

Economist & Sun • Stouffville Tribune

ETCETERA

Year of the Dragon

York Region's Chinese community celebrates New Year of great fortune

BY MIKE ADLER
Staff Writer

On Chinese New Year, Annie Chung is determined to have her Canadian-born children follow the rules. To receive their packets of lucky money, Li-See, the three children must, on the first day of the new year, follow custom by dressing in red clothes and praising their parents.

"They kneel down and give you a cup of tea," said Chung, a Markham restaurateur and artist from Hong Kong. Festivities for the Year of the Dragon this weekend include lion dances and money gods at York Region shopping malls. But for many Chinese families here, the New Year doesn't include all the things they might have done in China. The lunar New Year is a bigger event in Hong Kong, said Markham's Peggy Lam,

who brought daughter Wing Lam, 5, to a celebration last Saturday at the Unionville Public Library. "Maybe I'll buy a new dress for her to wear that day," she said. Some people are so busy they don't even remember it's the New Year, said June Tso, a Markham senior who, on Saturday, just finished making deep-fried dumplings filled with coconut shreds, peanuts, sesame seeds and white sugar — some with lard in the flour to make them softer, some without for crispness. A retired teacher and banker, Tso had already cooked and stockpiled a traditional parsnip cake, a vegetable cake with salted meat, a box of "smiling cookies" open like a

person laughing ("You have some of these for New Year's, you'll be smiling all year") and a sticky rice cake decorated with red dates. "Much?!" she exclaimed when a visitor

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STAFF PHOTO/ROB ALARY

Ken Mak, captain of Liking City Restaurant in Markham (left) and James Leung of Market Marketing display part of the restaurant's New Year's Day meal Saturday.

Foods of good fortune

When Chinese families of the region gather for New Year's Eve feasts tomorrow night, at least some foods on the table — perhaps a main course or clementine oranges or special pastries — will be there to bring happiness and prosperity in the Year of the Dragon.

The meal is in the Hong Kong style, food fit for a king, Leung said.

Culinary tradition in China can vary from region to region, and maybe family to family. High school student Gigi Luf of Richmond Hill, originally from Hong Kong, said her family doesn't have shrimp on New

Year's but does eat a cooked dried plant, whose name in Cantonese sounds like "getting rich".

New Year's Day meals Saturday include:

Sweet and sour grouper to bring abundance in the New Year, because the Chinese word for fish sounds like "something left" meaning "we have more than enough"

Shrimps, which are eaten to bring happiness because their Cantonese pronunciation, "Ha," is like laughter.

Fried chicken, because, with its golden colour, it too is thought to bring good luck.

A soup of shredded chicken, egg drops and corn, meant to symbolize good business.



IT'S A LIVING The Godfather of sole

Dying art of shoemaking still cobbler's passion after 50 years

BY FRED SIMPSON
Staff Writer



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

ANTON SCHLEICHER

Anton Schleicher is so busy repairing other people's shoes these days he has no time to fix his own. "Look at these," he laughs and points to his boots. They are falling apart. Somebody threw them out and I picked them up. His jocular remarks came last week as he took pause to reflect over the fact that, on Feb. 20, he will be celebrating his 50th anniversary as a cobbler and 20 years at his Anton's Shoe Repair store in the heart of old

See COBBLER'S, page 17.

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