

## No Laughing Matter

*by Marilyn Reeves*

The first frame in Mike Peters' cartoon 'Mother Goose & Grimm: RETIREMENT HOMES' shows a couple of old fogies from yesteryear checking out their various surgical scars. The second frame shows a couple of today's elderly people showing off their tattoos! Could it be that they, like me, are living in denial?

The hardest part about getting older is accepting the fact that your years are catching up with you. It seems like it happens overnight, but actually it's a gradual, insidious process that sort of sneaks up on you.

First, you wake up one morning and notice some silly little crease that you're sure wasn't there yesterday. As hard as you rub and scrub, it simply won't go away. Could it be? Is it possible? No, it can't be! But it is. Your first wrinkle has taken up residence and refuses to go away, along with a couple of gray hairs that also appeared overnight.

But you get over it and decide to go for a nice brisk walk, and you're moving right along feeling pretty good about yourself, and then a couple of young gals – both of them six feet tall – pass you by like you're standing still. You try to keep up with them but soon find yourself out of breath, while they're trotting along, chatting away, oblivious to your consternation.

The real horror comes when you're sitting in the tub and happen to notice that certain body parts aren't where they're supposed to be. They've gone south! You get out and dry yourself off and timidly step on the bathroom scale. Oh no! I've gained seven pounds. Well, that can't be right. This silly old scale just doesn't work right anymore... it's got to be wrong! And your next visit to the doctor's office confirms it. You've actually gained eight pounds! How did that happen? I haven't changed my eating habits. And then your doctor says something to you like, 'You know, at your age, you really need to start cutting back on your calories.' At my age? Gee, thanks, Doc! I hadn't considered myself verging on old age until you made that remark!

And so it goes. You've always thought of yourself as a young person, but other people start implying that you're over the hill. You still feel the same as you always did, but somehow – overnight – your youth has taken flight and left you holding the bag, so to speak.

Well, never mind all that. I think I'll go get a tattoo.