking her finger for a blood sugar check, calculating her next insulin dose, filling a syringe and injecting herself. Sometimes Crutchfield did it in her car or in a



Tonya Crutchfield



Insulin delivered by a tiny, discreet pump

bathroom stall. But too often, she skipped it—especially if she was busy or simply couldn't tote her insulin around in a cooler bag to keep it cold. "I hated the shots," she says.

As a result, her blood sugar was often sky-high, boosting her risk for eye problems, nerve damage and kidney trouble. At her doctor's suggestion, in late 2023 she tried V-Go, an insulin patch pump specifically designed and FDA approved for people with type 2 diabetes. The disposable device attaches to her skin with adhesive and contains a day's worth of insulin delivered continuously through a tiny needle into her skin. Before meals, she can adjust the dosage so it can handle blood sugar increases from any carbohydrates—such as bread, pasta, rice, fruit or dessert—she's about to eat. "My sugars have been fantastic," she says. Crutchfield's A1C—a measure of blood sugar control over two to three months—fell from a dangerously high 13 percent to below 7 percent, the goal for most people with diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association.

Patch pumps have been around for nearly 20 years, but they were traditionally used by people with type 1 diabetes. Now several patch pumps for type 2 are on the market, and more are in development.

"If you can get your A1C down and stable, it can reduce risk for complications of diabetes, especially for the eyes, kidneys and nerves," says endocrinologist Shunzhong Bao, M.D., of CHI St. Vincent Little Rock Diagnostic Clinic, who treats Crutchfield's diabetes. "Stable, controlled blood sugar also reduces cardiovascular risks."

Patch pumps are small, easy to

## [ DIABETES BRIEFS ]

### ► Spinal Cord Stimulation for Diabetic Neuropathy

Implanted spinal cord stimulation systems from four companies gained FDA approval in 2022 and 2023 for easing the pain of a type of nerve damage called diabetic peripheral neuropathy. In a 2023 study of 216 people with this painful condition, 76 percent of those who received mild electrical signals applied to the spine reported their pain improved by 50 percent or more after six months.



### ► Foot Mat Detects Early Foot Ulcers

An FDA-cleared foot mat senses temperature changes in the soles of the feet, a warning sign of increased risk for foot ulcers, infection and even amputation. Used daily for 20 seconds, SmartMat from Podometrics scans feet for temperature changes; in a 2020 study, device users had fewer foot ulcers.



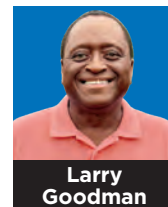
use and waterproof, although the insulin dose often can't be as finely calibrated as with a traditional insulin pump. And with a pump, you still have to test your blood sugar four times a day, though newer continuous-glucose monitors that send the data right to your phone make that simpler. "Living with diabetes is not easy," Bao notes. "These patch pumps can be really helpful."

# HEART HEALTH

## Breakthrough: Game-Changing Treatment for Heart Failure

### LARRY GOODMAN

checks his weight, blood pressure and pulse every morning. Then, as he makes breakfast in his kitchen in Middletown, Delaware, a digital health company 3,000 miles away in California reviews his numbers. "When you have a bad heart, every time you feel something you think, *This is it*," says Goodman, 69. "But I don't panic anymore. If there are numbers I don't like, I get a call from my doctor's office in 10 to 15 minutes."



Larry Goodman

Goodman has heart failure with reduced ejection fraction, meaning the left side of his heart is too weak to pump enough blood out to his body.

Goodman first landed in the hospital with heart failure 15 years ago, unable to breathe and with fluid accumulating in his body, and had been in and out of the hospital ever since. A few years ago, he joined a program at ChristianaCare, a Delaware-based health system that offered a new digital monitoring program aimed at helping Black Americans with advanced heart failure get access to a breakthrough treatment: a combination of four drugs that together can save lives.

The drugs cut the risk of early death by 70 percent. Without them, 10 to 15 percent of people with ad-



## Tackle Type 2 Diabetes Aggressively

"If your blood sugar is really out of control, beta cells in your pancreas that produce insulin can die faster," says Bao. "Getting blood sugar down can preserve beta cell function. Or if your blood sugar has been high for many years, you may have a severe insulin deficiency." Newer diabetes drugs may reduce or eliminate the need for insulin in type 2 diabetes, but for now it's a good tool for controlling blood sugar.



Doctors can monitor heart failure patients from miles away.

vanced heart failure are likely to die in just two years. In 2022, the American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology updated their guidelines to recommend these “fantastic four” drugs. Yet most people who could benefit still aren’t getting them. In a 2024 study of older adults hospitalized for heart failure, 4 out of 5 were candidates for the drug combo but fewer than 1 in 6 got it.

A tidal wave of new digital and remote monitoring programs is changing that. Those with heart failure can now track key health indicators at home with close monitoring by health care practitioners.

“It’s almost like the clinic is brought

to the patients,” says Sourin Banerji, M.D., medical director of advanced heart failure at ChristianaCare. Other health systems are using home monitoring options, including an implanted sensor called CardioMEMS, approved by the FDA in 2022.

It’s helping. “We see every day how much better our patients are doing,” says Banerji. “They have more stamina. They can remain independent longer. They’re less likely to be readmitted to the hospital.”

The four types of drugs used in this treatment strategy are a combination of mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists to remove extra water and sodium from the body; blood pressure

drugs that help relax blood vessels so the heart doesn’t have to work as hard; beta-blockers to reduce heart rate and sometimes limit some heart damage; and sodium glucose cotransporter-2 inhibitors, diabetes drugs shown to reduce symptoms and deaths in people with heart failure.

Goodman is on all four drugs now. “My doctor adjusted my doses often,” he says. “And I do feel better, less breathless.” A lifelong trumpet player, Goodman hopes his stronger, steadier heart will let him get back to participating in Taps Across America, a nationwide Memorial Day observance. →

## [ HEART HEALTH BRIEFS ]

### ► Artificial Intelligence for Lower Blood Pressure

About 68 percent of Americans with high blood pressure have their pressure well controlled. MedsEngine uses AI to analyze and improve treatments. It increased the number of patients with well-controlled HBP to 93 percent in one Dayton, Ohio, medical practice.

### ► Supermarket Carts Spot A-fib

In a recent U.K. study, grocery store carts fitted with electrocardiogram sensors in the handles uncovered 39 cases of previously undiagnosed atrial fibrillation (A-fib), irregular heart rhythms that can raise the risk for stroke.



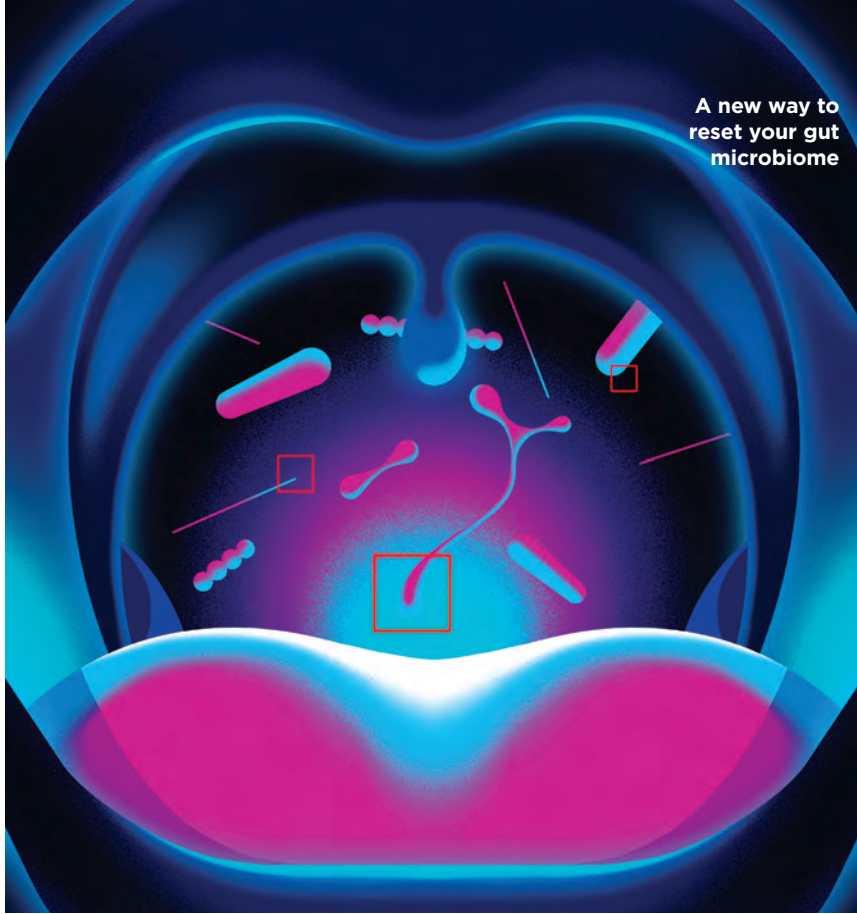
### ► On the Horizon: A Test and Treatment for Blood Lipids

High levels of the blood fat Lp(a) can boost risk for heart disease six times higher than the more well-known low-density lipoprotein (LDL). Five experimental Lp(a)-lowering drugs are in development, including zerlasiran, a gene-silencing treatment that lowered levels 90 percent in a human trial.



## Recognize Early Heart Failure Signs

Nearly 1 million U.S. adults are diagnosed each year with heart failure, but more than one-third of cases are missed by primary care physicians at early, more treatable stages, according to a 2021 study. Don’t overlook the early warnings of heart failure: Shortness of breath, a dry cough that’s worse at night, tiredness, nausea, low appetite, and leg swelling or an increase in the girth of your torso are potential indicators of fluid buildup when the heart isn’t pumping strongly, says Banerji. If you are diagnosed, make an appointment with a heart failure specialist, Banerji suggests.



A new way to  
reset your gut  
microbiome

## [ DIGESTIVE HEALTH BRIEFS ]

### ► New Hope for Crohn's Disease

The first FDA-approved pill for Crohn's disease, upadacitinib (Rinvoq), blocks enzymes that play a role in inflammation. In studies, 39 to 50 percent of Crohn's patients who hadn't responded to other treatments went into remission after 12 weeks.



### ► A Vibrating Pill for Constipation

First available in 2023, FDA-cleared Vibrant capsules start vibrating to stimulate the colon about 14 hours after they're swallowed. In a 2023 study of 312 people with chronic constipation, 39 percent had an extra weekly bowel movement and 23 percent had two after taking the capsules five times a week for eight weeks. The prescription-only capsules stimulate the intestinal walls to contract and are eliminated from the body naturally.



### ► A Remote-Controlled Camera in a Pill

George Washington University researchers are fine-tuning a camera pill that can be steered—so it's not just tumbling on its own. In a 2023 study, they used a magnet and joysticks to move the capsule around in the stomachs of 40 volunteers. Eighty percent of the volunteers preferred it over a standard endoscopy.



# DIGESTIVE HEALTH

## Breakthrough: A New Treatment for C. Diff

**FREDA PYLES' ROAD** trip from Wichita, Kansas, to her home in Pennsylvania was a nightmare. Severe diarrhea meant urgent bathroom breaks at every rest stop for hundreds of miles. In Ohio, her husband took her to an emergency room. "I was dehydrated. My kidneys were shutting down," says Pyles, 76, of her 2021 ordeal. "I couldn't walk."

She was infected with *Clostridioides difficile* (commonly known as C. diff or C. difficile)—a highly contagious germ that kills 30,000 Americans annually, most of them older adults. The infection took hold when an antibiotic prescribed for a tooth infection killed beneficial bacteria in her intestines that can normally keep C. diff in check.

A gold standard C. diff treatment, the antibiotic vancomycin, brought her a little relief but quickly set the stage for more trouble. It further wiped out

protective gut bacteria, allowing tough C. diff spores to grow, release diarrhea-triggering toxins and kick-start a new infection. Back home in rural Russell, Pennsylvania, Pyles spent her days in a chair close to the bathroom. She stopped gardening, keeping bees, swimming at the local YMCA and helping her husband take care of the couple's flock of chickens. For four months she had recurrent C. diff infections. It's a dangerous cycle that affects about 35 percent of older adults after a first bout of C. diff and kills 1 in 4 of them, according to a 2022 Yale University study of Medicare beneficiaries.

"By January I had lost 45 pounds, could hardly walk to the bathroom and had fallen a couple of times," she says. "My husband was really worried. He told a friend he was slowly watching me die."

Then a stool specimen donated by a stranger—processed into an investigational fecal transplant therapy packed with beneficial bacteria—stopped her symptoms. In February 2022, Pyles and her husband drove to New Haven, Connecticut, for the treatment. Pyles first received a potent antibiotic to halt her infection (it also allowed her to sit



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\*Based on customer experience reviews shared online at [www.thehartford.com/aarp/car-insurance/reviews](http://www.thehartford.com/aarp/car-insurance/reviews) as of July 2024.

in a car for the seven-hour trip). When she arrived in New Haven, she underwent a treatment she likens to an enema. “You receive this small bag of good bacteria and lie there for about 45 minutes. It just went in. And all those good bacteria went to work.”



Freda Pyles

In November 2022, the treatment—Rebyota—became the first FDA-approved fecal microbiota product and the first against recurrent C. diff. “We’re giving the microbiota a boost,” says gastroenterologist Paul Feuerstadt, M.D., an associate clinical professor at Yale University School of Medicine who studied the treatment and oversaw Pyles’ transplant. “We’re allowing a healthy, diverse microbiota to grow and become strong in a much more expedited way. It’s a real game changer.” In studies of people with recurrent C. diff, a fecal microbiota transplant was effective at stopping repeat infections for 80 percent of them at eight weeks,

and 92 percent hadn’t had a recurrence two years later.

Fecal transplants aren’t new; they were used for severe diarrhea 1,600 years ago in China. Researchers have been studying them since the 1950s, not only for C. diff but for other digestive problems like irritable bowel syndrome and ulcerative colitis, depression, anxiety and diabetes. Specialists have used them against severe, repeat C. diff for over 10 years, and medical guidelines have recommended them for that use since 2017.

But Feuerstadt notes that having FDA-approved C. diff treatments is a major advance. In 2023, the FDA OK’d

a second fecal microbiota treatment for C. diff. Called Vowst, it’s in the form of capsules taken by mouth. “The difference between FDA-approved products and non-FDA approved is that we know what we are administering,” Feuerstadt says. “We have a much higher level of sophistication. We’re seeing an evolution. This could be used much earlier in recurrent C. diff and by physicians in the community, not just by specialists. It shuts down recurrence. And it lifts the burden of anxiety, depression and fear that people with recurrent C. diff have.” ■

Sari Harrar writes for numerous national publications. She is a contributing editor to AARP THE MAGAZINE.



## Rethink Your Antibiotic Use

You can lower your risk for a C. diff infection by using antibiotics only when necessary, thereby protecting your gut microbiome from C. diff, says Feuerstadt. When you’re in a situation where you could be exposed, such as visiting a hospital or nursing home, “wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds afterward,” he says. “Alcohol-based hand sanitizers don’t kill the spores of C. diff.”

## ‘ACCIDENTAL’ BREAKTHROUGHS

The drugs below already have proven unexpected benefits. Now researchers are looking at even more interesting new applications for these meds. By NICOLE PAJER



DRUG TYPE	CREATED FOR	ALSO USED FOR	FUTURE APPLICATIONS
<b>Semaglutide</b> (Ozempic, Wegovy)	Type 2 diabetes	Weight loss	Combating alcohol abuse
<b>Sildenafil</b> (Viagra)	Hypertension	Erectile dysfunction; pulmonary arterial hypertension	Pain management; lowering the risk of Alzheimer’s disease
<b>Metformin</b> (Fortamet)	Type 2 diabetes	Influenza in people with diabetes; weight gain from antipsychotic medicines	Lowering the risk of dementia and stroke in people with diabetes
<b>Tricyclic antidepressants</b> (various brand names)	Major depressive disorder	Bulimia; insomnia; obsessive-compulsive disorder	Irritable bowel syndrome
<b>Gabapentin</b> (Neurontin)	Controlling seizures	Post-shingles nerve pain; anxiety; alcohol addiction	Hot flashes

From left: Courtesy, Ferring Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; Jack Sullivan/Alamy Stock Photo; Marc Brunelle/Alamy Stock Photo; Cordelia Molloy/Science Source; Jeff Chu/AAP Photo





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# YOUR ESSENTIAL VACCINE GUIDE

Here's what you need to stay safe this winter—and beyond By JESSICA MIGALA

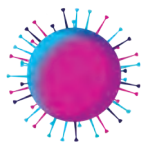
**WE KNOW.** You're busy. You hate needles. You're betting you can tough it out this winter. After all, you had a COVID shot a few years ago, and who's really worried about the flu?

But what if you could not only dramatically reduce your risk of winding up in the hospital but also slash your risk of heart disease, dementia and chronic pain? Now would you be willing to roll up your sleeve?

"As we get older, we tend to start experiencing various chronic diseases, such as high blood pressure or heart and lung disease. In addition, the immune system begins to slow down, and it can struggle to protect you from infections," says Sharon Brangman, M.D., co-principal investigator for the American Geriatrics Society Older Adults Vaccine Initiative. And as we're learning, many infections can have long-term consequences that we simply can't predict.

Here's a look at the vaccines you need now. You can even get many of them in just one visit.

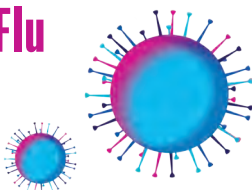
## COVID-19 2024–2025



50 and above

For now, one dose every autumn

## Flu



50 and above

One dose every fall, ideally in September or October

## RSV



75 and above; 60 and up if you have a chronic heart, lung or immune system issue. If you are in your 50s and have heart or lung disease or diabetes, talk to your doctor.

One dose, one time

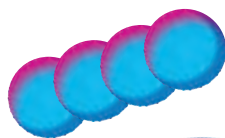
## Shingles



50 and above

Two-dose series, one time, each shot given two to six months apart

## Pneumococcal



65 and above; 50 to 64 for those with underlying medical conditions

Once

## Tdap/Td Booster



First dose in childhood; boosters throughout adulthood

Once every 10 years

## WHY?

“The virus has changed a lot over the years. The antibodies we have don’t work as well against the strains of the virus that are circulating now,” says Sandra Adamson Fryhofer, M.D., an internist and the American Medical Association’s liaison to the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

**Seventy to 85 percent of flu-related deaths are in people over 65**, yet just 7 out of 10 adults 65 and up got a flu shot last year. “Sometimes the vaccine can keep you from getting the flu altogether, while other times it can provide partial protection so you get a milder form of the disease,” says Brangman.

“We really underestimated the morbidity that can come from RSV, particularly in older adults. It can cause severe pneumonia,” says Morgan Katz, M.D., an infectious disease expert with Johns Hopkins Medicine. Clinical trials found **the vaccine was 83 percent effective in reducing the risk of severe disease.**

If you’ve had chicken pox (as 99 percent of people born in or before 1980 have), the virus lives on in your body, where it can emerge as painful blisters and a rash, as well as lead to significant nerve pain, says Katz. The good news is that this vaccine is more than 90 percent effective at preventing the disease.

The FDA has just approved a new vaccine that covers 84 percent of the strains that cause invasive pneumococcal disease, such as pneumonia, meningitis and bloodstream infections. “This is such a killer of people,” says Fryhofer. **One in six older adults who get pneumococcal meningitis, for instance, die from the disease.**

Td protects against tetanus and diphtheria, while Tdap protects against those diseases plus pertussis (whooping cough). You may have received the Tdap vaccination as a child, but if you did not, you should now. In addition, it’s advised that you get a Td booster every 10 years, which is easy to overlook. A nasty cut may also require a booster.

## EXTRA CONSIDERATIONS

A combined COVID-19 and flu vaccine may be available in 2025. Preliminary results show the combo may offer greater immunity.

There are several types of flu vaccines available. “We recommend adults over 65 get the high-dose flu shot, which helps create a stronger immune response,” says Brangman.

Right now, you only need a single dose. There are three different vaccines approved, and you can get whichever one is available where you are.

The vaccine, called Shingrix, can be given with other vaccines. You can also get it if you’ve had shingles before (just wait until any active infection is over).

Current recommendations advise getting a single dose of the PCV21 vaccine (Capvaxine).

**If you have young kids in your life, consider getting the Tdap booster** instead of Td. “Many babies are too young for the vaccine, and they depend on everyone around them to be vaccinated,” Fryhofer says.

## BONUS BENEFITS

Receiving the COVID vaccine reduces the risk of developing long COVID—debilitating symptoms like brain fog and fatigue that linger continuously for three months or more after an infection—by up to 52 percent.

**Getting the flu vaccine is associated with a 30 percent lower risk of heart attack** and death from cardiovascular disease. One possible reason? Flu infection triggers inflammation that may worsen atherosclerosis.

Have grandkids? Infants and young children are susceptible to RSV but cannot receive the vaccine. Vaccinating yourself can help protect them too.

A 2024 study found that **the shingles vaccine “is associated with a significantly lower risk of dementia”** for at least six years after vaccination.

Medicare Part B will cover the cost of the pneumococcal vaccine.

**People who got the Tdap or Td vaccine were 30 percent less likely to develop Alzheimer’s** compared with those who were unvaccinated, according to 2023 research published in the *Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease*.

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# There's No Place Like *(A NEW)* Home

From the Big City to Green Acres, these older homebuyers chased their dream for a better life

By David Hochman

**C**HANGING RESIDENCES at a later stage in life is all about embracing a new rhythm. Perhaps your empty nest feels a bit too roomy and the time has come to downsize to an urban condo. Or after years of battling rush hour traffic every day, you're craving someplace that's greener and more walkable, where the pace is more humane. If something's calling you to move, it's not too late to relocate. More than 6 million Americans age 55 and up take the leap and find a new address each year, with women leading the way, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Here's a look at a few of them.

DAVE DALTON, 65, AND JILL DALTON, 64

## Seeking Culture and Active Lifestyle on a Smaller Scale

→ FROM *BOOMING* CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA, TO THE *TINY* TOWN OF ABINGDON, VIRGINIA

**WHY RELOCATE?** The Daltons love Charlotte (metro area around 3 million), but when Dave retired as a manufacturing executive in 2021, he craved a more active, outdoor lifestyle. He and Jill both wanted a walkable small town with vibrant culture—an arts scene, great food and a more youthful population. They went all in on Abingdon, with a historic main street, access to trout fishing and biking, more than 30 restaurants, and the nation's longest-running professional theater. And with the town's median age of 45, retirees are able to mix with younger residents. “Can you

say dream town?” asks Jill. **DOLLARS AND SENSE:** The Daltons bought a three-floor historic house from 1803 and are making the renovation a retirement project. Adding HVAC and bumping up those low Jefferson-era ceilings isn't cheap, but costs in general “are a fraction of what they are in Charlotte,” Dave says. **NEW ABODE, NEW HORIZONS:** “Life is more relaxed, and there's a warmth from people you don't always get in an urban setting,” Jill says. “Once you meet someone here, you look out for each other.”



Charlotte, North Carolina

According to Dave, there aren't enough days in the week for all the activities Abingdon offers. He already serves on an Abingdon board and a tourism advisory council, and there's hiking, kayaking, horseback riding, an annual fiddler's convention, pickleball and tons of golf. “I thought people were supposed to slow down in retirement,” he says, “but it's not looking that way.”



Dave and  
Jill Dalton in  
downtown  
Abingdon,  
Virginia

NANCY HESS, 70

## Finding Energy in a Downsize to a Big City

→ FROM **RURAL BURLINGTON, KANSAS, TO COSMOPOLITAN KANSAS CITY, KANSAS**

**WHY RELOCATE?** “Don’t laugh,” says Hess, who had lived in small Kansas towns all her life, “but my gut was telling me that if I stayed in Burlington, I would turn into one of those little old ladies who never leaves the house.” She admits she felt she’d been “coasting” ever since Sam, her partner of 22 years, passed away 13 years ago. So after retiring as a computer program analyst at a nuclear plant in 2020, “I felt like stepping out of my comfort zone and pushing myself a little.”

**DOLLARS AND SENSE:** City life is more expensive. Hess’ senior living community in Kansas City required entrance and service fees, and K.C. prices are higher for things like dinners out and entertainment, but “that’s why I worked a desk job for 34 years,” she says. With plenty of activities at her complex—there’s a fitness center, for example—the

Nancy Hess in nearby Kansas City, Missouri, shopping and, below, visiting the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art



convenience and camaraderie balance out the costs.

**NEW ABODE, NEW HORIZONS:** “It feels like a fresh start to me,” says Hess, who loves being within 30 minutes of countless activities and events. Having people from her community to do things with is icing on the cake. She attends Kansas City Monarchs baseball games, summertime jazz band concerts and dinner theater events, as well as visiting local historical societies, libraries



and quilt shops. “At first I was a little bit hesitant going around town, but now I’m happy even if I’m getting lost and finding my way back home.”

RABBI JOE HAMPLE, 68, AND BARRY WENDELL, 75

## Greater Meaning at a Much Slower Pace

→ FROM **BUSY LOS ANGELES TO THE SOMEWHAT SLEEPY MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA**

**WHY RELOCATE?** Joe and Barry met and married at a gay synagogue in Los Angeles, where Joe was studying to be a rabbi after a career as a systems analyst and Barry worked as a cantorial soloist and teacher. They wanted out. “I had lived in Los Angeles for 25 years already and was, like, I’m ready for something new,” says



Barry. After Joe landed a rabbi gig deep in Appalachia, the move was on. **DOLLARS AND SENSE:** “Morgantown is dirt cheap by California standards,”

says Joe. “We never could’ve afforded a house in L.A. or any hot California real estate market.”

**NEW ABODE, NEW HORIZONS:** For a pair of confirmed urbanites, moving to a quieter locale meant finding God in the details. “Figuring out your favorite flavors of ice cream, taking long walks, spending time with the nice lady next door who feeds our cat—the little things take on greater meaning here,” Joe says. But the pace carved out more time as well. Barry found a late-in-life calling as a public servant: He spent two terms on Morgantown’s City Council and even ran for U.S. Congress in 2022.

## 6 Questions to Ask Yourself Before Making the Big Move



**Why do you want to move?** What are you trying to accomplish?

Are you looking to be closer to your family? Or maybe you crave more sunshine. Be clear about your priorities.



**What do you love about your current home that you can't live without?**

Make sure your new location satisfies your must-have requirements.



**What kind of lifestyle are you seeking?**

Consider the activities you enjoy now and whether you can reasonably pursue them in your new home.



**What are your health care needs, and can those be met in your**

**new home?** Consider the quality, cost and proximity of medical services, especially if you have a condition that requires routine checkups and care.



**Can you afford the cost of living in this new place?** Take a hard look

at your finances. Selling your home, saving the equity and moving to a more affordable area with lower housing costs can be a great way to stretch your retirement savings.



**Will it be less costly to live in this new place over the long term?** A

lower cost of living now doesn't guarantee a lower cost of living into the future. You have to consider whether it's going to be sustainable and affordable over the long term in that location. Do careful research on the place you're considering moving to and try to anticipate factors that may inflate your cost of living. —Alex Gailey, lead data reporter in personal finance for Bankrate



Jennifer and Lynn O'Connell

JENNIFER OLIVER O'CONNELL, 58, AND LYNN O'CONNELL, 63

## Finding a Place of Faith and Affordability

→ FROM SUBURBAN ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, TO THE SMALL DEEP SOUTH TOWN OF MUSCLE SHOALS, ALABAMA

**WHY RELOCATE?** “California prices are insane!” says Jennifer, a yoga teacher and freelance journalist. Lynn, a service engineer for tech businesses, was commuting 57 miles each way. Neither liked “the stranglehold of constantly working only to feel like we were just scraping by,” as Jennifer puts it. The O'Connells wanted a place that aligned with their Christian values. “Muscle Shoals instantly hit our hearts,” says Jennifer. She sent an email last winter to a pastor there whose sermons she appreciated. “He got back to me within an hour. Then a campus coordinator connected me with a Realtor

who helped us find a home. I was, like, we're doing this!” Last June, the O'Connells moved.

**DOLLARS AND SENSE:** Money goes much further in Muscle Shoals. “We have a great three-bedroom, two-bath house that's roughly half the rent we were paying for much less space in California,” says Lynn, who landed a service route with a regional communications and IT company.

**NEW ABODE, NEW HORIZONS:** Having a built-in spiritual community provided a soft landing. “An entire crew from church showed up at our house to move us in and make us feel cared for,” Jennifer says.

STEVE RODGERS, 59, AND JANE RODGERS, 60

# Following Family, Jobs and Heart

→ FROM A **TONY** D.C. SUBURB TO THE **HUSTLE-BUSTLE** BIG APPLE TO THE **QUAINT** VILLAGE OF HOBART, NEW YORK



Steve and Jane Rodgers

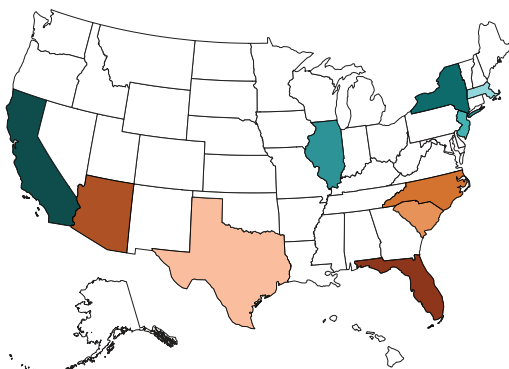
**WHY RELOCATE?** In 2019, after their son, Sam, experienced a significant health crisis, the Rodgerses left the leafy D.C. exurb of Leesburg, Virginia, their home for 20 years, to be near Sam in New York City. With his health stabilized in 2023, Jane and Steve headed way upstate, to Hobart, New York (population 397), for ample space and a quieter, more affordable ease into retirement.

**DOLLARS AND SENSE:** Even with downsizing, moving from a single-family home into a two-bedroom Manhattan apartment wasn't cheap. "Rent, groceries, restaurants, taxes—literally everything costs more in New York City," says Jane, a nonprofit executive who, like Steve, can work remotely. It helped to have additional income from renting the Virginia place, but Steve, who designs security systems, wanted to reinvest the cash after selling that home in 2020. "Property within a two-hour drive of New York City was out of our reach, so we pushed to three hours, and, yep, that did it," he says.

**NEW ABODE, NEW HORIZONS:** The Rodgerses found a beautiful old four-bedroom house on an acre and a half, with a converted barn/guesthouse "that is part of our retirement plan," says Jane, whose goal is to work two more years. Steve intends to work until age 65. "We'll use the guesthouse as an Airbnb beginning next year, and hopefully that income will keep us going," Jane says. And "we have enough space to host Sam and his friends anytime he wants to come up," she adds.

## Where Older Americans Are on the Move

Sunbelt states are attracting more 50-plus residents from northern climates



### STATES PEOPLE ARE MOVING...

#### FROM:

- 1 / California
- 2 / New York
- 3 / Illinois
- 4 / New Jersey
- 5 / Massachusetts

#### TO:

- 1 / Florida
- 2 / Arizona
- 3 / North Carolina
- 4 / South Carolina
- 5 / Texas

SOURCE: William H. Frey analysis of 2017-2022 American Community Survey 5-year data





Doreen Vann and son, Zaiden

DOREEN HALL VANN, 51, AND MARQUISE VANN, 46

## Priced Out of Paradise, Sin City Beckoned

➔ FROM TROPICAL PEARL CITY IN CENTRAL O‘AHU, HAWAI‘I, TO GO-GO GREATER LAS VEGAS

**WHY RELOCATE?** A Native Hawaiian, Doreen assumed she’d live out her days on O‘ahu. But after a daughter moved to the mainland for a nursing job, Doreen decided in 2019 to follow with her husband, Marquise, and son,



Sunny Springs Park

Zaiden, now 10. “In a more affordable setting, we could work to live rather than living to work,” she says.

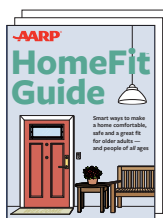
**DOLLARS AND SENSE:** Hawai‘i has the highest cost of living in the U.S. Doreen couldn’t believe the savings: The four-bedroom, three-bath house she and Marquise, an Air Force reservist and truck driver, bought for \$300,000 “would have cost twice that back on O‘ahu.”

**NEW ABODE, NEW HORIZONS:** Doreen feared that homesickness would overwhelm her, but Las Vegas has Hawaiian barbecue restaurants, hula shops, famous Hawaiian entertainers. “It’s easy to live aloha here,” she says.

### AARP RESOURCES

▶ **AARP Livability Index** If you’re in the market for a new home, go to [aarp.org/livabilityindex](https://aarp.org/livabilityindex) to learn about key features and services that support active and healthy aging in the neighborhoods you’re considering.

▶ **AARP’s HomeFit Guide** Make your home safer and more comfortable with this guide, available at [aarp.org/homefit](https://aarp.org/homefit), with tips to make every room in your house easy to use.



RICH MURRISON, 73, AND TERI MURRISON, 67

## Reining In for an Easier, Fuller Life

➔ FROM A SEVEN-ACRE IDAHO FARM WITH HORSES TO A DOWNSIZED HOME IN BOISE

**WHY RELOCATE?** Magical as it was, “farm life was just too costly and challenging” to maintain as the Murrisons got older, so “we made the hardest choice we ever faced,” says Teri, a travel writer. “During the wintertime especially, we were hiring people to come in and clean up horse poop and do other things we no longer wanted to do.” The Murrisons sold the farm and moved to Idaho’s capital city in January 2022.

**DOLLARS AND SENSE:** “When you factor in the cost of keeping animals and how much we paid



Rich and Teri Murrison

to irrigate and for power and gas, we’re saving a significant amount,” says Rich, a retired educator. The Murrisons re-homed their three horses. That leaves extra for urban niceties like dinners out (“all kinds of great ethnic restaurants nearby,” Teri says) and pursuing passions like skiing.

**NEW ABODE, NEW HORIZONS:** “We hit the neighbor lottery,” Teri says, with warm and welcoming residents on all four sides. ■

David Hochman is a contributing editor for AARP THE MAGAZINE who writes frequently about homelife and housing.

# REAL/PEOPLE



Myrick spreads steamed rice onto racks for cooling before fermentation.

Inspiring stories  
of friends and  
neighbors, in  
their own words

**INSIDE** • BAND OF SURVIVORS P. 66

SHE RAISED 40+ KIDS ... WITH LOVE P. 67

HOW SAVING A BABY—AND GOING  
VIRAL—CHANGED ONE MAN'S LIFE P. 68

*This Brew's for You*

## For the Sake of Japanese Sake

Former IT guy Jake Myrick turned his passion for a beverage into a thriving family business

**W**HEN MY WIFE and I came home to the States after 10 years of working in Japan, the thing we missed most was the unpasteurized sake. It's called Nama sake, and it just feels alive, the way kombucha does. But it's difficult to find Nama sake here because it cannot be shipped from Japan—it needs to stay refrigerated. And there was no one selling it in the Bay Area. So we started brewing it ourselves, in our garage. During my career, I'd started 10 companies, so opening a sake brewery seemed like a natural next step. And I'd grown up in a family that did its own canning, so I understood fermentation.

My biggest fear was, how do I, as a non-Japanese person, go into Japanese restaurants and tell them, "You should buy my sake"? It took me three years to make my first sale to a Japanese restaurant. The owner told me, "I always liked your sake, but I wasn't sure you were going to stick with this." But I guess we have. Our daughter, Olivia, was just finishing high school when we began brewing sake; now she's 28 and running the brewery with us.

We're working and sweating, but I'm enjoying myself. The reward is creating something you can taste and share, and that brings people together. We have customers of all ages, but young adults are our primary market. This next generation is drinking cleaner beverages.

Back when I worked in computer software, clients were always asking, "Why is this taking so long? Why is this bug still here?" With sake, the process just takes as long as it takes. We're not making widgets, we're making art. —As told to Gregg Segal

*Jake Myrick, 63, worked as an IT specialist for 25 years before founding Sequoia Sake in San Francisco with his wife, Noriko Kamei, 59.*





## ‘Music Is Hope’

Holocaust survivor Saul Dreier formed a band to comfort others

**MUSIC HAS** the ability to crack open hearts, to change minds, to heal, to comfort. When I was 89, I read about the concert pianist Alice Herz-Sommer, who had died at 110. Like me, she was a Nazi concentration camp survivor. And also like me, she had used music as a way through that terrible time. After the war, she continued to play to try to heal hearts. I felt that I needed to

honor her in some way. It came to me that I should organize a Holocaust survivor band to continue her work. I told my wife, and she said I was crazy. I told my rabbi, and he said I was crazy too. But I was very stubborn.

During World War II, I was sent to several concentration and work camps in Poland. My whole family was killed, and I alone lived. There was a famous cantor in one of the camps with me, and he would sing Jewish songs. And in those moments of music, I found escape. One day, I realized that he needed a beat, so I

managed to get two metal spoons, and I drummed for him: *pum, pum, pum*. Almost every night, we would all gather and sing, even though we were starving and exhausted. That is how I learned the drums. When we were liberated, I was sent to a displaced person’s camp in Italy, where there were actual instruments. I played the drums for the people in the camp and the town. Such joy!

After I went to America, between work and raising a family, I didn’t have time for music. But reading about Alice Herz-Sommer brought me back to the way music can reach hearts. I bought some drums for my band idea. At first, my wife said, “Either the drums go or you go,” but when you’ve been married so long, you fight for five minutes and make up 10 minutes later. Through people at my temple in Florida, I found other survivors and their children.

Our first concert, in 2014, was at the temple. We played Jewish, Polish, Hebrew and dancing music. We got a standing ovation! I felt like the sky had opened. And my wife? She said, “I live with you 51 years, and today you are my celebrity!”

In 10 years, we’ve played all over America (including the White House), Israel, Canada, Brazil and Poland. I will play for as long as I can, because music is hope. I am not interested in politics or taking sides. My purpose in life is to get people to see that we are all one, we all sing the same song. —As told to Beth Levine

*Saul Dreier, 99, of Coconut Grove, Florida, advocates for peace and tolerance through his nonprofit, Saul’s Generation Foundation.*



**MEMBERS ONLY**  
To watch Dreier in action in our video, scan this code or visit [aarp.org/sauldreier](http://aarp.org/sauldreier).

# She Mothered Dozens

Emma Patterson became a foster parent in her 50s ... and kept going



**Y**OU DON'T start out thinking you're going to raise more than 40 children—including two of your own. But they're all my own, in a way.

When my kids, Tamara and Floyd, were in high school in Silver Spring, Maryland, they'd sometimes bring home friends who needed a place to stay. For whatever reason, their parents had kicked them out.

I'd been a housewife until my husband and I divorced, but at this point, I was working two jobs. My kids still thought I was the kind of mom who could make the cookies and fix the problem. So when one of their friends had trouble at home, they'd say, "Let's go talk to my mom.

She'll know what to do." We had a big house with extra bedrooms, and their friends who couldn't go home were always welcome to stay.

I really don't know what prompted me to formally apply to the foster care system, but after Tamara and Floyd were launched, in the 1990s, I decided to open my door to younger children. Often the agency would ask, "Will you just help us for a couple of days, until we can arrange for a longer-term placement?" They would bring the kids, and the kids would adjust and wouldn't want to leave. And so the

county would let them stay. Most of the babies and toddlers I fostered stayed with me until they graduated from high school and eventually college. And most of them still keep in touch. My last foster daughter just graduated from high school in the spring.

You do get a stipend from the county for their upkeep, but it doesn't cover everything. Whenever a child needed a dress to wear to the prom, I would sew it for her. If someone needed money for an after-school activity, I took it from my savings. I never wanted them to feel different from the kids in biological families. I consider every single one of these children to be a member of my family.

I pray for my kids every night. I ask God to keep them safe and watch over them, because they all turned out to be really nice men and women. They all have jobs. Some of them own their own businesses, some of them work in the medical field.

Before I moved to a retirement community recently, I lived in the same house for 52 years, and the neighbors knew there were always children staying with me. Not too long ago, one of them told me they'd never known the kids were foster children.

They'd thought I was just taking care of relatives—family members' children. There's no better compliment I could have gotten. Every

child deserves that level of love and care. So when my neighbor said that, I thought to myself, *You know what? I didn't do too bad.* —As told to Robin Westen

**"I consider every single one of these children to be a member of my family."**

*Emma Patterson, 88, a retired administrative worker, lives in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.*



Nessman on his new job and, inset, a few steps from heroism



## Being the Guy Who Saved the Baby

Ronald Nessman was down on his luck—until a split-second decision changed his life

**I**T ALL HAPPENED in about 10 seconds. This was a year ago, and I'd just been to a job interview to be a dishwasher at Applebee's. I was sitting outside a car wash, waiting for my sister. Nearby, I saw a baby stroller get picked up by a gust of wind and start rolling toward a busy road. Before I could even think, I ran and grabbed the stroller right before it went into traffic. The little boy had been with his great-aunt, but she had tripped and fallen, and his stroller had gotten away from her. I rolled him right back up

to her and gave her a big hug.

That would have been the end of it, except that the whole thing was captured on video and went viral. Within a few days, it had been viewed 58 million times.

TV stations and newspapers wanted to hear my story, so I told them. My girlfriend had died five years earlier, and it broke me. All I could do was cry. I'd been clean and sober for years when she died, but I started using drugs again. I became homeless. I got beat up and left for dead on the railroad tracks in Fontana, California.

Then my sister took me in, and I realized I had to clean up my act. I stopped the drugs and went looking for a job. That's what had taken me to Applebee's that day. As I said to one of the TV reporters, if you want something different, you've got to do something different. And I wanted something different for myself.

All my life, I was always that person doing something stupid or wrong. I've been to prison four times. But suddenly people were saying nice things about me. They offered me money—though I never took a dime. People demanded that Applebee's hire me, which it did. And I learned that people are good. They would come into Applebee's and say, "Is that the guy who saved the baby? He really works here?" When I went to the DMV, people said, "Are you the guy that saved the baby?"

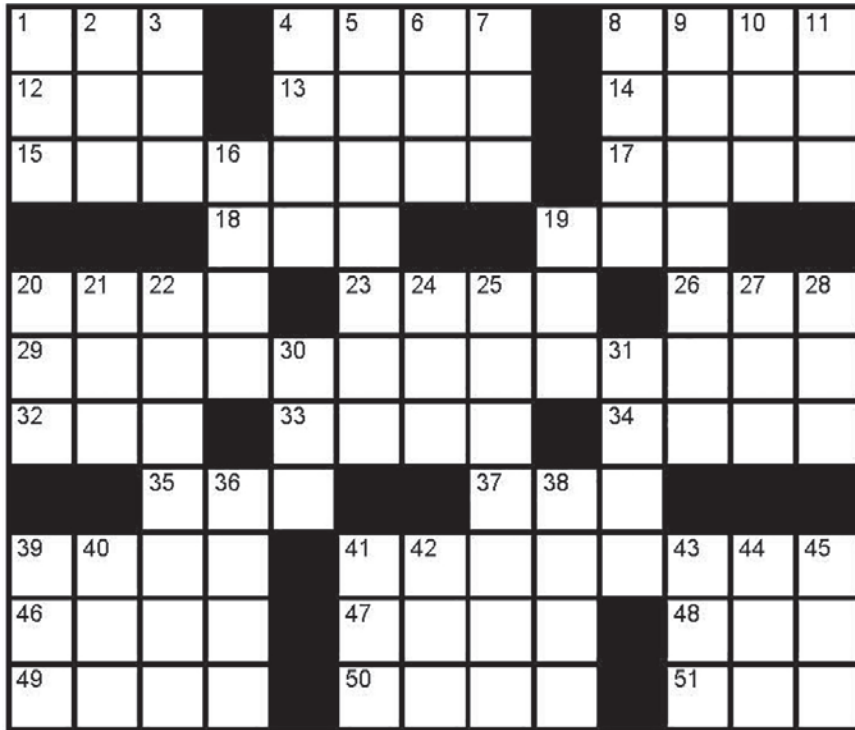
For the first time, I realized that I had been in a prison in my mind, thinking that I wasn't worth anything. When you feel worthless, that's how you expect to be treated. But now people were treating me like I had value. And it changed me. I'm open to everything. My confidence is through the roof. It's so much easier to speak to people. I feel I'm worthy.

I applied for a truck driver's license, and in April, after nearly a year at Applebee's, I started a job as a long-haul trucker. I loved my job, but this pays way better.

My message for others is that it's never too late to change. Until I was past 50, I used to do this and that, but today I work hard. I know what I'm doing, and I know that I make a difference. —As told to Andrea Atkins

*Truck driver Ronald Nessman, 54, lives in Victorville, California.*

PUZZLES BY STANLEY NEWMAN



## CROSSWORD

### Alphabetical Order

#### ACROSS

- 1 Nectar collector
- 4 Bachelor of \_\_\_ degree
- 8 Helpful facts, for short
- 12 Tavern
- 13 Informal refusal [having 14th-16th]
- 14 Leave port
- 15 Maryland seafood [having 1st-3rd]
- 17 Row of a poem
- 18 British lexicon: abbr.
- 19 Part of mph
- 20 Parade spoiler
- 23 Manufactured
- 26 "\_\_\_ the fields we go"
- 29 Tireless [having 4th-6th]
- 32 Parting word

- 33 Some primates
- 34 Repeated musical phrase
- 35 FBI investigator: abbr.
- 37 Tic-\_\_\_-toe
- 39 She, in Paris
- 41 Expressing amusement [having 7th-9th]
- 46 Big name at Disneyland
- 47 Fairy-tale villain
- 48 Falsehood
- 49 Detroit TV station [23rd-26th]
- 50 Soft throws
- 51 Dutch airline [11th-13th]

#### DOWN

- 1 U.K. network
- 2 Corn purchase
- 3 Historical period
- 4 Suffix for utter
- 5 Navigation software display
- 6 Toll road: abbr.
- 7 Realize

- 8 Maui or Aruba
- 9 Kenya's capital
- 10 Fish appendage
- 11 Grand \_\_\_ Opry
- 16 Doggie biscuit shape
- 19 Golf tee, for instance
- 20 Piece of barbecue
- 21 Your pick of
- 22 In theory
- 24 Feasted on
- 25 Interrupt [having 19th-21st]
- 27 Assistant to Santa
- 28 Football official
- 30 Skim milk's lack
- 31 Curve of the foot
- 36 Jazz saxophonist Stan
- 38 Improves, as wine
- 39 Sound of distaste
- 40 Overly lenient
- 41 Texter's giggle
- 42 In the past
- 43 Category
- 44 Nothing at all
- 45 Any birthstone

## NUMBER FUN

### DIGITAL DISPLAY

Each of the three digits below the line relates to the numbers directly above it. What number belongs in the blank space?



## THINK!

### THREE OF A KIND

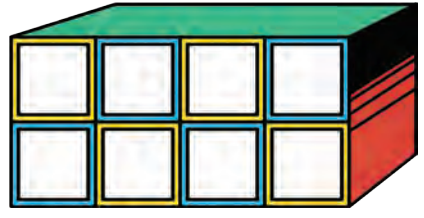
Find the three hidden, related words in this sentence: **So let's search for the elusive buried treasure.**



## WORDPLAY

### HALF AND HALF

The eight letters in **FURLOUGH** can be rearranged to form a pair of common four-letter words. What are those two words?



**AARP.ORG/BRAINHEALTH**  
Up-to-date news, resources and tips on dementia and cognitive health

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### 9. Acorn Stairlifts.

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**Jennifer Jacobs, 53**, Falls Church, Virginia. Intelligence analyst Jacobs created Connect Our Kids, which gives foster care teams advanced technology and tools to find families for children under their care.



**Robert Elkin, 65**, Dallas. Elkin and fellow volunteers founded March to the Polls, which provides peer-to-peer in-class high school voter education and registration in 10 school districts in the Dallas area.



**Gemma M. Garcia, 67**, Miami Beach. A moving volunteer experience at a faith-based prison program for women motivated Garcia to cofound the Ladies Empowerment & Action Program, which supports women exiting prison and jail in South Florida.

## Purpose Prize Winners

*AARP honors lives spent helping others*

**S**EVEN older Americans who have made important contributions to building a better world have been named the winners of the AARP Purpose Prize. Each recipient's organization will receive \$50,000. AARP also awarded an honorary Purpose Prize to the actor Taraji P. Henson for her work to address mental health issues in diverse communities (see page 7).

Here are the winners.



To find out more, scan this code with your phone, or visit [aarp.org/purposeprize](http://aarp.org/purposeprize).



**Jim Ansara, 67**, Essex, Massachusetts. Ansara's volunteer work in Haiti inspired him to cofound Build Health International in 2014, which, with local partners, builds high-quality health care facilities around the world.



**Renee Fluker, 69**, West Bloomfield, Michigan. Fluker founded the Midnight Golf Program, which offers high school seniors a 30-week program that introduces them to the game and to life-changing opportunities.



**Calvin Mackie, 57**, New Orleans. Mackie, a former engineering professor, founded STEM NOLA to fill the gap in opportunities for high-quality STEM learning experiences for children in underserved communities.



**Jon Eldan, 54**, Oakland, California. After Eldan, a lawyer, viewed a documentary about wrongful convictions, he founded After Innocence, which supports people exonerated for crimes nationwide and advocates for legal changes on their behalf.

Top: AARP. Portraits: Stephen Voss; Mackie portrait: Craig Mulcahy; Center: Erik Carter/August

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More than 39 million older adults do not have enough money to make ends meet. That's 1 in 3 seniors who simply can't afford to pay for utilities, rent, medication, and food.

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For more information, please visit our website at [aarpfoundation.org/DAF](http://aarpfoundation.org/DAF)

**AARP Foundation**  
For a future without senior poverty.

## YourAARP

### HOW WE'RE FIGHTING FOR YOU

## AARP TAKES ON AGING WELL

**A**S THE chief public policy officer at AARP, I have spent the past decade working to improve the lives of people and their families as they age. Yet as I approached my own 50th birthday, I asked myself the questions I'd been studying for years: How long will I live? Will I stay healthy? How long will I work? Who will care for me?

In search of answers, I talked to older people and experts and looked at new research in science and medicine. The result is my new book, *The Second Fifty: Answers to the 7 Big Questions of Midlife and Beyond* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2024).

Here are a few of the surprising things I learned.

► **Health has less to do with genes than environment and behavior.**

You've probably seen lists of the five healthy habits: a good diet, regular exercise, healthy body weight, no smoking, and limited or no alcohol. Practice four of these five habits and you can gain eight to 10 years free of major medical problems. But a sense of purpose may also help us live longer. And staying connected through work, volunteering or close relationships is crucial. Healthy relationships are linked to better immune functioning, lower blood pressure and lower levels of inflammation.

► **Mindset matters.**

A widespread misconception is that aging is strictly a time of decline.



Research AARP undertook with National Geographic found that people in their 70s and 80s were almost twice as happy as those in their 40s and 50s. And studies by Becca Levy, a professor at Yale, show that people who view aging positively live more than seven years longer than those with the most negative attitudes.

► **Decline is not inevitable.**

Some cognitive faculties actually improve as we age, and we also tend to become more resilient emotionally. Plus, we can take steps to support our brain health. Adopting those five healthy habits helps lower the risk of dementia by up to one-third.

► **We can't do it alone.**

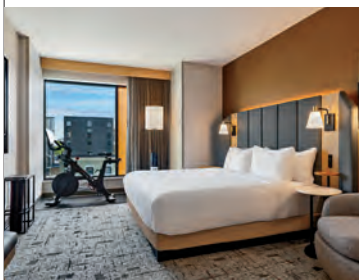
If we are going to create a society where Americans can flourish in their second 50, we need leaders with solutions that make it easier to age well. That's why AARP and our network of advocates fight to improve and protect systems like Medicare and Social Security that support us as we get older. Find out more about the book at [aarp.org/TheSecondFifty](http://aarp.org/TheSecondFifty). All of AARP's royalties from book sales support the charitable work of AARP Foundation. —*Debra Whitman*

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From top: Courtesy Hilton; Getty Images



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\*Source: 272 Dermatologists at AAD, USA, 2024.



# “There’s somebody out there that will help you.”

Tom McSpedden never imagined he'd need help putting food on the table. After decades as a truck driver, health issues derailed his career and financial stability.

At 70, Tom found himself dependent on Social Security disability benefits. Despite receiving SNAP benefits, he often went hungry, highlighting the challenge of affording healthy food on a tight budget.

Tom's fortunes changed thanks to a misdial. Seeking help after emergency SNAP allotments ended in 2023, he accidentally reached Erika Murdoch, a CalFresh specialist

at Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services, an AARP Foundation grantee.

Erika recognized that Tom might qualify for additional benefits. "Many CalFresh recipients don't realize there are other costs they can report that qualify them for a higher benefit," she explains. Erika had helped Tom secure an additional \$70 per month in food benefits, making a crucial difference in his life.

Tom's story is far from unique. Nearly 11.8 million adults over 50 were at risk of hunger in 2022, a 26% increase from the previous year.



## Thanks to a chance call with Erika Murdoch, Tom McSpedden got more benefits—and enough to eat.

Yet, only 37% of eligible older adults participate in SNAP.

By partnering with community heroes like Erika, AARP Foundation is working to change this. In 2023, we helped 79,017 older adults with low income apply for public benefits like SNAP.

For Tom, the impact goes beyond just having enough to eat. "Going to bed, sleeping well, waking up with a different attitude. I consider her [Erika] a friend," he shares.

---

**It takes community heroes like Erika to end senior poverty.**

**Watch the story at [aarpfoundation.org/hero](https://aarpfoundation.org/hero)**



**CREDITS: On the Cover/Samuel L. Jackson:**

Wardrobe credits: Blazer: Saks Fifth Avenue; Pants: Alexander McQueen; Shoes: G.H. Bass; Watch: Rolex from Craft & Tailored. **TOC Page 1:** Clockwise from top: Illustration by Remie Geoffroi; Maggie Steber; Illustration by Sean McCabe; Illustration by Kyle Hilton; Amanda Friedman; Scott Suchman; Victor Protasio. **Center from top:** Illustration by Ollie Hirst; Walt Disney Studios/Courtesy Everett Collection. **Samuel L. Jackson's Next Act Pages 32-33:** Wardrobe credits: Market editor: Daniel P. Lee; Fashion assistant: Jarrett Meilleur; Top: Rag & Bone; Pants: Rag & Bone; Loafers: Taft; Watch: Audemars Piguet; Glasses: Personal. **Page 34:** Wardrobe credits: Suit: Rag & Bone; Loafers: Taft; Watch: Audemars Piguet; Glasses: Personal. Photos *bottom from left:* Universal Pictures/Courtesy Everett Collection (2). **Page 35:** *Bottom from left:* Miramax Films/Courtesy Everett Collection; 20th Century Fox/ Courtesy Everett Collection; Trimark Pictures/ Courtesy Everett Collection. **Page 36:** *Bottom from left:* Courtesy Everett Collection; Lucasfilm Ltd./ Photofest; Courtesy Everett Collection. **Page 37:** *Bottom from left:* Paramount Pictures/Photofest; Walt Disney Co./Courtesy Everett Collection; Paramount Pictures/Courtesy Everett Collection. **Big 5-Oh Page 80:** Leonardo DiCaprio primary photo: Kevin Mazur/Getty Images. *Clockwise from top:* Melinda Sue Gordon/Paramount Pictures/Everett Collection; Andrew Cooper/Columbia Pictures/ Everett Collection; Alamy (3); DreamWorks/Everett Collection; Associated Press. Phoenix: Carlos Alvarez/Getty Images; Underdog: Everett Collection; Cheadle: Michael Buckner/Getty Images; Bracco: Anthony Behar/Sipa USA/Associated Press; Roth: Jason Kempin/Getty Images; DeVito: Getty Images.

**TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!**

We greatly value your feedback about AARP THE MAGAZINE—including what you'd like us to cover next. Here are several ways to send us your comments on stories, and to offer your suggestions for topics, people, trends and issues to report on in future issues of the magazine. While we read (and listen) carefully to all submissions, due to the high volume we cannot respond to every question or return submitted materials.

**U.S. Mail:** AARP The Magazine, 601 E St. NW, Washington, DC 20049

**Email:** [aarpmagazine@aarp.org](mailto:aarpmagazine@aarp.org)

**Phone:** 888-687-2277 or international callers: 202-434-3525

**Facebook:** [Facebook.com/AARP](https://www.facebook.com/AARP)

**Twitter:** @AARP

**SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES ON PAGE 69**

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**DIGITAL DISPLAY:** 4 (each digit below the line is the average); **THREE OF A KIND:** Sole, arch, heel; **HALF AND HALF:** Gulf, hour.



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Average no. of copies Each issue during preceding 12 months	No. Copies of Single issue published nearest to filing date	2. Free or nominal-rate in-county copies
		none
		none
A. Total copies printed (net press run)		3. Free or nominal-rate copies mailed at other classes through the USPS
22,450,678	22,364,769	none
		none
B. Paid circulation		4. Free or nominal-rate copies outside the mail
1. Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions		17,164
22,322,220	22,240,302	
2. Mailed in-county paid subscriptions		E. Total free or nominal-rate distribution (sum of D.1, D.2, D.3 and D.4)
none	none	119,364
3. Paid distribution outside mails including sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales and other paid distribution outside USPS		117,003
6,390	7,099	F. Total distribution (sum of C and E)
		22,447,974
4. Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS		22,364,404
none	none	G. Copies not distributed
		2,704
		365
C. Total paid distribution (sum of B.1, B.2, B.3 and B.4)		H. Total (sum of F and G)
22,328,610	22,247,401	22,450,678
		22,364,769
D. Free or nominal-rate distribution		I. Percent paid (C/F x 100)
1. Free or nominal-rate outside-county copies		99.50%
102,200	100,003	99.50%

This statement will be published in the October-November 2024 issue of this publication. I certify that all information furnished on this statement is true and complete. —Robyn Motley, Senior Vice President, General Manager

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

# Leonardo DiCaprio

**(NOVEMBER 11):** For more than 30 years, the Academy Award-winning actor has received titanic attention.

**COMMERCIAL APPEAL:** DiCaprio began acting as a child in TV ads for Matchbox cars, Bubble Yum, Honda, Kraft cheese and more.

★ 6 ★

Feature films made with director **Martin Scorsese**

**BIG BREAK:** His first major film role was opposite Robert De Niro in 1993's *This Boy's Life*. They acted together again in 2023's *Killers of the Flower Moon*.

**'TITANIC' HIT:** In 1997, DiCaprio starred in the

then-highest-grossing film ever.

**COMING SOON:** Among his upcoming projects is a film with director Paul Thomas Anderson.

**LIFELONG ACTIVISM:** DiCaprio has produced documentaries about the effects of climate change, animal poaching and deforestation. "I love being immersed in nature, going to places in the world that are pristine and untouched by man," he told *TimeOut* in 2016. "It's almost a religious experience." —*Whitney Matheson*



**MORE MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS**

**Joaquin Phoenix**

**OCTOBER 28**  
Oscar winner costars with partner Rooney Mara in upcoming film *Polaris*.

50



**Underdog**

**OCTOBER 3**  
The canine superhero has starred in cartoons, comics and even a feature film.

60



**Don Cheadle**

**NOVEMBER 29**  
Actor serves as a goodwill ambassador for the U.N. Environment Programme.

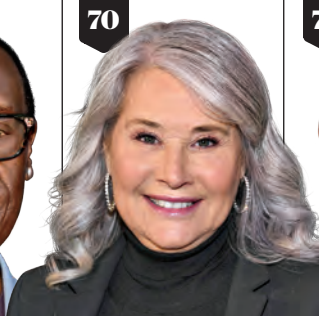
60



**Lorraine Bracco**

**OCTOBER 2**  
*Sopranos* star celebrated the acclaimed series' 20th anniversary earlier this year.

70



**David Lee Roth**

**OCTOBER 10**  
Besides music, the former Van Halen front man is a visual artist as well as a trained EMT.

70



**Danny DeVito**

**NOVEMBER 17**  
Actor costarred last year with daughter Lucy in the Broadway production / *Need That*.

80



Photo credits and information on page 78

# NERVIVE

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\*Nicholas Hall's global CHC database, DB6, 2021 value sales at MSP

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