

Turning Twenty

by Marko Peric

A few days ago, I turned twenty. Not really a big event in the history of the planet, but twenty is an important milestone. I will never again have the opportunity to do an editorial quite like this, or at least not until I turn thirty.

Every age from sixteen to twenty-two has some significance. Sixteen is obvious -- old enough to get a driver's license. Seventeen, well it's a stretch, but that is the age at which most people finish high school. Eighteen is legal age for voting and in this province one is legally an adult at eighteen. The significance of nineteen should also be apparent. Twenty is important because one is no longer a teenager. Twenty-one is the age of legal adulthood almost everywhere else on the planet. This is another stretch, but twenty-two is significant because you're no longer twenty-one. At least, that's what a friend of mine told me when he turned twenty-two.

But back to twenty. Probably about half of the people reading this are already twenty or older, and most of the rest of you will reach twenty before you leave this institution. In reality, twenty doesn't feel much different from nineteen. When I woke up I really didn't feel especially older, and I do not recall doing anything differently.

Twenty has a more symbolic importance, in my opinion. If a line must be drawn between childhood and adulthood, twenty is the perfect place for this line. Upon reaching this milestone, I am expected to act more like an adult, and hopefully others will be inclined to treat me as such. If they don't, I will not be amused. The next person to call me "kid" (or even worse, call me "boy") is really going to get it.

As with most everything in life, there is a downside to turning twenty. Childish behaviour is discouraged, and one is expected to always act with decorum and maturity. Sure, being mature and acting like a perfect adult are great when it comes to getting a good job, settling down, and beginning the long march towards middle age, but how much fun can that be? Twenty is the age of lost youth. Watching *Tiny Toons* is discouraged, and listening to news shows on CBC radio is advised. Excuse me while I yawn.

To those of you still under twenty (especially anyone in high school, we have reports of the *Panther Prints* occasionally getting to high school students) -- have fun now, before you reach my current age and are forced to become mature. And by fun, I don't mean going out at night to party and get drunk -- adults do that. Do childish things while you still can. Have a snowball fight (or a water fight, but not wait until spring). Get up early on Saturday morning and watch cartoons. Enjoy being able to do things without having pressure to pair off with a boyfriend or girlfriend.

To paraphrase a sappy line from a movie, it's the first day of the rest of your life. Make the best of it.

For those who have already reached twenty, all is not lost. Sure, we are expected to always act like proper adults, but every now and then a little regression is fun. (I regressed to the point of reviewing *The Return of Maxwell Smart* in this issue -- see page 10.) Throw a water balloon at someone. Eat Frosted Flakes for breakfast. Watch *Batman*, and be sure to read plenty of *Calvin and Hobbes*. Don't carry this to extremes, mind you -- it's a good way to get yourself committed.

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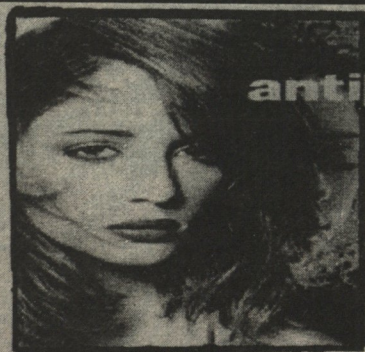
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