

## New Year's Resolutions

*By Hap Hansen*

It's easy to make New Year's Resolutions when one is relaxed on the sofa watching the endless New Year's Day football games on television. It's far more difficult to maintain those resolutions and wisdom during the cold, windy January. Those are the days when some folks want to have a cigarette, when one really wants an extra doughnut over morning coffee and when one really doesn't want to get out of a warm bed and do fifty pushups. Is that when we reach the age of wisdom? But that's human nature at its absolute finest. It's easy to talk about reforming our behavior to provide for healthier minds, bodies and souls. But it's far more difficult to continue that healthy reformation over a long period of time. Some of us never reach the age of wisdom. Most of all, it's easier to change our behavior and attitude if only something positive happens.

If. It's a mighty big two-letter word. If. It's also a simple two-letter word with connotations of the hopes and dreams we all have. If. It's a word that really means we'll change when all the if's happen. If I have less stress at work, I'll quit smoking. If they would only invent non-fat doughnuts, I'd lose weight, if I ever reach the age of wisdom.

And now, the best of all. If I win the lottery, I'll help the poor, give money to my church, provide scholarships for needy kids and make sure my family will never want for anything again. Never mind that the odds of winning the big-time lottery are about the same as being struck by lightning seven times! It's almost as if we think we will increase our chances of winning because of all the good and wonderful things we'll do if only we win.

Not yet, the age of wisdom. Deep down, we all know that lotteries and New Year's resolutions, for that matter, do not pay off for wishes and dreams. Neither do they pay off for those who are nicer people, who are more deserving or who are broke and desperately need the money. Forget the lottery. Play it for fun and for the fact that about half the money is used by our State for the very same good deeds that you would help accomplish if you won. This year, let your resolutions read that you will be kinder to all your family, friends, neighbors and associates, that you will try to make a difference in your community and that you will be generous to those less fortunate. Yes, you can reach the age of wisdom. Happy New Year!