

Couples crazy for eights

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Friday, 8/8/8, is said to be an auspicious day for all kinds of special events. The Chinese view the number 8 as so lucky, they're opening the Beijing Olympics today.

On the domestic front, The Knot, the center for all things bridal, says the number of weddings registered on its Web sites for today is four times the number of other Fridays in August.

Local courthouses don't know for sure how many couples will come to hitch it up today since they don't take appointments, but they suspect the number will be higher than usual.

"I would imagine that we will be relatively busy (today) given that it is a unique date with the eights," said Karin Case, clerk's citizens services coordinator for the Pinellas County Clerk's Office.

Bonus: Marry today and you never have to worry about forgetting your anniversary.

But Amanda White of Brandon chose the date for reasons of her own.

In March 2006, White met Santino Sanabria in an AOL chat room. "I really wasn't looking for a boyfriend, I was just looking for somebody to take me to dinner," said White, 21, a business management student at USF. She got her meal with Sanabria, now 27, a University of Florida graduate. And a few months later, she got a proposal.

They'll wed today in a beach ceremony at Sand Key Park. The couple, both of whom work for Children's Home Society of Florida, will live in Brandon.

Why 08-08-08?

I didn't pick that because it was 08-08-08. I knew that I didn't want to get married on Saturday because I'm very cheap and I didn't want to spend the money, so I was like, "Let's get married on Friday." Then I was looking at the prices of the cruises, and they get cheaper as you go closer to September. I'm also a student, so I needed the wedding to be during the time slot right after summer classes got over but before fall classes started. So I was like, "Let me just pick a random Friday. How about Aug. 8? That looks good." So I picked it and a week went by and I wrote it down somewhere, and I was like, "Oh my gosh, that's 08-08-08. I love this."

What's the most unique feature of your wedding?

My bouquet is made out of shells. We did the beach theme for everything. All the groomsmen are wearing Hawaiian shirts and linen pants, so it's very fun, festive. I had actually seen a picture in one of the bridal magazines, but whoever the designer was, it was a \$350 bouquet and I was like, "I'm not going to pay that." . . . My aunt went down to Marco Island. She found a shell shop that makes them there. It's really neat. It's all white. It has white sand dollars, white starfish and a bunch of different shells, and it has a cascading part on it. . . . Another unique thing we did was we bartered a lot of our services for the wedding. His parents have a beach condo in Indian Rocks Beach, and so our photographer stayed at the condo for a week in exchange for part of the payment.

Had any wedding planning disasters?

Last week my fiance got in a car accident and totaled one of our cars. He's fine. He walked away. So that was kind of crazy right before the wedding. Now we have one car right before the wedding. We're trying to shop for a car. But then we found out our deejay was arrested and has no bail. So we had to find another deejay. We got a great deal for \$200.

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