

HOT DATE

Many couples head to the altar on 7/7/07

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BY RYAN E. SMITH
BLADE STAFF WRITER

Kellie Calvin wanted two things when she chose her wedding date.

"I just wanted something that was easy to remember, for him, and that would be in the summer," she said.

The Maumee woman got both when she and her fiance, Gene Cole, agreed on what's become the most popular wedding date in years: July 7.

As in, 7/7/07.

As in, lucky sevens.

The fact that the lucky date falls on a Saturday makes it a perfect storm for the wedding industry in general and for couples headed for wedded bliss. Many facilities, photographers, and others nationwide already are booked full for that date.

"We're jammed," said Bob Lubell, co-owner of Grand Lubell Photography in Sylvania and Hudson, Ohio. "In 35 years of doing this, never have I seen a day with so much demand."

Jim Lieber, owner of Sounds of Music, said his DJ service is booked for seven weddings on that day.

"I don't remember anything like this," he said.

Even Hollywood has gotten wrapped up in the excitement. Desperate Housewives actress Eva Longoria and NBA player Tony Parker are planning a July 7 wedding.

The reasons behind the unprecedented interest are several, starting with the significance of the number seven, which shows up again and again in religion. (It sure beats 6/6/06, a number that carries satanic implications for some.)

Then there are all the pop-culture references: Seven dwarfs, seven-year itch, seven wonders of the world, 7-11. And if you're a gambler looking for a jackpot, all sevens on a slot machine means seventh heaven.

Miss Calvin, 27, has seven diamonds in her engagement ring. At her wedding, the drink of the night will be Seven Sevens (made with Seagrams 7 whiskey and 7-Up).

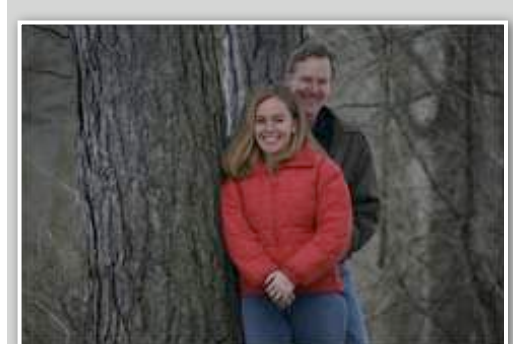
"I just feel like a lucky person to be getting married to Gene," she said. "Maybe someday we will have seven kids!"

When Joe Capucini, of South Toledo, gets married on July 7, there will be seven people to a side for the wedding parties.

He said he and his fiancee, Deanna Jackson-Roth, did a double-take when they discovered that date was a wedding-friendly Saturday.

"We like the novelty of it a lot," he said. "Seven's her favorite number. She wore a Teddy Ginn jersey all year," he continued, referring to the Ohio State football player who wore the number 7.

For Brooke Dailey and Jason Poturalski, of Perrysburg, the date has significance of another sort. It's the anniversary of his grandparents, who have been together for more than 50 years.



Kellie Calvin and Gene Cole plan a July 7 wedding. (THE BLADE/AMY E. VOIGT)



NBA player Tony Parker and actress Eva Longoria are among the couples who have scheduled a July 7 wedding. (ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Still, there's a practical reason behind their choice too (which they made all the way back in 2005).

"It was an easy day to remember," Miss Dailey said. "We knew it would probably be a popular date."

Other easy-to-remember dates in the past have received heightened interest, according to those in the wedding industry, but not as much as this.

"It's got to fall on a weekend," explained Jane Wilde, a wedding planner from West Toledo. "That doesn't happen that often."

For example, June 6, 2006, fell on a Tuesday. Sept. 9, 1999, was a Thursday.

Next year, Aug. 8, which already is seeing great interest nationally, lands on a Friday.

For those couples still thinking about tying the knot this summer on July 7, don't despair. It's still possible, but it won't be easy.

"It is definitely a date where the brides, if they still want to get married on that day, will have to get creative," said Richard Markel, director of the Association for Wedding Professionals International, a nearly 1,000-member professional organization based in Sacramento.

Many facilities and wedding professionals are booked to capacity. To help find those who aren't, Mr. Markel's organization has a special link on its Web site (www.afwpi.com) that identifies facilities all over the world that still are available.

In general terms, Mr. Markel suggests that couples look for alternative locations on that date, places like parks, zoos, aquariums, and museums. They might look to destination weddings - the Bahamas, anyone? - or something closer to home.

"I wouldn't be surprised if backyards get a lot more too," he said.

Contact Ryan E. Smith at: ryansmith@theblade.com or 419-724-6103.

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