



WINTER POTPOURRI

■ Old Long Since

"Auld Lang Syne" is the most commonly sung song by Americans on New Year's Eve. It is an old Scottish song first published by the poet Robert Burns in 1796 after he had heard it sung by an old man from Scotland. The title translates as "old long since" and means "times gone by." People throughout the English speaking world traditionally welcome the new year by singing this song with their friends just after midnight.

Listen to the tune: <http://www.npr.org/ramfiles/atc/20011231.atc.sax.ram>

Should auld acquaintance be forgot, And never brought to mind?	For auld lang syne, my dear, For auld lang syne, We'll take a cup of kindness yet, For auld lang syne.
Should auld acquaintance be forgot, And days of auld lang syne?	

■ New Year's Resolutions

Do you have one? Well, so do most people around the world. The average American, for example, makes 1.8 New Year's resolutions.

In a Taco Bell/Boys & Girls Clubs of America New Year's Resolution survey, 75% of young participants responded that they intend to volunteer more in 2005, 64% said teens don't volunteer enough, and 56% think their parents don't volunteer enough. However, generally speaking, most resolutions made by young people in America are about getting better grades at school, being nicer to siblings, eating less junk food, getting more sleep and more exercise.

Adults, on the other hand, usually swear to: pay off their debts, lose weight and exercise more, get a better job and improve personal relations.

Psychologists offer these tips to help you keep your New Year's resolutions:

- Make a strong decision to change your bad habits or start new, healthy ones. Be ready to make sacrifices to achieve your goal.
- Do not set your goals unrealistically high.
- Develop an action plan.
- Ask your family and friends for support.
- Reward yourself for making progress.

Do you know one of the most popular American sitcoms - *Friends*? Here's Phoebe's New Year's Resolution:

Phoebe: My New Year's Resolution is to pilot a commercial jet plane.

Chandler: That's great Pheebs, now all you have to do is find a plane load of people whose resolution is to plummet to their deaths.

Happy New Year!

Different religious and ethnic groups enrich American communities by celebrating their traditional holidays in a variety of ways. The coming of the New Year is celebrated by these groups at different times of the year and in more or less festive ways.

At New Year's Eve parties across the United States on **December 31**, many people watch television.

Many channels show Times Square in New York City. At one minute before midnight, a lighted ball drops slowly from the top to the bottom of a pole on one of the buildings. People count down until midnight as the ball drops. When it reaches the bottom of the pole, the new year sign is lighted. People hug and kiss, and wish each other "Happy New Year!" Unlike many other nations Americans don't celebrate New Year with fireworks.

On January first, many families and friends watch television together and enjoy football games such as the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, the Orange Bowl game in Florida or the Cotton Bowl in Texas.

One of the most unique celebrations of the coming of the New Year in the United States is the Mummers Parade in Philadelphia.

The Parade is held every **New Year's Day** and is a day long event. There are 4 divisions of the Parade: the Comic Division with dancing clowns in colorful costumes; the Fancy Division with participants dressed elaborately and outrageously; the String Band Division with groups of musicians; and the Fancy Brigade Division with dancing marchers in spectacular costumes. Clubs work on the costumes and practice all year for the Parade. Marchers have to comply with a complicated set of rules, and are scored by a panel of judges. String Bands are judged on their musical presentation as well as the costumes.

Each year about 15,000 people take part in the Parade and up to a million spectators are expected.

The Jewish New Year celebration is called Rosh Hashanah. In 2004 it began on **September 15**. On this day, year 5765 of the Jewish calendar began.

Rosh Hashanah remembers the creation of the world and is also called the Feast of the Trumpets, as the blowing of a ram's horn summons Jews to religious services on this day. Rosh Hashanah is a time for personal reflection and prayer.

The Islamic New Year is a religious event occurring on the first day of the first month in the Islamic calendar - Muharram. It is not "celebrated" in the festive meaning of the word but acknowledged as an occasion for reflection. Special prayers are said.

In 2005, the **10th of February** marks the coming of the new year for the Muslims: 1426.

The first day of the Chinese New Year 2005 is **February 9**.

From ancient times to the present, Chinese people have been welcoming the New Year and chasing away the evil spirits by setting off firecrackers.

Crowds gather in the narrow streets of Chinatown in New York, San Francisco and other cities where the Chinese have settled. A huge cloth dragon sways back and forth around the street corners, chasing a red sunball or a white pearl-ball. Following the dragon are people playing drums and gongs, and lion dancers with paper lion heads on sticks.

In the Chinese calendar, year 2005 is known as the Year of the Rooster.



*Chinese New Year Parade in San Francisco, 2002.
Photo by Wendy Goodfriend, courtesy of KQED Public Broadcasting*



*Polish American String Band, 1993.
Courtesy of Polish American String Band*

■ In February: Presidents' Day

Until 1971, both February 12 and 22 were observed as federal public holidays to honor the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington, respectively. In 1971 President Richard Nixon proclaimed one single federal public holiday, the Presidents' Day, to be observed on the third Monday of February, honoring all past presidents of the USA.



Who can be the president of the United States? Here is what the Constitution says: "No Person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States, at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the Office of President; neither shall any person be eligible to that Office who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty five Years, and been fourteen Years a Resident within the United States."

The White House has been the residence of the president and his family for more than 200 years. Beside the Oval Office (the president's office) and many meeting rooms, it also has several representation rooms, and naturally the private rooms of the First Family. Altogether, there are 132 rooms, 35 bathrooms, and 6 levels in the residence. For recreation, the White House has a variety of facilities available to its residents, including a tennis court, jogging track, swimming pool, and movie theater. It is open to the public, free of charge. Have a virtual tour of the White House at www.whitehouse.gov/history/life/



White House photos

Who else is living there? **Presidential pets!** At one time or another the White House has sheltered nearly everything that can walk, crawl, swim or fly: zebras, coyotes, badgers, hyenas, alligators, lizards, turtles, and birds, not to mention innumerable horses and ponies, and of course cats and dogs. The Bush family's pets are: Barney, the First Dog (a Scottish Terrier), Miss Beazley (also a Scottish Terrier), who has recently joined Barney, and India, the First Cat.



The oldest president inaugurated was Ronald Reagan (69); **the youngest** was John F. Kennedy (43). Theodore Roosevelt, however, was the youngest man to become president—he was 42 when he succeeded President McKinley, who had been assassinated.

George W. Bush is the 43rd president, but there actually have only been 42 presidents: Cleveland was elected for two non-consecutive terms and is counted twice (22nd and 24th).

Learn more about the presidents at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/>

■ If It's January Then It's Super Bowl!

Super Bowl Sunday is an important winter event in the United States and is almost a national holiday. For practical reasons, it usually takes place in one of the warmer states. Here's a handful of information about the year's most important event in professional football:

- Why is the game called "Super Bowl"? Kansas City Chiefs owner Lamar Hunt is credited with suggesting the name. He is said to have been inspired by his kids playing with a toy named Super Ball.
- This year's Super Bowl, the championship game of the National Football League season, took place on February 6 in Jacksonville, Florida. The teams competing were the New England Patriots and the Philadelphia Eagles. The Patriots are Super Bowl XXXIX champions with a 24-21 victory against the Eagles!
- Super Bowl is the most-watched, single-day sporting event in the world, with a global TV audience estimated by the NFL at more than 1 billion. The 2004 Super Bowl yielded the biggest audience ever with about 140 million Americans watching all or part of the game.
- Super Bowl Sunday is also the second-largest food consumption event of the year, after Thanksgiving.
- The champions get the Lombardi trophy, a sterling silver football in a tilted position atop a pyramid-like stand.
- Each year the American national anthem is sung before the game begins. Performers have so far included - among many other famous celebrities - Beyonce and Mariah Carey.
- Quarterback Joe Namath's grandfather was a Hungarian immigrant. Namath won the Most Valuable Player title in 1969.



New England Patriots Super Bowl Most Valuable Player, Tom Brady, waves to the crowd as the Patriots are paraded down Boylston Street in Boston, 02/03/2004. (©AP/WWP/Lisa Poole)

Super Bowl official website: <http://www.superbowl.com/>

Activity Page

Win Booklets!

To take part in a drawing for colorful English language booklets about the United States e-mail us the answer to the following question:

How many Americans watched the Super Bowl in 2004?

Send your answer to:
zoom@usembassy.hu

Please state your name, address, and age.

The deadline is
March 31, 2005

Winners will be notified
by April 15, 2005.

Good Luck!

Who Said What

Change these sentences from direct speech to reported speech!

Example: Barney said, "I enjoy living in the White House."
Barney said he enjoyed living in the White House.



White House photo

Andy said, "I have to be at work on New Year's Eve."

Mom said, "I may spend the holidays abroad this time."

Jack said, "I must lose weight next year."

Emily said, "Jack has been working on that project all year long."

Ethan swore, "I will not break all my resolutions this year."

Juan said, "We had a terrible New Year's party last year. This year it's going to be different."

Find Correct Answers at: www.usembassy.hu/zoom_key.htm

Glossary — With page numbers where the words appear.

- conviction** - a strong, unshakable belief in something without need for proof or evidence (4)
- eligible** - qualified for or allowed or worthy of being chosen; "eligible to run for office"; "eligible for retirement benefits"; "an eligible bachelor" (3)
- firecracker** - a paper container with an explosive inside used to make a noise (2)
- outrageously** - to an extravagant or immoderate degree (2)
- plummet** - fall suddenly and quickly (1)
- potpourri** - a miscellaneous collection (1)
- to proclaim** - to state or announce; "The King will proclaim an amnesty" (3)
- ram** - a male sheep (2)
- resolution** - a firm intention (1)
- sacrifice** - something given up for the sake of something else (1)
- sitcom** - a situation comedy (1)
- sterling silver** - silver of high purity (3)
- to succeed** - to travel behind, go after, come after (3)
- to summon** - call in an official matter, such as to attend court (2)
- to sway** - to swing slowly and rhythmically (2)
- volunteer** - to work of one's own free will without pay (1)

Missing — Add missing prepositions in the text below!

In the Chinese calendar each year is associated ____ one of 12 animals. The Chinese believe that the characteristics ____ a given animal influence the personality ____ every person born ____ that year.

According ____ the Chinese calendar a person born ____ the year of the Rooster is characterized ____ precision, meticulousness and even perfectionism. He or she has strong convictions and usually makes definite decisions. Roosters are also talented ____ doing organizational work.

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