

Chinese community celebrates 'Year of Rooster'

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Long after crowds heralded 1981 by watching the lighted ball go up and down in New York's Times Square, another new year will dawn this week.

Ushered in by dancing dragons and welcomed by barges of firecrackers, the year 4678 won't be forgotten in the Chinese community.

On Thursday, the Year of the Rooster will begin, honoring a bird said to be industrious, purposeful, quick, proud, brave and an early riser. Persons who are born during a year governed by the rooster share these characteristics, according to Chinese folklore.

But it will be a dragon, not a rooster which helps greet the year. The dragon dance with its performers in multi-colored costume presents a different picture of the scaly beast best known to Western culture for being slain by St. George. It takes two dancers to handle this dragon and its paper mache head, according to Marco Chin of Troy.

Chin's family owns the Mon Jin Lau restaurant in Troy where the dancing dragon and its attendants annually welcome the Chinese new year.

Surrounding the gaudy colors of the dragon is a display of strength and martial arts expertise, according to Chin. "It is very physical," Chin said.

THE HEAD of the dragon weighs between 25 and 30 pounds; the two dancers supporting the costume must be relieved by others during the evening.

The dance itself is more than an excuse for three dragon attendants to play drums and cymbals while others throw firecrackers near the beasts' feet. It is a martial arts exercise conducted by such groups as the White Crane Club of Detroit which will perform the new year's ceremony for the Chin family. The club bears the name of the style of martial arts it practices.

During the dance, the dragon will be encouraged to eat lettuce hanging from the ceiling. Connected to the lettuce are red envelopes containing "lucky money" with which the dancers are paid.

"They have to work for their money," Chin said.

"They really shred up the lettuce too.

It gets all over. It's a real mess. But it's worth it."

Lurking behind the noise and dancing is the Chinese superstition that preparation for the coming months must include methods for ridding them of any bad luck which occurred in the previous year.

This includes putting away the household's knives and scissors so no one can cut the luck for the coming year. Red, a color considered to draw good luck, is used in generous portions throughout the house with special emphasis on the front door.

DEMONS BEARING bad luck are said to fly in straight lines and can be thwarted by winding paths and rounded corners.

Resourceful householders place a goldfish bowl just inside of the front door to confuse any demons. Fish have the added advantage of being lucky charms, and the glitter of light on the glass bowl repels the dazzled demon.

"Some people vacuum away from the front door (toward the interior) to keep the good luck in. Some families save all their garbage until the new year," Chin said.



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Tradition

Sister Loretelle (left), principal at St. Fabian Roman Catholic School, helps some of the school's students to celebrate National Catholic School Week, Feb. 1-7. This year's theme is "Choosing a Tradition." Aiding in the celebration are (from left) John Hanaway, Mark Howler, Eesan Chu and Karrie Kranz, all first-graders at the school. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

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Business workshop is set

To aid the small business owner, Madonna College will host three business workshops on Feb. 7, 14 and 21.

Each session will focus on a different aspect of the "Management of Small Business Enterprises."

All sessions will meet on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in room 117A of the College.

"The series takes advantage of expertise in the community and gives owners the opportunity to evaluate operations of the small business," said Dr. Charles Roman, coordinator.

"General Management of Small Businesses" on Feb. 7, will discuss the practical, first steps of starting your own business. "Financial Management of Small Businesses" on Feb. 14, will explain record keeping and planning for fiscal stability. The workshop set for Feb. 21 will examine "Personnel Management of Small Businesses" including government regulations and personnel evaluations.

Local business leaders who will speak at the workshops include: Richard D. Josaitis, C.P.A., Richard D. Josaitis and Company; Runn Lunn, C.P.A., Lunn and Ferrell, P.C.; Frank Hand, Hand Insurance Agency; Robert Thompson, Kradle, Thompson and Mier, P.C. and Hilary Gross, Detroit Ball Bearing Company.

Offered through the Office of Continuing Education and the Work Education Council of Southeastern Michigan, the workshops are applicable as college or continuing education credit.

Register through the Office of Continuing Education at 591 5049. Madonna College is located at Schoolcraft and Levan Roads in Livonia.

'Visual City' is discussed

Toronto's Ontario Place and Eaton Centre and Detroit's Receiving Hospital have one thing in common: All three were designed by architect Eberhard Zeidler.

Zeidler will be in Southfield at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 12 for an appearance at Lawrence Institute of Technology. He will be speaking in the LIT architecture auditorium, 21000 Northwestern.

His presentation is free and open to the public. Zeidler, a native of Germany, is now one of Toronto's top architects with his own firm, Zeidler Roberts Partnership/Architects.

At LIT he will be discussing "The Visual City and

Its Missing Advocate", centered on the theory that architects must keep an entire-city concept in mind, even while designing a single building.

In addition to the award-winning Ontario Place and Eaton Centre, Zeidler also designed the Federal Court House in Ottawa, the Wayne State University Clinic, Toronto's St. Lawrence Housing Projects and its Young People's Theatre.

He has earned more than 40 national and international design awards for his work. Zeidler is author of a book on his innovative planning of the McMaster University Health Science Center entitled "Healing the Hospital."

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