

Community



A Dutch New Year's celebration isn't greatly different from a Canadian one except for the goodies, said Jeannette Millesse, owner of Jeannette's Dutch

Deli on Main Street. She's holding up an almond ring which, along with oliebollen (home made donuts) are some favorite Dutch treats. (Herald photo)

Welcoming New Year in traditional fashion

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT
The Herald

The ushering in of the new year is a time for celebration and three local residents prepared for the moment the clock strikes midnight in a different way than the majority of residents in Halton Hills.

Amal and Raja Alrawdah, John Sommers and Jeannette Millesse each have special customs and traditions to welcome the new year which are reflections of their cultural heritage.

The Alrawdah family, owners of Downtown Pizza and Submarine, are a Lebanese family who forego sleep while cooking the traditional New Year's meal.

Their celebration starts at 11:00 p.m. Dec. 31 when the whole family congregates at one dwelling to begin cooking a whole lamb. Once the lamb is summing in the oven, the family snacks on 'baklawa,' a type of cookie, and other treats.

Card playing is a favorite this night. The game, when translated, is called seven-and-a-half and is similar to poker but instead of gambling with money, the family uses nuts.

"We believe whoever wins the most nuts will have a good year," said Mrs. Alrawdah.

When midnight arrives, the party gets into full swing with lots of music and noise.

A special part of their celebration is the reuniting of family members who had misunderstandings or disagreements throughout the past year. The family promises to forget about them and start the new year with understanding and happiness.

The merriment continues until noon the next day when the traditional meal of lamb and 'tabouli' (salad) is eaten.

"Ein Glueckliches Neues Jahr" shout the Germans at New Years said John Sommers, columnist for the Herald.

Germans have loud celebrations, said Mr. Sommers, remembering the parties in East Germany where he was born. Special productions in theatre,

fire crackers and tricks make up a big part of the celebration.

Before the trickery begins, a traditional meal of carp is cooked and served with hot butter and a mixture of whipped cream and horseradish.

But soon, family members might find a piece of cheese is really plastic or a moving plate on their hands.

Mr. Sommers remembers one trick his brother played that ended up back-firing. A common stunt Germans play is putting little exploding pellets into cigarettes. Mr. Sommers' father allowed his sons to stuff the cigarettes but they had to make sure they were all smoked on New Year's Eve. Unfortunately, some of the cigarettes were missed and ended up being given to a salesman who came to call. Without the benefit of expecting a trick, he sure got a shock when his cigarette exploded after a few puffs, remembers Mr. Sommers.

When the key moment arrives, people crowd the streets to let off firecrackers and listen to the church bells ring.

"New Years is the time when everybody lets loose," said Mr. Sommers, who maintains some of the same traditions at his home in Georgetown.

Games and special foods also make up a big part of a traditional Dutch new year's celebration.

Jeannette Millesse still bakes some of the special treats for her family this time of year.

Library pre-school programs

Registration for all Halton Hills Public Libraries pre-school programs begins Jan. 10. Pre-school Storytime offers thirty minutes of stories, songs and crafts for 3-5 year olds. Tales for Two is designed for adult and child participation.

Baby Tales will introduce infants 6-23 months (with a parent) to the library and the world of picture books, songs, movement and rhymes for babies.

All programs are now 8 weeks in length and commence the week of January 15 (Georgetown Branch Library), January 22 (Acton Branch Library). For more information phone 873-3881 or visit your local branch library to pick up your copy of our new Winter Program Brochure.

P.A. DAY FUN AT YOUR LIBRARY

Tickets went on sale Wednesday for Erewon Theatre's Wind In the Willows coming to the Georgetown Branch Library on January 31, 1991.

This classic tale is presented with the use of mime, masks, dialogue and audience participation. Although suited for school-age children, pre-schoolers under 5 yrs. may also attend accompanied by an adult. Get your tickets now, \$3.00 per person, at the circulation desk.

Munch To The Movies is the scheduled P.A. Day Special at the Acton Branch Library. This program is "no charge" - just bring your lunch and enjoy an hour of movie fun. 12:00 noon.

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