



NANAIMO MUSEUM

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Media Release - Local Cultural Societies Team Up for the Lunar New Year – January 20, 2009
For Immediate Release*

Celebrate the Year of the Ox on Saturday, January 24

The Chinese Cultural Society, Nanaimo's Multicultural Society and Nanaimo Museum are inviting the community to bring in the excitement of the Lunar New Year on Saturday January 24 at the museum. This event is by donation and gets under way at 1 pm.

"We're very proud to once again work with the multicultural community to entertain and educate the public about Nanaimo's rich heritage," says Debbie Trueman, General Manager of the museum. "The New Year is such a magical time in many cultures and we're just happy we can be a part of the local celebration, especially in our new, bigger facility."

A variety of cultural experiences such as the ever-popular Chinese Lion Dance as well as a variety of entertainers from China, Thailand, the Philippines and the Caribbean will be presented throughout the afternoon. Displays of Chinese artifacts and a video of Chinatown burning will be featured.

Children singing Chinese songs will be among the highlights of this 17th annual event. There will be traditional crafts and games (including Mah Jong), hands-on calligraphy demonstrations for both children and adults, fortune cookies, cultural information and more.

"We're grateful the Museum Society recognizes the significance of our different cultures in Canada and that a special celebration takes place each New Year at the museum," says Mike Mah of the Chinese Cultural Society.

The Lunar New Year is traditionally a family affair, a time of reunion and thanksgiving. For people of Chinese descent, the New Year lasts for 15 days starting with the second New Moon after the winter solstice. The celebration is typically highlighted with a religious ceremony given in honour of Heaven and Earth, the gods of the household and the family ancestors. Although the actual New Year is usually brought in with family and friends, the Chinese community encourages everyone to embrace the celebration.

The Lunar calendar is based on a combination of lunar and solar movements. The lunar cycle is about 29.5 days. In order to "catch up" with the solar calendar the Chinese insert an extra month once every few years (seven years out of a 19-year cycle). This is the same as adding an extra day on leap year. This is why, according to the solar calendar, the Chinese New Year falls on a different date each year.

The museum is located at 100 Museum Way in the Vancouver Island Conference Centre. For more information about the Lunar New Year, contact Bobbi Williamson at the Nanaimo Museum at 250-753-1821.

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Year of the Ox

Those born under the influence of the Ox are fortunate to be stable and persevering. The typical Ox is a tolerant person with strong character.

Not many people could equal the resolution and fearlessness the Ox exhibits when deciding to accomplish a task or an objective. As we used this great creature long ago to plow the soil day after day, so do Ox people labor through their daily responsibilities either at work or at home without complaint or gripe. Oxen know they will succeed through hard work and sustained effort and find no truth or benefit in concocting get-rich-quick schemes.

Ox years are second in sequence and recur every twelve years. The Chinese New Year does not fall on a specific date, so it is essential to check the calendar to find the exact date on which each Ox year actually begins.