

A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: TAME THE TERRIBLE TEMPER

January 6, 1998

Here we are embarking on a new year and I am as full of resolve as a weasel in a hen house. I feel the same every year as we mark another milestone. It's as though it's the first opportunity I have had all year to rectify my faults.

We have been inured over the years by the constant media attention that it's the thing to do. The bit three current popular resolutions in vogue are to lose weight, quit smoking, and save money. Various experts in those fields are quick to point out how to do all three and the positive benefits to be derived. Not altogether bad ideas.

I see my own faults as being minor for the most part, but constantly plaguing my life. They in turn exacerbate and feed my worst character flaw, which is my temper. I readily admit it's a fault every bit as unsettled as any of the aforementioned, so today I started to sort out the small irritants that fuel my major sin.

One is misplacing my truck keys. I seldom have a problem leaving them in the vehicle. It's when I return that the fun begins. Today was a classic example after entering the vehicle in the bank parking lot. I strap myself in and start fumbling through two jackets, two vests and two front trouser pockets in vain attempt to locate them. The seat belt and other objects in the pockets hinder the whole process. After the second go-around I am really hot and leap from the truck totally unencumbered and finally locate them.

It's not much better on the occasions when I lock the vehicle. I usually wind up rotating through all six pockets at least once before scoring. After at least two to four stops on a typical trip to town, you can imagine my state of mind as I head back south on the Thendara Strip.

The old check book is another of my bugaboos. I can never remember where I left it. My better half opened her own account long ago to escape my vain attempts to blame her for its whereabouts.

Garbage day is another of my downfalls. I will even leave a note on the kitchen counter the night before and still blow it. It's the same deal as leaving my vehicle with the lights on. The alarm blares away unnoticed as I walk away oblivious to its implications.

Warnings such as "Easy Assembly" and Read All Instructions Before Proceeding" are like waving a red flag at a bull to people like myself. We firmly believe they are an insult to our intelligence. Why would anyone possibly need instructions to assembly anything as simple as that? Some people even save the carton in case the item has to be returned. Not this cat. It, along with the directions and even a few of the parts hidden in the packing are disposed of as soon as possible.

One would reasonably conclude from perusing this missive that mine is a very simple problem to correct. In its proper perspective I may make some headway. After 70 years it would be about time.

To make a long story short, my old Kentucky born army first sergeant had the right idea: "Don't go through life like the crawdad. Look ahead and see where you're going, not behind where you've been".