



Living on Newfoundland Time

By Mark Keinert



Now that the Green Bay Packers are Super Bowl champions and wine and cheese references are being talked or joked about around the world, I think I'll use this column to whine a little for myself.

Every year we do it and with so little resistance. It was mandated by legislation enacted in 1986 that we make this adjustment the first Sunday in April. What am I complaining about? Daylight Savings Time, of course.

Of all the things that I love about working out-of-doors on a golf course, this change is the one I dislike the most. Yet we have to do it every year. Think of all the time wasted as we travel about our homes, cars and offices adjusting every device we own that has a clock, whether it is electronic or not. If you are like me, I'll bet you will make adjustments to close to twenty items just to be in time with the rest of the world. VCR's, computers, ovens, clock radios, wrist watches, wall clocks, alarm clocks, clocks in our automobiles, microwave ovens and a dozen other time keepers have to be updated.

As a brief history, daylight savings time is the system of setting clocks ahead one hour, so that both sunrise and sunset are at a later hour producing an additional period of daylight in the evening. The idea of daylight savings time was mentioned in a whimsical essay in 1784 by Benjamin Franklin titled, "Turkey vs. Eagle, McCauley is my Beagle."

Daylight savings time was first promoted seriously in 1907 in a pamphlet "Waste of Daylight" by British Industrialist, William Willet. When questioned as to why he didn't get up one hour earlier, Willet simply replied, "What?"

Daylight savings time was used by the United States and in many countries overseas during WWI when the

system was adopted in an effort to conserve fuel required to produce electric power.

We early birds, known to golfers as golf course superintendents, lost control many years ago when our nation moved away from an agriculturally based society, where laws were dictated by the sunrise and sunset, to that of an industrial society with three shifts a day. Farmers, whose work schedules are dictated by sunrise and sunset and therefore inconvenienced when they must conduct business with the industrial world, were the only group to register their strong dislike for the measure. Because of their diminishing numbers, they were largely ignored.

Today, the Uniform Time Act of 1966 established a system of uniform daylight savings time within each time zone throughout the U.S., exempting only those states in which the legislatures voted to keep the entire state on standard time. I recall

my year in Evansville, Indiana when we would move our clocks ahead one hour to match daylight savings time and the rest of the state would stay on standard time. The logic was that during the winter months, Indianapolis wanted to have the same time as New York City, but during the summer, due to agricultural demands, wanted to have the same time as Chicago.

We know what effect daylight savings time has on our management programs in the autumn when we try to explain to our play committees that we do not have enough daylight lead time needed to set up the golf course for an 8:00 a.m. shotgun. We need that extra hour of daylight in the morning that the daylight savings time took from us.

Or how about those lengthy frost delays we face in mid-October? I'm always amused by the look on golfers' faces when I tell them that by

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this time next week, your watch will read 7:00 a.m. Even with this Yogi Berra, round about kind of saying, they get the point. The sun will have an extra hour to burn off the frost so you can enjoy your 8:00 a.m. tee time. Only superintendents and golf pros know the pure joy of sending the first foursome of the day at 11:00 a.m. after a long frost delay.

So what does Newfoundland time have to do with this message anyway? Newfoundland time is exactly 2.5 hours ahead of ours. As you know, daylight savings time springs forward in April and we in effect lose one hour of sleep that isn't regained until the last Sunday in October. As the earth moves toward its summer equinox, day length also increases opportunity for a longer work day. We find that instead of reporting to work at the early hour of 7:00 a.m. as normal shift workers do, we are further adjusting our schedules to 6:00 a.m. or earlier, losing yet another hour. Most superintendents report to work a half hour or more before our employees. We do this as a prudent time management practice that allows us to get something done before we

have to tip toe through the day's play. The net effect is that we adjust clocks the clocks in our minds ahead anywhere from 2 to 2.5 hours each summer from those of our families, friends and from those of our members.

We are living in a different time zone; Newfoundland time, to be exact. When I compared the time of my day to that of my friends, I found that on average I was reporting to work anywhere from one to four hours before they did. I realized then that my 6:00 a.m. was equal to their 8:00 a.m. and at days end my 9:00 p.m. bedtime is equivalent to their 11:00 p.m. This explained to me why I have been accused of being a party pooper of sorts when I'm ready to leave a party well before 10:00 p.m. That's my personal midnight! Every minute past that point in time is one minute less than six hours of sleep. It is only when I'm forced to explain that fact that I get some reprieve.

I cringe when I'm asked to attend an 8:00 p.m. meeting. I'm mentally gone. It's no good for me and I certainly question the worth of my input at that time of night. What prudent businessman, expecting only the best from his employees, would schedule

a meeting at 10:00 p.m.? He wouldn't unless it was an emergency.

I do, however, offer one feeble solution. We could standardize the world by adjusting each time zone one-half hour forward and then leave those clocks alone. Just think of the time you would save as a result of not having to turn back or forward the twenty or more devices that you have to touch twice a year. This to me makes sense as it would increase daylight in the evening by a half hour. If you only knew how much I hate going to bed when the sun is still visible in the western sky. Plus the extra half hour of daylight we would gain in the morning would be very valuable for our early morning maintenance routines.

I've always enjoyed listening to business people whine about not having enough daylight in the evening to complete their round of golf. I would just like to tell them, just once, "if you want another hour of sunlight to play golf, go to work one hour earlier, with daylight savings time, you'll own two!"

Now if I could only remember were I placed that VCR's owner's manual. ♣

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