

302 words, column #5
Java Talk
(for May 24 to May 30, 2007)

Every Age Is The Best Age

Happy (fill in the blank) Birthday

This week's column is dedicated to everyone having a birthday soon, including my dearest friend and long-time mentor, who is also a writer and storyteller, and by the way, is nineteen years older than me. She lives in the Yukon, so it is too far away to go see her and all the candles on her cake.

I like the idea of writers, especially, living very long lives. There is a sense of immortality by being a writer. Whenever formal essays are written about authors and their writings, the style is always put in the present tense. For example, "In all his plays, Shakespeare reveals his interest for the evolving ideas, words and literary traditions of his time." Meanwhile, even at the age of 443 years, he continues to gain fans, as each new generation is introduced to him and his works.

History, on the other hand, is properly recorded in the past tense, such as, "Emma Faust Tillman's distinction as the world's oldest person was short-lived following the death of 115-year-old Emiliano Mercado del Toro on January 24, 2007." Tillman, born November 22, 1892, died on January 28, 2007, at the age of 114. (Mercado del Toro had just become the oldest person, last December, when Elizabeth Bolden died at 116).

The longevity of the antediluvians (Latin for "before the flood") listed in the Bible, however, outdoes these modern seniors. Even Noah lived to 950 years; and Methuselah, topping that by nineteen years, lived to 969. The current tradition to light so many celebratory candles on a birthday cake certainly would have been impractical.

This week, I doubt I will be the only one lighting a candle, from across the miles, instead, as a way to send love and endless best wishes. To everyone, and especially to June Cable, happy birthday.

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