

No turning back (unfortunately)

Tick tock. Back goes the clock. This is the season for setbacks. If all went according to schedule, we all set our clocks back an hour and daylight-saving time ended early this morning. It means schedules today will be a little off. Connections will be missed and appointments bypassed.

The “setbacks” of setting back are part of the autumnal ritual. They are also, in the grand scheme of things, pretty minor. Take a look at a sampling of history’s epic “setbacks” that make any clock cares this morning seem small.

– Steven Uhles, staff writer
– Illustrations by Nate Owens

1.5 TO 2.5 MILLION YEARS AGO:
Australopithecus fails to recognize the usefulness of a sharp stone and stick, leaving tool-making to Homo habilis. The rest, as they say, is human history.



B.C.



3200 B.C.: Egyptians dismiss the Mesopotamian wheel as a fad and spend the next 1,200 years dragging stuff around on sledges.

1070 B.C.: Samson gets a haircut.



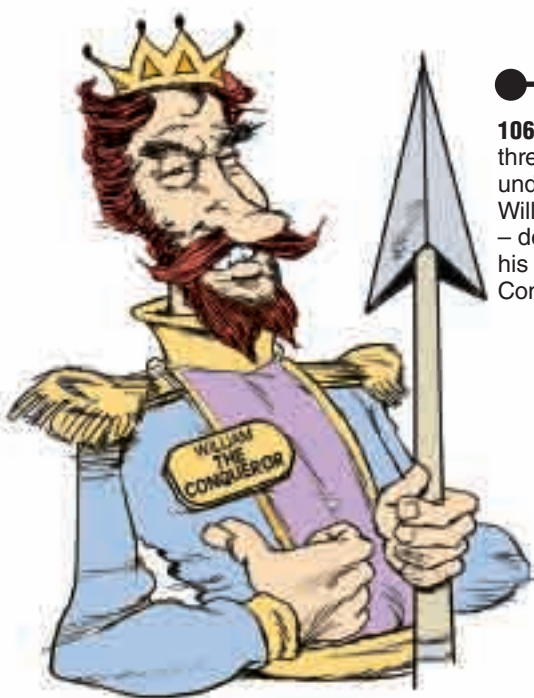
218 B.C.: Underestimating the mountaineering skill of elephants, Roman settlements in northern Italy dismiss Hannibal and his Carthaginian army's ability to cross the Alps.

79: Residents of Pompeii learn the hard way that seaports near active volcanoes are ill-advised.



A.D. 65: Rome burns. Nero didn't fiddle, but property values surely fell.

1066: Saxons ignore the threat of Norman invasion under the command of William the Conqueror – despite the fact that his last name was “the Conqueror.”

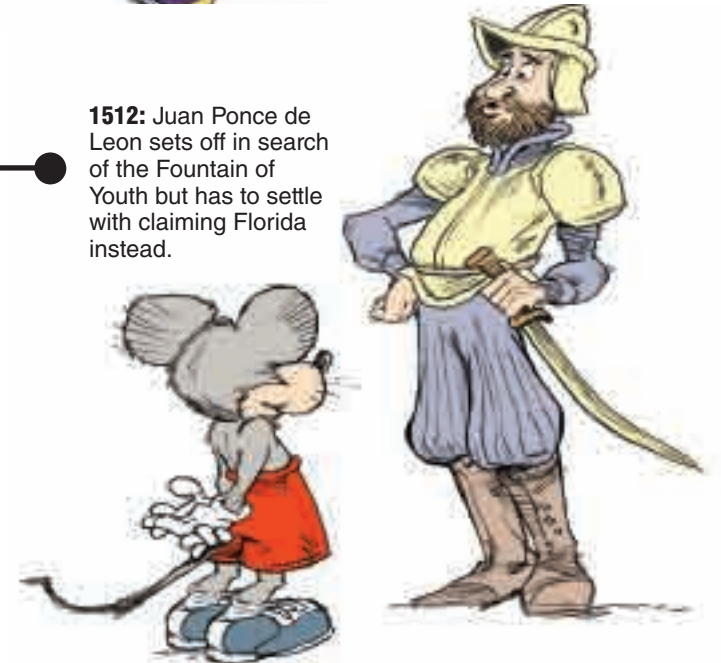


A.D. 1-1900

1478: The establishment of the Spanish Inquisition proves to be a public relations disaster.

1347: Black Death sweeps through Europe, killing one-third of the population. Nobody thinks to ask the rats how they are feeling.

1512: Juan Ponce de Leon sets off in search of the Fountain of Youth but has to settle with claiming Florida instead.



1536: Anne Boleyn discovers that her husband, King Henry VIII of England, has found an interesting new method of divesting himself of wives.

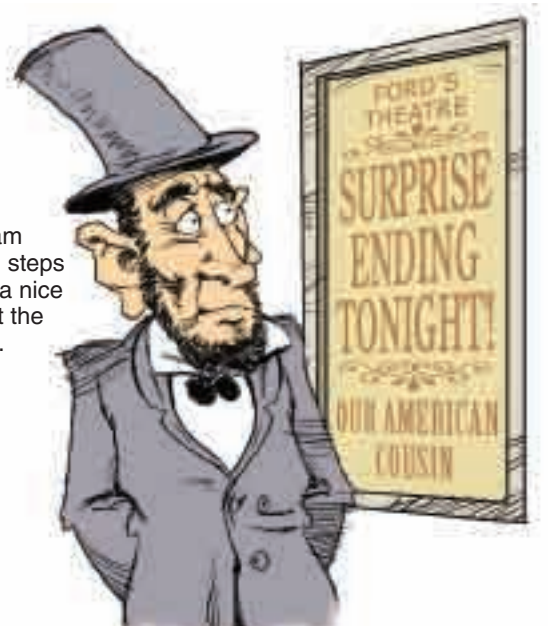
1620: The Pilgrims land at Plymouth Colony and are warmly welcomed by the locals. There goes the neighborhood.

1815: Napoleon decides the odds are in his favor and takes his army on a sightseeing trip to Waterloo.



1846: A wagon train, led by George Donner, tries to cross the Sierra Nevada range during winter. They become trapped, and as isolation starts eating at them, they start eating at each other.

1865: Abraham Lincoln steps out for a nice night at the theater.



1912: Iceberg 1, Titanic 0

1937: Amelia Earhart gets lost crossing the Pacific Ocean. Fred Noonan, her navigator, refuses to stop and ask for directions.

20TH CENTURY

1919: The Boston Red Sox sell Babe Ruth's contract to the New York Yankees. The Yankees become a dynasty, and the Red Sox won't win a World Series until 2004.

1957: Ford debuts the 'car of the future.' It's the 1958 Edsel.

1966: “Boys, I'd like you to meet my new girlfriend. Her name is Yoko.”



2000: Pets.com dissolves in the Internet stock collapse, leaving its sock puppet mascot all but unemployable.

1971: Richard Nixon installs secret tape recorders in the White House. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

