

**NEW YEARS MEANS IT'S TIME TO BE A BETTER PERSON
AGAIN
01/4/00**

Time flies when you're having fun. I must have enjoyed this past year immensely based on that premise. It seems like yesterday when I wrote a column on New Year's resolutions and here I am writing another on the same subject.

I recall my number one goal last year was to tame my terrible temper. No one will be surprised to learn I did not arrive at that end. There are some who will say my tantrums are even worse. Believe it or not, at least in my own heart I made a conscious effort to try. Although it was not always obvious, most of my anger was directed at myself. "You damn old fool," is an expression I find myself using more and more.

As I grow older I find it particularly true that it's important to focus on things that will give you a better outlook on life. An old friend once said, "There is no use worrying about something you cannot do anything about." How valid that is, especially for older people.

So here it is that time of year when we all should be thinking of ways to improve our anticipation of things to come. Once again, I find myself full of resolve, determined to maintain that spirit throughout the next 12 months. I hope all of you reading this will do the same.

In my case the terrible temper remains the number one issue. I have thought of some other things I feel are equally important in my circumstances.

I plan to be more cognizant of my driving habits, for one thing. No more daydreaming or looking for turkeys and admiring timber stands when I should be looking at the road. This will extend to more tolerance for others who do not display proper rules of the road or driving etiquette. Also, I will try to refrain from voicing my most vivid descriptions of the above persons in front of my grandchildren.

There is, of course, no end to the things I need to improve on, but the areas above I know I am particularly remiss in.

I have learned since retirement the things that have improved my philosophy on life. I keep busy. Writing this column is one such example. I read more and watch less television than I did in the past. Much of my time is devoted to an active forestry

consulting business. It's challenging and provides a welcome supplement to my otherwise fixed income. I like to think that a lifetime of experience in that field is a useful benefit to others.

Woodworking is a new hobby I enjoy. A universal woodworking machine called a Shopsmith cost an arm and a leg, but has been worth every cent I paid for it in peace of mind. Cooking also has claimed a new niche in my time.

I spend as much time as possible with the grandchildren and take an interest in the things they care about or have an aptitude for. In short, I try to make up for all I missed with their parents while they were growing up.

There are two other things I need to work into my agenda, time permitting. One is to write more letters and to keep more in touch with the people I shared much of my past with.

Last but not least, is to read the instructions on how to operate or install any new items I acquire in the future. I waste a great deal of time and effort undoing blunders I commit simply because I am too impatient to take the time to read the instructions first.

To make a long story short, this would go a long way to help me overcome my number one issue for the New Year.