

OUTDOORS +

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6, 2019 B1



Rick Reeves, Brent Dukehart and Tanner Creel are ready to hit the high country. If you are going to keep up with these guys, you need to be in shape. (Special to the Montrose Daily Press/ Mark Rackay)

Nothing new

I see that it is time for that “new year, new me” thing again. Seems everyone will be making resolutions for the year and some of those resolutions might survive until Jan. 3.

It takes me back to when I was a kid (as so many thing do). Being raised Catholic; Lent was something my family took seriously. During Lent, everyone was to give up something, or do something special, for the 40 days of the season. I had suggested that I give up going to school, but my parents shot that idea down. Instead, they decided I should give up desserts, which considering how terrible a cook my mother was, were the only edible portion of dinner.

I am not a person for making resolutions, especially when I know I am destined to fail. My wife has all kinds of resolutions for me. Most are ridiculous, like spending less money on outdoor equipment or fewer hunting trips. All those ideas are good for a laugh but have no chance of success. I see no reason for her to come up with these absurd ideas, other than to disturb marital bliss.

I see that the year is new, but the sad truth is, there really is not much new. Most everything we use in the outdoor world was invented long ago and what we have as “new” are simply modifications or improvements of the item. True, sometimes the modifications are a great improvement, but often times, it is just a marketing ploy. If they can convince you that you are using old and inferior, you will buy the new one.

Years back, there was a fishing lure, a gold colored weedless spoon, sold by the Normark Corporation. We used this spoon quite a bit for redfish, during my time in the Florida Keys. It worked as well as anything else, not great, just worked at times.

The sales of the spoon slumped downward, as many lures do, once the flash appeal wears off. The folks at Normark launched a new ad campaign that included a handful of bright green rubber tails to be included with the lure. It all came with flashy new packaging, touting the potential success with the new tails.

In no time at all, local guides and fisherman were stocking up on these lures. What was interesting is that all the guides said when the tails were used up the lure no longer caught any fish. The sad truth is, those tails were never intended to catch fish, only fisherman, and by the spike in sales it appears they were successful.

Some caveman who was looking for a way to carry his camp gear around invented the wheel long ago. We still use the wheel today, as it is one of the greatest inventions of all time. Sure, we get new styles of tires every year, rendering the old style “old and obsolete” but



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay



From the wheel to the GPS, and just about everything in between, there is really not much new in the outdoor world. (Special to the Montrose Daily Press/ Mark Rackay)

it really is nothing new.

Let’s take the backpack for example. This is one of the most important pieces of gear for any outdoor person. Dick Kelty invented the original backpack in 1952. Originally he called it a knapsack.

In 1967, Greg Lowe invented the internal frame backpack, which was mostly an improvement on the original design. This design is what most packs made today are based on. Every year, I get the mailers for all the new and improved versions of the pack. I admit that I sometimes fall for the new and improved version, which explains why I have so many packs.

Jean Chancel in Paris, France, invented the original self-igniting match, another important survival tool, in 1805. We now have windproof and waterproof matches, but they are still based on the original design.

Seems we are just trying to reinvent the spark, with all the new fire starters on the market. The famous Bic lighter was created in 1973 as a means to light up your Marlboro cigarette. Had that lighter been invented today, and marketed as a survival tool, we would all be turning cartwheels in the street over it.

A survival tool that has become a part of everyday life is the global positioning system, or GPS. Every

cell phone, car, boat and plane has a GPS unit. There are even a number of wristwatches that are GPS enabled. But GPS is not new. It was invented in 1973 for the U.S. Military and became available to the public during the 1980s.

An area that is important to the outdoor world is that of lubricants. We use different lubricants for our vehicles, yard equipment, ATVs, motorcycles, boats, motors, guns, fishing equipment... you get the idea. The list of items requiring lubrication is as endless as the list of lubricants out there. If you doubt this, take a look in your garage and workbench. I venture you have dozens of different brands around the homestead.

Let’s be brutally honest. There are no new or revolutionary lubricant products out there. Everything has been tried before. All of the lubricants, bases and additives suitable for use, are well known to the lubricant industry. What we see are just different combinations and mixtures of these known lubricants, in new packaging and marketed accordingly.

On a less cynical note, I did make a resolution once that really paid off for me. About 10 years ago, I did not like the weight I was carrying around with me. I also realized that I was in terrible shape, a result of too much food not good for me and a complete lack of exercise.

I resolved to lose the weight and get into shape. There were scores of hunting trips I wanted to take, but in my condition, it would be impossible. I dropped 50 pounds and have kept it off. I also started a vigorous exercise program that I still practice daily.

The payoff was really noticeable on an elk hunt I took last fall with Cross Mountain Outfitters near Hayden, Colorado. I hunted with my guide, Brent, who was 20 years my junior and in great shape. We hiked everywhere, and as you know, everything is uphill in Colorado. I admit that Brent did better than I, but I was very happy with my ability to keep up. The hunt was successful in every way.

With that in mind, I encourage you, my fellow outdoor people, to make a resolution this year. Make it for yourself, not for any outside reason. Eat healthy, get plenty of sleep, and start an exercise routine. You will get more enjoyment from your outdoor activities and feel better in the process. It is possible that you may add a few more years onto your life.

In the meantime, I have to go and squash my wife’s resolutions she is writing up for me. All of this spend less, stay home more, more chores routine just won’t cut it. I just don’t have the drive I guess. Happy and healthy New Year to all of you and I hope the outdoors treats you well in 2019, and may Murphy never visit your camp.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and avid hunter who travels across North and South America in search of adventure and serves as a Director for the Montrose County Sheriff’s Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org



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Every year...

...I try to come up with a list of New Year’s Resolutions. It’s a good idea, but what to put on the list? To keep my chocolate consumption to a minimum? Then I have to define “minimum”. Ok, what about being more organized? I have copious lists because I remember better if I actually write things down and then have the satisfaction of crossing them off. Does “more organized” mean I need to tape those lists to my forehead to have them handy? Not a good visual! Maybe my resolutions will be simpler. Maybe it will be only one- to live in the moment, enjoying the people or events right in front of me. It’s a start...

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