# Let's make our new year our best new year!

*by Calvin Naito*
Guest Columnist

Get ready. We are all about to embark on an incredible annual journey across space and time.

A new year begins.

A fresh start. A rebirth.

A time for New Year's resolutions. A time for self-reflection and intention setting that can serve as a wake-up call to live more fully.

A time to remember Janus, the ancient Roman god of beginnings, gates and transitions, who has two faces on one head – one face looking backward to the past, one face looking forward to the present and future – symbolizing reflection and learning from the past and awareness and foresight about the future.

We will make this annual journey together as a community of earthlings on our spaceship called Earth, which will travel around the sun in 365 days, covering over 583 million miles.

What will transpire over the next year? Much will depend on what we seek and do individually and collectively.

It starts off full of joy and hope. New Year's Day is the world's most celebrated holiday, and the day is often referred to as "everybody's birthday."

In your town, at your local central square, where people live and work side-by-side, you see people in special clothing singing, dancing, playing games, watching fireworks and enjoying special foods. You see people connecting with friends, gathering with family and exchanging gifts. You see people honoring their creator, praying, expressing repentance and seeking spiritual renewal.

We aspire for a heathier and more financially secure life. The most popular New Year's resolutions? Save more money, eat healthier, exercise more. People also want to lose weight and spend more time with family and friends. Others want to quit smoking and reduce spending on living expenses.

But we know what a challenge it is to go from aspiration to achievement. Yet to aspire is to be human.

Vow to make your new year your best new year. Vow to make our new year our best new year. Remember that learning from the past creates a better future for you and the world.

This is a good time to reflect, restart and dream.

We can learn from the collective teamwork of our Founding Fathers. Significantly, year 2026 marks the 250th birthday of the United States, which was born on July 4, 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was signed. It declared that we are created equal and endowed with the unalienable rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The Founding Fathers then followed a decade later with the U.S. Constitution, declaring "We the People … to form a more perfect Union …" – thereby creating the legal framework for our government and establishing fundamental rights for all citizens.

At age 250, our nation has aspired greatly and achieved many positive things, albeit with mistakes and shortcomings along the way. Yet it long endures. The life of our nation parallels our individual lives.

So let us lock arms as spaceship Earth makes another annual journey around the sun. Let us achieve the popular new year resolution of spending more time with other people and appreciate "the magic in teamwork," the theme of the 2026 and 137th Rose Parade. Let us embrace the line from the movie "It's a Wonderful Life" that states, "Remember, no man is a failure who has friends." Let us sing the timeless new year song "Auld Lang Syne" (meaning "for old times' sake"), which encourages us to reflect on cherished memories and celebrate enduring bonds and friendships, even as time passes. "Should old acquaintance be forgot, and never brought to mind?"

With the spirit of Janus hovering above and providing inspiration, make your new year your best new year. Learn from the past to create a better future for you and the world.

In signing the Declaration of Independence 250 years ago, our founders said, "We mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor." Let us collectively make a similar resolution, a similar social contract, as we embrace, as equals, our rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" in the new year. We are stronger together. Let's make our new year our best new year!

photo courtesy of Calvin Naito

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