

# Gadgets help keep resolutions on track



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Community columnist

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So, how are your new year's resolutions going?

I'm usually not big on resolutions, but I decided to make not one but TWO this year, based on last year's success.

The first: I am going to try to write a least one column per month for the *Chippewa Herald*. Last year, I got out of the habit, and had written only ONE column from January through September.

Then it happened.

As my wife and I were sitting down in the bleachers at a Chi-Hi football game, a man behind us greeted us with, "Hey, are you a Herald columnist?"

I couldn't believe it! This was the SECOND TIME in nine years I had been recognized by someone in the general public for my column. (The first time was at Rooney Printing after I had written about the Bush tax cuts in 2003.)

It must be a sign that I should continue.

I even remember the names of that guy and his wife: Dave and Sandy. Not only did they identify me; they also said they enjoy reading what I write. I asked them what type of column they like best, since I tend to wander all over the place, and they said their favorite topic was my kids and family.

So this column is about

... er, something else, I guess. Oh well, maybe next time, Dave and Sandy.

I find that it really doesn't take me very long to write a column if I just pretend I'm sending out an email or updating my Facebook status.

Maybe I can even write about things that happened way back last summer, when I was too busy to write. After all, I enjoy reading Steve Henry's musings from his childhood, so I figure if he can write about things that happened a half-century ago, I could get away with a half-year gap, right? With those untold stories still in the queue, there's no excuse to go more than a month between columns this year.

My second resolution for 2012 is to eat less junk food. I don't have any specific criteria yet, but this one is based on a successful resolution from last year.

In 2011, I managed to exercise (defined as getting into my target heart range for at least 30 minutes) every single day. Yes, I am 365 for 365! I averaged 53 minutes per day. Recording the stats is key to motivation, and I can do so thanks to my heart monitor and my new GPS watch.

I had become relatively lethargic through most of my 40s. I have lots of excuses, not the least of which was starting the

decade off with five children under the age of 10. (There – I *did* mention the kids.)

But I was in for a shock when I went in for a physical exam two years ago, just before my 50th birthday, in preparation for our 65-mile high-altitude backpack trip to Philmont in New Mexico.

I was diagnosed with borderline high blood pressure. This was a surprise to me, as my dad is well into his 70s and still in great health. So I thought I was immune.

But that diagnosis, in addition to wanting to get my aging body in shape to keep up with those teenage Boy Scouts at Philmont, spurred me to start keeping track of daily exercise.

I got a score of 95 percent in 2010, getting in a workout on 348 of 365 days. I knew I could do better, so in 2011, I decided to set my sights on batting 1,000.

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I also logged 68 sessions of the Y's "Strength Training" class led by Jill "Killer" Kirchen. I don't enjoy that as much as bik-

ing or skiing or racquet sports, but I have to admit it is growing on me.

And with several good friends in the class, along with my lovely wife Beth, it's not something I miss often unless I'm out of town or a beautiful fall day is beckoning my bike.

I went in for another physical a few weeks ago, and all my numbers look much better. The exercise is paying off in a big way.

However, while I lost about 10 pounds in 2010 (barely making it into the "recommended" range for Philmont), my weight has been constant throughout all of 2011. That can mean only one thing: I must finally admit that I eat too much. Or at least too much of the wrong things.

I checked the BMI (body mass index) chart, and my current weight is fine – if I were 5-foot-11. Apparently, I'm three inches shorter than my "ideal height."

But being stuck at 5-8, I'd have to drop 15 pounds to get to my "normal" weight of 164. (That's just a soft target, mind you, not an official New Year's resolution.)

I am not aiming for a modeling career, but I do have an ulterior motive: Our troop is planning to return to Philmont in 2014. And I'll have a whole new crop of teenagers to keep up with in the rugged back-country.

Do they make a computer watch that keeps track of what you eat?

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