



Meridian Passages

Central Irish Edition

March 17, 2017

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Central Pacific Edition

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In the Zone

Elgen Tells More Than You Wanted to Know About Time

There is a direct but unconnected relationship between the measurement of time and the world in which we live. Daily time is tied to the movement of the sun, but time standards are a human construct. Believe it or not, the United States did not have official universally accepted time zones until Congress passed The Standard Time Act of March 19, 1918, and that was just 9 years before I was born. Yikes! I'm nearly as old as our times zones in the United States!

In the centuries when the world was believed to be flat, and it was thought that there was nothing but water to the west between Europe and China there was little transportation or commerce between the few people then on earth, and little need or desire to keep track of time. The sun came up, and the sun went down, and for those living so went the days of their lives.

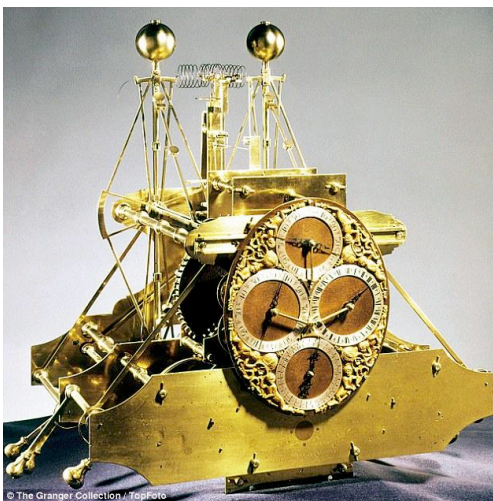
Marco Polo, Christopher Columbus, Magellan, and several other adventurers discovered there was a very large world out there that could supply things that would add wealth to their countries' coffers. This immediately stimulated transportation to acquire the wealth overseas that could be had for the taking, and ships in the oceans needed a standard means of telling time to be able to navigate precisely across those oceans to access that wealth.

Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) was established when the London Royal Observatory was built in 1675. It provided a standard time connected to the stars that ships needed so

they could navigate across the oceans to provide the means of commerce. That spawned the need for clocks that were able to keep accurate time aboard ships in order to calculate longitude. The first useful marine chronometer was invented by John Harrison in 1761. His story is told in the book *Longitude* by Dava Sobel, a classic tale of the founding of an accurate chronometer for ships. Another excellent (and more technically accurate)

source is *Plotting the Globe* by Avraham Ariel.

Except for ships at sea, there was little need for a standard time zone as most people in the United States and around the world were happier to have their time controlled locally. Communities of any size had their own observatories that would measure exactly when the sun was highest and everyone would then set their clocks to 12 o'clock noon. Locally it worked great and everybody was quite content with it.



Harrison's First Marine Clock, H1, 1735

Even at seaports around the world the local observatory's time worked very well for the ships in the harbor. Before ships carried radios, most major ports in the world had a ball like the one in Times Square (used on New Year's Eve) that could be seen from almost anywhere in the harbor. At noon every day the harbor city's local observatory would countdown to the handler of the ball so that it would reach the bottom at exactly 12 o'clock noon. If a ship's navigator knew when the local time was exactly high-noon he would know what his longitude was, and vice-versa.

Decades before the U.S. Congress ever assigned the official time zones for our country the railroads had already found out that each city having its own special time was unworkable. So in the latter part of the 19th century the railroads divided the country into railroad time zones with most of the borders

continued...

Plan of the Day

March 17, 2017

0530 Est. REMUS recovery

0900 SEA School, Ops. Ctr.: Bryan.

1000 Daily Progress Meeting: Ops Ctr.

1600 Nauticos All Hands: Ops. Ctr.

Mark Dennett

AUV Jockey

Mark Dennett is a research specialist and AUV operator for the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. He's from Massachusetts and has lived on Cape Cod for 43 years, the same length of time he's been working for Woods Hole. Mark spent most of his career in the biology department, and has made several trips to Antarctica working on icebergs. He helped collect water to look at growth rates and carbon cycling of "small stuff," and he helped with ice coring and collecting microbes that



live in the ice. He was also a part of the *Titanic* project, helping to survey the debris field. Amelia's Electra is not the first plane Mark has searched for — he was at sea for the successful Air France project as well. In fact, Mark has been out on all but one of the REMUS 6000 trips for WHOI. Just that one time he stayed home when his son and daughter-in-law had twins.

Mark has two sons, one daughter, and a very supportive wife. He was able to announce on this trip that his 9th grandchild is on the way, due the end of August! When he's not on the water for work, Mark likes to be on his boat fishing or

vacationing with family at their place in Maine, which it turns out, isn't far from Cap'n Joe!

— Marika Lorraine



...continued from page 1.

passing through the railway stations of major cities.

In 1883 on November 18 each railroad station clock was reset as standard time noon was reached in each time zone. This became known as "the day of two noons." Detroit was the last major city to leave its local time zone. On the boundary between zones, the city adopted Central Time in 1900 and finally settled on Eastern Time with the rest of the state in 1916, two years before the congressional act that ended the confusion for good.

During the early part of the 20th century various countries accepted

the GMT system with (usually) regional even-hour offsets, though there are some exceptions that use a half-hour offset and even a few locales with quarter-hour offsets. Nepal was the country last to join in 1986 with an offset of 5 hours and 45 minutes.

I have not mentioned the use of UTC (Coordinated Universal Time) which is "Z" or Zulu time, and will save that topic for the next time we meet. — Elgen Long

MERMAID MARCH MADNESS

Stay tuned for exclusive updates and check results against your bracket. *Passages* is the ONLY paper on board with this inside

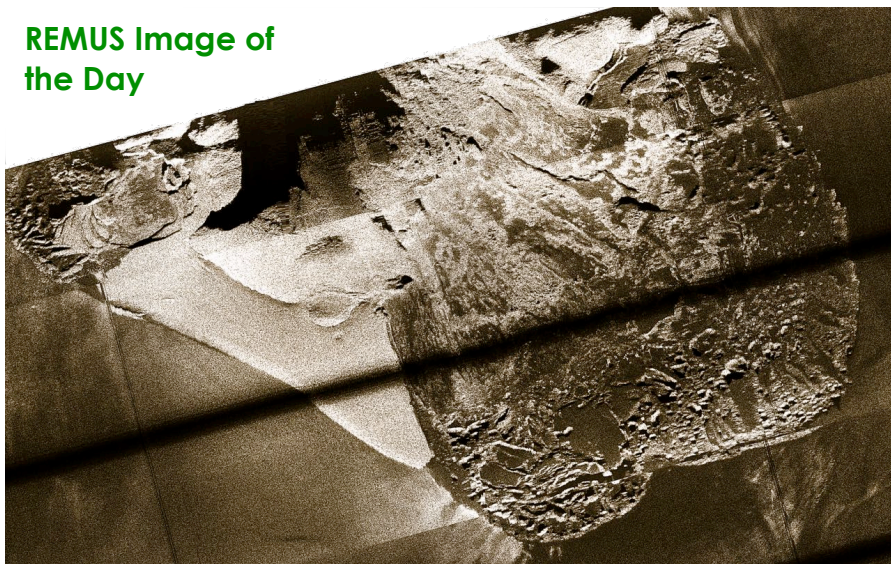
scoop. Don't believe the rumors you are hearing about an upstart Howland Enquirer On-Line.

LATEST RESULTS: Round Zero (Play In) is complete with "MacGyver" McCoy in the early lead with a perfect 4 points. "Spider" King and "Sonargirl" Morris are close behind with 3 points. The First Round is underway!

YES! IT'S ST. PADDY'S DAY! Get your green on! You don't have to be Irish to have fun with it! Pieter will serve green cake and Irish jokes are encouraged. Green beer will (sadly) not be served, but who knows, maybe it will be a day for the Luck O' the Irish? Is "Earhart" a Gaelic name, by any chance?



REMUS Image of the Day



This dramatic sidescan image mosaic shows an underwater landslide with material flowing from higher elevations on the upper left to flat terrain below. The feature is about a mile across and lies at a depth of about 18,000 feet.

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