

Local Muslims celebrate end of Ramadan

Dr. Najeeb Rehman of Horseheads, a cardiologist, is a Muslim and a member of the Islamic Association of the Finger Lakes in Big Flats. He and other area Muslims marked the celebration of Eid al-Fitr—

FIRST PERSON



**NAJEEB
REHMAN**

breaking the fast at the end of Ramadan—Sunday night at the Horseheads Holiday Inn.

Festivals are an instinctive part of human nature. All cultures and religions celebrate feasts and festivals. It is a time for collective rejoicing. Some festivals are cultural in origin and some have more sacred roots in the religion.

In Islam, there are two major festivals celebrated. These are the Feast of Ramadan (Eid al-Fitr) and the Feast of Sacrifice (Eid al-Adha). The Eid is an Arabic word which refers



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Uzma Saeed of Horseheads, with children (from left) Zaineb, 3, left, Bilal, 9 months, Madiha, 5, and Ali, 5, (not pictured) were among those attending Sunday night's Eid al-Fitr celebration at the Horseheads Holiday Inn.

to a recurring happiness, festivity and celebration. Al-Fitr literally means breaking of the fast. The Eid al-Fitr is celebrated by Muslims after fasting the month of Ramadan, as a matter of thanks and gratitude to Almighty Allah (God).

Sighting of the new moon marks the end of Ramadan.

Eid al-Fitr takes place on the first day of Shawwal, the 10th month of the lunar calendar. Since the Islamic calendar is a lunar one, it falls short about 10 days to the Gregorian calendar. This makes the Eid festivals move up about 10 days every year. Therefore, these festivals happen to come in all

seasons during our lifetimes. No one season is particularly associated with any of these celebrations.

This year, based on available astronomical data, the Eid al-Fitr holiday in North America was Sunday.

Eid al-Fitr is a day of joy and thanksgiving. It is a day of peace and sharing. On this day, Muslims show their joy for the health, strength and opportunities of life, which Allah has granted them to fulfill their obligations of fasting and other good deeds during the month of Ramadan.

Those who have faithfully observed the duties of Ramadan feel victorious on this Eid day. It is considered unholy to fast on this day. This is a great time of remembrance. The deceased are remembered by offering prayers for their souls. The needy and the grieved are shown sympathy and consolation. The sick and infirm are paid cheerful visits and good wishes.

It is also a day of forgiveness. It is the time to forget