

I don't often wax philosophical, but at my age, I suppose I'm entitled if that is what I want to do. If nothing else, this reminds me of my own mortality and leaves me to simply shrug and say "get on with it."

I write this as I am approaching death... for all things, you see, begin to approach death on the day of birth. As some philosophers have noted, living is a terminal condition.

We enter this thing called life wrinkled, bald and toothless... and most of us leave this life in exactly that same condition. Now, *that* is a cycle. But life is not the only cycle... all things that exist up to and including the universe, do so in a cyclic pattern.

Stars in the heavens come to life because of some complicated cosmic process we are just beginning to understand. They go through stages of development up to the time they become a super nova. With their demise, new stars are created and the cycle begins anew.

Planets, too, exist in cycles. Even our climate exists in cycles, ranging from an ice age to a global warming phase. Weather conditions also exist in cycles, giving rise to hurricane seasons, tornado seasons, blizzards, tropical rains, floods and the like.

Even our planet's insect populations exist in cyclic patterns. What better example of that is the Florida Love Bug that thrives in swarms twice a year and prove to be non-existent for approximately two cycles of five months each year.

Even an entity like myself can easily recognize the cycles of this one, lone life.

In my youth I had to contend with poor health as I was assailed with a myriad of childhood diseases. Now, in my old age, I face the ravages of time in the form of geriatric diseases.

In my youth, I had a passion for reading and writing... two activities that became lost in the pursuit of family and career interests. Now, in my old age, the passions have returned and I am both an avid reader and writer.

In my youth, I had a great deal of pride in this mane called hair on my head. I spent considerable time in front of the bathroom mirror assuring that I had the highest, straightest wave possible, with just the hint of a duck-butt in the back. Then for over forty years I wore my hair in a crew cut or a short, business like trim that was trendy. Now, in old age, as I find myself surrounded by balding old men, I am pleased to flaunt my golden mane (some see it as white, but I still see the blonde glory of my youth). Now, however, I don't soak my hair with Vitalis and straighten it so I can pile it high in front. When that stuff dried, it was as solid as any hair helmet on the market. Rather, I just wet it (maybe a touch of conditioner) and comb it back now and allow it to wave any way it wants to. I also wear it longer than when I was young.

A more subtle element of these cycles is that when I was young I worried about the troubles in the world and what affect they may have on my life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. There was World War II, the Cold War, the Korean War... and the wars just keep on coming, don't they? At the current stage of life, I am concerned about the same sorts of things for my grandchildren and their children. Yet, observing and talking with grandchildren, I realize they are in a similar stage of development as was I at their age. Unfortunately, they are living now in a time filled with media inputs of every conceivable nature and the ability of separating fantasy from reality is becoming more of a challenge.

An oft-heard statement at the end of many prayers is "World without end..." if only it were so. Even after millions and millions of years as a planet, even the Earth is caught in a cycle drawing it to its own demise.

Unfortunately, it appears that man is a flawed species, for in spite of the obvious cycles from birth do death, man's major pursuit throughout our time on the planet has been the waging of war. This is the only cyclic pattern man can control. Too bad we are too weak to do so.

If there is a purpose to this rambling, it is probably that we are all on our own little cycle of life... and perhaps we should just try to enjoy the ride.