

## RANDOM REFLECTIONS: “Landmark” Birthdays!

By Kathryn Wishlow

Maybe it's just me, but since I have been fast approaching a “landmark” birthday, this last year I have become very interested in what *other* people consider their most epic birthdays. The answers I received when questioning, were so much fun, I felt I should share ... maybe to invoke the reader's memorable past celebrations?

No doubt most of us recall birthdays when we were young. A six year old recently told me his “favourite” birthday was when he was six because he got to have six friends from school. They all played games and each partygoer got to create their own small pizza with only their most favourite ingredients. He loved so many presents, and he finally got an ice cream birthday cake from Dairy Queen, instead of a homemade one. Oh, the simple joys of childhood!

A few months ago, I ran into a friend's daughter at the grocery store. I remembered her thirtieth birthday was coming up and wished her “Happy Birthday” in advance in case I did not see her before then. She rolled her eyes, and complained about saying goodbye to her youth, had found a grey hair

already, and was beginning to get a “turkey neck”. I burst out laughing, and told her to “Love every inch of your young body, every single day ... it is only going to get worse!” Hopefully she takes my advice. Her idea of a landmark birthday and mine are different.

A younger friend of mine reminded me she was turning fifty this year, and what an experience she was planning to make of it. Her kids were throwing her a family reunion picnic party, and had rented space in a public park with a pavilion in case of rain. Looking forward to spending a whole day with most of her large family of all ages, she was enjoying planning the pot-luck menu, plus choosing music and a variety of games. I thought that sounded like so much fun!

When I was sixty, my daughter and mother held a surprise birthday party for me over in Haliburton, where my brother had found that renting the floor above the museum would allow them to host all of my family and friends. It was a total shock to have the elevator doors open, and a huge “Happy Birthday” shout out by a collection of the people I loved. However, by the time I got to say “hello” to

everyone, enjoy the food, presents and cake, it was time to hug everyone goodbye.

I truly loved the surprise, but was saddened by the fact that some people had come from so far away, and I had barely got to spend any time with them. So, when my daughter asked me this year what I would rather have ... one large party, or several smaller events? I chose many smaller ones. This is a “landmark” year for me, and there are now fewer of my friends and relatives left alive to celebrate it with. A sobering thought.

Quality time spent with the remaining people I have loved and are important in my life, has become a priority. I am really looking forward to spending some “one on one” time with all of them. Who knows how many more birthdays any of us have left to celebrate together?

*(Kathryn Wishlow belongs to WhitePine Writers Inc., a local group of like-minded authors who encourage and support all facets of writing, editing and publishing literary efforts. Follow them on FaceBook or [www.whitepinewriters.ca](http://www.whitepinewriters.ca)*