

WEEKEND

ANTICIPATION

CULTURE

Carpe Annum, Not Carpe Diem

Why Make Resolutions on New Year’s Day?

// BY PETER BURNS

When the ball dropped this past New Year’s, my dad and I were silent for a second that felt like an hour. We sighed. “And so the cycle continues,” I finally said, half-jokingly. I’d said the most cliché cynical thing about the start of a new calendar year. “You’re not exactly wrong,” he responded. We paused and stared at the TV screen. We’d spent the last hour watching Planet Fitness commercials and New Year’s Rockin’ Eve, which I’d quickly lost interest in after watching the Cotton Bowl. For us, New Year’s seemed like grating, corporate bread-and-circuses with grown adult diapers in Times Square.

New Year’s matters to a lot of people, I know. It always has. From the Roman pontifex praying to Janus, the god of thresholds and new beginnings, to celebrities singing on national television, this holiday has always marked a particularly special occasion. It’s a reason to start that thing that has been nagging at the soul for half a year or so, and take a deep breath and say to oneself, “it will be okay.” We collectively decide that it is time to change, and we remember that change is a normal and necessary part of living.

In other words, we make resolutions. I accept this idea and I celebrate it. While I might’ve looked down on the televised celebrations, I do see value in the holiday. Like I assume many others did, I resolved to eat more responsibly, especially at breakfast. A daily \$9 bagel from Glaze and Grind after the gym is neither a wise financial decision nor a dietary one. After falling victim to the sophomore slump last semester, I firmly committed to better my study habits. I am limiting my screen time and trying my best to wake up at a reasonable hour.

But why do we focus on these personal commitments around this time of year? History and culture drive us to practice the custom of New Year’s resolutions. I don’t know exactly what about history drives us so, but it is tradition nonetheless. Setting goals and the start of a new calendar

year are practically synonymous at this point. Perhaps my question is better said thus: What stops us from setting and working toward goals at any other point during the year? If it is so natural to expect change from ourselves and others, why do we put it off until the bleak midwinter?

When I pause and think for a second, my New Year’s resolutions are substantively no different from my general self-improvement goals. Eating a better breakfast is just a more specific detail from the umbrella category of staying fit and healthy. Improving my study habits and getting better sleep? I never had issues with studying and sleep before last semester’s slump.

I want to be clear: I appreciate and respect everyone’s goals for the New Year, new or old. I sincerely hope that they come to fruition and that 2026 brings good things to us all.

My cynical take on New Year’s stems from a lack of understanding of what makes the new year special. It is a time for community, for celebrating our lives and the time that we spend together. I’m glad we do this, but we should not limit these wonderful things to one holiday.

As we move forward into 2026, treat every day like New Year’s. Make a mid-May resolution to reach out to your hometown friends or not to leave your laundry to the last minute. We should try to make every day a celebration of our time spent together. Let’s celebrate the small moments we keep to ourselves. Once they pass, they are gone. Let’s harvest those hours — make something of them. What we resolve to do one day guarantees nothing for the future. What we aim to do every day doesn’t either, but it does make us better.

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ILLUSTRATION BY JULIAN RAYMOND

HOROSCOPES

// BY KIVA BANK

It’s time for the annual tradition of students flocking to the gym at 8 a.m., ready to seize the day and their GPA. Everyone may be on their new year grind for now, but don’t worry, that will die off when reality sets in and midterms start. T-minus 36 minutes.

Although our balls have already dropped for New Year’s, this week is still a fresh start for many. Emphasis on fresh with the “fresh” looks that can be spotted across campus. Everyone has a new hairstyle or dye job, but at least there’s something for your 2026 bingo card. Bonus points if you spot bob, bang, and bleach blonde in the first week back to school.

You may have thought 2026 will be different from 2025, and you’re right! It’s much worse. But, hey, at least 20/26 is still a passing grade.

Here is what the year has in store for you:

Aries

You have been attempting to use arts and crafts to cope with your spiral into Stranger Things conformity-gate theories. Oh, and the impending collapse of the world. Alas, DIYing punch cards makes you want to punch a wall. Try boxing instead to manage your internalized aggression.

Taurus

You don’t believe in New Year’s resolutions because you believe that you are perfect. There’s nothing you need to change about yourself. Definitely not your inability to clean up after yourself. Unfortunately, your closest friends disagree. They even have their own spring break group chat to plan a getaway vacation from you. Fix your cleaning habits before they leave you behind for good.

Gemini

You’ve told everyone that you are trying to be more adventurous this year, but the only reason you’re learning how to ski is to find a Yusband. Your dreams of a prosperous match and cozying up in a Vail cabin are slipping away on the ice faster than you tumble down the slopes. Fulfill your romantic fantasies with the upcoming season of Bridgerton instead.

Cancer

Each year you tell yourself that you will create a vision board, and it never happens. This year is the year. Or at least, that’s what you told yourself before you hot glued your hands together. Maybe 2026 just isn’t your time for self improvement. Try again next year.

Leo

For your vision board, you took an entirely different route. Your focus this year is finding your dream partner, so you decided to stitch magazine clippings of Zohran Mamdani’s face on Michael B. Jordan’s body with Jacob Elordi’s long legs. However, your ideal boyfriend will remain a delusion if your big move is awkward eye contact across the lecture hall.

Virgo

You spent the holidays enjoying rural life in your small hometown of Nowhere,

USA. Despite what was supposed to be an uneventful and restful vacation, you managed to see Yale opps at your local gas station. You think you just have bad karma, but maybe this will spark some introspection on why you have archnemeses in the first place.

Libra

All throughout the break you were enjoying time with family and friends. How shameful. You should have been applying to internships and gaining 500+ connections on LinkedIn. Any efforts to do so now are futile. You are competing with your Ivy peers who spent their entire break curing cancer and saving dalmatians from burning buildings and the vicious claws of Cruella de Vil.

Scorpio

You want to be in the best shape of your life in 2026, but every plan that guarantees just that costs \$10,000, your dignity and your first born child — annually. The good news? Spiraling and crying in the stacks is free of charge.

Sagittarius

This year, you want to get in touch with your inner child. For most others, this is a good way to self reflect and heal past trauma. However, as a child, you bit people. Parents. Siblings. Strangers. The stray cat. You name it, you probably thought it looked like a tasty morsel at some point. To avoid a regression into this dark past, perhaps you should look to the future instead and try journaling.

Capricorn

You had your schedule perfectly laid out before you arrived on campus. Then suddenly, your 9:25 a.m. class was canceled for the entire semester four minutes before it was supposed to start. Now you are scrambling to find another class and you will inevitably end up in the wrong seminar room because Coursetable lied to you, and you have to make an awkward exit midway through. But hey, life isn’t always perfect. You’re going to have to find an equally corny saying to get you out of this mess.

Aquarius

It’s been hard for you to find a New Year’s resolution that you can adopt, because you’re so quirky and different and special. Luckily, you resonated with the viral buttons trend and you will now overuse the quote “hey so it actually only has to make sense to me for me to do it and I don’t feel like explaining it to anyone else.” Most of your habits are unexplainable anyway.

Pisces

You’ve been back in your old routine of sacrificing study sessions for late night group hang outs at Est Est Est, which are all fun and games until your grades start to decline again. Let’s try to change that this year, okay? Remember, friendships are temporary, but transcripts are forever.

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