

A Neutral Dimension

By Pete Clark

Time is not my friend and time is not my foe. Time, unlike flowing water, is a river that cannot be dammed, but it may have cataracts. I cannot control the flow of time but I can condition myself to create parcels in my mind to harness its relentless restlessness. Day following night into the vastness of the universe creates the basis for partitioning each day into segments and provides the model for time to be mapped out in three hundred sixty degree units which can be repeated into infinity.

When I was very young and my head was even emptier than it is now, time dragged itself through my existence at a snail's pace. Things that were boring lasted forever. When we moved into Central Wyoming and I was enrolled in the Third Grade at Pavillion, it took forever for me to lose the status of an out of town interloper and become just one of the kids in the class. The only way to make time fly was to play hard or wander foreign lands in a good book. The only deadline I had to meet without a reminder was to be on the roadside when the school bus arrived to pick me up. Back then sometimes people would attempt to make time my enemy. During the Weekly Reader Tests an artificial barrier would be thrown up, limiting my time to finish the test. It didn't work. I always finished early.

As I approached Junior High in Shoshoni, time began to move a little faster and things were less boring. The truth is that time did not speed up, there was much more information bouncing around in my head, making the passage of time more transparent and even more unappreciated. I continued to stuff things into my skull and grouse about having no science classes before I reached high school.

High school was a different situation. Besides my studies, athletics became a part of my life. There was a lot going on those four years and time flew by. I worked hard to learn sports like football and to keep my grades up. I graduated Valedictorian of my class, but there were only twenty of us, so that was no great achievement. All through high school I stayed busy during the summers working seismograph out of ten towns in Wyoming, Montana and Utah.

When I entered college, time was put into packets for attending classes, studying, working and sleeping. Dead Week, before Finals Week was the spoiler. During Dead Week I had to bend time to my will to keep going until the Finals were history.

Time is most critical when I am severely injured or ill, but it is still not my foe. Time does me the favor of letting me know that I had better get moving if I want to keep breathing. Now, in my dotage, time really flies. Laundry day has arrived again and the clothes from last week's load haven't had time to dry.