



BY WILLIAM H. FREY



**While baby boomers** may think of themselves as forever young, the reality of aging is beginning to set in. By its very numbers, this demographic “pig in the python” shook up the culture as it crowded into grade schools in the 1950s, and redefined teenage-hood in the 1960s. Now, as the leading edge of this generation is entering their near-golden years, pre-senior boomers again bring with them distinctly more verve.

They are better educated, more racially diverse and less likely to be married. Moreover, as the first full-fledged products of the women’s movement, well over half of boomer females are still working – full-time retirement is not on their radar. And, of course, they still aspire to the good life: 60 really is the new 40.

Perhaps the biggest impact this huge generation is exerting is a rapid aging in parts of the country that have previously been associated with youth. The Sun Belt, the suburbs, and high-end amenity areas are showing the fastest gains in pre-senior populations. This includes a whole wall of states in the West, and the rapid growth of less-than-stodgy places, such as Las Vegas, Austin and Atlanta.

Note that the growth of pre-seniors in these areas is not necessarily due to recent immigration. Rather, boomers are aging in place, with big appetites for have-it-all consumption,

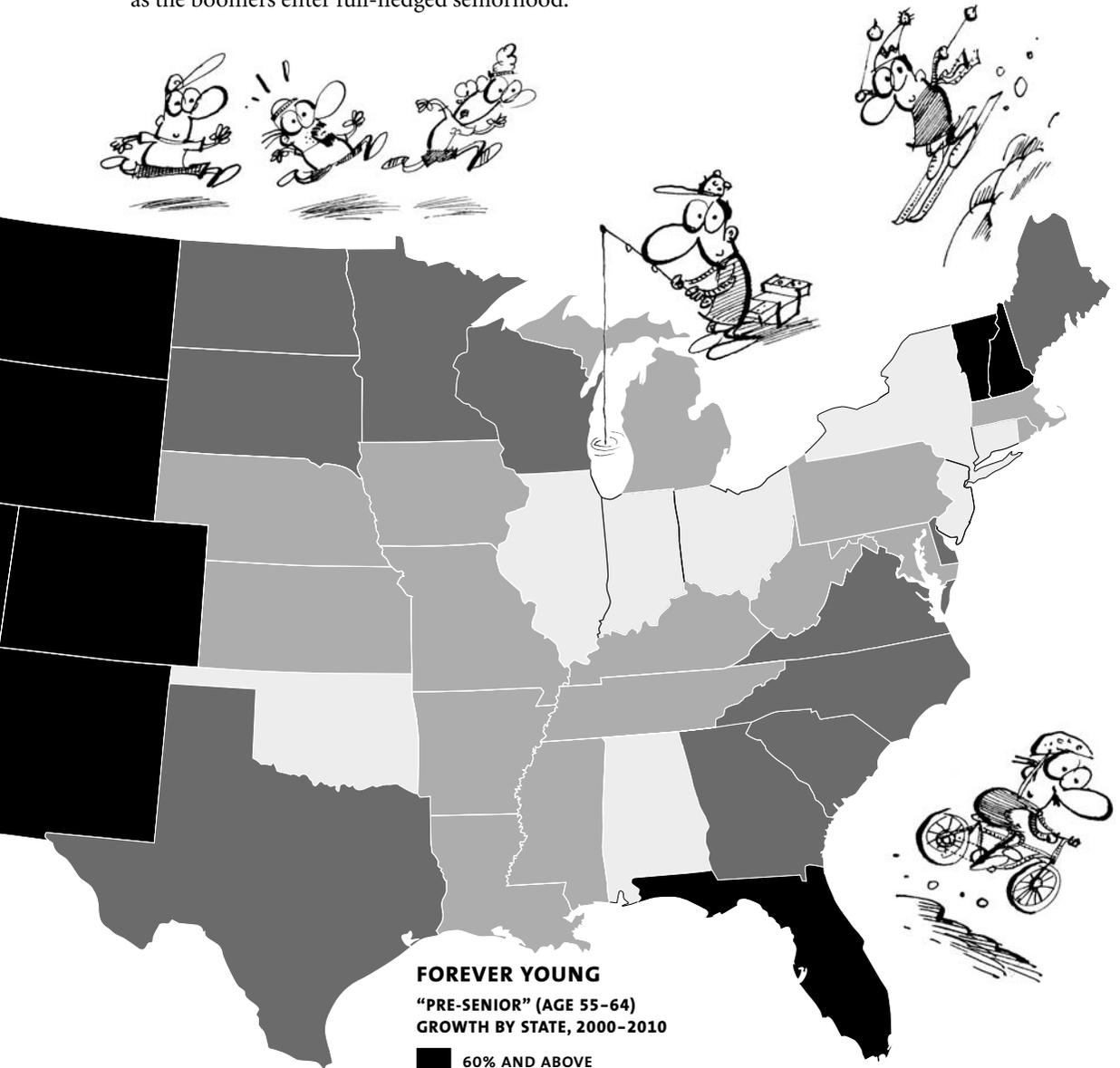


HAL MAYFORTH

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from chardonnay to convertibles to chiropractic care. And because this generation is present in force everywhere, even slow-growing parts of the country will be affected. The phenomenon will continue into the next decade, as the boomers enter full-fledged seniorhood.

By then, even stagnating states like Pennsylvania will feel the tug. At the other end of the spectrum, boomer magnets like Arizona will be changed by the double whammy of aging in place and senior in-migration. **M**



**FOREVER YOUNG**  
**"PRE-SENIOR" (AGE 55-64)**  
**GROWTH BY STATE, 2000-2010**

- 60% AND ABOVE
- 50-59%
- 40-49%
- UNDER 40%

SOURCE: William H. Frey analysis of U.S. Census sources

