

TWENTY **20.s** SOMETHING

Stop to Blow Out the Candles

BY THOMAS HENNING

Pumpkins, I am going to let you in on a little secret. I have a birthday this month. That is right, this humble columnist is a Cancer, born in the Year of the Dog with the moon in Libra.

July 10: that is the day I entered this world screaming, yelling, and getting my bottom spanked — some things never change.

I live for my birthday. It is the one day a year I throw open my doors and scream to the world, "Come adore me, shower me with love and praise, celebrate my life with me, and remind me how fortunate I am to have a life filled with such amazing and wonderful people."

Well, it's the one *official* day of the year, anyway: every year on my birthday, I invite all my friends and spend the evening celebrating me. Vain as it may sound, pumpkins, it is actually very therapeutic. I don't always value the people that mean so much to me. I get too involved in the day-to-day events of my life and forget to stop and appreciate how blessed I am.

It is also how I get through a very painful day four days after my birthday. My brother Sammy died July 14; this year will be the seventh anniversary. So, every year, I now have a huge party celebrating my life and all my blessings; four days later, I spend the day with myself, remembering my life with my baby brother.

My brother's death has taught me many things. One of the most important is that you can't take each day for granted. You can't live your life knowing that there will be a tomorrow, because we have no guarantee of that. It is so easy to forget how precious each moment of time is. How precious each of us are. It is baffling to me how much we take life for granted.

I have spent too much of my life apologizing, in one form or another, because I was gay and proud of who I am. I spent too much time buying into shame that I had about the abuse I suffered as a child. I have spent too much time trying not to shine because I thought I didn't

and legendary, and goes 'Jackie Chan' on anyone who tries to stop him.

That's right, pumpkins, it is a new season on *The Tommy Show*, and it promises to be the best yet. Stay tuned, because I am going to go all out. I am going to bring it up a level, and you all have front

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deserve it. That's all going to change. As Ms. LaBelle says, "I've got a new attitude."

There is a well-known quote that goes, "Dance as though no one is watching you, love as though you have never been hurt before, sing as though no one can hear you, live as though heaven is on earth." This year for my birthday, I am making a promise to myself; a promise that, until now, I have been unable to make or keep. The promise is that I will take that piece of advice and make it my mantra. It will be my own personal mission statement — something that I think we all should have; silly as it sounds. This will be mine.

So this year I am going to laugh loud and hard. I am going to slow-dance with boys under the moon in an empty field and wake up every morning with a smile on my face because I have been blessed with a new day. I am going to kiss boys hard, long, and charged with sexual tension, and not apologize to anyone for it. I am going to look in the mirror and like what I see looking back at me. This is the year that Thomas gets 'fierce,' lives large

row seats. My birthday will be the season kick-off, and from there I suggest you buckle your seat belts, sweet peas.

All right, before I use every corny line in the book, let me wrap this up by saying that I believe we all have the responsibility to live our lives to the fullest. We have the right to love, laugh, dance, sing, and live. Every moment is full of wonder; we just have to take the time to notice and appreciate it. The way the candlelight dances off of your partner's moist lips, or the way your pets rest their heads on your feet as you read your favorite book; it's all there — we just have to realize it. Don't let life pass you by because you were too busy or scared to get on. We live each moment only once, and I say we live it exactly how we want to.

Just the simple thoughts of a simple boy. Big, wet kisses to you all, and if any of you want to send me a birthday wish, my e-mail is thomascraigue@hotmail.com. Have I mentioned I love my birthday? ▼

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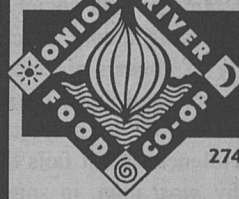
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