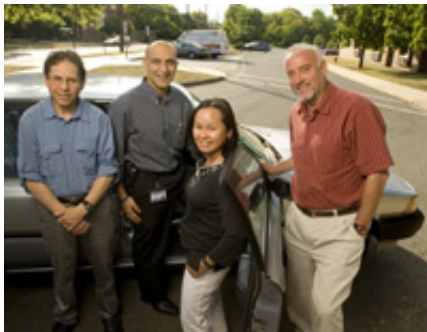


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Four carpoolers from North Jersey share bagels, the New Jersey Turnpike, and family milestones as they make their way to New Brunswick. From left, Stan Cohen, Al Ianuzzi, Melissa Aranzamendez, and Bill Glovin.

How Two Carpoolers Became Friends for Life

I hope my wife won't be jealous, but this fall I'm celebrating a special anniversary with someone else.

That someone is Al Ianuzzi, senior director of Worldwide Environment, Health and Safety at Johnson & Johnson. This September marks 15 years since we hooked up through Keep Middlesex Moving, a nonprofit transportation management association that listed our contact information in its newsletter. Al, who lives in Carlstadt, called one day in the late summer of 1994 and asked if I'd like to try driving together to New Brunswick. I had been working at Rutgers for four years, and had grown weary of the one-hour commute by myself from Nutley.

Through the years, we've saved thousands of dollars in gas and tolls, not to mention considerable wear and tear on our vehicles. Business travel, off-site meetings, and other conflicts limit our frequency, but just two carpools a week adds up over the course of a year. When we started, Al drove an old Honda Civic with no air conditioning and a radio that buzzed like a group of queasy insects. Today, we cruise in his new BMW, with heated leather seats and all the bells and whistles.

You learn a lot about someone by spending two hours in a car with him or her a few times a week. When I drive, Al wastes no time opening his laptop and getting to work as radio sports talk drones on in the background. When he drives, I'm out faster than you can say narcolepsy.

You also learn a lot about one another's job and company. I've learned that a physician who works for Johnson & Johnson invented the harmonic scalpel (which cuts tissue using vibrations); that a very proactive wellness program has made a difference in Al's life; and that the company is committed to going



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above and beyond when it comes to meeting its environmental regulatory responsibilities in the United States and abroad. Al has also taken me on a tour of the beautifully decorated corporate headquarters during the holiday season and talked about his business travels to countries in the Far East, Europe, and South America. He recently recounted his excitement at meeting J&J's CEO, Bill Weldon, who occasionally hosts breakfast for about 20 employees from different units of the company.

We've learned to avoid talking politics, since we're on different sides of the fence on most issues. Devoted to his family, church, and career, Al's a New York Giants season ticket holder, has a keen sense of humor, and stays in shape. I can't recall ever seeing him lose his temper, driving or otherwise. When he senses I'm drowsy behind the wheel, he'll turn the air on full blast or start singing Christmas carols, which is more effective than a quart of Red Bull. At one point, Al decided to get his doctorate, and I saw his tremendous work ethic on display. Ask for a favor, and he'll never turn you down.

Al also tends to show his affection for friends and family by assigning silly nicknames to them. He good-naturedly refers to his wife, Ronnie, as Wife-enstein. He shortened my last name from Glovin to Glovi and added "locks" to it. So I became "Glovilocks." When he would phone to arrange a carpool, he would take the Glovilocks theme a step further: "Locks, the porridge is just right," he'd say. That was his way of telling me that the carpool was on for the next morning.

I responded to his silly ritual by nicknaming him "Baby Bear"—the poor victim in the "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" story. Over time "Glovi" and "Baby" dropped off and we became simply "Locks" and "Bear." To complicate matters, Stan Cohen, a grant writer for the Saint Peter's Foundation, joined the carpool. Since he is obsessively punctual, we nicknamed him "Steady." Melissa Aranzamendez, manager of academic programs at the New Jersey Center for Biomaterials, joined and became "Moe," short for Moe-lissa.

We've watched each other's children grow up and been through births, deaths, graduations, sports injuries, and career shifts. We've watched each other's hairlines recede, overcome snowstorms and breakdowns, celebrated the 50th anniversary of the New Jersey Turnpike, and witnessed the gaping hole left in the New York skyline after 9/11—something we'll never get used to. Early on—I can't recall the year—Al decided to celebrate Fridays by picking up coffee and bagels with butter to consume on the ride. That's his generous spirit at work. And for years we've always made friendly wagers on the Super Bowl, the World Series, and NBA Finals. The loser buys the bagels, but with an upgrade of cream cheese and lox. I don't recall ever losing.

Both of our kids are heading to Rutgers—Newark this fall, so maybe they'll be chips off the old blocks. How long our own carpool will continue is hard to predict. But for now, we'll sit back and enjoy the ride—and the friendship.

[Return to top](#)

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