

Ron's 'Half Time' Comments at his 75th Birthday Event Jan 8th, 2011

You, my dear friends, are the wonderful individuals who have made my first half so enjoyable.

You are those who are making my current time so enjoyable, and I sincerely hope that you will continue to be such interesting and pleasurable company well into my second half.

So, tonight is simply about thanking you all.

I have mixed feelings about facing up to this mid-life crisis and some people have tried to thoroughly depress me with messages such as:

‘So what have we learned in 2,065 years?’

‘The budget should be balanced, the treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt.’

‘People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance.’

.... Cicero — 55 BC

This friend was trying to tell me that we've learnt absolutely nothing, in 2,065 years.

Whilst this may be true of politics, it certainly isn't true of our world, where we are breathing cleaner air, drinking cleaner water, eating better food and drinking better wine than any previous generation.

The proof of that is that we are living longer and I've managed to outlive all my male ancestors, without even being gentle with myself.

Talking of wine, Jesus advised us long ago, of the futility of putting new wine into old wine skins.

Well I know an old 'wine skin' that I'll put some new wine into tonight!

It may not help the wine itself, but it will certainly help the old 'wine skin'.

Now, some of the messages have not been all that depressing, one went along these lines:

'Old age is like a bank account. You withdraw from what you've put in.'

They went on:-

"So, my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness into the bank account of memories!"

Thank you for your part in filling my Memory Bank.

I am still depositing.

Remember the five simple rules to be happy:-

1. Free your heart from hatred.
2. Free your mind from worries.
3. Live simply.
4. Give more.
5. Expect less.

Now, that's a message I can identify with as I do feel we have a lot to celebrate.

The blessings we enjoy daily, most of them, because they are so common, we tend to forget to sing their praises and give thanks.

I am the happiest guy alive because of the people I live with, thank you Jenny.

Because of the great team who I work with, thank you team, and the wonderful group of people with whom I associate; and here you are tonight, all together.

It is my greatest present, just to see you enjoying each other as much as I enjoy you.

So, I say a sincere and warm thanks to all of you as I hand over to fellow-poet and long-term friend, Nan "Nanushka" Witcomb.