

Putter Day 2022!

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 01/02/2022

Once again, Putter Day (my fave ersatz holiday) returns. I think of New Year's Day as the wrapping paper for Putter Day, a day dedicated to trivial and pleasurable accomplishment. While everyone else offers lip service to, 'New year, New you'. Truly devoted putterers are making things happen. The 'to-do' list that languishes all year long? Putter Day is the day to tick off a few items. Come sundown on Jan the first, we putterers get to enjoy our ceremonial hands-on-hips power stance, offering our traditional Putter Day exclamation to all. "My work here is done." It is a glorious moment for small accomplishments, self-actualization and fulfillment.

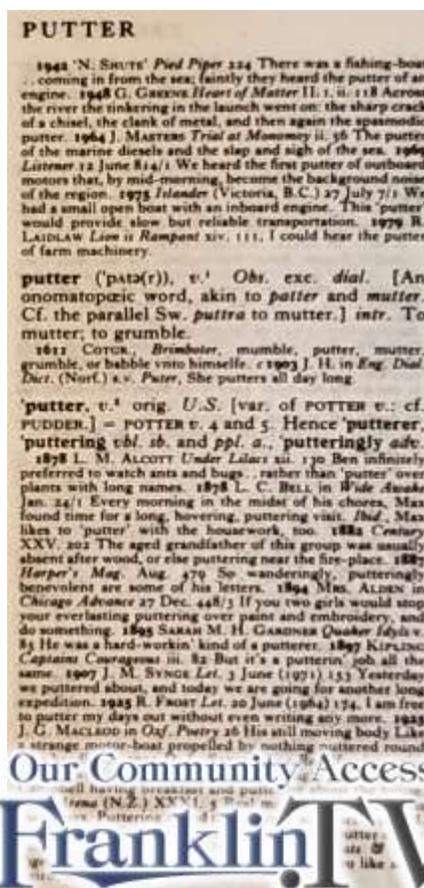
This year? Putter Day lands on a Saturday. Many of us putter on Saturdays. This can minimize the festive 'can-do' spirit of Putter Day. To make the most of the moment you can begin puttering on Putter Day Eve and then continue right through Sunday. You can also treat yourself to some nice hand tools at Home Depot. (Putterers never have enough hand tools.)

Finally, there are some who think that Putter Day has something to do with golf. Not so. Putter is a verb. It's not a golf club. I checked the ultimate authority on the English language - my OED, The Oxford English Dictionary. In sum, through four very detailed reference columns, OED describes puttering as the pleasurable doing of simple tasks. Putter Day - a holiday of purpose and progress.

May 2022 smile warmly, kindly upon us all.

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Merry Mid-January?

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 01/09/2022

Now that the holidays and their distracting festivities are in the rear-view it's time to face the music. (dramatic soap-opera style organ stinger) Winter is really here. Pop a Swiss Miss Cocoa pod in the Keurig and break out the mini-marshmallows. Cozycurl up with your fave creature comforts until Punxsutawney Phil (our fave creature) says it's over. All eyes (and hopes) rest on Gobbler's Knob come Feb 2.

Valentine's Day?

A blip on the romance radar.

President's Day and the faux excitement of Fantastic Car Deals?

Mercantile noise.

I gaze out the window with a wistful longing for Spring while light snow wafts its hypnotic dance. It looks postcard perfect - for minutes at a time. A seductive illusion in the first glimmer of dawn.

Last month's merry has lost its luster for many. This is when merry matters more. Resolved For 2022: Keep some merry throughout the Winter and across the year by rendering small bits of kindness here and there where possible.

Go on. Engage. Perpetrate frequent, deliberate, wanton, random acts of kindness.

In so doing, we can make 2022 a wonderful year, perhaps even in spite of itself.

May 2022 smile warmly, kindly upon us all.

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Finding Ben Franklin, Part 1

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 01/16/2022



Our town seal is uncommon. It features a portrait – a likeness of Ben Franklin. The town of Hamilton, MA followed suit. Town seals appear in many places. The visual challenges of portraiture are many. Every portrait artist understands the most essential challenge; producing a likeness of the subject that is at once accurate yet flattering. How to cast someone in their very best light. That can be a reach in some instances.



*You look so wonderful in this light.
Too bad you're so seldom in this light.* – Groucho Marx

In attempting to meet the first visual challenge (flattery), the mechanics of reproducing a town seal as that – a notary seal – pose the second challenge that comes with limited resolution and clarity. This is where things can turn ugly (literally).



God is in the details. So too, is good portraiture that faithfully captures the uniqueness and nuance of a person's likeness. When photography first emerged in the early 1800's it was considered a bane on the art world. In short order, artists discovered its great value as a tool of their work. They could document their subjects from several viewpoints and have an ever-patient record of all that nuance and detail to work from.

Unfortunately, photography came too late for Ben and the other founding fathers. This leaves us with only the interpretive record of their portraits. There are portraits, and then there are portraits of portraits – and so on – reinterpretations.

If there is a signature within every human face, it is often in the eyes. It's where we gaze when we see others. It's how we interpret their emotions and thoughts. If the eyes are indeed the window to the soul, I seek to understand Ben Franklin's soul.

This is where my journey of portraiture begins.

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WFPR-LP, FM License Renewal

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 01/23/2022

On December 27th, 2021 Franklin Community Cable Access, Inc., dba Franklin TV and Franklin Public Radio as the licensee of wfpr-lp, on 102.9 FM in Franklin, filed an application with the Federal Communications Commission to renew its FM broadcast license. Members of the public wishing to view this application or obtain information about how to file comments and petitions on the application can visit the FCC's website: www.fcc.gov/stationsearch, to find wfpr-lp's filed application. For more information, please email info@wfpr.fm or call 508-541-4118.

Pending license renewal, the public may file a Petition to Deny or an informal objection against the renewal. Positive comments about a broadcaster's service may also be submitted. Persons may respond via the FCC's database, LMS on the web. Alternatively, persons may submit paper copies to the Commission. For paper copies, please include an original and two copies of any filing. An additional copy of any filing may also be mailed to:

Franklin.TV
23 Hutchinson St.
Franklin, MA 02038.

All USPS First Class Mail, Express Mail and Priority Mail should be addressed to:

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW,
Washington, DC 20554
Attn: Audio Division, License Renewal Processing Team

Additional Suggestions for Filing. To help the staff expeditiously associate a Petition to Deny, informal objection, or positive comment with the proper license renewal application, the pleading should prominently identify:

The radio station's call sign: WFPR-LP
The station's facility ID number: 194829
The license renewal application: 0000177961

This information is available in the LMS Public Search on the Commission's Web site, and should be listed on the first page of your submission. The filing must also state whether it is a Petition to Deny, Informal Objection, or a Comment. If a cover sheet is used, it should be attached to each copy of the pleading. Failure to include this information may delay associating a pleading with a renewal application.

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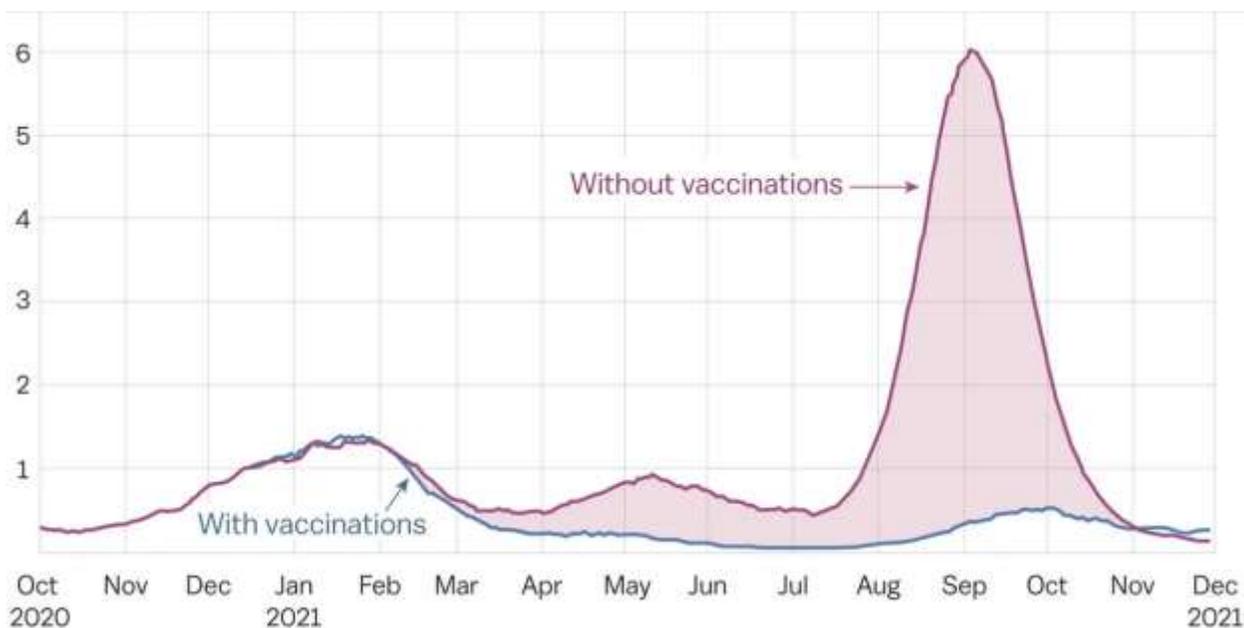
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What Vaccination Does

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 01/30/2022

When and how did 'vaxx' become a four-letter word for some folks? The vaccine has been fully approved for regular use for some time now. The stats bear out its effectiveness. Easy-Peasy. What's not to like? Sign me up. This graphic tells the tale of what vaccination does. It's dramatic. (I'm vaxxed/boosted - and masked.)



There is no logic that justifies avoiding the vaccine. Unfortunately, we are now seeing how anti-vaxx disinformation and vitriol spreads beyond covid to affect the uptake of other vaccines; notably the flu vaccine as well as the decades-long, customarily mandated shots for preschoolers. For a list, search: MA preschool vaccinations. (Lots of shots.)

Anti-vaxxers argue that it's about their personal freedoms. To that point - I ask a simple question. Who is truly more free: free of risk and worry? You? Or me? Vaccination - it sets you free.

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Finding Ben Franklin, Part 2

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 02/06/2022



Few would question Ben's place on a postage stamp. As an international figure, he showed up on stamps in many countries. Still does. The challenge? Faithfully rendering Ben's likeness in a small, resolution-limited form of print. (BTW: Kudos to Canada's nod to the U.S. Mint's image. Nice, eh?) Yes, all of these are our 'Benny'.

Some look little better than a police sketch.
(If you see this man, call our hotline.)

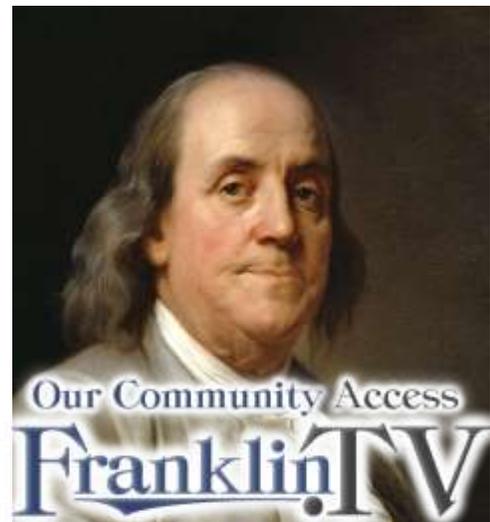
What do these versions of Ben have in common? Most draw upon the Duplessis 1778 portrayal. They also exhibit the difficulty of faithfully recreating Franklin's likeness, particularly with respect to his signature eyes and gaze. Such is my self-imposed challenge for our TV Town Seal.

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Finding Ben Franklin, Part 3

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 02/13/2022

Who/What/When/Where/Why? Let's start with 'who'. The obvious 'who' is our subject, Ben himself. The less obvious, yet equally important 'who' is the artist who best portrayed him, Joseph Duplessis.

Given Ben Franklin's international stature, there were several artists who painted him at various points in his life. Some interpretations are difficult to recognize as Franklin. Fortunately for us, Duplessis was a very talented, detailed realist.



Clear evidence of his immense talent is displayed in his own self-portraits. He rendered the left in 1798, a few years before he died. He is reflective, starkly honest. His earlier 1780 image shows his ability to *illuminate* his subjects in a most favorable light while maintaining a very high degree of cognitive fidelity. Duplessis could literally sell his talent by just standing next to his own likeness.



He deftly addresses two artistic challenges that are not always aligned with each other. "Will it look like me? Will it (I) look good?" He combines reality and vanity.

We in Franklin, MA 02038 were certainly not the first to set out on a quest to find Ben Franklin. The U.S. Mint faced the same challenge in its various designs for our \$100 dollar bill. They concluded that the Duplessis work was clearly the best reference for creating their own engraved iconic interpretation. The Duplessis image - it was right on the money.

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Finding Ben Franklin, Part 4

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 02/20/2022

Our Who? Benny. What? On our money. When/Where? The Ben Franklin \$100 goes back more than a century. Prior to 1914, the \$100 bill featured several different portraits, including 6th President James Monroe and Union Admiral David Farragut. One predecessor stands out from the rest.

His name was Senator Thomas Hart Benton, aka 'Old Bullion', who championed the gold standard. He and Andy Jackson both favored 'hard money'. (Remember All the gold in Fort Knox?)



Ben first appears in 1915 in profile. This engraving was rendered by Thomas Holloway from a 1777 bust of Franklin created by Jean Jacques Caffieri (1725-1792).

Only six years later we see Ben in his forward pose. This 1921 engraved image is believed to originate from a 1777 portrait by French painter Anne-Rosalie Bocquet.

In 1966 and again in 2006 our Benny was again featured more prominently. These most recent engravings were carefully wrought following the Josef Duplessis portraits. Ben's portrayals by Duplessis and Caffieri are remarkably similar in their interpretations of Franklin. Their efforts at expressing realism are the how and why we can recognize Ben Franklin - primarily through the icons on our money.

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Finding Ben Franklin, Part 5

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 02/27/2022

As noted at the outset of my quest for Ben, there was no photography. However, there was an optical imaging device, known as a 'camera lucida'.

The Renaissance masters had proto-cameras of a sort. They just didn't have film. Today, it is widely believed that the portrait masters used a lucida to project their subjects onto a canvas. This enabled them to sketch-trace the subject's likeness quite accurately, then paint a life-like portrait over the tracing. Et voila!

The camera lucida also could project the original tracing as a template onto a second canvas for final painting. The artist could then paint several fairly identical portraits from the same sketch. The camera lucida also enabled an impatient (or important) subject to keep the sitting brief. Quick sketch in hand, the artist was free to paint, and the subject was free to go.



There is visual evidence that Duplessis used a camera lucida in his work. (No shame in that.) In the three extant Duplessis portraits there are consistent optical anomalies. Whether Duplessis traced Franklin's likeness or not, he was working directly from the posed subject. A camera lucida enhances the fidelity of Franklin's portrayal.

The renaissance portraits that regale us to this day are very much like visual magic. And, like the magician says, "It's all done with mirrors."

The camera lucida. Still in use to this day. Want one?

<https://drawlucy.com>

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Finding Ben Franklin, Part 6

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 03/06/2022

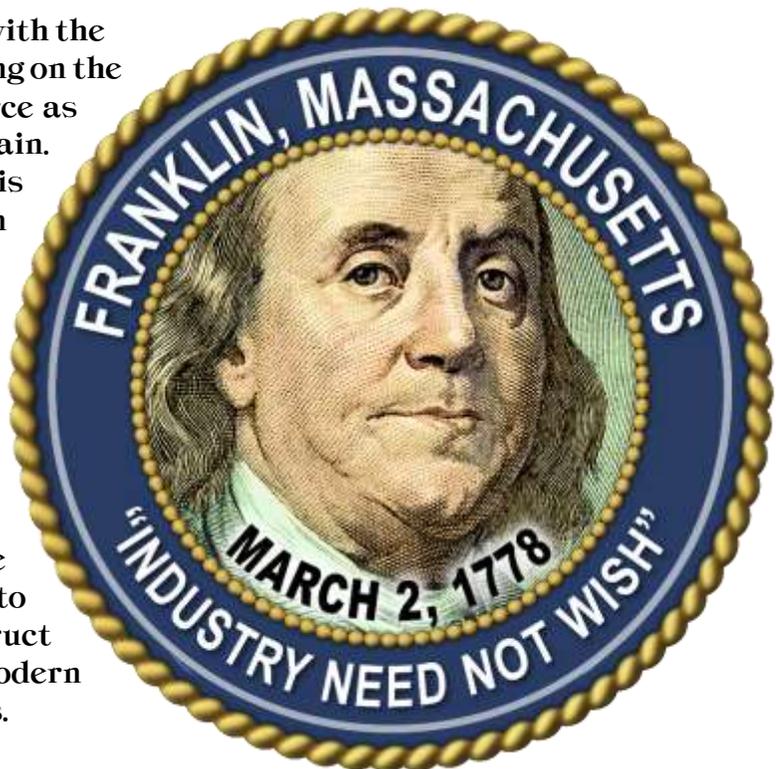
The Review:

Our original quest for Ben in 2012 was simply to address the need to reasonably reproduce his likeness on signage and TV by creating a proxy of the Town Seal. When blown up on an HDTV screen - not a visually pleasing representation.



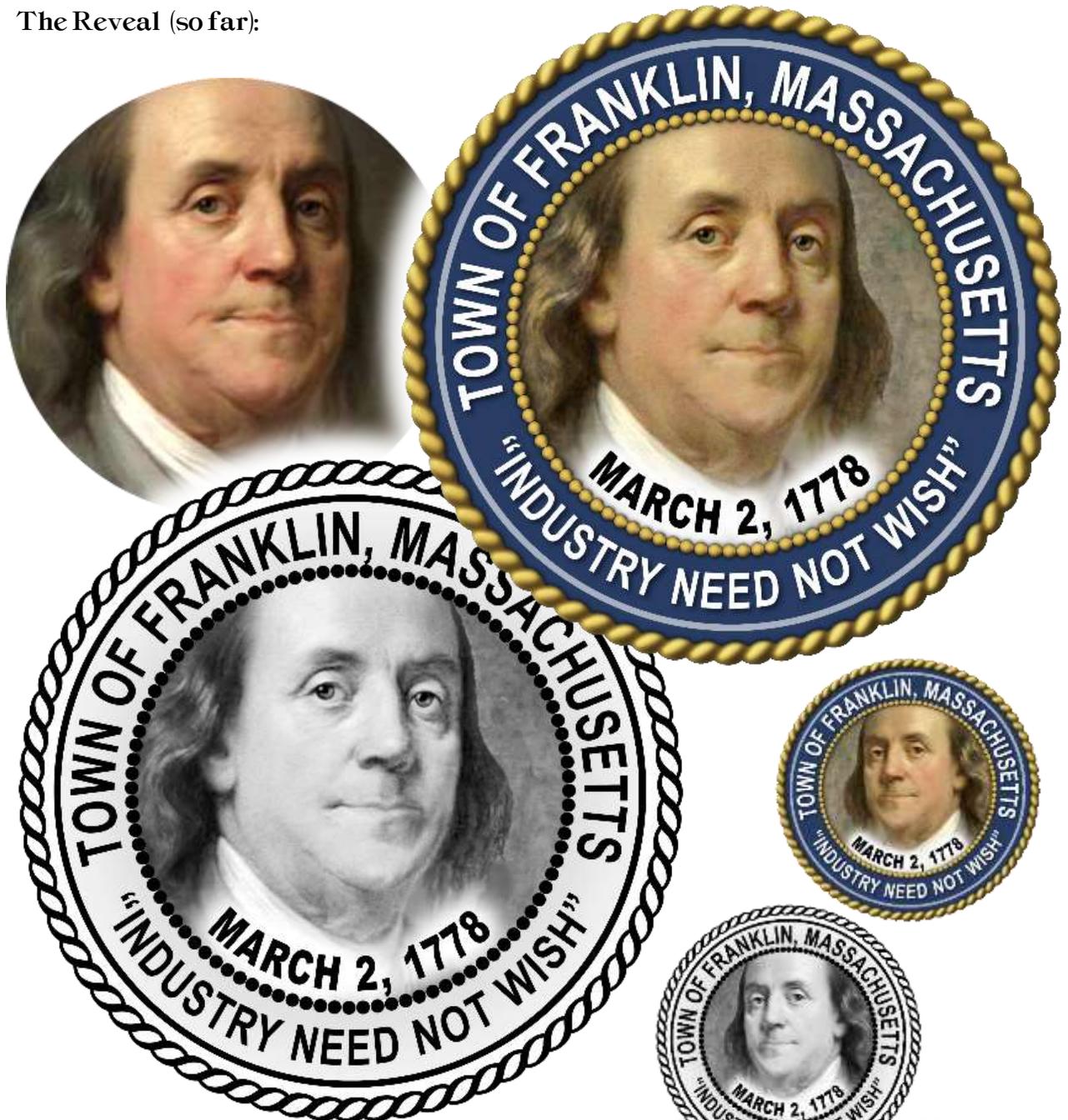
Our approach was simple; work with the most public image. Ben's engraving on the hundred dollar bill was our source as an image in the public domain. However, the U.S. mint's printing is intended to make reproduction (counterfeiting) difficult. Our 2012 engraved image (right) has these reproduction limitations. When we reduce its resolution or its size it falls apart.

Our 2022 Ben quest took us to the source of the Mint's version - the Duplessis portrayals. We started with a blank canvas - to reinterpret, repaint and reconstruct Ben's likeness from scratch for modern digital publication in many forms.



Our modern interpretation of Ben Franklin is slightly younger. His image has been reilluminated, and his countenance is a bit less formal, more approachable. Our last step will be to reduce all of this detail and nuance to the limits of a notary seal.

The Reveal (so far):



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The Daylight Returneth!

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 03/13/2022

It's Springtime! Daylight Savings! The Vernal Equinox! All is goodness and light. Christmas aside, this is the most optimistic time of the year for yours truly. Who doesn't revel in the welcoming light and warmth of the lengthening days?

Back in February all the President's Day sales ads pitched us to '*get in on the huge, spectacular savings*'. um- Yubbut, inflation is over seven percent. What savings? Hard pass on that.

My optimism this year runs higher than normal, laced with quiet waves of relief. The horrors of covid are receding in the rear view (hopefully). We don't yet know the true personal, social, medical, financial and other costs that so many suffered over these last two years. It has not been an easy time. Let it be a time past.

This weekend - I do plan to, '*get in on the savings*'. Daylight Savings! I plan to enjoy saving as much daylight as I possibly can.

Next week? The vernal equinox, and the official astrological start of Spring.

A new time has come - to renew ourselves and our outlook; to reaffirm our grasp on our future endeavors, our plans, hopes and dreams; to re-open, not just our buildings and businesses, but to re-open our hearts and minds to each other, for we have all come through a time where fate was fickle, life was fragile, and we all felt - forlorn. Wallowing in that helplessness, many of us became angry. Feckless misplaced anger became a social poison. Let the Spring and Summer sunlight be the antidote. Save and savor all that daylight - from dawn's early light to twilight's last gleaming.

In my new normal . . .

How would/should you end that sentence? How will you craft your new normal?

For me? In my new normal? There is Sun-washed optimism - to be shared.

My new normal is filled with daylight. I have no time for hate or anger. None. I'm too busy - getting in on the savings.

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Our Normal Returneth ?

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 03/20/2022

After two years of covid we are working on reopening our studio. I say 'working on' for a number of reasons. Topmost? Things are not simply what they were in 2019. We are entering a new time. This new time demands new thinking.

We are facing more technical changes, and with those, more operational changes. We also have to carefully consider how our staff (God bless 'em.) can best balance a more flexible work schedule that now includes WFH. With our studio shuttered, they responded in time of covid-crisis to get out there and cover as many live civic, school and sports events as possible. That meant working many more random nights and weekends. They made it happen without missing a beat.

We geared up, building small, portable TV control systems as 'Flypaks' that enable us to originate live from wherever with minimal setup effort. Our systems were also designed to be Zoom-friendly. We installed new systems in Town Chambers for effortless Zoom integration there as well.

Our radio operation became totally remote, with up to a dozen volunteers working, conducting guest interviews and producing programs from home via Zoom.

Now we're headed back the other way, technically. We're opening up studios that have been shuttered for the most part. But, they won't be the same. They also must be Zoom-enabled. Our new normal brings new expectations. We also have to enable Zoom in the FHS auditorium, a very large venue with its own challenges.

The beginning of the pandemic forced us into technical overdrive for months in order to meet the challenges of TV and radio production in 2020.

Now, at the end of the pandemic in 2022 (hopefully) we need to rework our studios, our gear and production skills to integrate Zoom on demand - whenever, wherever. We also plan to work on integrating radio and TV programming where possible. Life in 2019 B.C. (Before Covid) feels like quaint ancient history. Now, in 2022 A.D. (After Disaster) our lives are filled with change.

The only constant in life - is change. - Heraclitus

Do we simply succumb to it, or - do we master it?

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Yes. It is – Complicated.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 03/27/2022

That was my hesitant, but honest answer. I was reluctant to admit it.



He looked at all the wires that were radiating outward in all directions from our equipment. The floor was littered with cables. These connected microphones, speakers, cameras, ethernet, computers, displays, intercom and so on. That's what motivated a bystander's question, 'Is it complicated?'

I had never been asked, so I was thrown for a moment. But, looking at the mess of wires, I had to admit that it was. It is. Such was my quiet epiphany.

We do what we can to minimize the complexity for our crew by customizing our equipment into configurable, flexible modules. These systems can be connected in different ways depending on need. Think 'digital Legos' that snap together to form whatever configuration best serves the event. Like nested Matryoshka dolls, our systems have subsystems within, and these also can have sub-subsystems. Today, our systems and simplified 'snapping together' (all the wires) continue to expand.

Ten years ago, it was simple. Bring camera and microphone. Record event. Leave. Lather, rinse, repeat. Simple.

What we do today? Not simple. Today, we are expected to cover civic events that are live and audience interactive via Zoom. We are expected to make engagement effortless – simple – for all participants. We are also expected to be consistently successful. These expanding expectations are reasonable enough in today's world.

Fulfilling them? It's complicated.

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Out With the Old.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 04/03/2022

It's my ten-year anniversary! Yay, me! (I guess I'm not the new kid anymore.) Wow! Where did the time go? It seems like only yesterday that I... (Wavy TV screen effect that takes us back to day one.)

My first Summer was a technical firefight to fix damaged, tired gear, and get our snowy Comcast channels cleaned up. We bought a building in the Fall and began our journey to modernize the facility. Old standard definition TeeVee cameras, videotape and DVD players, (remember VHS?) editing systems, audio gear, channel equipment and all the background stuff that made it all go - year-after-year, all of it was slowly being replaced with state-of-the-art, high-definition gear.

Out with the old SD stuff



In with the new HD stuff.



The images above are of the old and new Equipment Rack 15. It's a small-ish, 2-foot high bundle of gear that connects our main studio to Panther TV's control room in the high school. Yes, I know exactly what you're thinking.

"OOoooooh! Wow! OMG! What a huge difference. Srsly!"

Uh, huh! Drink it in and savor the moment - just like I did. Why? The old rack was the very last of the standard TeeVee gear to be retired, and the new rack completes our long journey to an entirely modern facility - streaming online 24/7 in Hi-Def. Retiring the last of the legacy gear was a nice moment to mark a decade of progress.

Now, if only we can get our Comcast and Verizon cable providers to do the same.

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Goings On. Going Forward.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 04/10/2022

'Shopping' for Shows

As we ramp up our post-covid studio activities we are looking for programming. If you think that you would like to pursue a TV program of your own, please don't hesitate to contact us. We make it easy. We promise. Now you can interview guests over Zoom - right from our studio as if they were seated right in front of you. That literally opens up a whole world of opportunity. Fascinating folks who would otherwise not have time to come to our studio from wherever can now 'stop by' for a virtual sit-down and chat.

Town Chambers - The Sound

We are aware of audience reports regarding noisy or scratchy sound during our coverage of the government meetings. We have been doing all we can to keep the microphone mixing systems in Chambers functioning long enough and quietly enough until we can replace them with new gear. What we need is very specific. Only 2 companies manufacture these devices. They are on back order, like so many other items that people can't easily obtain because of supply chain issues. We are also working on implementing a temporary system this week until we can install an optimal solution.

Graduation '22

This year FHS Graduation 2022 takes place on June 3rd. It's less than 7 weeks away. That time will hurtle by in a blink, so we start planning and prepping about now. Our latest HD equipment update that I mentioned last week is part of the preparations. We'll be fine-tuning and testing over the next two weeks or so. This year Franklin High is again conducting the ceremonies outside on the field. If the weather hints at rain then we'll return to the gym. Either way, we'll be ready.

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