

# THE STRAIGHT SHOT

*The Matter with Time* by Jess Hardin

My problem with time isn't that reality sometimes requires our punctuality. As a drummer, I can fully appreciate the importance of timing, and know that without it there could be no rhythm, little music and less dance. And when it's time to meet someone, it matters to me that we both arrive close to the arranged hour. While I object to the very concept of punching a time-clock every morning at some automated workplace, I am sufficiently self-motivated and cause-oriented to voluntarily put in 16 hours at the computer when my needs or aims seem to require it. Nor is my problem with time, as I have heard certain other folks lament, that there is simply too little of it. There's enough time for what matters most, any-time we aren't either directionless or sold to servitude, or expending our precious finite moments on the shallow or superficial, rote or irrelevant, banal or boring, pitiful or pointless.

My objection, to be clear, is with the way that time is generally viewed and spent, and how little of what is meaningful and worthy gets sufficiently focused on and savored by a civilized humanity given to distraction and dissipation. And my problem, if I really have one, is that I can never reliably tell someone either the day of the week or hour of the day. While I recall a great detailed weaving of past events in my long and diverse life, I can't always tell you where they go on the calendar. Sometimes all I can say is that it hap-

pened, it was significant, it was part of a chain of events, and it had results and lasting effects even if not wholly discernible from my subjective vantage.

For example, I well recall the news as a child when the U.S. administration was choosing to insert the first American combat troops in Vietnam, with a General's assurance that it would only take a single battalion to set things straight... and it is such examples of past underestimation that comes to mind when I hear the latest similar pronouncements coming from places like Afghanistan. When I hear about the latest curtailment of our personal liberties and constitutional rights, it somehow melds with President Woodrow Wilson's repression of dissent prior to our entry the first World War, and the crushing of our supposedly guaranteed rights to free speech and a free press by the so-called champion of freedom Abraham Lincoln. Moments of extraordinary beauty past and present, heroic acts in the name of love – even the fall or rise of wondrous life forms throughout the changing eons – all seem to ride the crest of my awareness together. On one level I recognize the singularity of these events and can even pin an accurate date on some of them, yet I experience them more as repeating and revealing patterns rather than as being isolated and fixed on some linear graphic timeline. My sense of time is a sort of eternal now in which all things, even memories, history and tales, are

somehow seamless. As an historian, I write about the fascinating details and important lessons of the past, and yet for me it remains very much alive, as significant is some ways as the problems I have to deal with this morning or the temperature of the day.

To the degree that I have issues, it is not with any perceived practical drawbacks to my timeless sensibility, but with the ways that time is chopped up and regimented, used to control us, unceremoniously bought... and tackily brandished. I am on aesthetic as well as philosophical grounds opposed to gaudy bling wrist-wardens, advertising an acceptance of plastic as well obsession with the tick-tock passage of our mortal lives. I dislike alarm clocks in general, but especially those that wake us with a yelling radio announcer or songs we didn't personally pick out, and those that mechanically imitate bird songs or purport to start our days right with a "gentle Zen-like gong that gradually increases in volume." I usually wake up mighty early on my own, before even the real birds have had a chance to go off, and long before most laborers besides hookers, truck drivers and doughnut bakers are up and started on their tasks... and if not, I still don't like a contraption from China prodding me out of bed.

Needless to say, our natural rhythms aren't really the rhythms of a clock at all. This doesn't mean that we can all show up at the job at whatever hour we feel like it, and it can be helpful when the afore mentioned alarm let's us know it's time to get up and get ready for Spring planting, herb gathering or that long awaited fishing trip. But real life is more like a series of overlapping circles than digits on a dial: cycles of childhood, adolescence and maturity. Cycles of night and day, waking and sleep, enthusiasm and depression, marriage and loneliness, loss and bliss. And the only real time is always now. It's only here in the conscious present moment that we get rest and nourishment, do the good and necessary work or enjoy the well-deserved fruits.

"Now" is the only place where we actually taste the blackberry pie or locally grown peach. It's in the now that the chores are completed, the race run, the chorus sung. Even the sweetest of our recollections can become part of the vital present that is, after all, our greatest gift. Likewise, the problems and injustices of the world are unfolding at this very second, there for us halt, redirect or heal them. No matter what our clocks and watches say, it's always time to lend a hand, or say kind words to a saddened friend, to slow down enough to hear a special song, or to rally and respond to some unforeseen wrong.

The matter with time lies not in the marking of its passage, but in how deeply its noticed, and how purposefully its spent.



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## Marine Board Meeting Scheduled For October 13 In Bend

The Oregon State Marine Board will hold its next meeting in Bend on October 13, at 9 a.m. The meeting will take place at the Riverhouse Conference Center, Cascade Room H. This quarterly Board meeting coincides with the Marine Board's annual post-season Boating Law Enforcement Conference held each year in Bend.

The Board will consider initiating rulemaking on various topics from waterbody regulations to new program implementation rules. Agenda items include:

Possible reconsideration of Proposed Rules for Boat Operations in Multnomah County -Ross Island and Holgate Channel slow-no-wake rules.

Requests to initiate rulemaking to prohibit motorboat operations on Cheadle Lake in Linn County and motorboats/floatplanes on Waldo Lake in Lane County.

Consideration of proposed rules for aquatic invasive species prevention program. Initiation of rulemaking for a moratorium on new boating restrictions.

Initiation of rulemaking to implement HB 2079 requiring the wear of personal flotation devices on whitewater rivers.

Consideration of boating facility grant applications/amendments.

The meeting is accessible for persons with disabilities. Persons needing some form of assistance to participate in this meeting due to a disability should contact June LeTarte at 503-378-2617 by Friday, October 9. Persons wishing to address the Board on non-agenda items may do so during the designated period at the start of the meeting.

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