

What to do with the Groomsmen?



By Mike Morrison

Brooke Roberts Photography

For much of recorded history, the question of how to entertain the groomsmen during the build-up to The Big Day has tormented wedding-throwers the world over.

In 18th-Century England, bored male members of the wedding party might wander over to the Tyburn Gallows to take in a hanging or two while the bride and bridesmaids were fussing with their hair and painting their nails.

Then they'd jokingly refer to the groom who was about to "tie the noose" around his own neck and retire to the nearest pub for a few pints of ale.

Around that same time in Paris, groomsmen – or groomsmonsieurs, if you prefer – opted to dally at the Place de la Concorde to watch the shiny steel blade of the Guillotine drop down and sever the neck of an unfortunate nobleman. They'd relate that ghastly sight to the upcoming nuptials.

"Mon dieu!" they'd exclaim. "Poor Pierre, 'ee's going to lose 'ees 'ead in zee morning! Let us now eat zee cake!"

Across the pond in the fledgling United States, nee British Colonies, groomsmen awaiting a wedding had very few entertainment

options. The best they could hope for, sadly, was a chance to drop a dead fish into a hole, throw in a few kernels of corn and await the autumn harvest.

Thankfully, we've come a long way since those olden times.

Entertainment options are myriad and varied, and far less bloody and gruesome in most cases.

Why, right here in the Golden Isles there's so much for wedding party members to do that if they don't carefully watch their schedule, they're liable to forget about the wedding!

Bill Tipton, executive director of the Golden Isles Convention and Visitors Bureau, as a professional obligation and a matter of personal interest, keeps up with such things.

"We have a lot of options," he says. "There are a lot of sports opportunities like golfing and fishing, for example. These are things the guys can do in a group. They can enjoy the camaraderie while their female counterparts are preparing for the ceremony."

It should be noted that sexism is not in play when one makes a comment regarding the amount of time necessary for the average woman to prepare for a wedding ceremony. While the sexes

indeed are equal, that does not mean that their priorities necessarily coincide, not in all cases or under every set of circumstances.

Women, perhaps, are far more fastidious and can take a day or more to decide on the color of their toenail polish. Most men likely won't even polish their toenails for a wedding!

"The wedding is the bride's day," Mr. Tipton astutely points out, having recently married off his daughter and witnessed the various rituals of wedding preparation first-hand. "The grooms just happen to be there. The guys basically just wash their hair, put on a rented tux and, if they really care, they'll make sure their shoes match."

St. Simons Island's Elizabeth Blahnik is a wedding professional. Her business, Coastal Georgia Weddings, has sent many youthful couples strolling blissfully down the aisle. In fact, for her, the Golden Isles is the Golden AISLES.

She's an outpost of one-stop wedding shopping, telling prospective brides all they have to show up with is "a wedding dress and a smile!"

As a wedding facilitator, she realizes that the geese and the ganders,