



Improvements! Along with the new playground, more improvements such as these shown are being made at the Coke County Park in Robert Lee.

is pronounced “2020 two.” Regardless of what lies ahead, each of us have an opportunity for a fresh start in the new year. It’s an opportunity to try new things, participate in new experiences, and more. A new year is also an opportunity to improve on recurring aspects of life. Maybe we did not acquit ourselves all too well in a particular area of life last year or the year before, so what will we do in the year to come?

In the early 1990s, George Strait sang “I’d Like to Have That One Back” about the regrets of bad decisions and a lost love. We have likely all had that exact thought from time to time about certain aspects of life. We can’t always have it back, but sometimes life gives us the opportunity to do things better on the next trip around the sun. Brooklyn Dodgers fans popularized “wait ’til next year!” as a slogan for their teams of the 1940s and 1950s that perpetually fell just short of a world title. It was a level of optimism grounded in dubious levels of reality, but that optimism was nevertheless soothing to jilted fans who watched their team lose to the New York Yankees in five World Series from 1941 to 1953.

I have never been great at New Year’s resolutions for a variety of reasons. I certainly want to improve myself year over year (success rate may vary) but resolutions often feel forced. I prefer to treat the new year as a fresh start and a clean state to do better, both generally and specifically. Thinking back to those Dodgers fans, how many times in 2020 or 2021 did we (even subconsciously) adopt

a “wait ’til next year!” mentality towards improving life? Probably more than a few times if you are anything like me. “Next year” finally arrived for the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1955, when they vanquished the crosstown rival Yankees in seven games. Next year has now arrived for us as well!

I know I am dealing heavily today in cliché, but I recall the old saying that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over, expecting different results. Clean slates and fresh starts are only helpful if we treat them as such, not an opportunity to play a re-run of the same frustrations of the past year, leaving us to say “wait ’til next year!” yet again.

I do not know who needs to hear this or even what context you need to hear it - personal life, professional life, or in your community - but true year-over-year improvement requires a critical analysis of what needs to improve, *why* it needs to improve, and *how* to improve it. Crossing your fingers and hoping for magical changes in the circumstances of your life (we have all done it) is the self-improvement equivalent of playing the lottery as your sole retirement plan. It might work, but the odds are not great. I am certainly thinking of a few things - personal, professional, and community - that merited “wait ’til next year!” status in 2021 and I am hopeful that I can make 2022 the year. It might require better focus and intentional changes, but I can get there and I know you can too.

But do not forget to show your self some grace in the new year. We are all prone to compare our



struggles to everyone else’s highlight reel. We tell ourselves that we are the only ones struggling and no one else is. Do not let your inner critic turn a new year into a miserable struggle. The fresh start should be about living better. We all define that differently, because we have different goals and we are in different stages and seasons of life.

2020 does not have to be a trilogy. It is a new year. It is next year! Let us live it well.

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of the West of 98 website and westof98.substack.com and podcast. Contact James and subscribe to West of 98 wherever subscribe to these essays at podcasts are found.

WCCHD board meeting minutes told

By Pat Stephens invocation. Board members present were Pat Stephens, Judie Andrews, Betty Lewis, and Noel Tinkler. Houston McGuire, Administrator, Janie Munoz, BOM, and Chris Martin, Consultant, were also present at the meeting. The minutes from the previous meetings were approved. (Continued on next page)

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Our County, Our State and Our Country**



And Don’t Forget to Pray for Rain!

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