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# the richmond REVIEW

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## 'My heart sank when I looked at the monitor'

Little Hannah  
Schneider born with  
rare heart ailment

by Martin van den Heuvel  
Staff Reporter

Hannah's parents felt  
and refused to take  
her little didn't  
set off alarm bells for her  
mother, Jennifer Schneider,  
who recalls what became a  
frightening morning early  
last year.  
Just a couple of weeks earlier,  
Hannah got a sharp fall of health  
when she was born on March 7,  
2007, at St. Vincent's Hospital  
in what Schneider describes as a  
"very smooth delivery."  
Hannah had been re-  
acting like other normal  
babies do, but on this  
night, she never fell asleep.  
Through the screen of  
Schneider couldn't get  
much from the  
breathing.  
After eight hours, she  
had a bad case of a  
Hannah's back of age  
after 17 hours, her  
and wouldn't



## In this issue

### Illegal booze dens hit by crackdown

A crackdown on illegal  
liquor dens in the  
county, business and  
public health officials  
want to see a sign-  
rant drop on booze dens.  
The Richmond Police  
are generally strong  
in the county. They  
have issued 100  
to 150 in the past  
two years.

### Snow geese

For months, snow geese  
have gathered in every  
mouth of Sturgeon  
Lake, and the  
birds are  
no longer  
and school  
and school  
fields and  
fields.



# Gung Hei Fat Choy

## It's the year of the Rat!

Chinese New Year, also called Spring Festival, is the most important celebration for Chinese communities around the world. The term *nónglì xīnnián* literally means "new year of the agricultural calendar." This celebration is the occasion to take a holiday and gather with family and friends.

This year, the year of the Rat, whose element is Earth, begins on February 7th. In the order of rotation, the Rat is the first animal in the Chinese zodiac. Because the Chinese calendar is based on the lunisolar calendar (which takes into account both the moon and the sun), it does not change years on January 1st as western calendars do. Every year, Chinese New Year occurs between February 4 and 19, on the date when the sun reaches 135 degrees in longitude.



**Chinese New Year**

# New beginnings, family and food at core during new year

*Reunions and giving thanks an important part as year of the rat begins*

by Martin van den Hemel

Staff Reporter

2008 figures to be first-rate lucky for residents preparing to celebrate the Chinese New Year beginning next week.

This will be the year of the rat, the first of the 12 animals that comprise the Chinese zodiac calendar, and that has special significance, according to Henry Beh, executive director of the Richmond Chinese Community Society.

"It's really the beginning of the cycle, so a lot of people look at it as a very important date," Beh said, noting that the New Year and the start of the cycle give a double dose of beginnings where people can start fresh. "A lot of merchants and business people (are thinking) this is a beginning and hopefully will bring even better luck."

As well, the number eight symbolizes luck, happiness and good fortune, which gives 2008 great promise, he said.

With the start of the new cycle, people will likely be spending a bit more this year, purchasing new decorations for their stores, homes and themselves.

At Aberdeen Centre, where there will be plenty

of celebrations in the next two weeks, a giant lantern is being brought in to give a fresh look to the decorations. Paper lanterns are traditionally red, and symbolize happiness, Beh said.

"People born in the year of the rat are always noted for their attraction to the opposite sex. But business people and the Chinese culture hope the year of the rat will bring us even more prosperity than last year."

Here are some other ways used to usher in the Chinese new year:

- sweep the dust and dirt of the old year from your floors to make way for the new year (Beh cautions, however, that it may be unwise to do this on the new year, as they might inadvertently sweep away the good luck instead)
- decorate your house in brilliant shades of red and gold which are the traditional Chinese colours for wealth and good fortune
- fill your rooms with brightly coloured flowers and blooming plants, which symbolize rebirth and new growth and help ensure prosperity in the new year
- order a traditional new year's day dinner from a Chinese restaurant (Beh said any sort of gathering for the new year's dinner works fine, but on new year's eve, families like to have a sit-down hot pot dinner)
- to draw luck, cook dishes that include oysters which represent good fortune and success, as well as fish, which represent surplus, and lettuce, which represents wealth, riches and prosperity



Mark Patrick photo

Decorations are going up at Aberdeen.

## Is it the year of the mouse or rat?

The Chinese new year is just a week away, but is it the year of the mouse or the year of the rat?

It's all the same, as the Chinese symbol for 2008 on the Chinese zodiac translates into both rat and mouse, explains Henry Beh, executive director of Richmond Community Society.

"I think in Chinese, it's only one word in writing. But in English, you have either the mouse, the little one, or the rat, which is the big one. But I noticed these days the year of the rat is more acceptable because it's most commonly used," he said.

"I do use mouse, and I notice other people say rat, so sometimes we change it too, either way."

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# Chinese New Year

## Start the new year with a bang

From Page B3

- ring in the new year with noise makers, such as firecrackers, which drive away evil spirits

There are some very old traditions that not many people practise anymore, Beh said.

This includes the sacrifice to the kitchen god, to ensure that he gives a good report on the family's behaviour when he returns to heaven.

But family gatherings and the sharing of food are at the core of the celebrations.

In northern China, dumplings are served as families gather to celebrate the evening, while in southern China, the hot pot is favoured.

Continuing the eating theme, an octagon or circular-shaped tray of togetherness is served, containing symbolic foods such as lotus seeds and lychee nuts.

Parents also hand out red-and-gold coloured money packets—known as leisee—to children that are filled with 'lucky money.'

2007 was the year of the pig and 2009 will be the year of the ox.

The Chinese new years starts with the new moon on the first day of the new year and ends 15 days later, with the lantern festival. Because the Chinese calendar is based on both lunar and solar movements, the new year falls on a different date each year.

This year, the Chinese New Year is on Feb. 7.



Mark Patrick photo

Joey Kwan, promotion and public relations manager, at Aberdeen Centre poses with some of her mall's Chinese New Year's decorations.