

314 words, column #2
Java Talk
(for May 3 to May 9, 2007)

Every Age Is The Best Age

The Way of the Oak Trees

Many years ago, someone asked a certain centenarian, “What is the best age?” She replied, “Every age is the best age.” Since then, I have been paying attention to those in the hundred-plus crowd who are preparing the way—or rather, many ways, to get ideas on how to live my own long life. The problem is that these pioneers are still a rare find. Also, it can be a bit disconcerting, at first, to see what one looks like, especially after a hundred years.

A couple of weekends ago, I went to the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary's annual native plant sale. Being a native born Victorian of a best age, it is no wonder that I am happily rooted, living in my own small Garry oak sanctuary, weathering the droughts and storms, and even flourishing like the other native plants growing here. Although perfectly adapted to their environment, the oaks grow slowly. Even at one hundred, they are not that big, and they are easily over-shadowed by fast-growing Douglas firs. Add to this that the beauty and character and strengths of an old oak are not always appreciated. Willie MacGillivray, the Swan Lake Site Manager, said the oaks he is planting are for the future generations to enjoy.

Meanwhile, I imagine some of you might remember the long-time cigar-smoking comedian, George Burns. He was born on January 20, 1896. He said, “Retirement at sixty-five is ridiculous. When I was sixty-five, I still had pimples.” Then again, he also said, “At my age, flowers scare me.” His plan was to live to a hundred, and sure enough, that's how old he was when he died!

My plan is to live to *at least* one hundred and twenty, in my own habitat. I don't know what to expect. But who knows what good changes there might be, when you live such a long life?

Deidre Hill

