

Daylight Savings Time (DST) is bass-ackwards.

I have been thinking about this lately because it's winter, and it seems that almost everyone in Southeastern Ohio suffers from some form of "seasonal affective disorder" (SAD). Simply put, we all get a little depressed because of lack of sunlight.

All my life I had heard that DST was conceived and instituted to somehow "give the farmers an extra hour of daylight." Well of course that makes no sense at all. Most farmers that I know (and I grew up a farm) operate by the sun, rather than the clock. You know, "up with the chickens" and all that business. So it wouldn't matter if the sun rose at 5:00 AM or 8:00 AM, that's when the farmer is going to start his workday.

I understand that challenging DST is a radical position because it was first suggested by that great thinker, Ben Franklin. How dare I challenge an idea promulgated by such a revered figure as Benjamin Franklin? After all, Franklin was the inventor of the flexible urinary catheter, bifocals and the lightning rod – all good things. But he was also a staunch Puritan, kept slaves and fathered an illegitimate son. Hmmm – not so good.

Well, it turns out that Franklin never did anything more than talk about DST. And it turns out that "modern" DST was really first proposed in 1895 by George Hudson, a New Zealander who collected bugs and wanted more daylight in the summer to catch more bugs. There is a solid reason to reconsider DST.

In the U.S., DST was officially adopted in 1918, and has had its share of proponents and opponents over the years.

So I did an Internet search on "why do we have daylight savings time." At the top of the search results was this statement, "One of the biggest reasons we change our clocks to Daylight Saving Time is that it saves electricity." That sounds suspiciously like nonsense.

That article goes to state that, with DST, less electricity is required for lighting and appliances late in the day. To which I respond, "What?" This seems to be predicated on the assumption that in the winter we will just give up and go to bed at 9:00 PM, probably because we are so depressed at all that darkness.

Instead of our present system, I propose that we should set the clocks ahead in the winter and back in the summer. For many Americans, I would argue that a better scenario is one in which we minimize the "daylight differential" at the end of the day. I think it is depressing to drive home from work in the dark, and to spend the entire evening in the dark.

So imagine that we set our clocks ahead in the winter, thus making the mid-December sunset at 6:00 PM rather than 5:00 PM. Following that same logic, if we set our clocks back in the summer, sunset in mid-June would be at 8:00 PM rather 9:00 PM as it is now. Thus the "daylight differential," the difference between summer sunset and winter

sunset, would be just two hours! Under our present system, the daylight differential is obviously four hours.

I can already hear you braying “yes, but the sun would not rise until 8:30 AM in December.” Guess what? I don’t care. We’re just trading our long daylight differential to morning instead of evening, and I am okay with that. I will probably be at work anyway.

Moreover, based on the logic espoused by the definitive source known as “the Internet,” wouldn’t we actually use less electricity in the winter for lighting if it got dark an hour later?

Hey it’s the 21<sup>st</sup> Century! Maybe things have changed enough since 1918 to reconsider this DST thing again.