

# Revving Up with the Rev

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Stay young even though growing older!

What's one way to do this? Be in the Guelph-Wellington Men's Club!

A recent daily quote by Frederick Buechner—from his book *Whistling in the Dark*—got me thinking about this business of staying young even though growing older. Not that any of us are doing that but, if you promise not to tell anyone, I'll let you in on a little secret...we're heading in that direction.

Buechner writes:

For the majority of us, growing older is like living in a house that's in increasing need of repairs. The plumbing doesn't work right anymore. There are bats in the attic. Cracked and dusty, the windows are hard to see through, and there's a lot of creaking and groaning in bad weather. The exterior could use a coat of paint. And so on.

Fortunately for me personally, my attic is, on most days at least, relatively bat-free, but I do know about the dusty windows, and there are some creaks and groans, and the plumbing...and, well...

However, as Buechner suggests, in spite of the changes wrought by the vagaries of age, our spirits remain "as full of beans as ever." And that's the important thing!

The average age of those in our Men's Club is 79.8. I turned 83 in July but still like to think of myself as below that average mark...even though, as I write that the song, "What kind of fool am I?" starts to play in my head.

## A lesson to put it in perspective.

Recently, I spent a week at my daughter Sandra's home in a rural village area south of Huntsville. One of her two children is my grandson Clark who turned 11 in late August. Gotta tell ya, if you want to stay young—or at least think young—spend a week with that laddie.

One minute, Clark's outside using an electric saw to cut pieces for a bench he's making for his treehouse. The next minute he's ramming around the yard on his tractor that used to be a ride-on mower but had its blade removed so he can, at a moment's notice, take a spin and survey the broad expanse of his rural kingdom. As I watch him, I am reminded of the days when I did similar things when growing up on our family farm.

Notice I said that I "watch" him. Because if I tried to follow him around, I wouldn't last even half a day. But that's okay. Clark needs to do what he's doing—it's all part of the imagination pushing the growing, learning process. I don't need to do it now because I've been there, done

that. All of it. I'll take very slight liberties with what Buechner says as he reflects on the comparison of an 11-year-old and an 83-year-old this way:

"Part of the pleasure of being a child the first time round is that you don't have to prove yourself yet." Thus, Clark has nothing to prove, just has to imagine and explore. Anything goes.

"Part of the pleasure of being a child the second time round is that I don't have to prove myself any longer. I can be who I am and say what I feel and let the chips fall where they may."

As Buechner says, young 'uns such as Clark are like the sun before breakfast...and, if you'll allow it, their shine will rub off on you.

Sure, he gets scared sometimes. When he encounters something that seems too big to tackle. When he extends himself beyond his capability and the result is a bruised shin or heart.

But I get scared sometimes too, when I realize that I can't quite bring off some of the stuff I used to do without batting an eye, or when life has given me an unexpected swat sideways.

As I think about all this stuff, I'm reminded of what Vince Wall once told us, in his Men's Club thought for the day, "I'm not old yet. I might be some day, but not yet!"

So, until I get there—to that not-yet day to which Vince referred—I'll dare to think and stay young. And like the octogenarian King Lear, a long time before me, I'll "pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh at gilded butterflies."

One of the things that keeps me thinking in that direction is this Guelph-Wellington Men's Club, of which I'm so pleased to be a member.

Know any others who could benefit from being a member of this wonderful group? Bring 'em on!

Keep smilin', guys! That helps too!

**Tom Watson**