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Wake-up call for boomers

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FOR a generation that never wanted to grow old, the baby boomers have come in for a rude awakening.



A typical American family of the 1950s sits down to eat.

In 2006, the first boomers started turning 60. They will be the largest elder generation in America's history and their past and future will be explored in a new documentary.

How will the Woodstock Generation cope with the challenges of the next, and final, third of their lives? As explained in "The Boomer Century" by host and gerontologist Ken Dychtwald, boomers won't be glued to their rocking chairs. They'll be doing everything from volunteering to returning to school, to moving to college towns and starting new businesses. Good, because with the future of Social Security uncertain, they'll need all their savings.

The documentary faces other

scary issues head-on. For example, 25 million boomers live paycheck to paycheck with net household assets of less than \$1,000.

And here's another sobering statistic: By 2046, it is projected that there will be only two workers or less to support each boomer retiree (there were 42 when Social Security began in 1940).

If you're over 60 and haven't yet jumped off the roof, don't read any further: Unless a cure or treatment is found, 15 million boomers will be stricken with dementia by the middle of this century.

To soften some of the statistical blows, the documentary includes interviews with celeb boomers

who've done quite well for themselves. From Hollywood, filmmakers Oliver Stone and Rob Reiner talk about getting old in Tinseltown. On the highbrow end of the spectrum, playwright Eve Ensler and novelist Erica Jong offer their thoughts on how women will deal with their last years. Civil rights pioneer Julian Bond, healthy aging doctor Andrew Weil, political analyst David Gergen and White House spokesman Tony Snow will also weigh in with their insights on what they'll be doing when to remain forever fabulous.

**THE BOOMER CENTURY:
1946-2046**
Wednesday, 9 p.m., PBS