

It all started with a question: Why does the snooze on my alarm clock last for nine minutes?

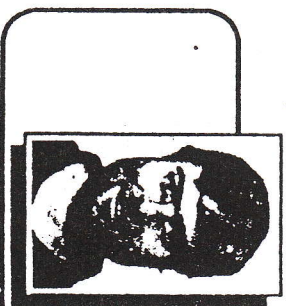
I consulted with some friends, and discovered that their alarm clocks, too, gave them exactly nine minutes of snooze time. I can only guess that the number nine was chosen under the same principle that stores price things at \$9.99—nine minutes doesn't sound like that much time compared to, say, 10. Such ingenuity minimizes snooze guilt and makes you think you're getting to work on time.

As much sense as that makes to me, I got a different answer when I called Sony, the makers of my alarm clock. I was told by a supervisor in charge of the alarm clock division at Sony's product information department that "research has been done on human sleeping patterns, and it was found that 10 minutes puts you into that deep R.E.M. sleep. So nine minutes is less disrupting."

Fascinating.

While discussing snooze with my buddy, Jay, he told me his snooze habits, and I feel they're worthy of mention, if not concern.

Jay shares a bedroom with Andrew, who has to be up for



Raparound

You snooze, you lose

By JONATHAN LESSER

work approximately an hour and a half before Jay. Andrew likes to snooze for an hour before he gets out of bed, so his alarm first rings at 6:45 a.m., waking both him and Jay. One half-hour after Andrew is done snoozing and out of bed, Jay's alarm goes off. Jay then snoozes himself, as he likes to do, slapping his clock every nine minutes for another hour. In total, Jay's night consists of about four hours of sleep and three hours of snooze.

Does Jay abuse snooze? I mean, having three hours of each day broken into nine-minute segments must have some side-effects. Does he have trouble staying asleep for more than nine minutes? Does he have a phobia of the number nine? Is Jay just bizarre, or is this snooze abuse affecting

large numbers of people in our generation?

Since nothing of any importance has yet to define the twenty-something generation (except that we're all confused), I decided that this snooze thing just might be it: the Holy Grail for all of Time magazine's hip sociologists. So I decided to do some investigating.

Sure enough, most people I asked like to snooze, except for one outlaw reporter who said he hates having to get up once a day, so why would he put himself through any more trauma.

My friends seem to average about three or four slaps to the snooze each morning.

Sonya, who hits snooze four times, for a total of 36 minutes,

says she does it because she's not a morning person, and it's too cold to get out of bed.

My friend Heidi says she is able to have the most incredible action-filled dreams in the brief nine minutes of snooze time.

Oddly, no one I spoke with said they use snooze occasionally, or just once in the morning. They are, for the most part, apparent abusers.

I like to snooze for about an hour each morning, and frankly, I feel somewhat addicted to it.

Curious if any psychological damage was being done to my friends and me, and no doubt to countless others who abuse the snooze, I checked with my mother, who is a certified psychotherapist.

"Uninterrupted sleep is better

than if you keep getting up and getting up," she said. "If you find yourself hitting the snooze bar more than three times, then you should set your alarm for a later time."

My mom also said that someone who snoozes instead of sleeping for the few hours before waking will be more irritable and tired throughout the day, and possibly even depressed.

"I wouldn't want to work with someone who snoozes for three hours," she said, "because they're cranky."

She also brought up the possibility of dangerous side-effects from interrupting your dreams. Who knows what might happen to someone continually stifling his or her unconsciousness with a snooze button? It could lead to chronic frustration or even to watching Melrose Place.

Now fully aware that snoozing can be hazardous to your health, right after I call my lawyer to see who I can sue about it, I'm going to go to Radio Shack to lobby for them to put warning stickers on all of their alarm clocks so we can prevent another lost generation.

Night's Dream

The getting of the Beaver Creek amenities proved a tad more difficult. Still, it came to pass this week by a unanimous vote of the Eagle County Commissioners, who saw safeguards in place regarding wildlife and open space as well as overall community support.

In both efforts, we congratulate the man who spearheaded each: Kent Myers of Vail Associates. It all leaves us to wonder what he has in mind for an encore.

Recently found out that one of my favorite teachers from my childhood died from AIDS last year.

Mr. D'Elia was my fourth grade teacher, and made that year one of the most memorable of my youth.

With my friends Ethan Cohan and Timmy Pastore, I used to sit in the back of the class while Mr. D'Elia taught us about the pharaohs of ancient Egypt.

The other fourth-graders in my small elementary school, who had Mrs. Ford, or even worse, Mrs. Bankas, always seemed to be doing math, while we were dancing in class to a 45 of Steve Martin's "King Tut" what seemed like every afternoon.

We listened to records after recess, which was always devoted to kickball on the blacktop. Mr. D'Elia is one of the few teachers I can remember who sometimes played kickball with us, smiling his friendly smile, as always.

In or out of the classroom, I can't remember Mr. D'Elia ever speaking a negative word. He liked everybody. He made school a fun place to be, and gave special attention to everyone it seemed.

I remember vividly from that



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Heroes should be immortal

By JONATHAN LESSER

year the biggest project of my fledgling academic career: a report, complete with an illustration, on someone famous from ancient history who I'd never heard of.

I chose the topic because I liked the guy's name: Pompey. I soon found out that he had nothing to do with the town destroyed by the volcano, which rendered me slightly confused. As my friends discovered whole books on subjects like Tutankhamen, the Great Pyramids, and Julius Caesar, I began to worry if I could find any information at all on this guy.

But Mr. D'Elia told me to stick with it. I found a paragraph here, and a mention there, all of which I photocopied until I had enough information on this semi-famous

Roman general to write about 200 words on his greatness in my neatest, largest script handwriting, which I was given highest honors and gold stars for once a month by Mrs. Quigley, the elderly, shaky handwriting teacher who remarkably had a capital "Q" in her name, the hardest letter in the alphabet to script.

I remember thinking how boring the information in my report was. There was so little out there in the Todd School library that I couldn't pick out the good stuff. I had to use it all.

After my report had gone through all the stages leading up to the final draft, Mr. D'Elia gave me a 5-by-7 inch piece of yellowed oak-tag. I drew faint lines in pencil to keep my writing uniform, and then, crayon in hand, I diligently copied my boring re-

port onto one side of the card.

The result was aesthetically pleasing, as was most of my work, but the worst was yet to come. Never much of an artist, I now had to draw a portrait of the ancient hero on the other side of my card.

To this day, I can see that drawing in my head. It was like a cross between a stick figure and a cartoon character. I tried so hard to make the eyes look real, and the nose, and the ears, but still it came out looking like Garfield the cat, the only thing I could draw well.

When final-draft day was over, Mr. D'Elia collected everyone's reports. He came in the next morning and handed them back. Iaminated.

I don't know how he did it, but my flimsy little report was no

longer a report: it was a project. Something chic. Some thing lasting, to hang on the fridge, and then file away somewhere to save forever. Heck, my ugly portrait even looked pretty good behind that plastic sheen.

What a great reward for a nine-year-old who labored for what must have been weeks: a frame to show off, professionalize, and ensure the safety of his work. My Pompey was immortal, as heroes should be.

I don't remember the grade I got on that project, but I sure remember working on it, and I sure remember bringing it home to show my mother.

I spent a lot of enjoyable hours learning in Mr. D'Elia's fourth grade classroom. The living room in back that he set up was a great place to hang out and listen to records or hear stories. The pets he kept in the room were wonderful.

I know I learned a lot that year, and it may not have been mathematics, but I feel it was much more important. By example, Mr. D'Elia taught me the importance of fun in learning, of taking pride in your work, of friendship, and of caring for everybody.