

Fun New Year's Traditions From Around the World

by Con Chapman

In Italy, they throw old dishes and glasses out their windows. In Latin countries, women wear yellow underwear for good luck and red for success in love. In America, people blow noisemakers and pretend to be interested in two .500 football teams playing in the WeedWacker Cauliflower Bowl. People around the world celebrate the New Year in a variety of ways. Join me for a whirlwind world tour (and try saying *that* five times fast) of the different ways people in other lands "ring in the new."

Lucky yellow "Peanuts" underwear.

Goat Toss: In Middle Volta, which is conveniently located between Upper and Lower Volta, native Voltaic men toss a goat across a fence until one man is exhausted and can continue no longer. The winner is allowed to bed the loser's wife for the night, and the loser must buy the goat dinner and a movie before getting any action.

Upper Volta postage stamp celebrating the nation's air traffic controllers.

New Guinea Joan Rivers Infomercial Fest: New Guinea's current president Alpha Fofonde was a student at UCLA during the 70's. He received an A- in organic chemistry after pulling an all-nighter while a Joan Rivers Infomercial for hair care products played on the television in his dorm's lounge. Each year, he tries to re-create the magic of that moment by leading his people in a pantomime performance of "Great Hair Day!" "It stays on your scalp 'til you shampoo it out!" Fofonde shouts to the crowd from the presidential podium overlooking Joan Rivers Memorial Plaza. "I haven't washed my hair in decades!"



Rivers: ". . . and Left Volta is over here."

Swinging Balls of Fire Around: The Scots are a cautious and wary people--except on New Year's Eve, when they like to swing flaming balls of gunk around on the feast they refer to as "Hogmanay." "We like to keep our birth rate low," says Scottish Foreign Secretary Ian MacLeod. "For those people who inadvertently slip through the cracks and are born, a good whack on the head with a flaming Hogmanay ball usually corrects the situation."



Hogmanay fire thingies: "Sorry about your kids!"

Ten squids in the virgin's bed: Sardinians pride themselves on their inability to reason deductively, and so place ten baby squids in the bed of a virgin for reasons that are lost in the mists of time. "It

helps if the virgin has passed out from too much wine," notes cultural anthropologist and widely-quoted horndog Salvatore Ferminucci. "If not, you can end up losing a squid in her nightgown, and they're not cheap. The squids, that is, not the virgins."



"Buddy check!"

Everybody Check Your Yak, Somebody's Got Mine: The people of Mongolia are a fierce, lusty race descended from ancestors whose idea of a good time was to overwhelm neighboring tribes by brute force and celebrate their conquest with an evening of wild passion. The culmination of this tradition is the Mongolian Cartwheel, a difficult but rewarding sexual position that requires a yak and a movie theatre-size package of Twizzler's Red Licorice.



Stock up with the Family Size Yak Pack!

New Year's Eve is traditionally celebrated by a night of yak swapping, followed by a continental breakfast at which the powerful beasts are returned to their rightful owners in exchange for small tokens of appreciation.

"Last year I got a Jumbo Assortment of Kellogg's cereals in snack-pack sizes," goatherd Ulsyn Batbold recalls wistfully. "This year I want a baby squid."

