

## Some things to consider while planning your wedding...

The “needs” of your wedding photographer should always be secondary – after all, I'll be there to record the event, not direct the course of events – but there are a few things you can keep in mind when doing your planning that can help make the process go more smoothly and create an environment that can result in better photographs. These are just some general ideas to consider, not a checklist of “must do's”.

- ◆ Usually the most convenient time to take photographs of the bride and groom together is after the ceremony and before the reception. But if your reception is scheduled to immediately follow the ceremony – and if you're okay with the idea of seeing each other before the ceremony – we can try to do a shoot at an earlier time with just the two of you. It's an opportunity to be alone before the stress of the day really kicks in and get some of the more formal photography out of the way so you can enjoy the rest of the day. Of course, even better is to schedule your ceremony and reception with a healthy gap in between!
- ◆ While I'll do my best to make sure I know the “important players” in your wedding (one of the reasons I like to attend the rehearsal), it is an area where some assistance can be helpful. If someone in your bridal party is particularly familiar with “who's who” in your families, you could ask them to act as “photographer's guide” to point out any people who should be part of the informal and candid photographs I take.
- ◆ Photos taken in the room(s) where the bride and her bridesmaids do their pre-ceremony preparations can be improved with a little bit of planning. Lighting is important in any photo location and natural light is always the best, so consider choosing a dressing room that has large windows (indirect light from a north-facing window is the absolute best). Minimizing the amount of “non-wedding-related” clutter in the room can prevent some “why were those pizza boxes sitting in the corner of the room?” moments when you see your final photographs. Flowers in vases. Unattractive furniture covered in white drape cloth. You probably get the general idea. You don't want the space to be pristine (it's a busy day and the location can reflect that), but you can make it more fitting to the sense of romance and the importance of the day.
- ◆ Similarly, the lighting scheme used at your reception location can play a part in the types and quality of photographs taken during the latter part of the day. Even a small amount of lighting around the edge of the room can prevent photos from having pure black backgrounds. Christmas lights, hanging lights, string lights – all can create a little bit of unobtrusive background.
- ◆ Taking your time with the bouquet and garter tosses will give me an opportunity to capture a few images of you prior to the throw. Maybe do a “fake out” or two. Consider clearing children out of the “catch zone” or you may have one of your youngest guests run off with the prize. And don't be afraid to declare a “do over” if something unexpected does happen with the toss.
- ◆ During the first few formal dances at the reception, it's best if you try to ignore the photographer, allowing me to try to capture a more pure moment. On the other hand, during more casual dancing it's perfectly okay – and even a good thing – to occasionally dance toward the photographer. I'll occasionally try to get your guests to “play up to” the camera, but it's also something you can mention to the members of your bridal party beforehand.