

By CHRIS CASHMAN - editorial@nwherald.com

Tradition offers chance to put goals into practice

Richard Kuranda's New Year's resolution could have been to sink a half-court shot on the basketball court at Madison Square Garden.

But he's already done that.

Instead, the 42-year-old executive director of the Raue Center for the Arts in Crystal Lake is planning to drop 20 pounds in 2012.

"I am so used to eating leftover mac and cheese with my four kids," Kuranda said. "I want to work it off and keep it off so I can keep up with the smartest, most beautiful person on the planet – my wife, Alicia. She really is the better half."

Kuranda said he also will be learning to fly fish in 2012 with a close friend. "I'll be happy if I catch a single fish. Really. Just one."

Professionally, Kuranda resolves "to keep up with Raue Board President Matt Turk, an incredible guy with a tremendous amount of energy. I'm in awe of his passion. He's an all-around great guy."

"I get so into my job that I kind of forget that there is a life outside the theater. I want to be more active in my church, my community and get back to more charity work."

A Lakewood resident, Kuranda was among several McHenry County notables who shared their New Year's resolutions with the Northwest Herald this season.

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David Barber, 62, of Crystal Lake, executive director of the United Way of Greater McHenry County, said his chief New Year's resolution is to continue to work on raising money to fund the health and service needs of McHenry County.

"More and more these days people are finding themselves in situations that had previously seemed like a nightmare but were now a reality," Barber said. "They are in need of basic necessities, living assistance, and in many cases employment opportunities."

"If everyone who works and lives in the greater McHenry County area donated just a dollar a week, we would raise more than \$4.2 million. This would go a long way to help our fellow neighbors. But if you can, please give more. The need is truly there."

At home, Barber resolves to "continue to work at being a better husband, father, grandfather, and friend. First and foremost in our lives should be our relationships with those close to us," he said. "During the past year, our family has lost three members. Each of them truly helped change the lives of everyone they met. This is something each of us should strive to achieve."

He also resolves to get in better shape. "This is one of those resolutions that seems to come up every year and never goes away. Now that our grandchildren are getting older, this will let me enjoy them more and be a better playmate for them."

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Pam Cumpata, 48, of rural Elgin, president of the McHenry County Economic Development Corp., said a personal resolution is to ride her Harley-Davidson Road King motorcycle with her husband "at every opportunity. We enjoy the freedom that it brings as well as the country we get to experience not traveling on highways."

"My second resolution is to enjoy our grandchildren and family members, to share memories and make new ones," she said. "I know this sounds corny, but in life the most important things to me are health, family and my faith. When those things are in check, everything else is perfect or close to it."

"On the business side for the McHenry County Economic Development Corp., my resolution is to remain diligent to our mission of the retention, expansion and attraction of primary employers to McHenry County. The way we accomplish our mission is to be connected to the employers in the county through site visits, communication, assistance – primarily anything that assists those employers to continue to grow and hire people."

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Lisa Haderlein, 48, of Harvard, executive director of The Land Conservancy of McHenry County, resolves always to wear a

hat at TLC's restoration workdays. "I had an incident in November 2011 where I wasn't wearing a hat, and I tripped and fell into a thicket of burs that became matted in my hair. The only way to remove the burs was to cut them out."

Project Quercus, TLC's oak woodland conservation program, will be a priority in 2012, Haderlein said.

"We've been at it for five years, and I'm determined to find a way to generate enough income to cover program costs related to growing and planting more oaks, training more volunteers and reaching out to more landowners to help them restore their oak woods," she said. "These trees are this area's keystone species – birds, insects and wildlife rely on them. They are also an important part of our cultural history – early settlers used oaks for building fences and barns, and relied upon the oak woods for fuel to heat their homes."

On the personal side, Haderlein resolves "to eat more fresh, local fruits and vegetables and less processed food. As I get older, this seems a good thing to do for my health, plus by purchasing locally grown items, I know I'm contributing to the local economy.

"Additionally, in 2012, I resolve to purchase a bicycle and start riding it for exercise around Harvard and also to ride it when I attend the monthly oak restoration events at the new Gateway Park in Harvard. I see this as another investment in my health. I have a medical condition that makes it hard for me to walk long distances, but I can pedal a bicycle forever."

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Lorraine Kopczynski of McHenry will be retiring in 2012 as president/CEO of Pioneer Center for Human Services in McHenry.

"Although I will be retiring, I've made a solemn vow to myself, my colleagues and most importantly the clients, that I will not abandon my passion and commitment to the organization," she said. "My hopes are to be an integral part in advancing the 377 Board, which will bring much-needed funding to individuals with developmental disabilities."

Kopczynski said she's looking forward to enjoying the little things in life.

"Time is precious and children grow so fast," she said. "My three children are all grown and have given me six beautiful grandchildren and two grand-dogs. I want to be sure to be an active participant in their lives. You can't get back those moments once they are gone. This resolution will give me the opportunity to 'live with no regrets,' to not look back one day and wish I had made time to spend with my family. I fully intend to be an avid spectator at soccer games and the loudest clapper at school recitals.

"I love to scrapbook, sew, play bridge and do crafts. But when life is busy, we tend to put ourselves and the things we enjoy doing last on the list. I relish the opportunity to spend time reconnecting with my creative side."

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Mary Miller, 53, of Crystal Lake, is chairwoman of the McHenry County College Board of Trustees. She said she normally does not make New Year's resolutions.

"If I did, maybe I would be 10 pounds thinner," Miller said.

In 2012, Miller plans "to continue to work closely with MCC's president, Dr. Vicky Smith, and all my fellow board members to improve student success and support our college mission. Also, to bring in one new Rotarian to the best dawn Rotary club in McHenry County, the Rotary Club of Crystal Lake Dawnbreakers!"

And finally – "To lose the 10 pounds I have been trying to lose for at least 10 years now."

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Michael S. Eesley, 56, of Woodstock, chief executive officer of Centegra Health System, said his resolutions are to "maintain a diligent focus on the provision of health care services to the Huntley market, continue to make my family a priority in my life, and to take the time to enjoy my family and friends."

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Michael Bissett, 55, of Lake in the Hills, chairman of the Democratic Party of McHenry County, "will work to reinvigorate county government by helping to elect Democrats with fresh perspectives on how government can better serve the public interest. We'll continue our efforts to fight government waste and unnecessary tax increases, while improving service delivery and responsiveness to local issues."

On a more personal level? "I will nurture my family and support them in reaching their personal dreams," Bissett said. "My wife, Paula, is the most generous and thoughtful person I have ever known, and she deserves to appreciate the blessings of our time together. I will not let the demands of our political involvement take the joy out of our lives.

"I will spend more time indulging my passion for music and filmmaking. I will learn at least one more Charlie Trotter recipe and

serve a great bottle of wine with it. I will take my wife someplace wonderful for her birthday.”

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Andrew Zinke, 43, is undersheriff at the McHenry County Sheriff's Office. Zinke grew up in McHenry, now lives in Woodstock, and has spent 22 years with the sheriff's office.

He said that in 2012 he looks forward to building upon the strong relationships the sheriff's administration has with its staff, area police officers and their agencies. "Information-sharing is critical to effectively reducing crime and maintaining safe communities," he said.

Also on the agenda is completing a website project "that will improve our social media capabilities and information-sharing for the general public."

And last but not least, Zinke resolves to finish the final courses he needs to obtain his master's degree. "When [I'm] finished," he said, "I can spend more time at home with my wife and children."

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State Rep. Mike Tryon, 56, of Crystal Lake, said his resolution as McHenry County Republican Party chairman is the same as it is every year: Help Republicans get elected.

"This will be a presidential year, so there will be a lot of activity and interest. I look forward to planning a good strategy for the November elections and involving as many people as I can."

Tryon, a diabetic, said a personal resolution is "to keep myself healthy and increase [my] amount of exercise to four times a week."

Tryon noted that the General Assembly is not very family friendly. "You have to be aware that you need to balance your political activities in Springfield with family back home. I'll renew my commitment to spend as much time with my wife and kids as I can, and keep them my No. 1 priority."

– Chris Cashman

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