

# What have I to hide? Except my chinny-chin-chin

It's been a long time since I've seen all my face.

Now I see some of my face every morning in the mirror as I brush my teeth and comb my hair. But it's been years since I saw all of my face.

You know, the part under the beard.

Apparently, some people feel one who wears a beard is hiding behind it. That's ridiculous. How can you hide behind a bunch of whiskers?

Now I'll be the first to admit facial hair dramatically alters one's appearance, and perhaps, changes the way one is greeted by society. But hiding behind it?

A number of people in this office have beards. Some sport them on a full-time basis while others are seasonal.

And occasionally, there are a few "wannabe beards" but they don't quite make it. But I don't think any are hiding behind them.

So why do men grow them? Some would tell you it's easier than shaving, but that's baloney. A beard takes more work to maintain,

if one has any pride in his appearance. It's really difficult to trim it in a straight line, and keep it even and level on both sides of your face.

Maybe it's because women can't. Or if they could, they wouldn't want to. It's one barrier in the battle of the sexes women haven't been able to surpass. Who knows? Maybe it's the male's way of countering not being able to have a baby.

In my case, I think originally I grew it to prove I could. Sort of like the progression that follows the ability to grow sideburns. The beard is the next step, when the sideburns get so long they meet at the chin.

But now, after all these years, my beard is an extension of my personality. No one would know me if I shaved it off.

I shaved it off once. It was eight years ago, and lasted for two long months. Believe me, it was a disaster.

I did it on a whim while my wife and kids were in town shopping one day.

As I washed the razor, I looked at that clean shaven face, similar to

## A TED BIT

By TED BROWN



a baby's bum, staring back at me in the mirror and thought to myself, "How did my chin get so small? I don't recall it being like that."

It looked to me like I had lost about three chin sizes with the single swipe of a razor. And the stubble was as tender as could be. I was sure my family would be shocked.

But I was disappointed when my wife and kids arrived home.

They walked in the door carrying groceries and visited with me like nothing had changed.

They never noticed a thing! I began to wonder if I was that insignificant in their lives.

It lasted more than an hour, until we all sat down for supper.

Second eldest daughter Mary Ann sat staring wide-eyed at me.

Finally she spoke.

"Daddy," she began meekly, "I don't like you like that. Why don't you go in the bathroom and put your whiskers back on?"

My wife stared at me across the table, suddenly dumbfounded.

"When did you shave it off?" she demanded.

I tried to joke and told her about two weeks ago, but she was adamant.

Okay, I confessed. I told her it fell victim to the razor as she was squeezing loaves of bread in Loblaws.

"But why?" she protested, "I kinda liked it; it hid your little chin."

"My little chin?" I questioned, "You never mentioned anything about my chin being little."

"Well, I just never noticed it before," she explained, "that is until you shaved off your beard. You do have a little chin. Mind you, it's a cute little chin."

She was trying to cushion me, I

could tell.

I suddenly became very conscious of "my little chin."

I had to grow that beard back. Quickly. Immediately. Pronto.

Over the years I have learned all about growing beards. I know it takes two full months for a beard to be presentable. Some guys will tell you they can grow one in a couple weeks, but those guys are a rare lot and I suspect they have cousins who swing through the trees and eat bunches of bananas. Most men take two months.

But I wasn't prepared for the fact whiskers almost stop growing when one has a beard.

For the first two days, I hardly had any stubble, and I panicked. Why didn't it grow? How long was this going to take?

As time passed it finally sprouted and after two months, I was back to my woolly-faced self and have remained so ever since.

But every once in a while, I get an urge to shave it off, for a change, just to see what I would look like.

After all, I've nothing to hide. Nothing except perhaps, my little chin.

## Fire briefs

### Where there's smoke...?

Firefighters were called to Trafalgar Rd. and 10 Sdrd. late last Saturday evening after someone reported smoke in the area. Unfortunately for the firefighters, the smoke turned out to be car exhaust.

### Gas odor in Acton

A strong odor of natural gas was detected around the Longfield Rd. neighborhood in Acton by a number of people Tuesday afternoon. Firefighters quickly responded to the area, and eventually discovered the cause to be Consumer Gas employees venting lines at Derry Rd. and Trafalgar Rd., according to the Fire Department. High winds apparently carried the odor to Acton.

### False alarm at the Legion

Firefighters responded to a false alarm at Georgetown's Royal Canadian Legion Tuesday afternoon. A malfunction in the alarm is to blame.

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