

## My Descent Into Geezerdom

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I have to wonder when I crossed over the line from Regular Guy to one of Them. I used to hold the door for women and the elderly. These days, young women occasionally hold doors for me. I catch people glancing surreptitiously at my belt line. At one time I would have thought maybe they were checking out the package, but then a chance encounter with a mirror suggested that what they were probably looking at was the packaging. And not in a positive way. I might as well face it - my belt folds over. Yes, there is definite tippage at the juncture between gut and groin.

When I am power walking with my buddy along the waterfront, of late no one seems to check me out except perhaps to gauge how to go around me. Which, it becomes clear from their furtive glances and furrowed brows, requires some degree of planning. The hair is gray, rivulets of wrinkles form deltas around my eyes. Speaking of which, my eyebrows have developed minds of their own, sending out alien-looking feelers in odd and apparently unplanned directions. Did I mention my feet hurt? Not all the time, but more and more frequently and especially when I stand after sitting for any length of time. Or for that matter, when I stand for any period of time.

If the physical manifestations of aging weren't enough, the passage of time also seems to be moving me inexorably out of the realm of hipness. Increasingly, my daughters stare uncomprehendingly at some of my best comedic material. They profess embarrassment for reasons ranging from my sartorial choices to my taste in music. Apparently, there is something wrong with wearing black socks with sweat shorts and a Hawaiian shirt, flamboyantly directing the music in my iPod earphones while walking on my treadmill. Who knew?

The point is, I never did know. My apparent slide down the slippery slope to Geezerdom has nothing to do with aging. In fact, it's not a slide at all – I've always been this way. I have always been, am now and hope to always be just a bit off to one side of normal. It's where I live, who I am and all that I can be. I grew up this way and it's high time I took ownership of who I am. So, dear reader, the real me revealed:

I had a chemistry set as a kid and I used to save up my allowance to buy specimens preserved in formaldehyde to dissect. I could probably still point out the major organs in a perch. I babysat and mowed lawns and had two paper routes. I was a Boy Scout and an altar boy. I loved doing Broadway-style musicals and when I put together a band with my high school friends, it was a Miller-style stage band. And this was in the late sixties – early seventies!

I am lost in love with my wife of almost 24 years and still close to several high school friends. When I pick up the guitar, I'm more likely to play a song from Gord's Gold than the Grateful Dead and I couldn't identify grunge music with a gun to my head. I really, really like folk music and I record the folkie reunion shows on PBS. And there's no point to me reading People magazine because I have no earthly idea who most of those folks are or why I should care that they're divorced or in rehab. Again.

I am a mild person when I'm not being an unrepentant jerk and a lover of all people when I'm not shaking my fist at some stranger on the freeway. I watch Survivor but not South Park and have the DVDs of all seven seasons of The West Wing. A good Saturday morning is coffee with my wife while we watch a home improvement show on Home and Garden TV. I've been a voter since the '72 election and I've hardly ever seen my candidate win national office with the result that both my generally conservative

family and my generally liberal friends consider my political stances incomprehensible. By any reasonably informed estimation, I'm not cool or socially acceptable or studly or stunning or graceful. But I am me and I am thankful for the life I'm living and the folks with whom I'm living it.

So, no more apologies. This is Michael, unrepentant and unreconstructed. I am Da Man by my own estimation and I don't particularly care who disagrees. That will be the starting point of this blog and the guiding force behind my comments. Love me or leave me, I like me just the way I am.

(Except maybe the weight...gotta work on the weight...)

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