

Choose your favourite celebration and have New Year's fun

December 31, 2008

The Harbour City hosts several celebrations tonight to ring in the new year in style.

From families to foodies, the Daily News explores a list of hot spots in Nanaimo to celebrate the birth of 2009.

Whether you want to dance or drink the night away, dine to music or simply relax, there is something for all ages to enjoy on the last night of the year. And if the thought of crowded booths or dance floors does not appeal, moviegoers can celebrate with the silver screen or curl up at home to mark midnight with a ball drop on TV.



FAMILY FUN

New Year's Eve Finale 2008

Bring the kids to enjoy this family-friendly celebration that features skating, swimming, crafts music and activities, such as Guitar Hero contests. Hosted by the city parks, recreation and culture department, one of the biggest Nanaimo New Year's events promises fun for the whole family. Beban Park Auditorium 7 p.m. to 12 a.m. One family costs \$25 or tickets sold individually.

For information, call 250-756-5200

A Special Unity Family New Year's Eve Celebration

Youngsters can watch movies and make crafts at this alcohol-free event held at the Unity Church at L'Ecole Oceane School. The evening includes a world healing meditation and peace service, a cold-plate dinner, dancing and entertainment. At midnight a special prayer will take place. Adult tickets cost \$25 and children \$10. Call 250-716-8912.

DINE TO MUSIC

Basque Restaurant -- Marty Shepard

Trumpeter Marty Shepard will perform several styles of music, such as soft jazz, latin and funky soul. Diners can dance "under the stars" to celebrate the last day of the year. 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. 250-754-7354

Red Martini Grill -- The Lounge Lizards

This versatile duo will ring in the new year as people enjoy a tapa and champagne toast. Reservations are a must and cover is \$20. Call 250-753-5718.

Lighthouse Bistro & Pub

Say goodbye to 2008 with a prime rib buffet, midnight snacks and a DJ.

The New Year's Party on the Water includes champagne and party favours. Adults \$35. Call 250-754-3212.

DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY

Patricia Hotel - Dan Miron Blues Trio

Dance to rhythm, blues and rock infused with the sounds of electric guitar, harmonica, bass and drums.

Soulful song rounds out the evening at the Patricia Hotel along Haliburton Street. 250-754-9016.

Nanaimo Blues Society New Year's Eve Bash

Boogie to the blues with the Bill Johnson Blues Band. The evening at the newest arts venue, Nanaimo Centre Stage, includes a late-night feast and champagne at midnight. Tickets are \$65. For information, call 250-753-2522.

Nanaimo Ballroom Dance Society's New Year's Dance Party

Enjoy ballroom and social dance music at Nanoose Place.

Complimentary champagne at midnight and party favours are on the bill. Dress in formal/semi-formal attire and bring some finger foods to the potluck. Call for \$17.50 tickets at 250-468-2095 or 250-390-2489.

New Year's Eve Women's Dance

The Vancouver Island Lesbians in Progress Society hosts their annual New Year's Eve bash at Wellington Hall.

The celebration includes dancing, snacks and midnight bubbly. DJs Tree and Viva host the night. Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. Call 250-756-0769 or 250-754-2549.

BAR-HOP

The Queen's Hotel -- Fully-Loaded

All-stars from Wunderbread in both bands, Jona Kristensen and Tina Jones, will wail out the disco dance and Mo-town hits at The Queen's Hotel.

Partiers are encouraged to dress up, whether that be black-tie or funky threads from the 1970s. Tickets can include a Chinese buffet and dance (\$40) at 7:30 p.m. or a dance with Paramounts & Wunderbread at 9:30 p.m. for \$20. Late night dance admission to be determined. 250-754-6751.

Old City Station Pub -- Mardi Gras New Year's Eve Party

Partiers can rock in the new year in carnival style at this free event.

The traditional colours of the infamous carnival are purple, gold and green.

The Palace Hotel -- New Year's Bash

The night includes light and smoke machines, live performances, free giveaways and midnight party favours and food.

The show starts at 9:30 p.m. and continues until 4 a.m. Tickets are \$15 at the door. 250-729-0301

OTHER

If drinks or crowded dance floors aren't your thing, why not catch a hockey game, flick or curl up on the couch to watch the ball drop?

The Nanaimo Clippers host the Cowichan Valley Capitals at Frank Crane Arena at 7 p.m. Tickets are available at the door or by phoning 250-751-0593.

At Woodgrove Centre, movie buffs can enjoy Twilight, Madagascar 2, Australia and more. For information on show times, call the Avalon Cinema Centre at 390-5021.

At the Galaxy Theatre at North Nanaimo Town Centre, movies include The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, The Spirit and Marley & Me. Call 250-729-8000 for information.

More than a million people will watch the 2009 ball drop at Times Square in New York. You can tune in on television alongside millions at home or view it online with live video streaming at

<http://newyears.earthcam.com/> or check out www.youtube.com if you miss it.