

Fifty-Five Plus News

February 1, 2021

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BREAKING NEWS

CONTACTS:

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Winter Hours:

Closed
until
further
notice.

A media release went out on January 22, advising that all full-time Town staff below the level of supervisor in Leisure Services will be temporarily laid off until May. This will be effective February 5.

This includes our own **Jen McEachen** who has worked so hard on our behalf, scheduling virtual activities, providing links to interesting sites and generally keeping things running. She takes the time to check on various members of the Club to see how they're doing. All her work is very much appreciated. She will be back in May.

In further news from the Town, **Micole Rubinoff**—who has been a staunch supporter of the 55+ Club for many years—has announced her retirement as of the end of April. We will miss her input and her humour.

Membership in the 55+ Club has been extended. You will be notified when membership becomes due.

Many thanks to Virginia & Ron Gould, and Cathi & Paul Mount for sharing their “high school sweetheart” photos and memories! So nice to see! Enjoy!

Thanks also to those who kindly penned “**Letters from Away**” for us to enjoy! It's been nice to have a pleasant way to spend time until the vaccine arrives and Covid begins to disappear. A vicarious vacation for all of us!

FROM THE 55+ STAFF WORKING GROUP

In view of the developments with the Town, there will be no meeting of the 55+ Club Staff Working Group in February. Barb Armstrong advises that all virtual activities currently running will cease as of January 29. Those who had paid for the full session will receive a credit to their account.



PHONE POWER

Well, we've made it through January but that light at the end of the tunnel is still pretty distant. Now, more than ever, it is important for all of us to have social contacts. A simple phone call can change someone's day! Just hearing a friendly voice and talking about inconsequential things is actually more restorative than you would think. If you were part of a calling chain, try to make an effort during February to contact the people on your list.



CHINESE NEW YEAR

The standard public holiday for (Mainland) Chinese is 7 days from Chinese New Year's Eve to day 6 of the lunar calendar new year. Chinese people will get 7 days off from work from February 11-17 in 2021. Traditionally New Year activities start as early as three weeks before Chinese New Year's Eve. Rural people start cleaning their houses from the 23rd of the twelfth lunar month (February 4, 2021). The end of the Spring Festival is the Lantern Festival (Chinese month 1 day 15).

SMILES



Alphabet Wife:

After being married for thirty years, a wife asked her husband how he would describe her. He looked at her for a while, then said, "You're a perfect alphabet wife ... A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K."

She asks ... "What the heck does that mean?"

He said, "Adorable, Beautiful, Cute, Delightful, Elegant, Foxy, Gorgeous, and Hot."

She smiled happily and said, "Oh, that's so beautiful, but what about I, J, K?"

He said, "I'm Just Kidding!"

The swelling in his eye is going down and the doctor is fairly optimistic about saving his testicles.



BIRTHDAY PEOPLE

Arlene Heywood, Cyril A. A. Back, Eleanor Rudner, Joan Marshman, Margaret Schell, Pauline Hirsch, Susan Geyer, Linda Peever, Tricia Flaherty, Pat Hartley, Gail May, Nicoleta Puscariu, Darlene Soles, Elena Aiello, Judy Axelson, Vimalathe Balasubramanian, Anita Boldireff, Nicolas Boldireff, Jessie Chin, Fred Christensen, Eleanor Fintelman, Anna Gjerek, Susan Gray, Judith Horvath, Jenny Jones, Brigitte Kroen, John Lan, Mai Xia Liang, Rong Lu, Mary Matthews, Bill Milos, Velrami Moegle, Richard Nabzdyk, Dorothy Quinn, Parameswary Sabaratwam, Siva Sammanthar, Constance Stuy, Phyllis Wilson, Xuexin Wu



MY CHINESE NEW YEAR

Grace Luk has kindly shared her memories of **Chinese New Year in Hong Kong**.

These are the most memorable experiences I had when I was a young child/teen in Hong Kong. Chinese New Year is such a huge festival: it's the most celebrated holiday of the year. All children get "lucky money": red envelopes from parents, grandparents, relatives and even friends of the families. All married couples prepared "lucky money" to give to the young ones.

There were lots of fireworks and dragon dances on the street in front of the shops, complete with drummers and dancers. The celebration goes on for days. Schools are closed for weeks, businesses are closed for days. The mothers and grandmothers will be busy making savoury dishes and sweets to last for weeks.

On the first day of the New Year, the younger generations will go to visit their family's elder generations: parents, grandparents, great grandparents. They always bring homemade goodies for the visit.

Last but not least, our New Year's Eve dinner. It was such a big feast. Our main courses are duck, roast pig, chicken, sea food such as tiger shrimps, scallops, oysters, sea cucumbers, abalone, crabs and lobsters. There were all sorts of vegetables and most importantly, the big steamed fish. It represents that you will always have leftovers. Yum! Oh, how I miss the food and the wonderful atmosphere!

Lunar New Year for 2021 will be on Friday February 12. This is the most important festival. This will be the Year of the Ox.

HIGH SCHOOL SWEETHEARTS

(From Virginia Gould) : Ron and I met in Grade 8 and started dating when I was in Grade 10 at Brampton High School. My mother was very upset because I was too young but he was 3 years older and of course, older boys were very appealing. We married 2 years later which was 65 years ago!



Our wedding



Our honeymoon

(From Cathi Mount) : Paul and I met at Northern Secondary School, Mount Pleasant Avenue, North Toronto (in our day) in 1968. I was coming from St. Joseph's, and transferred to Northern in my final high school year. I think Northern thought I was male and put my locker in the tech wing, just a few lockers over from Paul Mount. We dated through 1969, and married on February 10, 1973. My folks loved Paul, not his motorcycle, because he loved me. Mother reminded Paul on our wedding day that I was a "No Return Policy."



TABOOS FOR CHINESE NEW YEAR

1. **Avoid taking medicine.** It is taboo for a person to brew herbal medicine or take medicine on the first day of the lunar year; otherwise, it is believed he or she will get ill for a whole year. In some place, after the bell announcing the New Year at midnight New Year's Day, sickly people break their gallipots (medicine pots) in the belief that this custom will drive the illness away in the coming year.
2. **Don't sweep or take out garbage:** The act of sweeping on this day is associated with sweeping wealth away. Taking out garbage symbolizes dumping out the good luck or good fortune from the house.
3. **Don't eat porridge and meat for breakfast:** Porridge should not be eaten because it is considered that only poor people have porridge for breakfast, and people don't want to start the year "poor" as this is a bad omen. Besides, meat should not be eaten at this breakfast out of respect for the (Buddhist) gods (who are believed to be against killing of animals), as all gods are expected to be out meeting and wishing a Happy New Year to each other.
4. **Don't wash clothes and hair:** People do not wash clothes on the first and second day because those two days are celebrated as the birthday of Shuishen (the Water God). Hair must not be washed on the first day of the lunar year. In Chinese language, "hair" has the some pronunciation (and indeed is the same character) as "fa" in "facai" which means "to become wealthy". Therefore, it is seen as not a good thing to "wash one's fortune away" at the beginning of the New Year.
5. **Needlework should not be done:** The use of knives and scissors is to be avoided for any accident, whether harming a person or tool, is thought to lead to inauspicious things and the depletion of wealth in the coming year.
6. **A married daughter is not allowed to visit the house of her parents:** A married daughter is not allowed to visit the house of her parents, as this is believed to bring bad luck to the parents, causing economic hardship for the family. Traditionally a married daughter visits the house of her parents on the second day of Chinese New Year.
7. **Keep children from crying:** The cry of a child is believed to bring bad luck to the family, so parents do their best to keep children from crying by whatever means possible.
8. **Avoid breaking tools or other equipment:** Breaking tools or other equipment during this period is associated with a loss of wealth for the coming year; therefore, tradesmen and business people in general take great precautions to prevent it.
9. **No visiting hospital:** A visit to the hospital during this period is believed to bring illness to the person in question for the duration of the coming year; therefore, visits to the hospital are avoided, except in cases of extreme emergency.
10. **Avoid being stolen:** Do not let other people take objects, including money, from your pocket during the Spring Festival, and take care not to have your pocket

picked, as this is believed to portend your whole wealth in the coming year being stolen.

11. **Avoid borrowing money:** Don't borrow money during Chinese New Year. Money should not be lent on New Year's Day, and all debts have to be paid by New Year's Eve. If someone owes you money, do not go to his or her home to demand it. Anyone who does so it is said will be unlucky all the year.
12. **The rice jar should not be empty:** The rice jar should not be allowed to become empty. This causes grave anxiety, as the cessation of cooking during the New Year is an ill omen.
13. **Don't wear damaged clothes:** Do not wear clothes that are damaged. If kids especially wear such clothes in the first lunch month, it is said to bring bad luck.
14. **No killing:** Killing should be avoided from the 1st to the 15th of the Lunar New Year as blood is considered an ill omen which will cause misfortune such as a knife wound or a bloody disaster. People usually kill chickens, ducks, pigs and fishes before Chinese New Year or on Chinese New Year's Eve.
15. **Do not wear white or black:** Do not wear white or black clothes as these two colours are traditionally associated with mourning.
16. **Don't give certain gifts:** Don't give certain gifts, such as clocks, scissors and pears as they have a bad meaning in Chinese culture.

