

My baby's now married

To date, I've worn a kilt on two occasions.

The first time was decades ago in the early 1990s when my mom hosted a Robbie Burns Dinner, complete with haggis.

I decided to surprise her and borrowed a kilt and stumbled through the Address to the Haggis at the dining room table.

The key thing here is Robbie Burns' birthday is at the end of January. Wearing a kilt, in January? 'Nuff said.

The second time was two weeks ago.

And we all remember the weather back then - like midsummer. Totally different scenario.

So why did I wear a kilt this time? Because I gave away my baby girl in marriage.

Yup, the fourth and final Brown daughter is now married.

Jennifer Grace Brown became the wife of Chris Forgan Oct. 21 at a spectacular ceremony at the historical Scottish Rite Club of Hamilton.

Thinking about Jenn being married seems a bit surreal for me. She's the youngest of our four girls, and there is almost a five year gap between her and her next sibling Maggie, and seven and eight years between her and sisters Mary Ann and Lindsay.

So Jenn always seemed much younger compared to her sisters.

But believe me, no matter what I may think now, she did indeed grow up, especially when she had those three older sisters to



TED BROWN
A Ted Bit

blaze the trail for her.

The wedding was a Scottish theme, and quite appropriately. Jenn's mom's family has deep Scottish roots, and Chris also shares the same highland background. He's also a piper - you know, bagpipes. His longtime friends still call him 'Piper' as a nickname.

So the Scottish heritage was pretty deep at this wedding.

In her younger days Jenn was a competitive highland dancer, so she was familiar with kilts and all the regalia that goes with it. And keeping with the Scottish theme, she requested that all the men in the wedding party wear kilts.

The day was perfect, the entire ceremony and reception went off without a hitch. My two-year-old grandson Oliver made it down the long aisle in the chapel at the Scottish Rite without veering off course on his mission to the wedding party. (For the record, he wore a kilt too - a tiny little kilt, but still a kilt.)

You know, it's hard to describe how one feels as a dad, when your daughter

takes your arm in preparation of the processional. I'd done it three times before, but it never gets easy.

For Jenn and I, there was that fleeting moment just before we started down the aisle. Our eyes met - and for me, the rest of the world ceased to exist.

On my arm was my youngest daughter, my baby - that same person I rocked to sleep as an infant, who played in the sand at Sauble Beach, who danced the fling, the hornpipe, the sword dance and the chanteuse - suddenly she was no longer that carefree little girl.

No she'd become a woman, a beautiful happy woman, and I was escorting her down the aisle to join her with the love of her life, to begin their lives together.

As father of the bride, a myriad of thoughts go through your mind at that moment - all happy, but also bittersweet.

Later that night, Jenn and I danced the father-daughter dance to James Taylor's 'You've got a Friend.' It was a perfect choice, because as we danced, I realized our bond was still there, strong as ever, just as it is with her siblings - they're all still my daughters.

Although they've entered into this wonderful stage in their lives, they will always be my daughters. Once married, they have their own lives to live, children to raise, a spouse to love and be loved.

But no matter what, I'll always have those 'four' friends.

THEN AND NOW



Photo courtesy Esquesing Historical Society



Alex Mior/Photo

Wilf Bessey is pictured standing out front of the Co-operative Feed Mill at 43 Guelph St., Georgetown. Date of Then photo is 1900. The Now photo shows the site today as the location of a retail plaza.

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