



sneakers



CHINESE NEW YEAR

GET READY FOR THE YEAR OF THE DOG

By KARALEE MILLER
Knight Ridder News Service

Today some people may party like it's 4704.

That's because, according to the Chinese calendar, it will be.

This Chinese New Year marks the Year of the Dog. On the Chinese calendar, each year is designated by one of 12 animals. Last year was the Year of the Rooster.

This year also is known as the Year of Bing-xu. The name of the year is repeated and recycled every 60 years.

The Chinese New Year celebration starts with the new moon on the first day of the new year and ends on the full moon 15 days later. The new year is celebrated in many ways — firecrackers, lion dances and parades are just a few.

When did the Chinese New Year celebration begin?

The Chinese use of the lunar cycle to determine the New Year dates from about 2600 B.C., making it the oldest calendar in use.

Like the Western calendar, the Chinese lunar calendar is yearly. However, the start of the lunar year is based on the cycles of the moon — which is why the date of the new year varies, falling sometime between late January and the middle of February.

What are some of the Chinese New Year rituals?

Preparations begin a month before the new year. A massive cleanup takes place in Chinese houses, which are cleansed of any traces of bad luck. Doors and window panes typically are given a fresh coat of paint — usually red, a color meant to ward off evil spirits. The doors and windows then are decorated with colorful calligraphy called chun lian (spring couplet) featuring themes for happiness and longevity.

New Year's Eve dinner typically is a feast of seafood and dumplings, with several foods signifying different good wishes. For example, prawns represent liveliness and happiness, and raw fish salad, or

yu sheng, is meant to bring good luck and prosperity.

On New Year's Day, an ancient custom called Hong Bao, meaning Red Packet, is observed. This involves married couples putting money in red envelopes and giving it to children and unmarried adults.

How do people spend each day of the 15-day celebration?

On the first day of the new year, many people abstain from meat because it is believed this will ensure them long and happy lives.

On the second day, the Chinese pray to their ancestors and gods.

The third and fourth days are meant for men to spend time with their in-laws.

The fifth day is called Po Woo — when people stay home to welcome the God of Wealth. No one visits families and friends on this day because it's believed it will bring bad luck to both parties.

From the sixth to the 10th day, the Chinese visit their relatives and friends. They also visit the temples to pray for good fortune and health.

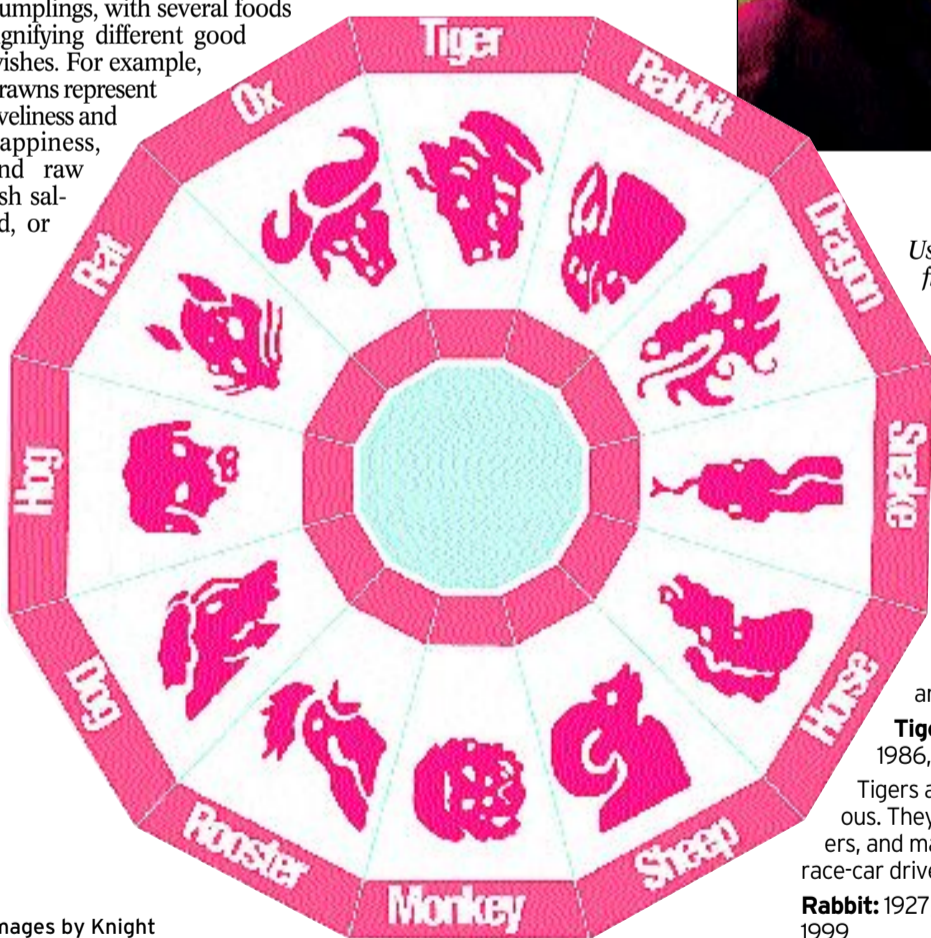
The seventh day is when farmers display their produce. Noodles are eaten to promote longevity and raw fish for success.

On the eighth day, family reunion dinners are held, and on the ninth day, offerings are made to the Jade Emperor.

The 10th through the 12th are days when friends and relatives are invited to dinner. To balance all the rich food, the 13th day is supposed to be enjoyed by eating simple rice congee and mustard greens (choi sum) to cleanse the system.

The 14th day is spent preparing to celebrate the Lantern Festival, which marks the culmination of the new year celebrations on the 15th night.

Sources:
www.chinapage.com/newyear.html; www.newyear.co.uk/chinese/



Images by Knight Ridder News Service

ARE YOU A RAT OR A RABBIT?

Using the Chinese lunar calendar, find out what your birth year says about you.

Rat: 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996

Rats are imaginative, charming and very generous to those they love. However, they also can be quick-tempered and overcritical.

Ox: 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997

Oxen are born leaders, methodical and good with their hands. They make fine surgeons and hairdressers.

Tiger: 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998

Tigers are said to be bold and adventurous. They have a tendency to be risk takers, and make good bosses, explorers or race-car drivers.

Rabbit: 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999

Rabbits are affectionate, cooperative and pleasant, with lots of friends. But they can get too sentimental and seem superficial. Ideal careers include law, diplomacy or the stage.

Dragon: 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000

Dragons tend to be popular and full of life. They make good priests, artists and politicians.

Snake: 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001

Romantic and deep-thinking, wise and charming, snakes can also tend to dismiss others too quickly. Ideal jobs include teaching or psychiatry.

Horse: 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002

Horses are hardworking and independent, but can be a bit selfish. They would do well as scientists or poets.

Sheep: 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003

Sheep are said to be charming, elegant and

artistic, but they have a tendency to complain. Ideal jobs include actors, gardeners and beachcombers.

Monkey: 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004

Monkeys are intelligent and well-liked and have success in any field.

Rooster: 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005

Roosters are decisive, hardworking and unafraid to speak their minds — which can sometimes come across as boastful. They make good restaurant owners and world travelers.

Dog: 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006

Dogs are honest and faithful. They make ideal secret agents or business people.

Boar: 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007

Boars are honest and tolerant and make good friends. They thrive in the arts as entertainers.

Source: www.new-year.co.uk/chinese/

Movie mania: hitting the big screen in 2006

By NANCY CHURNIN
Knight Ridder News Service

It's the start of a new year. But many familiar faces will be greeting us on-screen. We couldn't fit every movie in our guide. So here's a look at some selections for the first half of the year. Some films are not yet rated. And remember, dates may change.

January

"Glory Road": Inspired by the true story of the 1965-66 Texas Western college basketball team that took the sport's first all-black starting lineup to the



Steve Martin in 'The Pink Panther'

here's the story of another magical governess.

NCAA championship.

"Hoodwinked": Was the Wolf really bad? A new, animated twist on the Red Riding Hood story.

"Nanny McPhee": For those who loved "Mary Poppins,"

February

"The Pink Panther": Steve Martin stars as the inspector who never met an object he couldn't trip over.

"Curious George": The curious monkey gets into trouble again in this animated movie.

March

"Ice Age 2: The Meltdown": Is the ice melting? That's what the woolly mammoth says in this animated sequel.

"The Shaggy Dog": Tim Allen changes into a sheepdog in this re-



make of the 1959 Disney movie.

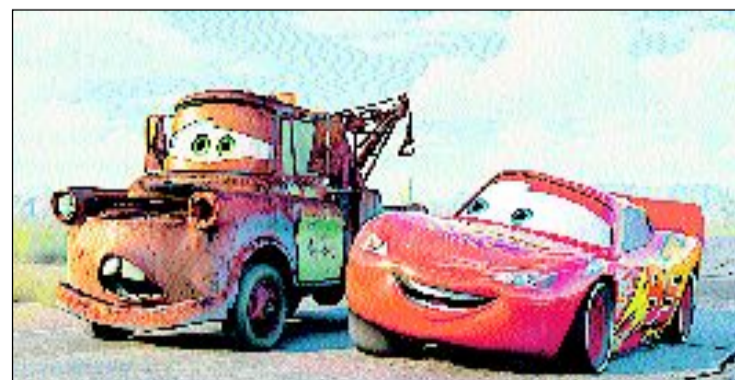
April

"Hoot": A boy finds a cause worth fighting for in this adaptation of the Carl Hiaasen Newbery Honor book.

"Akeelah and the Bee": A girl dreams of winning a spelling bee.

May

"Over the Hedge": A raccoon tries to get his timid fellow animals to check out garbage can treasures in this animated tale.



Photos from Knight Ridder News Service

The makers of "The Incredibles" return with "Cars."

June

"Cars": "The Incredibles" wizards at Pixar bring cars to life in this

animated film.

"Superman Returns": He leaps tall buildings again in a single bound.

