

*it's not turning the calendar, it's filling it up*

So I thought I would spend some time talking to you about a milestone that I have recently achieved...I just turned forty.

Actually I didn't really see this as being that big of a deal. If you stay reasonably within the boundaries of basic living, with a little luck, everyone will hit the big four-ooooooooohhhhhh sometime during their travels through this wonderful experience called life.

I worked at the morgue (creative writers do things like that) for about a year and a half, and I can assure you that the alternative to turning forty is not a very pleasant one, indeed. I am more than happy to turn the page of my calendar and start down the road of yet another minutes to hours, hours to days, days to weeks, and weeks into still another year gone by.

Some people really get emotional about turning forty. Some get so depressed that you'd swear that their favorite college team had been put on probation and will not be allowed to play in this year's Boredom Bowl. It's a rather grim way to start a decade, if you ask me.

They say that women take forty harder than men, but I'm not so sure. True, it is not much fun keeping company with a woman who thinks she's getting old, but how many men have you seen turn forty and go out to get a tattoo, pierce their ears, or buy that motorcycle they've always wanted? Or even worse, find those young babes attractive and 'worth a shot'?

At forty, women get down in the dumps...men get down in the gutter. But really now, most of us don't really have a problem with getting older. Most of us are grateful to be alive and look forward to making the most of every opportunity that comes their way in the next forty years. I do see signs of getting older though.

I went to a Beach Boys concert for my birthday. No other group brings back my youth like the Beach Boys. What a shock it was to look through my binoculars only to find gray hairs, sagging chins, bald heads, wrinkles and droopy eyes.

"My God, they're not young!!!" I screamed.

The thought of my Beach Boys as being mortal was a major shock to this old beachcomber's heart. I aged twenty years that night alone.

I don't have to squint any more to find gray hair on my head, and my hair is much easier to part down the middle now than before. I don't mind, though. If the hair goes gray, fine. If it just

goes, that's fine, too. I never saw my hair as being a major part of my existence...except during those flower-powered '60s days of my youth.

I still remember everything about my youth... whether it happened or not. I know all the answers to life, though no one ever stops to ask me. Certainly, I enjoy looking at all the attractive young ladies, but I am blessed with enough horse-sense to know better than try and make a fool of myself by thinking they might find me attractive without a sports car and fancy portfolio. Parties, large get-togethers and social events are now avoided when possible.

The children now tuck me in at night.

I no longer have any patients with people who don't think and act the same as me... especially when behind the wheel of my car.

I see all these 'beautiful people' strutting around the health club and want to throw up.

I'm in heaven when the girls are all out for the evening and I can sit back in the peace and quiet of a good book.

I see people with young children and thank my stars that my girls are old enough to forget my name.

I don't like sleeping in. There is no better way to start the day than to get up early and sit out on the porch with the sports page and a cup of coffee.

Athletes that are my age are considered antiques in their sport.

I'm glad I'm not an athlete.

I like a vacation that isn't busy. Sitting around a lake chatting with family and friends is just fine with me, thank you.

But I guess the bottom line is that age is really a state of mind. I don't think of myself as forty...I'm sixteen with twenty-four years of experience.

For my birthday, I read a book about one of my favorite people...Jack Benny. Now here's a guy who was thirty-nine for many, many years. That's the right attitude.

So I've reached this great milestone in life...I'm forty. But it's not how many times that you turn the calendar of life that counts...it's how you fill it in.

Just A Thought