

MAYBE  
WE'VE  
GOT IT  
WRONG

The Hegira calendar is not the only thing to be at variance with millennium fever. According to Foulsham's Original Moores Almanac January 2000 is the gateway to the new millennium not its beginning. The publishers maintain that the third millennium actually begins on 1st January 2001. Another group of protesters at millennium excess claim that because four years were lost when dating the calendar between BC and AD, the millennium was actually 1996.

Nevertheless most of us will actually celebrate millennium eve at the same time in December 1999. Even so, that still leaves a truck load of options, so what will you actually be doing.

Ads in the Sunday Times, a couple of months ago invited responders to rent from a selection of historical houses and classic cottages for the period, (one wonders where the usual occupants will be!) Telephone 0044 171 937 9349 if you want to check out what's left. One place you won't get in however is the Chesapeake resort, (yes that place) accommodation there has been booked solid for months apparently. (Aren't some people strange?)

Meanwhile, the Union-Castle Mail Steamship Company Ltd. proposes that you extend your celebration period to a dream voyage of 66 nights from Southampton to Cape Town for the millennium celebrations. If you don't have 66 days to spare, shorter sections were still available at the time of writing. (Starting from £2195 per head.)

To the east, Singapore has actually proposed an 18-month program of millennium events from arts, culture, music, sports, parties and exhibitions etc., and if you visit the Sungei Buloh Nature Park at anytime in December 1999 you actually get to take away a special millennium souvenir. (They don't actually say what it will be though.) Already on their way to Antarctica are two teams from Singapore aiming to be the first people to see the millennium sun. One group is walking 1100 km to the South Pole; the other is climbing the Vinson Massif at 4897m above sea level. Both teams aim to be in position for sunrise on the 1st Jan.

At the other end of the globe, the Svalbard Polar Hotel offers a banquet and fireworks at the worlds northern most hotel. Any spare time you might have can be spent ice-caving it seems.

Viking celebrations apparently began on October 9th; the 1000 year anniversary of Leif Ericson's first documented foot to step in to North America. 12 months of celebrations have been planned, culminating in a banquet and the opening of the Leif Ericson Hall of Fame in Philadelphia sometime next year.

Millennium celebrations in Nevada are scheduled to

run from Nevada Day on October 30th right up to January 15th. The big noise in Las Vegas will apparently be Barbara Streisand, singing at the MGM Grand Hotel on the evening of the 31st December, (tickets here cost up to \$2500 per head) and Bette Midler at the Mandalay Bay where tickets were on sale at a bargain price of only \$500 each. If you're going to be there, why not take advantage of the Millennium Sleepover? Apparently for only \$250 each you can leave your kids while you party. Drop them off at 6pm on the evening of the 31st and pick them up at 9am next day says the Ad.

For a completely different view of events why not travel to any of the 11 millennium-celebration-sponsoring towns in Southland, New Zealand. Located only minutes away from the International Dateline, people here will be among the first on earth to see the dawning of the new day and if you actually get to a place called Invercargill you could actually see the sun rise accompanied by Henry Tuctara. Henry is apparently a lizard and reckoned to be the "last living animal of the dinosaur era".

Wherever you decide to go there's bound to be a party. Best party of the year, according to the Millennium Society will be a black tie charity bash, kicking off at 6pm GMT in the shadow of the pyramids. Meanwhile in Cape Town's Elgin Valley a 72 hour long Psychedelic Party will be attracting followers of Trance music. (Can anyone enlighten me as to what this might be?)

Back at home in the UK things will be just as wild! Essex County Council website promises the Clavering Millennium Celebration Weekend on the 24th and 25th June 2000 including Punch & Judy, Bungee running and "the reptile experience". Why they've chosen this date is not made clear but visitors to the website are asked to note that although the events will be free to village residents, a charge may be levied on others!

Newspapers and the Internet have been full of adverts for everything you might possibly need to make your own party go with a swing. Champagne glasses to T-shirts emblazoned with messages ranging from downright naff to virtually unprintable and just in case your local power grid goes down you can buy "handy-dandy candles" to light your way through the turn of the millennium. One of the extra tacky items is a candle in a champagne glass which carries a disclaimer from the supplier regarding drinking from the glass whilst the candle is lit!

If none of the above actually fits the bill, don't despair. Research has shown that because of the lack of babysitters available for that special time, a whole bunch of us will simply stay at home. Whatever you do... enjoy. We'll be back for the next issue...see you in the year 2000.