THE RICHMOND NEWS

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RICHMOND

City aims to ward off bi-weekly confusion

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KUNG HEI FAT CHOY

New year monkey business

Do you consider yourself to be lively, flexbible, quick-witted and versatile? If so, you may just be born in the year of the monkey, which is being celebrated on the Chinese calendar this year.

The monkey is the ninth in the 12-year cycle of Chinese zodiac. The years of the monkey include 1920, 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004 and 2016.

Those born under that sign are said to also have a gentleness and honesty which brings them an everlasting love of life.

And although they have enviable skills, they still have several shortcomings, such as an impetuous temper and a tendency to look down upon others.

"When I was a kid, my mom used to say me that when I was being naughty I was a monkey," said Joey Kwan, spokeswoman for Aberdeen Centre, site of the largest Chinese New Year celebrations in Metro Vancouver.

This year, since the countdown to new year is on a Sunday (Feb. 7) and it falls before the Family Day holiday on Feb. 8, Kwan said the event may draw a shade more than the 5,000 or so that cram into the main atrium area of the mall to celebrate and watch the seconds tick down to the new year on a big clock.

If you happen to be born in the year of the monkey, you are certainly in good company as notable people sharing your birth year include: inventor Leonardo da Vinci, writer Charles Dickens and romantic poet George Gordon Byron.

Entertainers Celine Dion, Tom Hanks, Will Smith and Diana Ross are also monkeys. So are Canucks' stars Daniel and Henrik Sedin.



Aberdeen Centre's Joey Kwan with a stuffed monkey, which is the animal for the upcoming Chinese New Year celebrations. *Photo by Philip Raphael/Richmond News*

Kwan said visitors to Aberdeen Centre in the days leading up to Chinese New Year are going bananas — literally.

To mark the celebrations, the mall is giving away inflatable bananas each day until Feb. 8; At a random time during the day, mall staff will be handing out a limited number of the two-and-a-half foot long Best of Luck Bananas.

"People are lined up for them," Kwan said. "And it's not just the children. We're getting plenty of seniors wanting them, too."

Also getting into the new year spirit are a number of local public schools, which have scheduled visits to the mall where Kwan leads them on a tour to explain the various cultural aspects to the celebrations.