



## Romantics, gamblers hope for luck on Saturday

By Susan McMillan, Staff Writer

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Chattanooga, TN - When it comes to planning a big event, some dates are more popular than others. And few could rival this Saturday -- July 7, 2007, or 7/7/07, a combination many people see as lucky or just intriguing.

Like thousands of engaged couples and the organizers of the Live Earth concerts, some Chattanoogaans have seized on the date to celebrate milestones.

In Signal Mountain, a handful of members of the Central High School class of 1930 will celebrate 77 years since their graduation by toasting with cocktails of 7-Up and Seagram's 7 Crown whiskey at 7:07 p.m.

Virginia Paul, 93, said a meal featuring barbecue and a seven-layer cake will follow. Mrs. Paul said she put together the party because she thought the date was interesting, not necessarily lucky.

"I'm not superstitious at all because I was born on July 13, 1913, so 13's my lucky number," she said.

For most, the three sevens in a date come around once in a lifetime. But Willie Mae Ledford, born on July 7, 1907, will celebrate her 100th birthday at Edgewood Baptist Church in Chattanooga on Saturday.

Becky Kyle, who is organizing the party, said seven is Mrs. Ledford's favorite number.

"I think that she is just very excited she's turning 100," Ms. Kyle said. "But she thought the date was interesting, too."

The date has proved especially popular for weddings. Melissa Bauer, a spokeswoman for the wedding planning Web site TheKnot.com, said 38,000 of the site's member couples will get married Saturday, as opposed to the 12,000 normal for a Saturday in July.

Morty Lloyd, owner of the Wedding Chapel of Chattanooga, said he started receiving calls about July 7 weddings a year ago.

"I'm running a thousand miles an hour that day," he said. "Last I counted, I have six weddings that day."

Mr. Lloyd said he performs three weddings on a typical Saturday during the summer.

Amy Young and Matt Mullins are one couple being married by Mr. Lloyd at the Wedding Chapel on Saturday. Miss Young said the number seven has personal significance for her, especially after her father died last year.

"That's my favorite number, it's Matt's favorite number, it was my dad's favorite number," she said.

Deana Garrison and Chris Scoggins also are marrying on Saturday, at 7 p.m.

"We picked July 7 because it was just kind of interesting, and that way my fianc&eacute; would never forget our anniversary," Miss Garrison said.

The wedding guests will receive "Lucky 7s" Tennessee Lottery tickets as favors, she said.

Gamblers as well as romantics are hoping that 7/7/07 will bring them luck. Alicia Malone, a spokeswoman with the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, said many of that city's wedding chapels and hotels are booked this weekend.

"I think a lot of people are coming to Las Vegas hoping a little of that luck will rub off," she said.

Some resorts are trying to capitalize on the date, creating themed cocktails or amenities packages that include seventh-floor rooms or 7 a.m. tee times for golfers, Ms. Malone said.

Mr. Lloyd said one of the couples he will marry on Saturday has plans to fly to Las Vegas after the ceremony.

Phil Stevens, an associate anthropology professor at the University of Buffalo who studies belief in the occult, said cultures all over the world consider seven a favorable number, most likely because of the lunar cycle. He said the 28-day cycle usually is divided into seven weeks of four days or four weeks of seven days.

"You are advised to undertake something important when there are these three sevens in a row, 7/7/07, if your culture believes that seven is important," he said.

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