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It's time to change time

Megan Troutman Mar 8, 2018



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What time is it? It's time-change time.

Daylight Saving Time is one of those curious things that come around every so often to confuse the crap out of people. Does the clock get pushed backward or forward? Do I lose or gain an hour of sleep? When is it socially acceptable to start drinking coffee again? Do I even *care* if it's socially acceptable yet, or do I just down the cup anyway?

Growing up in Colorado, I was one of those lucky people who got to experience Daylight Saving. Essentially, clocks are moved forward in the spring and back in the fall by one hour to optimize summer sunshine in the United States. This year, the clocks move forward at 2 a.m. March 11, and will move back at 2 a.m., Nov. 4.

So, for most parts of the country, it's about that time again to change time.

But let's back up. Our man Benjamin Franklin conjured up the idea in 1784 to add extra work hours to the day by simply moving the hands of the clock (it was obviously too ridiculous to just change the work hours, so we had to change *all* of the clocks). At the time, Franklin was the Minister to France, so he calculated "that French shopkeepers could save one million francs per year on candles," according to the 1998 Daylight Saving Time document in the Congressional Research Service Library of Congress.

So my takeaway was that Daylight Saving Time was partially suggested to save candles, which is fun.

But Daylight Saving did not actually happen until 102 years ago, in 1916, by the Germans to conserve fuel in World War I. Then the United States jumped on board 100 years ago in 1918. The idea was not taken lightly, probably because people didn't know when they could start drinking coffee again.

As a student, Daylight Saving was always one of two extremes: a saving grace or a hellfire punishment. You either gained an hour of valuable sleep, or you lost an hour and had to get up even earlier than you already had to against your will. Or at least that's what it felt like to me having the clock automatically pushed back an hour. Talk about a love/hate relationship.

So as a student in grade school, our teachers would remind us repeatedly the day before Daylight Saving that we had to change our clocks and had to be at school on time. From my days as an energetic elementary schooler who didn't worry about Daylight Saving because I woke up at the crack of dawn anyway (much to my parent's dismay), to a high schooler who praised or cursed the time change, it's been an interesting time.

Fast forward to now. I'm a college student in Arizona, which is one of six states and territories that do not follow Daylight Saving Time, and sometimes my digital alarm clock still thinks I live in Colorado—which is fun when it automatically changes and wakes me up either an hour before class or an hour after. The latter is unfortunate.

If you were curious, Arizona, Hawaii, part of Indiana, Puerto Rico, American Samoa and the Virgin Islands all do not follow Daylight Saving Time.

For the longest time I thought Arizona was just stubborn, refusing to change time, but now that I've lived here for four years, it's kind of refreshing. Especially as a college student, I do not have to deal with the anxieties of when to change the clock so I'm still on time, and never need to change my morning coffee hour.

In the end, I think I'm OK with Arizonans being a little bit stubborn.

Megan Troutman is the editor-in-chief of The Lumberjack, Northern Arizona University's student newspaper. College Chronicles aims to connect FlagLive! readers to various aspects of campus life.

