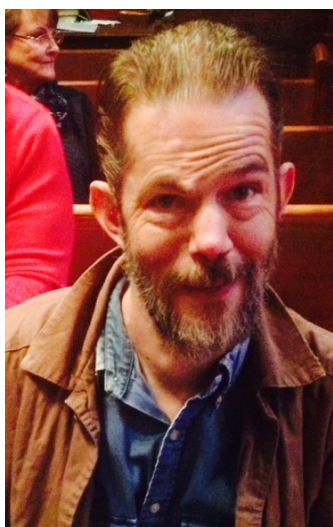


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Holiday activities: From the top: Faith House dinner, complete with antlers and red noses courtesy of Beth Owens; dinner and carol singing with members of Rivermont Presbyterian Church; CABIA holiday gift exchange; Chattanooga Bach Choir at St. Paul's Church.



TO RESOLVE OR NOT????

Every year about this time, I enjoy preparing new calendars, remembering the past year, and thinking about what I want to accomplish in the next year. I don't like to "make new year's resolutions" because I don't like the connotation that vocabulary brings (most folks only manage to keep their resolutions for a few weeks!), but I am all for making goals and creating new habits. Two important steps to accomplishing your goals are to write them down AND to tell someone about them. The first is important because it helps you really focus on exactly what you want to accomplish. The second is important because not only can you get support from others, but you are more accountable for making progress because someone else knows what you supposed to be doing!!

Below is an excerpt from an article written by Carolyn Anderson that merits a good reading. If you have any inclination to try to create new habits or reach new goals, perhaps these ideas can help you.

Put Your Resolutions to the Test

All goals should follow the SMART acronym.

S -- Specific. *Don't just say I want to lose weight, say "I am 130 pounds by June 30, 2013."*

M -- Measurable. *Goals have to be something that you can measure your progress in. A resolution to be healthy isn't measurable, but aiming to eat 8+ servings of fruits and vegetables a day is.*

A --Attainable. *Although you want to reach for the stars, if your goal is too unrealistic it can be deflating mentally. An attainable, realistic goal makes it much more likely that you'll actually pursue it. Once you achieve that initial goal, you can upgrade it to something you might have never thought possible before.*

R -- Relevant. *Make sure your goals are relevant to you and your life. Think about your values and what is really important to you.*

T --Timeline. *There has to be a timeline. For example, you can't just have an open-ended goal that you want to be wealthy at some point in the future. You need a specific amount in mind with a deadline attached.*