

# THE RIVERFRONT SCOOP

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## THE RIVER FRONT MASTER

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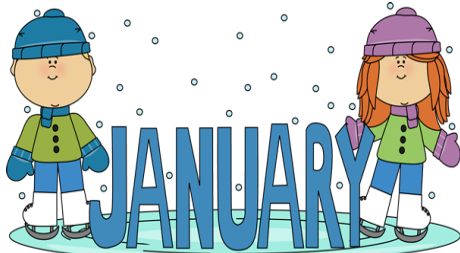
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**Monday - Friday** ....9:00 am - 5:00 pm



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## Resolutions are an Ancient Tradition

If you are joining millions of Americans in making New Year's resolutions, you are continuing an ancient tradition. begun 4,000 years ago in Babylon. Around 2000 BCE, the Babylonian new year (called Akitu) was celebrated in mid-March, coinciding with the barley harvest and the spring equinox. During the 12-day festival, people made promises to the gods—mostly practical ones like paying off debts, returning borrowed farm tools, or being better citizens. If they kept these promises, the gods would supposedly favor them in the coming year.



The Babylonians also crowned a new king or symbolically reaffirmed loyalty to the reigning king, so resolutions often included pledges of loyalty. The practice evolved after that. Ancient Romans adopted it when Julius Caesar moved the new year to January 1 in 46 BCE (to honor Janus, the two-faced god who looks backward into the past and suggested reflecting on the past year and planning improvements.

Early Christians initially rejected the custom as “pagan,” but by the Middle Ages many used New Year’s as a time for spiritual reflection. “Watch Night” services, still held in some churches, today trace back to this. But, the actual phrase “New Year’s resolutions” first appeared in print in a Boston newspaper in 1813.

About 40–50 percent of American adults say they make New Year’s resolutions each year, according to YouGov. Only 8–12 percent of people report successfully keeping their resolutions for the entire year.

In keeping with that reality, various days have been called "Quitters Day" -- with dates ranging from January 12 to 19, although some surveys suggest that people keep their resolutions until mid-February.

About 75 percent make it the first week, and 46 percent make it past six months, according to University of Scranton research).

# Writing a legacy letter: Send love forward

Who knows what the world will be like 50 or 100 years from now. Will robots do everything for us? Will work be optional? Whatever the future holds, human life will still have certain trials and triumphs. There will still be broken hearts. Still be bad decisions. There will still be good decisions and sudden successes. Struggles, humor, love.

We'll still ask ourselves what is important in life. After all your years of living, do you have an answer to that question? New Year's is a great time to write a legacy letter to your children or grandchildren, spouse, mentors, close friends, future generations. Write it, keep it where it will be found, and add to it next year.

Kathleen M. Rehl, writing for Sixty and Me, says the first step is to decide to whom you will write and address the letter specifically to that person. Tell them why you are writing to them. Next, adopt a thankful tone and tell the recipient what you are grateful about him or her. In the next paragraphs, tell what one big lesson you learned in life. Tell what you think matters most in life. What do you value most? Tell something about yourself. You might consider what you wish you knew about people in your family tree. Answer those questions about yourself. Tell some stories about the ancestor you knew about. Tell the family stories. In your closing, give your readers your love. Tell them what your hope for them. Offer encouragement.

You can write more than one legacy letter and write to more than one person. You might even want to record a video. The key is to search your heart and try to send your thoughts and wisdom to the next generation. If you like crafts, buy a box to hold your letter, or letters, and decorate it. Put in some family items.



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## Queen of the San Diego Zoo passes peacefully



Gramma the Galapagos Tortoise has passed away at an estimated age of 141, after spending about 100 of those years at the San Diego Zoo.

Gramma was the oldest resident of the zoo.

Gramma was an old tortoise, but not the oldest. Naturalist Charles Darwin and latter day animal enthusiast Steve Irwin both cared for Harriet the Tortoise, who lived at least 176 years and died in 2006.

Gramma, cheerfully oblivious to the human chaos of two world wars and 20 new presidents during her lifetime, came to San Diego from the Bronx Zoo in about 1928.

Gramma's personality was described as sweet and shy.



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