

Who asked for this?

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I don't know about you, but I find that the older I get and the more our world grows ever-more topsy-turvy, the more I find this question coming out of my mouth. Maybe I'm becoming more curmudgeonly as time goes on, maybe I'm becoming more practical, or maybe it's a matter of simply becoming blunter, but here it is.

In recent weeks, particularly as the calendar has flipped closer and closer to this week's U.S. Presidential Election, I've found myself asking that very question with more frequency than ever before, often followed by the question, 'Who is this for?' or 'Who benefits from this?'

By the time you read this, the polls will be closed in America ? and one can only hope the ballots will have been fully counted and a victor declared by that time as well ? but it's not very likely one will be able to retire these questions soon, but this line of questioning is not only related to political events here at home and abroad.

It can also apply to some of the more mundane things we live with every day but rarely question.

When we look at our national polls, for instance, we know we're going to have an election sooner rather than later ? and despite the Federal Liberals dipping significantly in the polls, often coming second or third behind the NDP, many Canadians hesitate to consider a New Democrat-led Federal government, gravitating instead towards the two parties that have, in various iterations, governed this nation since Confederation in 1867.

Is it simply a matter of habit voting for the Conservatives when you're miffed at the Liberals and vice-versa when the Conservatives are caught in your proverbial crosshairs? A clinger-on to the long-since-passed idea of the Liberals being Canada's so-called 'National Governing Party'? An idea that this is just 'how things are done'? Or, in the case of Ontario, a philosophy I know is still alive and well in certain segments of my own family circle, that it's somehow unfathomable to consider an NDP alternative because of something that happened at Queen's Park nearly 40 years ago?

We have no shortage of political options in this country, yet we often stick to the paths we know, whether it is out of conviction, habit, or tradition. Who is that for and who does that benefit?

When it comes to our national identity, we often play into tropes that seem to emanate from people who are outside our country looking in.

I don't know how many times I've rolled my eyes at American friends who gleefully mention they chose so-called 'Canadian Bacon' as their breakfast protein of choice, to pick just one example, despite the fact there is no such product in this country. Or those who continually point out how 'nice' we are no matter what life throws at us. I think we can all agree that that's far from the truth. That we all say 'about' and like linguistic touchstones, despite the rich diversity of regional accents in this country. That we collectively say 'sorry' far more than our counterparts in other parts of the English-speaking world.

Well, that last one might hold some water, but I think the other ones are stereotypes we simply roll with either out of expediency, an effort not to burst the bubbles of others, or simply out of tradition. After all, there is some marketability to be squeezed out of these tropes, even if they are quite inaccurate.

Maybe that's who and what these tropes are for.

Whether I agree or disagree with the aforementioned tropes, or some of these odd traditions, others do have some sort of purpose when you scratch the surface. Still, however, there are some customs and traditions we still live with that have outgrown their

original intent and still stick around with little to no practical purpose.

We all experienced one of those things on Saturday night and Sunday morning when we once again went through the rituals of taking our clocks, that is those that don't do so automatically these days, and setting them back an hour.

Because, who doesn't love darkness at 4 p.m., right?

?In 1895, George Hudson, an entomologist from New Zealand, first proposed the idea of a two-hour time-shift so he could have more after-work hours of sunshine in the summer,? says University Canada West. ?In 1915, the German government began brainstorming ways to save energy for battle during the First World War. During this time, they needed their citizens to reduce the use of artificial light and conserve scarce resources like fossil fuels. Their solution was to have more daylight during working hours by pushing the clocks forward one hour in springtime. It was believed that adjusting the time would encourage people to use less energy to light their homes and reserve important resources for the war.

?In 1918, the Canadian government formally introduced Daylight Savings Time as a way to increase production during wartime. With the end of the First World War, the federal government ceased Daylight Saving Time, but resumed the practice during the Second World War. During the Second World War, Daylight Saving Time was used all year round in Canada.?

Times have changed. We have the ability to set our alarms earlier if we want to enjoy a bit more sun during the dark winter months, monitor our energy use, and more ways than ever to curb it, yet Daylight Savings Time persists.

Who is this one for?

Well, it's certainly not for the workers at all those wartime munitions factories we have across the country. Nor is it for farmers of any level of tech adoption; after all, if you have an alarm clock to set, you're golden. If you still start your day when the rooster crows, you're set, too, because he doesn't give a damn what the clock says.

?When we spring forward, we lose an hour of sleep and we're also moving our social clock away from the sun, which our body wants to follow. So, it's like we're making ourselves an hour jet-lagged every day. Your body doesn't immediately adapt to that and can actually lead to some negative health impacts,? says York University Professor Patricia Lakin-Thomas, who studies the molecular and biochemical basis for circadian rhythmicity.

Lakin-Thomas says Daylight Saving is shown to contribute to higher numbers of car accidents, heart attacks and strokes and workplace injuries.

?Ideally, we would all follow the sun, scrap our clocks, and do what they did in the Middle Ages, before we had regulated clocks, do what farmers do, and get up with the sun. People in cultures that don't have electricity don't bother with clocks. That would be ideal. We can't do that, but we can get rid of Daylight Saving.?

Indeed.

I'm still at a loss at who Daylight Savings still serves ? and, while it ain't exactly broke, if there's no purpose, there's a lot of room for change.