

Time has always kept us prisoner.

Ever since grade school when I would look behind me to the American Company IBM (itty-bitty minute) wall clock that ticked away ever so slowly I would wonder how time ruled what we did.

"Time to take out your reader," the teacher reminded us after casting her all-seeing eyes to the back of the room. A selected student would then stand at his or her desk and read until the next name of the teachers' list would be hollered out.

Only in the school room would time drag. Once we were released from the classroom would time "fly." We would sedately run out of the room heading for the playground or to our friend's house to call home and ask permission to stay and play. "Be home at 4 o'clock," says mom who at that time in my life was a stay-at-home mom like all the other moms. How I would know what the time was, having no wristwatch, is still a mystery.

Time is a mystery in itself, even now. Not one of the commandeering clocks in our home reads the same hour and minute of the day. Our bedroom clock is set a half-hour ahead of the Livingroom Grandfather clock. The time difference gives us plenty of time if we over sleep, I guess. However, when we remember the difference, we subtract the half hour and turn over for a snooze time. Crafty of us.

Time rules, though: "Time to get ready for bed. Time to brush teeth, time to say our prayers, time for lights out."

Time could be our enemy or Time could be our friend. Daylight Savings Time is a time to change. We don't need a clock, though, for that reminder. A look at a Calendar tells us when to move the hands of a clock, change the digital time ahead or behind. "Spring ahead (one hour or Fall Behind (one hour). It is a must, otherwise the extra half hour on the bedroom clock is worthless and will make us move quicker. "Time to hurry. We will be late. No time for that (arguing, crying, doing homework) you will be late. Like the rabbit in Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland." We will be chanting "I'm late, I'm late for a very important date."

Time is free. We cannot eat it; we cannot wear it. However, time is always surrounding us like the wind on an Autumn Day; swirling around us, buffeting our hairdo, ruffling our nerves. Time can be our enemy, or time can be our friend. Time can keep us on schedule, but only if we guide our time to our needs.

Autumn is the season to watch the leaves in our beloved trees give us a colorful show. With the happy comes the sad. We lose an hour soon. Remember: we fall behind in time, again. On Nov. 7 we will notice less time to sleep, less time to fix meals, less time to quilt. We will feel deprived for a while but we will adjust. Remember to change every time piece that doesn't automatically slip into the season. Telling Time to remind us to quilt is taking charge.

We can become the Time Keeper, not the prisoner.

Lana Russ