

UP front

As I write, the late morning sun from a cloudless blue sky makes me re-think my flannel shirt. The temperature is pushing towards 75. But my iPhone warns that a near-freezing 33 is less than a week away.

Things are changing fast. I intended to grill outside last night, and it was plenty warm to accommodate my plans. But when the time came, it was dark. Who wants to wrangle a plate of chicken in a lightless courtyard? Not I, so I activated the oven and the grill remained covered and undisturbed.

Standard time is an ill-chosen name. It typically runs about four-and-a-half months, while daylight savings time stretches for nearly twice as long. How is the “standard” thing more the exception than the rule? Also, there is nothing standard for me about waking before 6 and struggling to fall back asleep. And my resting heart rate, which has toggled between a daily average of 53 and 55 for most of the year, is suddenly 56. It might not sound like a big deal to you, but you’re sane.

A few days ago, I “asked” Jenna to order “the Christmas Card.” A task that is more complex than it sounds. It requires negotiation (with the kids) and iterative design work. Seventy-five and sunny and I’m worried about getting these things in the mail. Irrational? Maybe. But it’s a cruel condition of time’s unsympathetically relentless march.

Two months ago, Penn State and Clemson fans couldn’t wait for their journeys to a possible national championship to begin. Those dreams are long dead, and our Skinnie football pool is approaching the end of its rope, too. Today, I chose the games for our second-to-last regular season installment. Find it on page 34 and enter before you’re out of chances until next year.

Our next issue will come out a few days before Thanksgiving, and then it’s a sprint to 2026. I remember when I was a kid: The idea of the year 2000 seemed

impossibly abstract. Like a space-age fantasy. As vaguely theoretical as colonizing Mars. No more worth worrying about than machines that think for themselves. Funny how life compels us to recalibrate.

More than a quarter-century past the unimaginable, I hope I’m healthy when the ‘50s roll around. For a long time, “the Fifties” has unequivocally conjured nostalgic but tangible images of drive-in theaters, black-and-white TV, and the nuclear family ideal. Those things will be as peculiarly distant vagaries as a petticoat (popular in 1900) in 25 years.

It’s getting colder and darker by the day. And the tendency is to root for a return to warmth and light. But there is warmth and light available now, at the winter solstice, and always. As I age, I remind myself to savor the moments that I once anxiously hoped to pass. A long plane ride. A stack of paperwork. An hour on a treadmill. A conversation from which I can’t escape. There’s a natural impulse to want to fast-forward to whatever is on the other side of these things. But these things, stacked on top of themselves, represent a big chunk of a life. And, until proven otherwise, we only have one (life). So, we must relish every minute, no matter how we account for them – standard or daylight savings time.

There is nothing standard about the human experience. Time is a precious gift, to be treasured one day at a time.



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