

# 2-2-22

## Groundhog Day Doubled

Hello my friends,

Today is Groundhog Day. It is always Groundhog Day on 2-2, (the second day of the second month), but in this 22<sup>nd</sup> year of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that double 2 is doubled with a 22. So today it is 2-2-22 and 20 days from now it will be 22-2-22. So, instead of once again, this month it is twice again time for me to send you an **arithmodigmaphilia message**.

I started these almost-annual messages at the turn of the century on 01-01-01. When we passed 12-12-12 I had to look other places for such dates. In 2020, I found two dates.

Last year, for various obvious and less obvious reasons, I did not send an arithmodigmaphilia message to my friends.

But I did get messages **from** my friends who alerted me just in time, so I could get a photo of that amazing moment in January 2021 when the time showed as:

the 21<sup>st</sup> second of  
the 21<sup>st</sup> minute of  
the 21<sup>st</sup> hour of  
the 21<sup>st</sup> day of  
the 21<sup>st</sup> year of  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century

My thanks to Jeanne, Francesco, Jock, Luc, Gail, Bernard, Ed, and other alert arithmodigmaphiles who keep me updated.

Some of the dates I do spot by myself—including the two this month. I noticed this 2-2-22 date right away, but I have been looking forward even more eagerly to the irresistible date of 22-2-22 which occurs on—wait for it—TWOSday.

I've already got some ideas for that day, but first (or second) I want to share some thoughts with you about 2-2-22. The delight of discovering upcoming arithmodigmaphilia dates is accompanied by the challenge of finding a connection that makes interesting reading for you and a learning experience for me.

The second arithmodigmaphilia message was on 02-02-02. To read what I said 20 years ago about Groundhog Day (and read some of my other writings), just go back to The Castle Library where you downloaded this PDF.

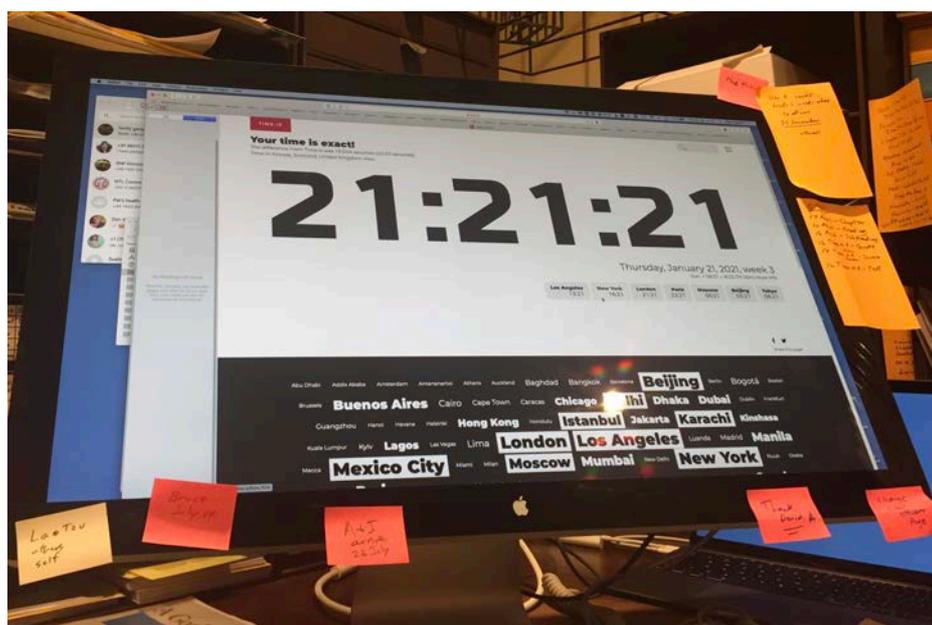
I also wrote about Groundhog Day two years ago on 02-02-2020, so I'm becoming a bit repetitious—like the film!

Phil Connors, the lead person in “Groundhog Day” (as distinct from Punxsutawney Phil, the lead groundhog) keeps repeating the same day again and again. That has now led many people to use the term Groundhog Day to describe an experience that feels repetitive and unchanging.

But although Phil is stuck in a repeating time loop for many days, he **does** break out of it. He does that by consciously choosing to act differently.

Among the ways we can consciously choose to act differently is to think of ourselves as **stewards**. That word has stood out for me in **two** recent messages from **two** of my favourite people.

One message was from Sukey, a distant cousin and a good friend. She describes her life as being a *land person, a steward*, who cares for the land in the California coastal valley where she lives. I'm intrigued by her idea of being a land person. We need many more people like Sukey who do care for the land that so many others are ignoring or damaging.



An almost-annual message from Walt Hopkins. Contact me at [Walt@WaltHopkins.com](mailto:Walt@WaltHopkins.com)

Sukey speaks with her usual humility when describing herself: *I see myself at Zen Center as a "worker" more than a real student of Buddhism - though I guess it is all of a package here.* Stewarding seems to work both ways. Sukey is caring for the land which cares for her: *I feel so lucky to live here in this beautiful valley by the ocean.*

The other message came from Sarah Bolton, who has been president of The College of Wooster since 2016. At our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion in June 2016, our class welcomed her to Wooster a few weeks before she became president. Several of us have stayed in touch with her as she developed into a wonderful president for the College.

Like many others, I was sad to hear Sarah's decision to move on to the presidency of Whitman College. I wrote her a note to thank her for her brilliant work at Wooster. She responded beautifully and reassured me that Wooster will easily find a new president because *leading and stewarding this wonderful community is an extraordinary opportunity and holds so many joys.*

Steward, stewardship, stewarding are significant words. One of the original meanings of stewarding is to take care of the food and the people who eat the food. That's what I did for a couple weeks when I was on staff at a Boy Scout Camp in 1961 and was given the steward's job for a few days when he left early.

I was in charge of getting the kids into the dining hall, being sure they got their food, and then

getting them out again so we could clean the place before the next meal. I also peeled a lot of potatoes!

In the summers of 1965 and 1966, I worked on a lake freighter—washing dishes all day. My boss was the Steward.

The Steward's job was to take care of all of us by cooking and creating meals for the officers and the crew. John Dobis, the Steward my first summer, also took care of the crew in other ways—getting them back to the boat for a coffee after they had spent too long in a dockside bar, urging food on the crew, preparing meals ahead of time—and listening to me as I tried to figure out what to do with my life. One evening when I told him that I wasn't sure I could meet the challenge of studying for a postgraduate degree, John said, "You don't want to just wilt, do you? Here is a real challenge."

As I have been writing about my past experiences with stewards and stewarding, I have realised that I know another group of people who provide both food and kindness: the 18,000 people of the United Nations World Food Programme. When WFP won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020, those 18,000 people were honoured for the care—and the food—that they provide for millions of people every day.

Those numbers—thousands of people helping millions of people—sometimes seem too much to absorb. So today I chose to focus on one person who I got to know in several training programmes that I did about ten years ago for WFP.

Mary-Ellen McGroarty is the WFP Representative and Country Director in Afghanistan. She says that if the donors do not come through soon: *We run out of money by March. We have a shortfall of \$1.9 billion.*

In an interview published at <https://www.devex.com/news/wfp-s-afghanistan-chief-terrified-as-hunger-and-despair-mount-102516> there is more information:

*It's a very traumatic time for the people of Afghanistan, McGroarty said. In all my long career in WFP, I've seen this deteriorate, escalate, and implode at a pace and scale that just stunned me. Week on week, we've just seen it get worse.*

In our own roles as stewards of our own wealth, we need to at least consider how and how much we share with other people who have much less.

Like the movie, Groundhog Day comes round each year so that people in Punxsutawney will know whether Phil will see his shadow and thus predict the weather and so that the rest of us in the world will be reminded that we can look at our own shadow and predict our own next season.

If we keep our sun bright, the shadow will at least be clearer and we can choose to respect the shadow power of Covid, war, and poverty while also honouring our own brightness as people who care for the land, care for ourselves, and care for everyone.

Onward,

*Walt*