

## On the Corner

### Starting over

by Robert Docter –

Well—here we are!

It's a new year, and I'm starting a new calendar with 12 clean, unmarked pages.

I'm beginning a new semester of teaching with new students, different people, fresh souls.

I'm now working with a new commissioner with his own approaches to the territory's challenges.

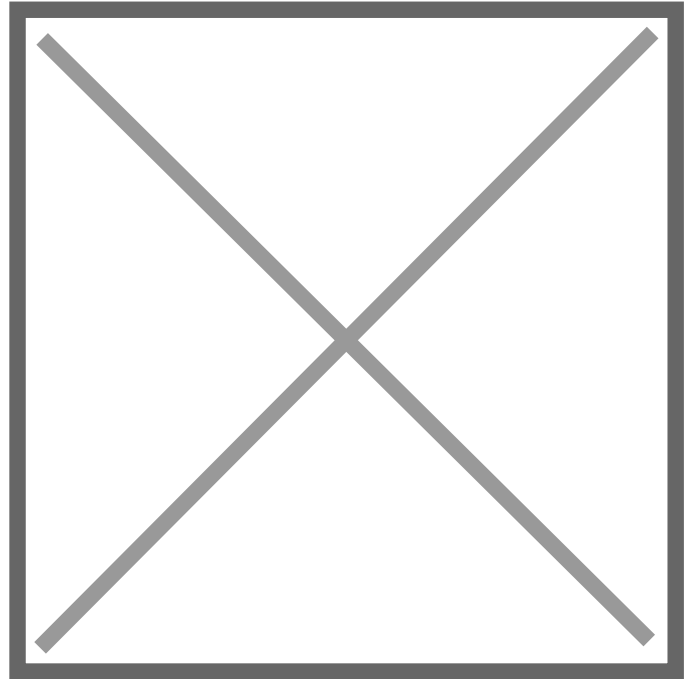
I'm a year older and discovering different things about the way my mind works and my body functions.

It feels like I'm starting over—a lot of new beginnings.

I don't know about you, but I enjoy the process of "starting over"—beginning something anew—getting a second chance on something—or with someone. It's like opening up a new gift. The element of surprise hangs nearby. Anticipation and positive expectancy seem surrounded by hope. Joy sprinkles its effervescence like multi-colored sparklers floating without falling through the air.

I can hear you now. "Gimme a break!" you say disgustedly. "What's wrong with this guy?" you wonder. "Doesn't he know there's a war going on in Iraq and Americans are being murdered by cowardly masked thugs when all they're trying to do is give people some choices in their lives? Isn't he aware that a monster tsunami just about wiped out 11 different countries and killed well over 150,000 people and that no segment of the massed media communicated anything at all about the tremendous work The Salvation Army has been doing since day one because they didn't have to fly us in—we were there from D-day and H-hour?

Can't he see that this nation seems very divided on narrow ideological lines and that political circumstances make any movement toward compromise almost impossible? Hasn't he realized that despite all our efforts and work and legislation and verdicts, social justice is still a distant concept even for many Americans let alone countless millions throughout the world?



“It can’t be too much time in the sun,” you say—“it’s been raining constantly for what seems like the last month.”

I understand all that. I have strong feelings, aggressive thoughts and confrontational behavior about all those issues.

So what!

I’ve got one primary choice as I look at my life in January 2005. What kind of meaning do I wish to give those events? All of them impact me. I can’t ignore any of them, but I can choose to assign my own meaning to them. Because I perceive myself as an optimist I believe that I am, for the most part, internally controlled as opposed to the pessimist’s orientation of being externally controlled. I can decide how I view certain events, and then I can act.

I intend to fill the pages on my new calendar with a plan designed to assure some time spent each on physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual development during the course of the year. Then I intend to work the plan.

I intend to review material for the courses I’m going to teach next semester—enrich it, add to it and determine more meaningful ways to assure I meet my goals.

I’m going to get to know our new commissioner and provide him with opportunities to get to know me. He seems very approachable. From brief association and his presentation at the welcome meeting I’m impressed with how hard he’s worked to begin to understand the “ins” and “outs” of the territory—what makes us tick—what traditions we value and what our priorities are.

He’s asked us to WORK on making this Army better.

Seems like a good idea to me. What about you?