

Time is a funny thing

Written by **BRIAN LOCKHART**

What time is it?

Well, somewhere in the world it's time for cocktails.

Somewhere else it's time for a 10:00 a.m. meeting to discuss widget production while at the very same time someone else is crawling into the sack for a good night's sleep.

Time is a concept that is in many ways hard to understand.

Here's an example: Try explaining to someone what time is ? without using the word 'time.' Good luck with that.

We are all guided by the numbers on a clock that indicate where in the day we are, based on a starting point and one second intervals that tick constantly with the space between each clock movement being exactly the same all around the world.

Tick tock, tick tock ? all day long.

Obviously the invention of the clock was an important step in the progression of mankind.

Otherwise, starting production on the assembly line at 7:00 a.m. may not work as well when half of the workers haven't shown up because they have no idea of when the line will start moving.

Without the clock, your boss would have no real reason to yell at you for showing up five minutes late for work.

Schools would have no idea when to ring the bell other than to guess that students have had enough math instruction for one day and it was time to go to tiddly-wink try-outs in the gym.

Meeting that blind date for a 7:00 p.m. dinner would be problematic ? you could end up meeting someone else's date and your dinner reservation may or may not be waiting for you.

The fact that the day is divided into 24 hours has a huge impact on society.

While the concept of a 24 hour day goes way back to the ancient Egyptians it seems to work well with modern society.

How different would our world be if the they had decided on a 20 hour day? Would half hour TV shows be longer? Would your current half-hour lunch be extended because the hands on a 20 hour clock told you to take longer finishing your martini?

This past weekend we all turned the clocks ahead one hour as we move into daylight saving time in an attempt to alter time and provide more light during the evening hours.

Altering the time is practiced in most countries in the Northern Hemisphere. Near the equator there is no real reason as the amount of daylight doesn't vary as much. In some countries there has never even been an attempt to try moving the clocks forward or ahead.

There are a number of reasons why daylight saving time was introduced, but it all had to do with providing additional light toward the end of the day.

The thing is, no matter where you are on the planet, on any given day you receive as much sunlight as you did on the very same day the previous year. Turning the clocks forward doesn't alter the amount of light, it only alters your perception of where you are in the course of a day.

There is some obvious good in this. I enjoy long summer days and being outdoors at nine o'clock on a June evening when it's still light out and I can enjoy one of my hobbies while the sun is yet to set.

However, when November rolls around, we turn the clocks back to standard time. Now you have the joy of leaving your 9-5 job and driving home in the dark.

There seems to be no logical reason for turning the clock back in the fall other than something about kids walking to school in the dark. Unless your kid lives several hours from school that shouldn't be a problem and it is light when classes start.

The difference between the shortest day of the year ? mid December at nine hours, and the longest day , mid June at 15 and a-half hours ? obviously makes a big difference in the way you go about your life.

If daylight saving time is such a great thing, why not just use it as the standard all year long?

Most of Saskatchewan doesn't change their clocks at all. That is partly because of their location and partly because cows don't care what time it is ? they still need to be milked.

During both world wars, daylight saving time was used to reduce energy consumption, but studies since that time have shown that it has no real impact these days.

I guess people could rebel and refuse to change their clocks but I'm not sure that would turn out well.

Time will tell ? at least it will if everyone remembered to turn their clocks ahead.