Written by Mike Schulz
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Strange as it may seem, there are some people who would love to ring in the new year with a festive party who can't quite manage to stay awake until midnight. But enough about me. If you'd like to celebrate the arrival of 2009 with your kids, yet are concerned about them (or perhaps *you*) nodding off before the ball drops, Bettendorf will be offering a sensible December 31 alternative - the shouting of "Happy New Year!" at 12 *p.* m. - at two of the city's family venues.

Located at 3800 Tanglefoot Lane, the Scott County Family YMCA invites kids to take part in the New Year's at Noon festivities, which begin at 10:30 a.m. and conclude at 12:30 p.m. With free party favors for the first 100 children to arrive, the celebration's events will include crafts, games, a balloon artist, a jump house, and a buffet loaded with seasonal treats, plus entry to the area's only indoor aquatic center, complete with two-story water slide. Admission is free for YMCA members and $3 each for members of the community, and the noontime ringing in of the new year will be highlighted by the multi-hued balloon drop off the Y's second floor.

Meanwhile, Bettendorf's Family Museum (located at 2900 Learning Campus Drive) will offer a family-friendly fiesta of its own with the venue's Noon Year's Eve celebration, taking place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Like the YMCA event, Noon Year's Eve will feature a countdown to 12 o'clock, a toast to 2009 with either grape-juice bubbly or milk, and a rousing chorus of "Happy New Year!", and among the scheduled activities are arts-and-crafts projects in which kids can make their own party hats, noisemakers, and even confetti. (Kids, be sure to make a little extra confetti to take home with you. Your parents will *love* that.) Admission to the party is free with regular museum admission and, of course, includes entrance to such exhibits as "Amazing Acres," "Rhythm Alley," and the holiday-themed "Walk Down Main Street," on display through New Year's Day.

For more information on this year's New Year's at Noon at the Bettendorf Family YMCA, call (563) 359-9622 or visit ScottCountyFamilyY.org . For details on the Family Museum's Noon Year's Eve party, call (563) 344-4108 or visit FamilyMuseum.org

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