

DISCUSSION CONCLUDING AAS 11-681

Frank Reed noted that Steve Allen's idea allows for the ability to maintain all sorts of unusual "minority" time scales. Allen noted that the capability is compatible with most Unix-like operating systems, and Microsoft has its own alternative methods of implementing such information. Neil deGrasse Tyson noted that if this option works smoothly and bug-free, then it seemingly allows any municipality to operate whatever kind of time scale offset they might want; he asked if this option opens the whole world up to going back to local mean time. Allen responded that some areas may already be there, citing Winterhaven, California as an example; it keeps Arizona time due to its proximity to the larger community of Yuma. Terrett noted that airlines need consistent local time tables for the development of schedules. Allen said that the International Air Transport Association maintains official tables correlating airports with time zones. Terrett wondered whether people would resort to using whatever the airlines used for time out of convenience, in much the same way municipalities adopted the zone times of railroads in the 19th century. Tyson noted that the airlines would only care about the declared time of the airports and not the time kept by adjacent communities. Terrett clarified that if the situation became chaotic for communities then they would likely fall back to some convention like the zone time of the local airport. Allen noted that 130 years ago St. Louis had six times because six railroads operated through it, each tied to a different meridian.

Reed noted that when standard time was adopted across the US it was major news which some local municipalities resented for philosophical or religious reasons. George Kaplan recommended a book by O'Malley "Keeping Watch—A History of American Time" that records some of the resistance to time zones, with daylight-saving time (DST) being another contentious issue.¹ McCarthy noted that astronomical observatories were funded by railroads for a long time to observe sidereal time and convert it to solar time. Reed commented that astrologers were interested in cataloging all the different local DST rules before US standardization. Kaplan remarked that he would like to know about any old records or catalogs related to DST rules because the US Naval Observatory gets many requests about how local time was maintained in specific locations.

REFERENCES

¹ O'Malley, M. (1990), *Keeping Watch; A History of American Time*. Viking Penguin.