It isn’t pretty. In fact, it’s a tragedy as horrible as it is unavoidable. Worse yet, I’ve seen it happen to all my classmates from high school, one by tragic one, and next week... oh my good gracious, it’s happening to me! I am turning fifty. NOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!  
It is so unfair. I mean, if I shaved off my grey beard and touched up my temples with mascara and filled in my laugh lines with flesh-coloured Poly-Filla, I certainly wouldn’t look fifty; 48, maybe. Additionally, if you ask anyone in Calmar, they would readily vouch for the fact that I don’t act fifty; fifteen, perhaps but definitely not fifty. Sure, my co-workers see me as some square fuddy-duddy, but that’s only because I have children older than they are. Heck, I’ve got underwear older than they are.  
One unsettling feature I’ve noticed at this stage is that everyone I’ve always expected to be older than me; my doctor, my boss, my pharmacist, are now younger, sometimes even MUCH younger than I. The only place I’m considered a youngster is at the Legion and in the bedroom with Cupcake as she has a few years on me. (Hehehe!)  
The thing is that, well... I don’t feel fifty. This could be because I’ve never been fifty before and don’t know what it’s supposed to feel like. Still, without access to my reflection, I would guess I was... oh... early thirties, max. I keep my “inner child” alive and well; too well, according to informed sources (AKA Cupcake). I will admit, having had a hip replaced under warranty and a couple issues with my... uh... undercarriage, I do have a few miles on this chassis. (When I was born, ALL the odometers were in miles.) But unless there’s been a change in the weather or it’s damp out or I’ve been on my feet a lot, I feel pretty good.  
 Oh sure, there’s been some signs. Hair now grows in places it never did before; weird places... unnecessary places. It now flourishes on the tops of my ears, for example. What’s up with that? Is there some kind of interior decorator gene in my DNA that says “You know, at your age, a thick, well rooted white hair would look outstanding there.... and there... and maybe one over there. “ It’s not like they help keep my ears warmer in winter. They’re more like old guy identification antennae.  
And nose hair! Holy mackerel! It grows like dandelions on fertility pills! Unfortunately, there is no good way to deal with them, either. Yanking them out like they’re stubborn boogers makes you tear up worse than being kneed in the nether regions. It’s definitely not recommended when driving; a fact I learned only too well going to an important meeting years ago Using those itty-bitty nose scissors is almost as disgusting as the whirring nostril shavers. Lighting short cigarette butts with a blow torch is an effective nostril hair removal method; although heat blisters on your face are a possible downside. No matter what strategy you use, however, they’ll be in your face again faster than relatives after a 649 win.  
Still, turning fifty isn’t all bad. Every stage of life has its particular charms and trials. Youth is great, for example, but the crushing poverty of college life and being a young parent and sole wage-earner of a family of four who expected to eat every single day, sucked more than a suped up shop-vac on a 220 circuit. We’re not rich by any means but at least now, we’re not crippled by an emergency car repair or needing gas to get to work or increased beer prices.   
There’s been some adjustments. My body now occasionally refuses to go along with the plans my mind makes for it. I’ve replaced slow pitch with community theatre since it’s as much fun but involves way fewer collisions at second base. I’ve also started to hire out some of the grunt work Cupcake lines up for me, which my body appreciates very much. I ignore the fact that the guy I hire to do these jobs is my buddy, Gord, who is in his late forties. If he wants to abuse his body moving gravel hither and yon at Cupcake’s whim, that’s his business.  
To cheer myself up over turning this milestone, I decided to compile a list of the positives of life once past the half (gulp!) century.  
\*I can now ask for a senior’s discount in some places. That extra ten percent off will easily make up for the fact I now qualify for it.  
\*Cupcake and I now have the option of stealing away one night and moving to a senior’s only complex thus negating the need to try and get the kids to move out.  
\*I can now “feel nifty”.  
\*Life insurance salesmen won’t call as often.  
\*I’m still younger than all my siblings.  
\*People will believe it when I say I’m fifty instead of wondering if I’m lying when saying I’m only 49.  
\*No matter how big a drag it is to turn fifty, it beats the only alternative.

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