

# Weddings last a day — wedding photos are forever

**BY BETHANY BROADWELL**  
Special to the Record-Eagle

The wedding day, after much anticipation, comes and goes. But the wedding photographs will evoke memories for years to come.

When it comes to choosing someone to take wedding pictures, photographers who work in the Traverse

City area agree it is essential that clients have good rapport with the person behind the camera.

"This person is with you through — next to childbirth — one of the most intimate and precious moments of your life," said Elizabeth Conley, a news photographer (formerly of the Record-Eagle, now with

the Detroit News) who, for six years has filmed multiple weddings across the state.

The range of services photographers provide is varied, she said, so clients need to feel comfortable and understand precisely what photographers are providing for their fee. A price quote that seems like a deal can mount quickly for example, depending on the charge per picture.

"It's important to ask for references and make sure you are familiar with their work," Conley said, who typically charges \$1,800 to \$3,000 for wedding packages.

She advised checking with wedded friends to find out their satisfaction level with their photographer and pictures. It can be helpful, Conley added, to view a sample album from a full wedding, not just select images from weddings over the course of years.

Conley estimated she gets 95 percent of her business from personal referrals, about 90 percent of whom

hold their weddings in northern Michigan. Having lived in Traverse City prior to moving to Ferndale, she has strong ties to the community and said the region offers some great sites for getting married.

Conley said she really doesn't think of herself as a wedding photographer and that her specialty is in "documenting the day." Typically, about 10 percent of what she shoots is portraits.

Michael and Kate Miller-Wilson hired Conley to photograph their July 9 Alden wedding and Elk Rapids reception.

"Looking back at the photos, I get to see things I didn't have the time to see on the day of the wedding," Kate explained. "For instance, she took photos of our parents as they watched the ceremony."

In the case of a different wedding, Conley recalled, a bride gasped in pleasure on seeing her picture and marveled, "I looked like that?"

"Overall, I just love the



Courtesy of EGC Photography

**When choosing a photographer, look at a full sample album from a wedding instead of select images from over the years.**

fact that I get to step into someone's life for such a wonderful day," Conley said. "I just love it when the photo shows that person's personality."

Conley's work can be viewed on her Web site at [www.egcphotography.net](http://www.egcphotography.net) and may be contacted by e-mail at [elizabeth@egcphotography.net](mailto:elizabeth@egcphotography.net).

Jana Drayton works out of Linda Drayton Photography in Petoskey. The business has operated for nearly 20 years, and she said in that time the trend in wedding photography has changed from portraiture to photo-journalism.

Based on her experience, Drayton said couples seem to have the most challenging time knowing what they want while keeping within their budget.

Craig and Laura Brubaker of Ferndale hired Drayton to take pictures at their Sept. 4 wedding in Bay Harbor. They purchased a medium-sized package that

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