

Michael at sixty-eight

17Apr2021

Although Mary began the morning by wishing me a happy natal anniversary, the conversation that ensued had little to do with overt celebration. We discussed our plans for the day and I have to admit that the items on our agenda would probably bore many people: putting the prime coat of paint on the shop walls, running to the hardware store for a garden tool, taking down the parts of a madrone that will interfere with installing the fence... And of course, Saturday housework, etc.

We won't do much in the way of celebration. I think 'observe' is more semantically accurate. Certainly, Mary wishes me well but that's the truth most days (yes, like any long-married couple, we've had our moments). The dogs love me without regard for calendar events. And the workshop won't get itself finished or the house clean itself, so it will be a day of project advancement.

After the tree limbs are trimmed and while I wait for the first coat to dry, I'll sort through the mountain of tools we've pulled out for this or that move-in project and return them to some sense of order. I'll lay out the tarps to protect the workshop floor while I put on the show coats of paint.

In the house, I'll do a top-down vacuum and marvel as always at the sheer volume of dog fur I'll pick up. If I get really ambitious, I'll take on the sagging front door. Shimmying a hinge isn't a fun thing but it's sure satisfying when the door finally closes with a soft 'click.' So I guess, in a way it is a fun thing.

And here's the difference between me at 68 and me at (18?). Sans balloons, over-iced cake or noisemakers, this birthday suits me just fine. I'll spend the day with Mary doing what we've been doing for three-plus decades – making a life together.

My wish for each and all of you is that you'll enjoy this day in your own way and for your own reasons as much as I.