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12/23: Festivus for the Restivus at Clarendon Hotel

by **Brianna Mattox** - Dec. 22, 2009 11:02 AM
The Arizona Republic

["Seinfeld"](#) fan?

Got some grievances to air?

Tired of the commercialization of holidays?

We've got the party for you.

The Clarendon Hotel + Suites is hosting a Festivus party Wednesday, inspired by the "Seinfeld" episode in 1997 that introduced the fictional holiday.

Frank Costanza, George's father, refused to conform to the heightened commercialism and consumerism that had taken over the December holiday season, so he created Festivus.

Shortly thereafter, fans of the show began to engage in Festivus parties, which feature traditional Festivus practices as seen on the show, including the "Airing of Grievances," which occurs when each person tells everyone else all the ways they have been disappointed by him or her over the past year.

After this, the "Feats of Strength" are performed, which involve [wrestling](#) the head of the household to the floor, with the holiday ending only if the head of the household is actually pinned down.

No Festivus is complete without the "Festivus Pole," an aluminum pole that is to be erected as a sign of disregard to the commercialization of Christmas trees - and because Costanza "finds tinsel distracting."

Some wonder whether Festivus might be considered an actual holiday.

Media critic Elayne Rapping, professor of American Studies at the University at Buffalo in [New York](#), said the celebration of Festivus reflects a lot of the issues that people realistically endure over holiday family gatherings, just in the satirical sense.

"Festivus resonates with younger generations, who get a kick out of it," Rapping said. "I don't think it's a holiday so much as it is a day when people get together to go through a set of rituals. It's become a cultural event that will spiral and add more aspects to it."

Since Festivus' inception, the event has grown into other avenues such as [film festivals](#), annual school traditions, books and even Web sites that sell Festivus poles and other themed products.

Allen Salkin, a "New York Times" reporter and author of the book "Festivus: The Holiday for the Rest of Us," views the holiday as a "perfect nothing" in which people can celebrate by throwing parties and wishing a "Happy Festivus" to others with offending anybody.

"Those little manifestations of Festivus that you see like that are what tells you that it has become completely sewn into the fabric of the way Americans celebrates the December holidays," he said.

"Has there ever been a Christmas where the family didn't fight or the kids didn't wrestle? That's Festivus."

Susan Mackey-Kallis, an associate professor of media, culture and film at [Pennsylvania's](#) Villanova University, believes calling Festivus a real holiday is over-analyzing what it actually is.

"The word 'real' is problematic," Mackey-Kallis said. "We make meaning, we don't find meaning in the world. Any ritual that is meaningful to the participants is symbolic, and calling it a real holiday is a problematic notion."

Whether it's a real holiday or not, Salkin believes the immense popularity of the idea of Festivus will be celebrated for years to come.

"Even as the cultural impact of 'Seinfeld' has diminished in the 12 years that it has been off the air, Festivus is actually growing year by year," he said.