

Hitting the half century milestone

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At 50, everyone has the face he deserves.?

George Orwell

I'm not sure what Orwell meant by that, but I hope he was referring to that wise, distinguished look that comes with having been around the block once or twice.

Age is a state of mind, I'm told



Well this state is maturing quite nicely, thank you.

As I waited to cross the street the other day, I noticed a 1970s-era Camaro drive by. The licence plates contained the 'historic' designation.

I drove a 1970 1/2 RS in high school. Does that mean I'm considered 'historic,' too?

Say it isn't so!

Recently, there have been a slew of end-of-the-world movies on TV. Was that a sign, heading into Labour Day, the final weekend of summer, and my 50th birthday?

I'm older than the fax machine!

I recall working in Bolton when one of these babies first arrived. We had to have a switch on the wall because there were no dedicated phone lines. It was neat, but the early machines used a roll of thermal paper that was flimsy and did not have a long shelf life. When we first got the machine, it was weird because only a handful of other companies had them, so we weren't inundated by faxes.

Today, they're integrated into larger machines and somewhat being replaced by email, scanners and laser printers.

I am older than the cell phone!

I remember the early portable car phones and my sister-in-law had this monstrosity perched in her car. It looked like a Second World War field unit, with a handset attached to large box. Reception was spotty but at least she had bragging rights for having one of the first.

I really liked the Motorola and Star flip-phones when they appeared. I'm not a huge gadget enthusiast, and while I now have a smart phone, I have no plans to get an iPhone. But I do love my iPad!

Ah, the computer age. There have likely been more technological improvements in the past 10-15 years than ever before in humankind's humble existence.

In college we actually used those clunky IBM electric typewriters with the moving ball! I found a trick where I could unlatch the ball, and hitting the right key just so, I could launch the ball clear across the classroom! While I didn't receive extra marks for that stunt, I got a few laughs.

As part of our video instruction, I recall lugging around these clunky Beta video cameras with battery packs on wheels.

At work, we first used surplus LED computers with built-in floppy disc drives. Then came a slew of Macs from the Mac Plus and colourful G3 iMac "fish bowl" models to the slim large-screen iMacs we currently use.

In my day, and for the first several years in the newspaper business, we used cameras with 35mm film! I actually did some darkroom work and developed black and white prints.

Like many photographers, I had a few bucks invested in camera equipment that is, alas, no longer practical. Maybe it will make a comeback!

I'm older than LED and LCD watches!

I was obsessed with timepieces (still am) and managed to get some of the early models of these cool watches.

I read up on just how the LED and LCD screens worked and was fascinated by digital watches.

I think it was really a fad, because today, your basic analog quartz watch is the mainstay. Perhaps it always has been the standard.

I couldn't really appreciate the cost of things the year I was born (1963) as I was still in cloth diapers.

But people could buy a candy bar for a nickel and a gallon of gas for a quarter. A new car and an average house would set you back about \$3,200! Consider the average income was close to \$6,000, you'd still have money to spare!

They say all things are relative, but they're not at all. Our income to cost ratio for food, shelter and necessities, is out of whack.

Wages just haven't kept pace and many average Canadians are simply stuck in the mud in the proverbial climb up the ladder. It's an employers' market and there are more contract positions than ever before - companies don't want to be tied down with bodies.

I share a birthday year with the likes of Conan O'Brien, Johnny Depp, Helen Hunt, Brad Pitt, Quentin Tarantino, Rob Schneider, John Stamos and the equally well known Steve Pellegrini, Cleve Mortelliti and Avia Eek.

But I'm younger than Madonna and comedian Steve Carell.

The 1963 split window Chevrolet Corvette is arguably one of the coolest North American sports cars ever built.

Ford was tops that year. Other neat cruisers that dominated the pack that year were the Galaxie, Fairlane, Falcon, Thunderbird, Impala and Skylark.

While many notable things and events didn't take place until the late 1960s, I consider them part of my decade.

One of the most groundbreaking science fiction TV shows ever - Star Trek - began its short run from 1966 to 1969. It would change that genre forever and make household names out of Kirk, Spock, McCoy, Sulu, Chekov, Uhura and the Enterprise. It spawned a huge media franchise that included five more TV series, 12 movies and hundreds of books, games and toys. To this day, you can find Klingons and Vulcans in uniform at conventions around the world.

Live long and prosper!

While 50 doesn't seem like a lot, I'm likely past the mid-way point of my existence. I'm hoping to hit the century mark and perhaps, if modern medicine continues to improve, I may very well go a bit beyond.

I told my kids the other day, that living to 100 or even 150 may become common in their lifetimes.

When you're young, you want to grow up so fast, and yet when you reach a plateau, you dream of being young again.

But we are unique creatures, capable of a great many things. As we age, we are living tape recorders of our human history and fine examples of what our species is all about.

To others marking their 50th this year, you're in good company!