

# Road Romp 2004

Day 4: Sunday, 13 June 2004

## Fock 2: Entering Centric Time Zone

Interstate 10 across West Texas is a long, dry, hot, empty roadway, surrounded by long, dry, hot, empty, sage-dotted prairie -- for hours on end. This being my first time through these parts, I was able to approach it with the well-this-is-sure-different mindset and try to tell myself that I enjoyed the uniqueness of the experience. That worked on the first drives through Kansas and Nebraska back in the mid-80's, but it wasn't a long lasting effect this time.



It was just about 2:00 when Moby stepped back onto I-10 West. The southern border of New Mexico, en route to Carlsbad and its caverns, was some 425 miles away. A whole lotta nuthin lay between here and there, so the best thing to do was just to settle in and enjoy the ride.

There truly was very little to see in West Texas. Momentary chuckles came from town names on the infrequent exit signs, like Welfare and Comfort. Which town would you rather live in? The hills were occasionally bigger, but the ground was much drier, and large (i.e., eight-to-ten feet tall) scrub bushes appeared in clusters, like college guys around a keg.

Signs advised us to "Drive Friendly." This was pretty easy, since there wasn't a darn thing to be unfriendly about, or anyone to be unfriendly to. The scenery wasn't spectacular, but it was nice to be able to see *far*, and you need tall hills to do that. Florida doesn't have any of those, and most of this trip so far had been in low zones.



At one point, I determined that my Road Mode needed a little bit of a fine tuning, so I took out my fine tuning fork and let a chilly breeze do its work. Just as I did, to my total surprise, Moby went zipping by mile marker 515. Mysterious ways, indeed.



Between exits, in all those miles and miles of prairies and fields, there was absolutely no sign of human habitation. There were quite a few cows, but not vast herds of them. They were pretty much scattered here and there across the landscape. Thin, wide-ranging, wire fences marked territories and kept the bovines boundaried, but there weren't

any ranch houses in sight anywhere. Where do all those cows live? Where do they get their mail? Who squeezes their titties?

And I-10 just kept on rolling. Some of the rises began to look more like flat-topped mesas rather than round-crowned hills.

Only small signs broke the awesome isolation. Stark Creek was, appropriately, bone dry. Exit 420 was Baker Road. I thought that was pretty funny.

There was green to be seen, but not much. It was damn impressive that there was so much nothing.

A time check told me it was about quarter-of-four. Time passes slowly when there is so little to see. The electronic tunes were entertaining, and I slumped deep into Moby's cushions, and let my mind wander around.

It's funny how we will all so readily say "quarter-of-four," or "quarter-past-six," or even the occasional "half-past-ten," yet nobody ever refers to thirds, fifths or sixths of an hour:

*It's a fifth-to-eleven, Beatrice, we better get going to L.A.*

*I'll meet you at a third-past-twelve, and bring your own squeegee this time!*

*Be here in a sixth-of-an-hour, or I'll eat all the pudding myself!*

The third-hour, being a nice and tidy 20 minutes, would seem like a perfect reference. And the sixth-hour, for 10 minutes, should be used all the time, damn it!

*He's trying to become the first runner in John Wilkes Booth High School history to run the 2-Mile in less than a sixth-of-an-hour!*

*Once I bashed the third-hour barrier for 5K, there was no holding me back.*

I do agree, though, that the fifth-hour is a bit funky. I mean, how many times do you refer to 12 minutes?

I guess the problem is in the confusion with counting. "Third-of-an-hour" is OK, but third-hour sounds like three o'clock, or maybe three hours after you started something. Same with fifth-hour or sixth-hour. If we take that huge effort and say "of-an" in the middle, it's all clear and good, but that's a lot of extra work for the average American. When you use "quarter-hour" there is no mixing that up with "fourth-hour." And when you use "half-hour," you don't get confused with "second-hour." That would really blow people's minds though, wouldn't it? *Second-hour? Which is it? A second or an hour? AHHHH!*

I use "third" and "sixth" sometimes, though, just to watch people squirm. "OK, I'll pick you up at a third-of-seven." Now, if I had said "quarter-of-seven," no problem! But this "third" shit messes people up. You can see them doing the division in their heads, and they're never sure if they have it right because they always have to clarify, "you mean, twenty of seven?" So, I'll reply, "well, either that or six-forty, whichever comes first." God forbid I would have said, "I'll pick you up at two-thirds-past-six." Yikes.

I reminded myself about Centric Time (CT). CT (Centric Time) is a concept that I first considered many years ago, and I'm sure many people have checked it out on their own. It's not complicated. In fact, just like the metric system, it's a lot less complicated than the system we have in place.

CT is time of day put on base 10. Ten hours in a day, 100 minutes in an hour, and 100 seconds in a minute. Simple. Can't get much simpler, in fact. One day = 1000 minutes.

Our current system, which dates back to sundials and degrees and stuff like that, gives us 86,400 seconds in a day (60 x 60 x 24). CT requires 100,000 ticks. We don't have to go out and buy more time; we just have to redefine the Second.

According to Merriam-Webster, our current "second" is: *the base unit of time in the International System of Units that is equal to the duration of 9,192,631,770 periods of the radiation corresponding to the transition between the two hyperfine levels of the ground state*

*of the cesium-133 atom.* OK, hoss, where the hell did we come up with that one? Who sat at the big conference table and said, "OK, I have one that nobody can refute...." Cesium-133? Can I get that at CVS? 9.2 billion? And what is a "period of radiation?" How do we measure that, as 1/9.2-billionth of a second?

That definition sucks. Sorry, scientists, but that is a very bogus def.

Let's revamp the concept. To get from 86,400 standard seconds – I don't even want to think about how many rad-periods that would be! – to 100,000 CT seconds, we just tweak the second a bit. Shorten it by 13.6% and now you can fit 100K of the little suckers into your day. The Second would actually become an even *more* precise unit of measurement!

Basically, you start your day at 0.00.00 (midnight). There is no need for that "a.m." and "p.m." crap anymore. That's frigging dumb anyway. Like I can't tell the difference between 4:00 in the morning and 4:00 in the afternoon. Duh. At least military time drops that nonsense. Still, their "nineteen-fifty" always makes me stop and subtract twelve, which is a pain.

So, the first second of the day is 0.00.01, if you want to use hours, minutes, and seconds. It could be 0.0001 if you just want to use hours, or it could be 0.01 if you want to use minutes. Any of those is fine with me. I prefer the minutes thing myself, just because a computer would freak out over the "xx.xx.xx" double-decimal, and we already pronounce the hours and minutes like a four-digit number anyway. Just like we say "three-thirty" for 3:30 now, we'd be saying "three-thirty" for either 3.30.00 or 330.00.

One o'clock CT would be 1.00.00, or 100.00 minutes, or 1.0000 hours. High noon would be – anyone? anyone? – five o'clock, or 5.00.00 (or 500 minutes, or 5.0 hours). Why? Because it's the 50% point of the day, Einstein.

We could even come up with new terms! That would be exciting. What they heck, if we're already fucking with people's minds by changing the ancient concept of time measurement, we might as well totally befuddle them by calling an hour a "mac," a minute a "ken," and a second a "zie."

The day, of course, would change at the tick-over from 9.99.99 to 0.00.00 (midnight), so you would never even need that tens column on your digital clock.

In fact, the easiest thing of all would just be to skip the concept of hours (macs), minutes (kens), and seconds (zies), and just say the day is 1000 kens (minutes) long. One unit of measurement, from 0.00 to 999.99. What time is it? 500. What time will you be here 675. How long can you stay? About 80 kens. What should I set the microwave timer for? 0.67.

Simple.

Anyway, Here's a quick chart to help you convert:

<u>Current System</u>	<u>Centric Time</u>
12:00 a.m	000.00
1:00 a.m.	041.67
1:26:24 a.m.	100.00
3:00 a.m.	125.00
6:00 a.m.	250.00
9:00 a.m.	375.00
10:04:48 a.m.	420.00
12:00 p.m. (noon)	500.00
12:21:36 p.m.	515.00
3:00 p.m.	625.00
3:01:26 p.m.	626.00
4:20 p.m.	680.56
5:15 p.m.	718.75

<u>Current System</u>	<u>Centric Time</u>
6:00 p.m.	750.00
6:26 p.m.	768.05
9:00 p.m.	875.00
11:59:59 p.m.	999.99
0.87 seconds	1 zie
1 second	1.1574 zies
1 minute	69.44 zies
10 minutes (600 sec.)	6.944 kens (694.4 zies)
1 minute, 26 sec. [1:26]	1 ken (100 zies)
1 hour (3600 sec.)	41.67 kens (4,167 zies)
2:24 (2 hours, 24 min.)	1 mac (100 kens)(10,000 zies)

Naturally, this would affect how things were timed as well. The World Record in the marathon would be 83.67 kens! Imagine running under a mac for a marathon! Damn.

The WR in the mile would be 2.604 kens! That sounds fast, man!

The world's fastest human would run the 100 meters in 11.32 zies, though, which does sound slower than 9.78 seconds.

Things that normally take five minutes would now take 3.472 kens. You could now call out from the shower, "I'll be out in 5 kens!" and you'd buy yourself a little time.

Hour-long TV programs would have to be adjusted. Most, I assume, would just extend out to 50 kens (72 minutes). Half-hour shows would go to 25 kens (36 minutes). A good long movie would last 1 mac.

The BEST thing about Centric Time, though, and the main reason for making the change, would be the ability to use time in calculations. This base-60 thing is the bane of any track coach or distance runner. If you run a mile in 5:17, what should your average lap be? Well, years of dealing with it just pops the answer into your head, but young runners always just let themselves be baffled rather than deal with conversion to seconds, division by four, then subtract 60, keep the remainder. They would just give up, and say, "you tell me, Coach."

With CT, a kid runs that mile in 367 zies, so simple one-step division gets you a nifty 91.75 zies-per-lap answer.

You run a 3:22:36 marathon now, and you want to figure out pace per mile? Rosta ruck, Ruzer. With CT, it's a breeze: your 140.69 'thon would be 5.37 kens-per-mile. A 5 KPM (kens per mile) pace would get you a 131 finish time.

And, of course, when you're on a ramack, and you leave one place at 9:48 a.m. (4.08) and arrive at the next at 2:36 p.m. (6.08), you can tell in a blink how long it took you (2 macs).

Don't let it befuddle you, because it actually is **very** basic. The conversion to CT sounds damn daunting when you start from the second and work your way up. But when you look at it from the other end, it's rudimentary math. A day = 1.000, and any point in the day is a simple three-digit percentage. Convert whatever current time you have into hours and divide it by 24. For example, 1:30 p.m. is 13.5 hours into the day. Divide 13.5 by 24, and you get a .562 percentage, or 562 kens. Your day is 1000 kens long. No problem.

Of course, the die-hard 420 people would lament only having one of those a day now.