

Milestone Birthdays

By Carole Gauntlett

Age One – In many countries of the world age in months is never mentioned, considered bad luck until the first year has elapsed. Then the celebration centers on the joy of survival. My own dear granddaughter arrived from Korea with a Hon Bok, the traditional dress to be worn on her first birthday as she circled a table filled with symbolic items meant to foretell her future. Without hesitation she chose to eat the pear and grasp tightly the silver coin predicting that she would be both rich and “fruitful.”

Age 5 – The magic number for the school doors to open and learning to be refined by the alphabet (without the song), the understanding of how numbers work (without your fingers) and who “Zero the Hero” is. Unbridled excitement at the onset and yawning through the afternoon of new but happy long hours in Kindergarten.

Age 11 – Middle School. Angst and worry spread across finding your way in a new physical setting, new teachers, new rules, new potential friends ... or not. This to deal with while the body is making vast changes of its own without your consent.

Age 13 – Teenagery will occur. No one can predict the outcome. The child will pass easily into the nether world or will become a small version of Attila the Hun. You take your chances

Age 16 – Mom and Dad spent hours riding in cars as passengers with their bodies rigid between the seat back and the floor, holding their breaths in anticipation of this day when the dreaded Driver's Test takes place. Pages of new rules are put in place and a taste of delicious freedom is not as free as predicted.

Age 18 – Take note: You no longer qualify to be tried in Juvenile Court!

Please register to vote first thing! Be excited, you can join in the long, exasperating trip to the White House for all sorts of unqualified people.

Life Changing decisions are made here. College? Job? Both? You are too young to make these decisions but, there you are. If you choose not to make a choice at all, you will spend the next 12 years in your parents, basement.

Age 21 – You will no longer need your fake ID. You are considered a “young adult.”

Age 30 – This is where you must acknowledge a “biological clock.” You are surprised that it's YOUR clock. If you are unmarried, people all want to know why not but won't ask. If you are married, both sets of parents want to be grandparents. And they will ask. Repeatedly. Feel any pressure here?

Age 40-50-60 – Your children have left and it's your turn to be grandparents. Ask about it repeatedly. It's your turn.

Age 65 – Branch out and feel like five again! Unbridled excitement at the onset and yawning through the afternoon. It's called “Eldergarten!

Age 70 – You may now celebrate a birthday week, not just one day.

Age 80 – You may now celebrate a birthday month.

Age 90 – You may now celebrate a birthday year. Every day is a celebration, as it should be.