

Bretzelsonndeg, or Pretzel Sunday, will be the focus of the next meeting of the Luxembourg Heritage Society of Northwest Iowa. The gathering, which will take place at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, March 12 in the meeting room of the Remsen Public library, will prepare for the celebration of Pretzel Sunday on March 27.

Bretzelsonndeg is a Luxembourgisch custom dating back to the 18th century. During Buergbrennen, or the traditional bonfire welcoming spring that takes place on the first Sunday of Lent, a woman would shout out the name of a man who had taken her eye. If the young man were interested, on Bretzelsonndeg or the fourth Sunday of Lent, he would show his mutual interest by giving the woman a pretzel.

The courtship cycle, however, still was not complete. The woman then had a final chance to show her feelings. On Easter Sunday, she gave another hint of her interest. If she still wanted to get to know him, she would present an egg to her young man. If she had decided she was no longer interested, she would give him “de Kuerf kreien,” or an empty basket. Today, “de Kuerf kreien,” to be given the basket, is slang for being dumped by a girlfriend.

Elaborate pretzels frosted with fondant and sprinkled with almonds are still sold in shops in Luxembourg before Bretzelsonndeg.

To commemorate this Luxembourgisch tradition, the Luxembourg Heritage Society will hand out bags of pretzels after Sunday masses on March 27 in the Pilgrim cluster (Alton, Granville, and Hospers) and at Remsen St. Mary’s church and Marcus Holy Name church.

Bagging the pretzels will take the place of the program at the March 12 meeting.

Other items on the agenda will include discussion of a proposed bus trip to eastern Iowa, updating bylaws, and replacement of retiring Board members .

Anyone interested in the country of Luxembourg or its traditions is welcome at the meeting.