



DER BOTSCHAFTER

To All United German American Society of Florida Member Club Presidents, Delegates, Members and Friends,

On behalf of the Board I take this opportunity to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Healthy, Happy New Year. Hopefully we will all soon see a return to “normal” times and clubs and organizations can resume pre-COVID-19 programs.

Unfortunately, as of December 31, 2021, UGASF will be losing three of our oldest member clubs: Naples Harmonie (Ralph Brand); New Port Richey (Ernie Seitz); Palm Coast (Dan Homa). As is the case with many of the clubs, young people are not joining and many of the seniors can no longer drive nights or cannot drive at all.

Our By-laws require we schedule a January meeting, for which notifications will be sent out shortly. We urge each club to send at least one representative who can vote on behalf of his/her club. We will be holding elections for Officers as well as discuss the future of UGASF.

Kurt Freiter President





Der Botschafter

Uninformed members a good club do not make

Issue 1/2022

The History of New Year's Traditions

For at least four millennia civilizations around the world have been celebrating the start of each New Year. According to our **Gregorian** calendar of today, most New Year's festivities begin on New Year's Eve, December 31, and continue into New Year's Day, January 1. Common traditions include parties, special New Year's foods, resolutions for the New Year and watching fireworks displays.

The earliest recorded festivities date back some 4,000 years to the ancient **Babylonians of Mesopotamia**. The first new moon following the vernal equinox—the day in late March with an equal amount of sunlight and darkness—heralded the start of a New Year.

The occasion was marked with a massive religious festival called **Akitu**, a derivative from the Sumerian word for barley, which was cut in the spring.

Different daily rituals were held for eleven days. In addition to the New Year, **Atiku** celebrated the mythical victory of the Babylonian sky god, **Marduk**, over the evil sea goddess, **Tiamat**, and this served an important political purpose: It was during this time that a new king was crowned or that the divine mandate of the current king was symbolically renewed.

The **Roman** New Year also originally corresponded with the vernal equinox. In order to realign the **Roman calendar** with the sun, Julius Caesar had to add 90 extra days to the year 46 B.C. at which time he introduced his new **Julian** calendar.

The early **Roman calendar** consisted of ten months and 304 days. Each New Year began at the vernal equinox, as created in the eighth century by **Romulu**, the founder of Rome. A later king, **Numa Pompilius**, added the months of Januarius and Februarius.

Over the centuries, the calendar fell

out of sync with the sun, and in 46 B.C. the emperor **Julius Caesar** decided to solve the problem by consulting with the most prominent astronomers and mathematicians of his time. He introduced the **Julian calendar**, a close resemblance of the modern **Gregorian** calendar, mostly used world-wide today.

As part of his reform, Caesar instituted January 1 as the first day of the year, partly to honor the month's namesake, **Janus**. **Janus** was the Roman god of beginnings, whose two faces permit him to look back into the past and forward into the future. Romans celebrated by offering sacrifices to **Janus**, exchanging gifts, decorating their homes with laurel branches and attending raucous parties.

Julius Caesar accepted January 1st as the date for the New Year in 46 B.C. and in 1752 England and its American colonies officially adopted this date for the beginning of the New Year.

In medieval Europe, Christian leaders temporarily replaced January 1 as the first of the year with days carrying more religious significance, such as December 25, the anniversary of Jesus' birth, and March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation. In 1582 Pope Gregory XIII re-established

January 1 as New Year's Day.

Throughout antiquity, civilizations around the world developed increasingly sophisticated calendars, typically pinning the first day of the year to an agricultural or astronomical event.

In Ancient **Egypt**, the culture was closely tied to the Nile River, and their New Year corresponded with its annual flood. This event coincided with the rising of the star **Sirius**, the brightest star in the night sky which first became visible after a 70-day absence. This phenomenon typically occurred in mid-July just before the flooding of the Nile River, which ensured that farmlands remained fertile for the coming year.

This festival was known as **Wepet Renpet**, which means *opening of the year*, a time of rebirth and rejuvenation.

One of the oldest traditions still celebrated today is the **Chinese New Year**, which is believed to have originated over 3,000 years ago during the **Shang Dynasty**. The holiday began as a way of celebrating the new beginnings of the

spring planting season, but it later became entangled with myth and legend. According to one popular tale, there was once a bloodthirsty creature called **Nian**—now the Chinese word for year—that preyed on villages every New Year. In order to frighten the hungry beast, the villagers took to decorating their homes with red trimmings, burning bamboo and making loud noises. The ruse worked, and the bright colors and lights associated with scaring off **Nian** eventually became integrated into the celebration.

Chinese New Year festivities traditionally last 15 days and tend to center on the home and the family. People clean their houses to rid them of bad luck, and some repay old debts as a way of settling the previous year's affairs. They also decorate their doors with paper scrolls and gather with relatives for a feast.



Following the invention of gunpowder in the tenth century, the Chinese were the first to ring in the New Year with fireworks. Since the Chinese New Year is still based on a lunar calendar that dates back to the second millennium B.C., the holiday typically falls in late January or early February on the second new moon after the winter solstice. Each year is associated with one of 12 zodiacal animals: the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog and pig.

Today in many parts of the world, traditional New Year's dishes feature legumes, which are thought to resemble coins. Pigs represent progress and prosperity and are therefore included on the New Year's Eve tables in Cuba, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Portugal and other countries.

Ring-shaped cakes and pastries, a sign that the year has come full circle, round out the feast in the Netherlands, Mexico, Greece and elsewhere. In Sweden and Norway, rice pudding with an almond hidden inside is served on New Year's Eve. Whoever finds the nut can expect 12 months of good fortune.

UGASF CLUB JANUARY EVENTS IN FLORIDA

CAPE CORAL...Jan 22 **Maskenball**

Jan 30 – Schlachtfest

Friday nights: member and guest
“gemütlicher” Abend

CENTRAL FLORIDA...Jan 22

Narrensitzung-Alpine Duo Solo

Alpanrose Schuhplattler...No report

HOLLYWOOD... No report

Marion County...No event

Miami & Auerhahn...No report

PALM BEACHES...Jan 16 **Beerfest**

Picnic in giant pavilion – German and
American fare plus all you can drink-
Alpine Express

Jan 23 – **Frühschoppen** – all menu
items à la carte.



PINELLAS COUNTY... No report

SARASOTA...Jan 22 **Western Dance**

Peter and Edith Mueller; VFW Hall 5-9

SPRING HILL...No report

SUN CITY CENTER...No event

PINELLAS COUNTY... No report

SARASOTA...Jan 22 **Western Dance**

Peter and Edith Mueller; VFW Hall 5-9

SPRING HILL...Jan 14 – Inaugural Ball with
Manni Daum

SUN CITY CENTER...No event

TAMPA CULTURAL CENTER...Jan 22 4:30

Schweinshaxen Dinner @ Jägerstüble

Leepa Rattner Museum – date/info tba



The Villages...Jan 20 Dinner Dance with
Matthias Wagner

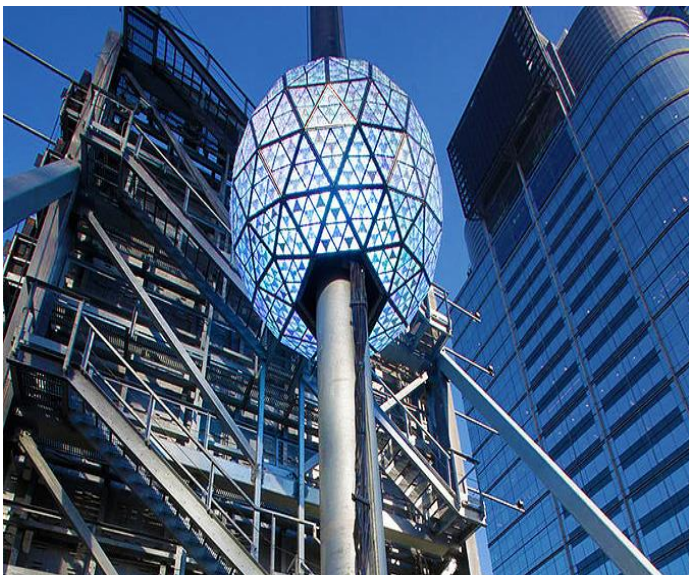
TREASURE COAST...Jan 22 – **Schlachtfest**
Alpine Express/Bill page

VENICE...Jan 15 **Nifty Fifties** with Rick
Krieger-- So. Venice Yacht Club 6 p.m.

WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA...No event

Other customs that are common worldwide include watching fireworks and singing songs to welcome the New Year. The ever-popular *Auld Lang Syne* is sung in many English-speaking countries. Resolutions and promises are made in order to start the year off on the right foot. **The most popular resolution in the United States is a promise to lose weight!!!**

In the United States, the most iconic New Year's tradition is the dropping of a giant ball in **New York City's Times Square** at the stroke of midnight. Millions of people around the world watch the event, which has taken place almost annually since 1907. Over time, the ball itself has ballooned from a 700-pound iron-and-wood orb to a brightly patterned sphere 12 feet in diameter and weighing nearly 12,000 pounds.



Our website has been expanded, ...please remind your members to check it out at UAGSFlorida.org

Do you have a new suggestion you would like to pass along? Please feel free to contact any one of our Board Members..

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