

# Age rage: how old do you think I am?



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HJ GENERAL MANAGER

I've really mellowed out.

There are so many things that used to upset me that I can just slough off now. It might be the wisdom of perspective, or more likely, it's that many things just aren't worth expending the energy to be bothered about.

First, consider this:

As a youngster, after a Vikings loss, I put on my toy shoulder pads and rammed into a wall until I made a hole in the plaster.

A few years later when I was more mature and able to drive, I punched the ceiling of my car until my knuckles were bloody on the way home from a haircut because they cut my hair shorter than I wanted.

That's the baseline I'm operating from.

Like I said, tantrums just aren't worth the effort

anymore.

But once in awhile, something pops up that still inspires a reaction. I'm too polite to make a scene, so instead, I'll just write about it.

The offense is this, and I'm naming names – the alcohol policy at the Renaissance Festival.

I don't consume alcohol anymore, but do have occasion to buy a drink for my wife or pick up off-sale for a gathering. Normally, I don't have any problems.

This year there was an unfortunate combination of bad timing. Because I had another birthday, I had to renew my driver license, and of course, the State of Minnesota still hadn't sent me the new one.

Obviously at the Renaissance Festival, the policy is that every prospective buyer of alcohol gets carded. In general, I don't object.

What pushed me over the edge, was that when I handed over my expired license with the holes punched in it, that wasn't good enough. I also had to dig out my renewal receipt papers so they could be scrutinized. They said I needed "a valid ID."

That happened twice, after which I informed my wife she was going to have to buy her own drinks from then on.

The crucial fact to be determined was if I am old enough to legally purchase alcohol, not if I am currently qualified to drive.

Thus, I contend, if I was old enough a couple months ago, as my expired license indicates, then I am still old enough. (You know what? I'm actually even older now than I was then.)

And if you can't tell that this gray-haired, white-bearded guy was at least 21 years old, then you better not be entrusted with any responsibility whatsoever as a sales clerk.

Like so many things, this appears to be another example of government's frequent penchant for taking a good idea to such an extreme that it becomes foolish.

The penalty for someone to serve alcohol without checking an ID, even if the buyer is clearly eligible for a senior citizen discount, must be so severe that fear triumphs over common sense.

I get it. Some people look younger than they are; others look older. There is a pretty wide margin for error.

If I'm 40, fine – go ahead and card me. You're doing your job.

But when I'm just about three times the legal age, leave me alone already! ■

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