

12 Hosting Weddings and Other Occasions

It is not uncommon for islanders to want to share this special place of serenity and happiness with family and friends and to use the island as a setting for special occasions. This chapter points out many factors you should consider before planning a large event on the island.

Advance Planning

As you begin to plan your event, a good place to start is to question others. A number of weddings, memorial services, and reunions have been held on the island. Speak to those who have hosted large events and find out what worked well and what didn't; ask what they might have done differently if they had it to do over again.

Extra Expenses

Carefully consider the expense of hosting an event on Bustins. Having an event on an island can increase your budget significantly when you consider the challenges that exist due to our unique location.

For example, you will probably want to provide transportation and may need to provide overnight accommodations for your guests; portable rest room facilities at the site of the event; tent rentals to protect your guests from sun and bad weather; and tables and chairs either rented from the mainland or transported from the Community House (making sure that arrangements have been made ahead of time and that no other event is occurring there at the same time).

Cooking or catering must either be done ahead of time and transported to your event, or done on site with the help of a generator or by using portable grills and warmers. Refrigeration may require you to bring in several large portable coolers. You will have to store your trash until you can get it off island or have it picked up. These costly extras are in addition to all the normal necessities, such as decorating, set-up and clean-up, which occur at any event.

Consider Your Guests

Transportation of your guests is a major consideration. Think about how you will get your guests to and from the island. Mainland parking is an issue that you should consider and plan for ahead of time. Your guests will either have to pay for parking at one of the marinas, or use the Park-&-Ride on Route 1 in Freeport and arrange for shuttle service to the Freeport Public Wharf. Once there, don't assume that the *Lilly B.* can handle a large number of guests on one of its regularly scheduled runs. You might need to arrange a special or enlist the help of friends who have boats. Schedule additional truck runs, if necessary, to help unload and load your guests' personal items.

Where will you house your guests? If you are recruiting friends and neighbors on the island, make sure that you have considered your guests' comfort and your hosts' inconvenience. Think about linen, breakfast options, and bathroom facilities; keep in mind that island septic systems are not often designed for heavy use. It is not wise to leave these matters up to your host families without some kind of discussion ahead of time.

If you are renting cottages, make sure your guests understand what is involved in spending a night on Bustins. Are they familiar with using kerosene and gas lamps? Are they prepared to use an outhouse? Heat water for washing up? Will they know what to do in case of a fire or other emergency?

Will any of your guests, once on the island, require help getting around? If so, make sure you have made arrangements for truck service to and from their cottages to your event.

Consider Your Neighbors

Consider the island and your neighbors. The island's natural resources are precious, and your relationship with your neighbors is essential. Consider the impact your event will have on these two important factors. You can avoid conflict if you communicate with your neighbors ahead of time. Let others know what you want to do so that islanders will not be inconvenienced by your plans, or at least will know the special circumstances of your event.

The Day of the Event

Allow plenty of time for both set-up and clean-up. Be aware that all who offered to help may not be able to fulfill their commitment. Keep a list, assign chores, and check often to be sure that your volunteers are getting everything done. Plan to share the work with family, friends, and volunteers, or else you may be too busy to enjoy your own event.

Try to coordinate the arrival and departure of your suppliers. Consider whether to offer food and beverage to their employees, who will not be able to purchase refreshments locally.

Following is a list of supplies to consider. Some can be found on island, but most will be contracted through companies off island, and each supplier will have their own unique needs.

Supplies you will need include:

- Tents
- Dance floor, podium, and band stand
- Tables (for guests, food, bar, DJ), and chairs
- Linens or paper cloths and napkins
- Food and beverages (including plenty of fresh water, soft drinks, and alcohol with mixers)
- Bartenders and servers
- Photographer
- Decorations, including flowers
- Ice (consider buying blocks and/or 50 lb bags)
- Dinnerware (china or plastic plates), cups, and utensils
- Rest room facilities and/or port-a-potties
- Band/DJ for music (consider the need for electricity)
- Generator/electricity for outdoor lights and/or stoves
- Trash barrels for trash and recyclables

Pack a "toolbox" (i.e., a plastic tub) that will serve as a central location for necessary last-minute items that are easily forgotten including: extra toilet paper, paper towels, large and small trash bags, zip lock bags, storage containers for leftovers, handy-wipes, rags, pens, pencils, sharpies, badges, tape (all kinds), scissors, box cutter, screwdriver, hammer, poster board, signs, arrows, magic markers, staple gun, and a small first aid kit.

Using the Community House

You may be able to schedule the Community House for your event, if it is available and would serve your purpose. Doing so will simplify your concerns about the weather, cooking, refrigeration, and the availability of tables and chairs. Note, however, that you cannot serve alcohol in the Community House without permission from the Board of Overseers, and your event must be open

to the public, although you are not required to include their participation in your event. To reserve the Community House, contact the CABI chair and inform the Board of Overseers.