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astonishing discoveries about their backgrounds  $\dots$  whites who discovered black ancestors, blacks who discovered Native American ancestors and so on. A few years ago, I started hearing sensational tales of people who took DNA tests and made

Internet with genetic science, and in doing so transformed genealogy, and the very notion of - a genealogist who had run up against his own wall - hit upon the notion of marrying the blossoming, tremendous strides were also being made in the field of genetics. One day a man Frustrated, I posted some questions on genealogy websites, in the hope that some distant cousin might read them. No such luck. My questions are still sitting up there, asd and unanswered. But technology had other things in store. At the same time the Internet was unanswered.

world wars, the Russian Revolution, and seven decades of communism, they seem to have forebears' birth, marriage, and death records may have existed once, but in the course of two able to track down lots and lots of ancestors in America; in Europe, not so much. Those down that next great-greatgrand-somebody-or-other. My wall was the Atlantic Ocean. I was Everyone who sets out in search of roots will come to a point where he or she just cannot track

instance. Or maybe Genghis Khan.

Vercente to the satisfaction of the controlled of your cheek and you can learn some amazing and even lifte-changing things about yourself and your cheek and you can learn some amazing and even lifte-changing things about yourself and your tamily ... even if they're not the things you were hopping to learn. You could learn that you are descended from Moses' brother, Aaron, for hopping to learn. You could learn that you are descended from Moses' brother, Aaron, for hopping to learn. Welcome to the astonishing, edifying, and sometimes perplexing world of tracing your roots

reunion, you see, is happening online. It's virtual and perpetual. related, but little else. The guest list isn't set ... actually, it's grow ing all the time but that's okay, because we don't have to rent a space, or figure out how much potato salad to make. This he. For that matter, the entire family gathering is composed of people who know we are fact, though I know for certain that he and I are related, I don't know exactly how. Neither does offer I couldn't resist, even though, as family reunions go, this one is a bit unusual. For one thing, Harry and I have never met. I didn't even know he existed before he e-mailed me. In Long Island - we'll call him Harry - who was writing to invite me to a family reunion. It was an relatives you never knew you had. I recently received an e-mail from a cousin of mine out on How the new DNA technology can solve mysteries in your family tree... and help you discover

new insight about how we're all "related" in spite of visible/physical "differences!" ggd ③ Richard Rubin from the online version of AARP - The Magazine. I hope you enjoy it and gain NOTE: I've alw ays been fascinated with history and genealogy. This is a condensed article by

# Are You My Cousin?

Greg (Formerly Known As "Da Baby") Davis ggd 😊

I'm easy to contact ... 478/318-0471 and/or via e-mail at gdavismail@gmail.com!

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## ## DNA (Continued)

I also wasn't too surprised to learn that my matches' ancestors were mostly, like mine, from eastern Europe. But eastern Europe is a big place; while I had believed that my maternal line originated in Lithuania, I found close matches in western Poland and Romania. Even more dispersed is the family on my father's side: while my earliest known ancestor in that line came from Belarus, I found close matches in such distant locales as Germany and Bosnia. Oh, and also Puerto Rico, where the family of a man I'm supposedly related to has been living for more than 300 years ... now that was a head scratcher!

At first I thought it must be a mistake. But we are, indeed, a match. There is a 96.56 percent chance we share a common ancestor within the past 24 generations. That's about 600 years ago - or some 85 years before all Jews were expelled from Spain. Which means there's a good chance I'm not only eastern European but Spanish! That revelation, though, wasn't as big a surprise as the e-mail I received just a day after I first saw my results. It was from Harry, the cousin I mentioned earlier. You see, when you swab the inside of your cheek, you also give your name and e-mail address, and indicate whether you wish to share them with others. If you do, you and your genetic matches will be able to contact one another. This function is what really makes the process worthwhile, because it enables two previously unacquainted people to work together on tracing their shared family tree. The image that comes to my mind is of two miners tunneling toward each other in the hope they'll eventually meet!

This, says Bennett Greenspan, was his vision from the start. Today his company's database has more than 200,000 people in it. Greenspan configured that database so it would seek out matches between members and facilitate their getting in touch with one another. Which means that every time a new person enters the database, matches are instantly notified of the newcomer's arrival.

So back to my e-mail from Harry. He was writing, he explained, to invite me to join a club of sorts, in which all the members were genetically matched. Not to brag, but my cluster group has 81 members at present and is, according to Greenspan, one of the largest and most active. I, of course, couldn't be prouder. But here, at last, is perhaps the most surprising thing of all: what seems, on the surface, to be the coldest, most impersonal means of tracing your own lineage is anything but. As I have said, before I received that e-mail, I had no idea Harry existed. Aside from the fact that he and I both live in the New York City area and share a direct ancestor, we have very little in common. He's in his 80s, was born in Vienna, and is an electrical engineer; I'm in my 40s, was born in New York City, and am still inclined to stick a fork in the toaster unless someone stops me. And yetwe have become very friendly, talk and e-mail often, and have even made plans to visit in person. It's strange to think that it wasn't some outside networking entity but something deep inside me - not the ⊟ks lodge or MySpace but my own DNA - that managed to offer me such a strong sense of community. I'll have to find an armchair psychologist to tell. I'm sure there must be one in the family. ggd 💿

## Who Influences You?



The people we are closest to, and spend the most time with, influence who we are; that should come as no surprise. But your friends may have much more of an impact on your health than you realized. If you struggle to lose weight, or want to gain insight into your health, start by taking a look at your closest friends.

Recently, researchers looked deeper into the connection between social circles and people's weight. What they found is that your best friend's weight will likely determine w hether you will gain or lose weight over the years. Some even say that you will likely weigh within ten pounds of the person you are closest to.

Having friends who are overweight should not be a reason for you to blame them for your own weight gain. Everyone has to take responsibility for the choices they make, and the 152 Maple Street | Warner Robins, GA 31093 lifestyle they life. If you and your close

Meeting Dates/Time: Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> and Wednesday, November 19th (10:00 A.M.) Location: Wellston Center

friend are both overweight, use it as an opportunity to set goals together that you can both work toward! ggd 😊

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#### Election Day Is Tuesday November 4, 2008!

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Christmas Party will be Friday, December 12th at 5:00 P.M.! Mark Your Calendars: November's meeting will be the 19th (third Wednesday)! The President's Corner: Please continue to bring gift items for each month's meeting!

1882) "Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted." Matthew 5:4 For love and friends, For everything Thy goodness sends. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-For each new morning with its light, For rest and shelter of the night, For health and food,

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