

The Salem Leader  
Educationally Speaking  
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### **No one ever told me that getting old smells funny**

For me, the writing is on the wall. In two months, I will become old and worthless. That's because my 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday is coming around. What they evidently don't teach you in school is all the horrible things that will happen to you as you get older. I've already experienced some of them.

First, no one ever told me that the older you get the more buttons you have to button on your pants. When I was a baby I didn't even wear pants. Then, when I was a kid I only had Velcro on my pants. As a bonus, I even had Velcro on my shoes. Then from Velcro I was forced to learn how to snap my pants shut. Plus, I still remember that horrible day when my mom told me my pants were too big for snaps and that I'd have to button them. Buttoning was hard and I was a busy kid -- I had Lego boats to build. Now, just when I thought I had achieved the end of pant evolution -- I recently went shopping for new pants only to find that all men's pants suddenly require *two* buttons. One in the front and one just off to the left side. Who on earth decided that pants needed an emergency suspension system? *Lesson: getting old means no one wants to see you without pants so they make sure to fasten 'em on real tight.*

Second, no one ever told me that things were so dang expensive. I'm not ready to admit to my Dad that money does not, in fact, grow on trees. But it seems that no matter how much money I don't spend someone else always manages to take it. If I don't see a pile of money quickly add up in my checking account, I'll be forced to admit that I've become just my like Dad. *Lesson: getting old means you become your parents. And you're broke.*

Third, no one ever told me that things would hurt. I woke up the other morning with neck and back pain. It could have been caused by the two cats and a dog or just age. I'm not sure. Ordinarily, when I lay down to sleep my cat Payton will lay on top of my head and my other cat Dayton will slowly nibble away at my fingers -- likely in preparation of my eventual death when he'll be forced to eat me for sustenance. Now with my dog Charlie, I have a cat on my head, a cat eating my fingers and a dog between my legs. This forces me to lay in a position very similar to a murder victim's chalk outline. I have to assume if I were younger I could handle that arrangement. *Lesson: dominating pets should be for young children only.*

Fourth, no one ever told me that I'd actually have to keep children off my lawn. I always thought the story-line of an old guy on his porch yelling at the neighborhood kids was just a rouse for a story-line. Turns out, you actually have to do that. I spend most of my summer either at work and angry at some stupid policy or at home and angry at some stupid kid with parents too stupid to realize you can't give a kid in a housing complex a

baseball and a bat. *Lesson: don't give kids baseballs and bats. Give them to people with nice lawns -- like me. That way I can keep kids off my lawn.*

Fifth, no one ever told me that retirement is an urban legend. Come March I will have been employed with the State for three years. It feels like much longer and I have the retirement account paperwork to prove it. I opened them up in the mail one day last week to find that I had a little over one paycheck's worth of funds in my account.

*Lesson: after working for 60 years, I'll have enough money in my retirement fund to live uncomfortably for about 20 weeks. Then, I'll be forced to foreclose on my house and get a job as a Wal-Mart greeter.*

Lastly, no one ever told me that once you hit 21, you really don't have anything to look forward to. When you're a kid, you look forward to 16 (in most cases) because you get to look at a car and a learner's permit. Then you look forward to 18 because you can vote and mess up our democracy, get drafted and shoot things and buy cigarettes and lottery tickets -- even if you don't smoke or gamble. Then, you look forward to 21 when you can legally buy the alcohol you've already been drinking anyway. *Lesson: after you hit 21, the only thing to look forward to is your 20 weeks of uncomfortable, unemployed retired living.*