

From Bridal Gown to Flannel Gown: *The Truth About Happily Ever After*

By Rosemary Kaszans

Nearly every girl dreams of this – gliding down the aisle, all her girlfriends in dreamy dresses looking on, the pews packed with family and friends. She is wearing the most unbelievable fairy tale gown that brings the light of love into the eyes of her groom, that handsome young man in the sharp tux waiting for her just a few steps away. Flowers are everywhere, and afterwards there will be a big party.

But wait!

Weddings ultimately lead to marriages, and this union between soul mates needs to be able to withstand “for worse” and not just “for better” – everything from colicky babies to financial stress to who-left-the-cap-off-the-toothpaste, as well as the fun times of date nights out, shared laughs, the incredible joys of family life.

“There’s so much emphasis put on the wedding and there doesn’t seem to be enough thought given to the marriage,” says Cuffy Hise Sullivan, married for 15 years.

“The wedding is a day. The marriage is your life. After the initial excitement of the ceremony and all the frills, there’s some welcome relaxation and some time to get to know each other and accept each other’s flaws.”

From bridal gown to flannel gown. It’s a transition that every marriage must make, if only metaphorically.

When the party ends, the tux is returned and the gown is put away, there are just the two of you and the reality of sharing your life with another person, in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow.

Diane Crawford of The Lady in White, historic downtown Brunswick’s bridal and social occasion dress salon, carries

everything from ballgowns frothy with beads and lace to simple yet stunning sheaths. There are necklaces and handbags and beautiful shoes.

By contrast, she wore a simple gown for her own wedding 23 years ago, without a veil. The lack of a veil has not seemed to have caused any difficulties in the long run, as she is still very happily married to husband David.



Hise-Sullivan

Crawford’s advice for young marrieds who want to become old marrieds: “Be comfy with each other, warm and fuzzy – even if you don’t like to wear flannel.”

Heather Heath, executive director of Golden Isles Arts and Humanities, remembers

with fondness her wedding day and the events leading up to the couples’ official commitment to each other.

“I met Bryan (Brunswick Mayor Bryan Thompson) at the Academy Theater in Atlanta where we were both working as actors. We were good friends for many years, worked together off and on, It wasn’t until we ended up here

in Brunswick that we ‘woke up’ to each other. Love’s funny, ain’t it?”

When they decided



Crawford



to marry, Thompson was working as Director of the Downtown Development Authority, and Heath was

GIAHA’s director.

“We both were constantly doing press releases for our various activities. Instead of sending invitations, we just sent a press release to the paper and sent out our respective newsletters inviting people to come.”

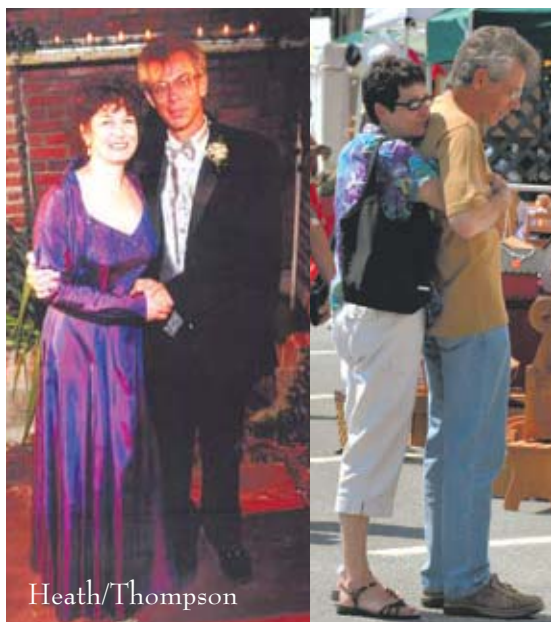
Thompson and Heath were married on November 19, 2001, fittingly, given their current careers, in historic Downtown Brunswick.

“The Gallery on Newcastle was the perfect setting – no decorations were needed as it is filled with beautiful art – and the reception food and cakes were gifts from friends. Judge Amanda Williams married us. We had about 200 people show up dressed in everything from tuxes to shorts.”

Heath says she had no expectations of marriage other than that she and Thompson wanted always to be together, and the wedding was a way to make that commitment public.

“Things seem the same, but stronger,” she says. “How is it different? We take more naps.”

Her advice to newlyweds: “Be friends, have fun, let go of



Heath/Thompson