News

Love, honor, cherish 8/8/08

BY MATT ROCHELEAU FOR THE SUN CHRONICLE Saturday, August 9, 2008 1:34 AM EDT

Town halls see surge in weddings on a lucky day for many

Many couples tying the knot on Friday believed they had more superstitious luck on their side than the usual something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue.

Eight, a lucky number in China, gained even greater significance Friday as the date on the calendar rolled over to 8/8/08.

In Attleboro, six weddings were performed at city hall, the most City Clerk Betty Shockroo said she has seen in her first year as clerk and in four years as justice of the peace.

"Today was higher than our monthly average," said Shockroo, who performed seven weddings in all of June and 10 in May.

She said all but one couple chose the date for good luck, including one couple of Chinese descent who plan to have a bigger ceremony in a few weeks. On average, 5,000 weddings are held in the United States on a Friday in August, said Rebecca Dolgin, executive editor of TheKnot.com, a site couples can use to plan their wedding day.

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"This Friday, we have seen a 400 percent increase, and have 22,000 people registered to get married," Dolgin told the San Francisco Chronicle.

WeddingChannel.com saw a 213 percent increase in registry entries for weddings for the auspicious Aug. 8, 2008, compared with the second Friday in August last year.

The Chinese word for eight - ba - sounds so similar to the word for wealth that many believe the number is associated with prosperity.

About 9,000 weddings will take place in Beijing on Friday, which is more than twice the previous single-day marriage record, according to the state-run Xinhua News Agency.

Friday's opening ceremonies for the Olympic Games in Beijing also began at 8:08:08 p.m. on 8/8/08.

In China, people try to get phone numbers, addresses, license plates and floors in buildings with the number eight in them.

The telephone number 8888-8888 was sold to an airline for $280,000 at an auction in China several years ago, according to the Associated Press.

In Chinese culture, six is lucky, while seven is bad - and four is really bad.

Town halls in Plainville, Rehoboth, Seekonk, Foxboro, Mansfield, and Norfolk were closed Friday afternoon, and Norfolk's town clerk was not available, so no information was available on the number of weddings in those towns. The town clerk's offices in Wrentham and North Attleboro said they had no weddings.

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