



David Matthews

New Year's resolutions

The new year brings a new opportunity to make all the changes you vowed to make last year and never did

No pain, no gain

The most common New Year's resolution is to get fit. However, so few of us actually follow through that we're beginning to forget what exercise even looks like.

Take the story of an Idaho man who enjoyed exercising along the scenic Centennial Trail path near the Washington state border. One morning this past fall while working up a sweat on a bridge overlooking the Spokane River, he was approached by police concerned for his safety.

Turns out that a passing motorist mistook the man's boisterous workout for the final ravings of someone preparing to jump to his death. The motorist quickly called 9-1-1 and police arrived ready to talk the man down.

Instead, what they found was a man described as "animated, pacing, burning those calories with a vengeance," but not at all suicidal.

No charges were filed, though the man was advised to move his workouts away from traffic next time.

How do you like them apples?

One resolution that can be good for the soul and for the karma is to help others through volunteer work.

Take it from 50-year-old Thomas Grant. In November he was waiting to catch the New York City subway to a soup kitchen where he volunteers when he fainted and fell into the path of an oncoming train.

Enter Carlos Flores, a 36-year-old grocery store produce clerk, who was running late for work when he saw Grant collapse.

"I was thinking, if he gets hit I can't go to work," Flores told the New York Daily News. "It's Sunday. I can't miss out. It's a time-and-a-half day."

Averting both tragedy and tardiness, Flores jumped down onto the subway tracks and hauled Grant back over to the platform, where another man helped lift him to safety. Flores then climbed back onto the platform himself just in time to catch the train to work.

Grant suffered only minor injuries from his fall. As for Flores, his heroism prompted his co-workers to nickname him "Spider-Man."

So you think you can dance?

Popular resolutions this year involve self improvement, like finding a new job or managing time better.

A Florida dance troupe will have both of these goals in mind this year as they try to raise money for a return trip to New York.

The group of four women and three men called "Club Envy" were scheduled to take part in a live TV talent show on BET's "106 & Park." After spending three months fundraising to pay for the trip, the dancers, ages 16-20, along with adult chaperones, were nearing the end of a 24-hour drive from Jacksonville to New York City on the day of the performance.

Just as the group were getting close to the downtown studio, their two-car convoy hit a serious rush-hour traffic jam in the Lincoln Tunnel. Already dressed in their camouflage costumes, the crew decided that their only hope was to abandon their chaperones and run the remaining 2 miles to the TV studio on foot.

"I was thinking, if he gets hit [by the subway train] I can't go to work. It's Sunday. It's a time-and-a-half day."

However, when Port Authority police saw the camouflaged gang sprinting through the tunnel, they immediately called the FBI-NYPD Joint Terrorism Task Force, and the young dancers were soon surrounded by a massive contingent of heavily armed officers with guns drawn.

"I was boo-hoo crying," said Eternity, one of the youngest members of the group.

Traffic was shut down for 45 minutes while the dancers were questioned. Once police were satisfied with the group's story, they offered to escort them to the show, but by then it was too late.

BET has offered the group another chance to perform in the coming months, and even offered to pay their bus fare, just as long as they leave the combat attire at home. **R&B**

Matthews has been chronicling the unexpectedly humorous side of transportation news since 2000. The stories are all true.