

# Join Us On New Year's Eve

by Lynne Belluscio

LeRoy House will be open at 7 pm on New Year's Eve. Anyone can stop by and have a cup of warm cider, or a cup of coffee. We'll have the fireplace lit in the basement and you can try your hand at skittles or a game of euchre. The upstairs parlors will be set up for skittles and we'll see who can get the highest score. The crinkinole board will be set up and many of the other games. There is plenty of parking in the parking lot and we will light the Jell-O Brick Road with luminaries to light the way. And you'll have a front row seat to join the crowd down by the creek to see the fireworks at 9 pm.

This is a very traditional way to

celebrate the New Year and I am sure the LeRoy family would be glad that we have decided to have this open house. In the 1820s and 1830s when Jacob and Charlotte LeRoy lived in the house, New Years was the big holiday, not Christmas. It was the custom for men to go out on New Year's Day and visit all the neighbors while their wives stayed at home to welcome everyone, with a table filled with cookies and cakes. We have no idea whether Charlotte and Jacob entertained on New Years, however, in Geneseo, Mrs. Wadsworth mentioned that she stayed at home, and no one showed up, much to her chagrin.

There were many other Dutch

traditions at New Years. Mrs. LeRoy would have made sure her cook prepared honey cake to guarantee a prosperous new year. And there would be plenty of the delicious Oliebollen, filled with raisins and rolled in sugar. Both of these recipes were included in her little hand-written recipe book. Oliebollen is delicious and reminds me of a doughnut which is deep fried in oil. Oliebollen can be traced to the 1600s and is included in the 1683 edition of "The Sensible Cook." Oliebollen is also called oliekoeken. I have used several different recipes. The following recipe is from Peter Rose's book about Dutch holiday cooking "Delicious December."

½ cup warm water  
 3 pkg. active dry yeast  
 pinch plus 1/3 cup granulated sugar  
 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter  
 1 ¾ cups raisins (I like using golden raisins)  
 4 cups all purpose flour  
 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon  
 ½ teaspoon ground cloves  
 ½ teaspoon ground ginger  
 ¼ teaspoon finely textured salt  
 1 ½ cups whole milk  
 1 cup whole unblanched almonds  
 3 medium Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and cut into small slivers  
 oil, for frying  
 confectioners' sugar or granulated sugar, optional

Pour warm water into a small bowl and sprinkle with yeast and sugar. Let stand for a minute, then stir to dissolve yeast. Set aside in a warm place.

Melt butter on the stove or in the microwave, and let cool. Place raisins in a saucepan, cover with water and boil for 1 minute. Remove from heat, cool for 5 minutes then drain. Pat dry with paper towels and mix with 1 tablespoon of flour.

Place remaining flour in a large bowl, stir in cinnamon, cloves, ginger and salt. Make a well in the middle and pour in yeast mixture. Stirring from the middle, slowly add melted butter and milk. Continue to stir until flour is completely incorporated and a very stiff batter forms. Thoroughly mix in raisins, almonds and apples. (I have never made oliebollen with fresh apples.)

Cover bowl and allow batter to rise for about an hour or until doubled, then stir down. Heat about 4 inches oil to 350 degrees F in a large pot or use a deep fryer. Using a large spoon, gather batter about 2 inches in diameter and carefully, hold the spoon near the hot oil and push the batter off the spoon with another spoon. Fry on each side about five minutes or until golden brown. Check for doneness by cutting into one. Drain on paper towels. Dust or roll them in confectioners or granulated sugar. Yield: about 36.

