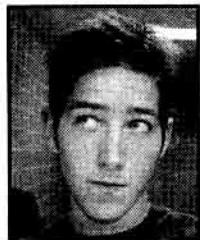


# Where *Has* the Day Gone?

by Chris Ladd  
MANAGING EDITOR

Two a.m. I've been trying to get to bed before two a.m. for the past two years, and I've come to the simple conclusion that it is impossible.



WHERE THE  
HELL IS  
WAYNE, ME

Something always keeps me from this aim, and I'm still not entirely sure how it happens. I don't watch television. I don't play

Snood or Solitaire or Minesweeper. Where is all this time going?

Great piles and stacks of time, unwieldy forkfuls of it, are fed to my snooze button. I love the snooze button, as a mother loves a son, and as my mother did to me, I spoil it. So much that I have to put my alarm clock, which houses the button, on the shelf across the room. I spend my mornings trudging zombie-like out from underneath the covers, stumbling over clothes and papers and bits of trash that litter the carpet, slapping haphazardly at the top of the alarm clock until I somehow connect with the long, flat oval of a snooze button, turning again back around to kick and wade through the same clothes and garbage and papers, and inserting myself once more into the very center of my bed. It is in this manner that I finally learned my multiplication tables for the number nine. That is, even though I set the alarm for eight o'clock, it's usually

8:36, or 8:54, four and six snooze-button-whacks respectively, before I grab sleepily for my towel and find my way, squinting, into the shower. Every nine minutes, I have another chance to wake up, another chance at the towel, another chance at beginning, but usually just another chance to practice the jaunt across the room and back again without stepping on anything sharp.

So, because of this button, I am invariably late for my morning class. Always. On the weekends, if I want to enjoy the day, I can't. If I can get up or not, I won't. Because of this button, I am not a morning person.

I suppose that's not entirely fair. Even with no snooze button, even with trained animals to roust me precisely at eight each morning, even if I woke up when I planned to and made it into the sunlight before it began to fade, I would still have a problem. I would be absolutely exhausted.

The college schedule, the college attitude toward time, is the problem. College gives us a distorted picture of what a 'day' really is. When they made time, when they decided where to put "noon" and "midnight" and all the hours in between, they went on a few basic assumptions.

The light times—the times when the sun shone—would be the day. These light times would be ours to till, plant, tend, work, reap, frolic, revel, play, muse, strive, and ponder in.

The dark times—when the sun left, and the screen of the blue sky darkened enough to let us see the

stars—would be the night, and we would sleep in it. Dark times were also perfect for tomfoolery, courting, hooliganism, surprises, secrets, and

for the laws of physics that govern the rotation of the earth and the sun and the stars, this indifference to the schedule of the one non-florescent

It becomes harder and harder to seize the day if, by the time I wake up, the Carpe Diem in question has swum almost beyond my reach, and I can do very little but throw my arms tight around the slick scales of its tail fin, only to watch the thing wriggle and wrench itself free, turn and consider me a moment with flat Carpe eyes and wide, gawky Carpe mouth, then go once more about its Carpe business without giving me another thought.

what they refer to in the bible as "laying down with".

Just to make these official, we marked a "middle" of the light time, and called that noon, and a "middle" of the dark time, and called it midnight.

But more and more, and especially at college, noon marks the very beginnings of our days. Midnight is nowhere near the midpoint of our respective sleep cycles. In college everything is backwards.

Three-thirty a.m. On any weekday night, that's the pivot between late and early. Between night and morning. More than eight hours after the sun sets, we call it a night. And this is normal. This insane disregard for the natural order of things, for the cycle of sunrise and sunset,

light source on campus is entirely, unapologetically normal.

Weekends are a little trickier. A Friday or Saturday night can easily bleed into four or five o'clock the following morning. Five-thirty, then, is the point of no return. At half past four, you can still get away with a midnight snack. An hour later, you may as well call it breakfast.

Until recently I've gone along with all this. I lived into the night and hid from the sun in the morning until snoozes eleven through thirteen. I rose late and worked even later. I did all this, and still do, but I never knew why. Why these insane hours? It becomes harder and harder to seize the day if, by the time I wake up, the Carpe Diem in question has swum almost beyond my reach, and

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I propose a rollback. Where is the logic in spending so many of our waking hours in the dark, or under harsh, eye-reddening artificial lights? There is nothing in the late-night agendas we've created for ourselves that couldn't be rescheduled. We're not doing anything that couldn't be changed.

The traditional party starts at ten. Three or four freshmen show up at ten-thirty, the rest come by quarter to midnight and everyone is out by four. Why? Why not begin right after dinner? Why not begin right after lunch? The three freshmen that show up at ten-thirty, they've been ready to go since five, nicely dressed and hunched in front of their computers, checking the away messages of everybody they know for clues to the earliest they could be fashionably late. They will come when they are told.

Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe there is some logic to the hours we've chosen to adopt. But for me, at least, my nights and mornings, owing to my schedule and snooze button respectively, drag later and later the longer I'm here. In time, maybe I'll puzzle together a master plan to fit more "day" in my days. That is, if I can get up early enough to figure all this out.