

My seventh decade?

I had a birthday two weeks back.

It was what is often referred to as a 'milestone birthday', one of those times that we have to stop and think about where we've been, and more importantly, where we're going.

You see, I turned 60 on June 11.

And, as is the case with most milestone birthdays, there was a party held in my honour. The Sidekick and my four daughters, Lindsay, Mary Ann, Maggie and Jenn, put their heads together to provide me with a fabulous celebration in honour of the fact that I was turning 60.

Personally, being a bit of a denial freak, and the fact it was actually held the night before I turned 60, I elected to call it a "Farewell to my Fifties Party."

No one else bought it.

Now this was not a surprise party. They did that five years back, for my 55th birthday, and in spite of having a really good time—well, I don't 'do' surprises that well.

I find it awkward if I pee my pants when two dozen people yell 'SURPRISE!!!' as I step into a darkened room.

Or when I drive in my driveway to see 25 cars parked helter-skelter all over the yard—like, couldn't they have at least lined them up in a straight line?

And just knowing I'm on the verge of having that 'milestone birthday' I'd probably lay awake all night for weeks, worrying, just in case they had a surprise planned.

So, in the interest of preserving my mental health, this party wasn't a surprise.

Weeks before, The Sidekick asked me outright how I'd feel about her and the girls hosting a 60th birthday party for me. With the appropriate amount of gut-wrenching, deliberated thought and consideration, I finally agreed.

That opened the floodgates for the kids and her to put together one of the best parties I've attended in some time.

It was a hoot.

The Sidekick rented the Legion, and she and the kids teamed up, sharing duties on the e-vites, the catering, decorations—well, you name it, they did it.

Geez, I saw friends I haven't seen in ages, and others I had talked to that same day. I enjoyed some great music playing in the background, thanks to the DJ talents of Lindsay's boyfriend Josh, and a fabulous

Ted Brown



buffet set out by the Legion ladies.

And magically, there seemed to be a drink in my hand at all times.

In spite of the 'Best Wishes Only' notice on the e-vite, some guests felt the need to drop off a gift or token of the celebration on the table inside the door.

And one gift, dropped off by Bryan and Elaine Lewis, was quite unique.

It was three packs of birthday candles, and a fire extinguisher, all wrapped in newsprint, with a clipping of my column flash strategically taped to the top of the gift.... cute.

The only consolation I have is knowing that when Bryan celebrates his birthdays, they don't bring out the fire extinguisher—they send a pumper out from Halton Hills Fire Department—just in case. One of the perks of being a councillor I guess.

By the end of the night, friends, neighbours, relatives, co-workers and anyone else who might have wandered in, made it a great time for me.

And I took a moment to address them after trying to 'blow' out the numerous cupcake candles assembled to make a cake.

As I thanked them all for joining me, I mentioned in passing about starting into my sixth decade.

Later, longtime friend and co-worker Kevin Powell couldn't let that one slip pass.

"Actually Ted, you're not starting into your 'sixth decade—it's really your seventh decade. Your sixth decade ends after 59."

True to form, Kevin is the person who walks into your living room at Christmas and points out how many lights are out on the tree.

So thanks again to all who helped me celebrate crossing over to my 'seventh decade'.

Geez, now I'm kinda lookin' forward to the next milestone.

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