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## Second Annual Themed Essay Contest: New Year's Resolutions

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SECOND ANNUAL THEMED ESSAY CONTEST:  
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Kunert: Second Annual Themed Essay Contest: New Year's Resolutions

1st Place: "Resolution"

2nd Place: "On The Right Tract Baby..."

Honorable Mention: "Evolution"

Judging writing is not something I do with a great deal of zeal. My own expertise tends to be in a field considered by many to be much more objective: natural science. When asked by Dr. Edwards if I would agree to assess this year's essays for the *Promethean*, at first I hesitated. After all, what would a fly-pusher know about rhetorical technique or grammatical structure?

What convinced me to agree to this task was my realization that good science is not so far from good writing. Both are accomplished by individuals passionate about uncovering a reality, either in nature or in their own life (or both!). After that bit of self-discovery, I agreed to take up the challenge that was placed before me. Please forgive my limited experience in literary criticism.

I decided to use a single criterion for judging the quality of these essays: Which essay revealed the most profound insights about the author? As I read the packet of essays, I was struck by the honesty and self-effacing nature of the compositions. The authors were clearly intent on sharing some part of their souls with the reader. The essays were often brutal in their revelations about the frailties and eccentricities of the creators. Most revealed a great deal of progress in the author's understanding of life.

While it is most difficult to judge such essays effectively, I am forced to by the nature of this project. All of the essayists are to be commended for their efforts. The following essays were selected as my personal favorites.

**Honorable Mention:**

The essay entitled "Evolution" expressed the frustrations of the author's inability to keep New Year's resolutions in the past and what those experiences were beginning to teach the writer about life itself. Providing the analogy of the late-blooming rose was an effective technique in expressing the author's changed perspective. Life is not so much planned; it must simply be lived. That demonstrated a great deal of growth on the part of the writer and their manner of thinking about the future. It also seemed as if the author had developed a greater sense of peace as a result of this growth.

**Second Place:**

"On The Right Track Baby..." was a fascinating look at the essayist's growth in self-understanding and self-love. Self-love can be a frightful attribute, but when

accomplished in the Biblical sense (i.e. to "love your neighbor as you love yourself"), it is a most essential and healthy component of a balanced life. Each set of contrasting resolutions gave a glimpse of the growth taking place. I was most impressed with the maturity demonstrated in "This year's resolution." The stark transition from freshmen expectations to this year's realities provided a most interesting method of highlighting the essential transformation the author had been undergoing.

**First Place:**

Of all the essays, however, the one that revealed to me more about the inner being of the author than any other was the essay simply entitled "Resolution." It grabbed my attention from the very first line with its description of the personal torment of a person afflicted with a very real psychological abnormality: mysophobia...the fear of being dirty. Perhaps it was due to my own experience with a brother suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder, or perhaps it was the manner in which the author bantered with herself/himself in the text, the result was a compelling and authentic, albeit brief, account of inner struggles faced by the author. That is why I have judged this essay to be the best of the lot.

My congratulations to all those who offered submissions for this contest. I found all the readings very interesting. Keep up the good work!

Dr. Chuck Kunert  
Dean, College of Theology, Arts, & Sciences