



LITTLE Steps
into a big world



New Year's Day Good Luck Brunch— A Southern Tradition

by Wendy Van Wagner

My dear friend Ellie hails from New Orleans, Louisiana. One of her southern family traditions to bring in the New Year has always been to cook and serve a savory brunch on New Year's Day. The foods that are traditionally served at this brunch are all significant in some way; they usher in the hopes and dreams of the coming year.

They celebrate the New Year by consuming black-eyed peas. These legumes are usually cooked with either hog jowls or ham. Black-eyed peas and other legumes have been considered good luck in many cultures. The hog is considered lucky because it symbolizes prosperity. Cabbage is another "good luck" vegetable that is eaten on New Year's Day. Cabbage leaves are also considered a sign of prosperity, being representative of paper currency. In some regions, rice is also a lucky food that is eaten on New Year's Day.

Ellie always tells the story of growing up in the South and having the women on her mother's side of the family get together and cook all of these lucky foods all morning, making a veritable feast for the early afternoon shared by their loved ones. I have always appreciated the communal aspect of this tradition and, of course, that it involves food!

When we were in collage she carried on this tradition by making the special New Year's brunch for some of our friends. This year for a group of my friends, I will be re-creating this wonderful southern tradition, Northern California style... vegetarian! We will have to come up with a hog alternative!

Some of the recipes that make up this brunch are listed below. Give this tradition a try, or come up with your own menu with foods that reflect your own hopes and dreams for 2009!

Collard Greens

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 pounds of collard greens
- 1 ham hock or 6 slices of cooked bacon
- 1 medium onion, sliced or chopped
- 1 teaspoon of crushed red pepper
- 2 to 3 teaspoons kosher salt

DIRECTIONS:

Clean and wash greens well; remove tough stems and ribs. Cut them up and place in a deep pot; add onion. Wash off ham hock and add to the pot. Add red pepper and

January Events...

Mondays

Mother Dance

Dance class for moms and pre-walking babies designed to nourish and nurture both Mom and baby with an opportunity to connect intimately through touch, movement, rhythm and dance! Mondays 10:30-11:30. Cost \$10/class. Moving Ground Studio, Grass Valley
Phone: 272-4240

January 19 – March 27

Baby & Me

Join in for songs, playtime, and discussion while getting to know other parents and babies. Groups forming now to start the week of January 19 for a 10-week session. Birth to 12 months. Weekday mornings in Grass Valley. FREE to first-time participants, sliding scale fee up to \$50 for 10 sessions for subsequent groups.
Phone: Meg 913-2745

January 19 – March 27

Toddler & Me

Join in for songs and playtime in a preschool setting while getting to know other parents and toddlers. Groups forming now to start the week of January 19 for a 10-week session. 12 to 24 months. Weekday afternoons in Nevada City. FREE to first-time participants, sliding scale fee up to \$50 for 10 sessions for subsequent groups.
Phone: Samie 265-0611 x223

January 20

Newborn Care Class

Taught by Laurie Chamberlin, CD, ICCE, LE 6-8:30 p.m. Cost \$30. Call to register.
Phone: 530-477-5442
www.lauriechamberlin.com

January 23, 24, 30, 31

FLOWER DRUM SONG

CATS will be producing the Tony-nominated Broadway version by David Henry Hwang. It is a lot of fun with loads of sing-

salt. Add enough water to cover greens and cook until tender, about 1 hour. Taste and adjust seasonings. Serve with sliced tomato and corn bread.
Serves 4 to 6.

Skillet Corn Bread

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup corn flour
- 1 cup white flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup buttermilk
- 4 tbsp. butter (1/2 stick)

DIRECTIONS:

In 10-inch skillet over low heat, melt butter. Spoon 2 tablespoons melted butter (1/4 stick) into medium bowl. With fork, stir in milk, and remaining ingredients until you have a thick batter.
Once the skillet is hot, pour your batter into the skillet, cook on medium heat until set and semi-firm. Place the whole skillet in the oven and finish cooking for 10 minutes at 400 degrees.
Makes 8 servings.

*Wendy Van Wagner is the owner of local cooking school IN THE KITCHEN, offering classes to both kids and adults. Join the revival of taste, table and tradition!
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Website: www.wendyvanwagner.com | Blog: www.localfoodtastesbetter.wordpress.com*

Tips for Bonding With Your Unborn Child

QUESTION: I am 17 weeks pregnant. I know the vibrations of my voice can be heard within the womb and my partner enjoys babbling to my belly. Is it possible to bond prenatally with your baby? If so, do you have any tips?

ANSWER: The ear is the most developed organ prior to birth. The ear appears in the third week of pregnancy, is functional by the 16th week, and your baby actively responds to sound in utero, usually by the 23rd week of pregnancy. So babble away. Your baby is not only listening, but learning, too. In fact, language lessons actually begin in the womb! *(continued)*

To read the entire article to go: www.makinghealthyfamilies.com/recent7.htm

Gayle Peterson, MSSW, LCSW, PhD is a family therapist specializing in prenatal and family development. Visit her website at www.makinghealthyfamilies.com

ing and dancing accompanied by a live orchestra! Tickets \$20-25. 8 p.m.
Phone: 273-6362

**January 29, February 26, March 26
Fifth Annual Family Fun Nights**
Grass Valley School Readiness Program
Three fun evenings for families of pre-schoolers planning to attend Grass Valley School District. Each family will receive 3 picture books each evening, with a fun activity to do with your child to help get her ready for school. Refreshments, child care and prizes! 6 to 7:30 p.m. Hennessey School, FREE.
Phone: 273-4059

Spanish-English Storytimes

Every Friday

Spanish-English Storytime (TRK)
Storytime for children ages 6 & under at 10:00 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the Truckee Library. Truckee Library: 582-7846

Every Saturday

Spanish-English Storytime (GV)
Storytime for children ages 1-4 years old at 11:00 a.m. every 2nd and 4th Saturday at the Grass Valley Library.
Grass Valley Library: 477-5790

For more library storytimes call your local branch at:

Bear River Library: 271-4147
Grass Valley Library: 477-5790
Nevada City Library: 265-1538
Penn Valley Library: 432-5764

Web: mynevadacounty.com/library



You are reading a printed version of our new on-line newsletter Little Steps.

To see this in full color, and save a few trees, we encourage you to sign up for the on-line version.

Visit www.first5nevco.org

Enter your e-mail address in the box on the home page and you will be e-mailed an edition of Little Steps at the beginning of each month.