

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

What did Parkinson want for Republicans?

A large group of people with the same interest elected Mark Parkinson to represent them in Topeka. After just a couple of years, things go well enough for Parkinson, even more people put Parkinson in the Senate. His success continues and Parkinson is then selected to lead every Kansas Republican.

Then, like a bolt of lightning, Parkinson quits and leaves all that behind, apparently not liking the people that got him to where he was.

One day, Parkinson is chairman of the Kansas Republican Party. The next day, he leaves the party and is Democrat Governor Kathleen Sebelius' running mate.

So much for loyalty. No wonder the masses are bitter about politicians.

Parkinson started in the Kansas House of Representatives in 1990, elected to the Senate in 1992 and was elected as chairman of the Kansas Republican Party in 1999 and again in 2001. Those are pretty prestigious and powerful places.

Sebelius said she chose Parkinson because of their similar interests in education, economic development and crime reduction. Sebelius said party labels don't matter when finding good leaders. But there in lies the problem - is Parkinson a good leader?

Parkinson said Kansas Republicans are headed in a different direction than what he wanted, a direction contrasting his own core values.

That's tough to comprehend considering the position he had for so long. Parkinson was the leader - the person the party looks to for answers. Being a leader is a challenge from heading a Boy Scout troop to a state political party.

But Parkinson may be one reason why there are differences among Kansas Republicans. Now, it is easy to accuse Parkinson that he never got the majority of Kansas Republicans to buy into his visions and goals for the party. That was his job as party chairman. Did he even have a plan or was he too busy telling different things to different Republicans which may have caused the differences?

If Parkinson said he struggled with Kansas Republicans, how can he handle the desires from Republicans and Democrats at the same time being Sebelius' right-hand man?

— John Van Nostrand, publisher

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail jvannostrand@nwkanas.com or pdecker@nwkanas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

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June 6, 2006, is just another day

A few doomsayers have been talking about Tuesday — the sixth day of the sixth month of the century's sixth year as some sort of Satanic date.

Even some intelligent people are weirded out about that date and although it is a bit creepy, I am of the opinion it's just another superstition.

As superstitions go, our youngest child was born Friday, Feb. 13, 1987 with a full moon and I needed a Cesarean section.

A lot of superstitious people were mortified about the date and circumstances. But when I saw that beautiful baby boy, all the superstitions in the world melted away in lieu of the joy I felt.

In a recent article I read that mothers who have due dates on June 6, 2006, should consider rescheduling the date. Hogwash!

The article went on to interview some moms-to-be and are already afraid of the teasing and heckling their child may have later in life because they were born on 6-6-06.

From personal experience with a baby born on Friday the 13th, the exact opposite occurred. It's like we took this negative superstition and turned it into a positive. In fact, our son's lucky number is "13" and he likes the notoriety of having been born on a special kind of day.

But the bottom line to all this doom and gloom, demonic children syndrome and end of the world hoopla is this: God dances the day any child is born and, as one famous author wrote, "A baby is God's way of saying the world should go on."

Tuesday is going to be another day, like any other. And for those mothers who have a child born Tuesday, I am confident once they hold their tiny infant in their arms, they too will forget about silly superstitions.

Here's another tidbit. Any baby born Tuesday will be sharing the same birth date as the famous



Patty Decker

● Deep Thoughts

tennis player, Bjorn Borg; lots of musicians to include Levi Stuffs from The Four Tops; Sean Yseult with the band White Zombie; Bardi Martin and James "Munky" Shaffer, rock musicians; and many other talented individuals.

In fact, I thought it would be interesting to check out Tuesday's Today in History by the Associated Press and see just what types of events occurred on that date years ago. Here is what the Associated Press found out.

- On June 6, 1944, the "D-Day" invasion of Europe took place during World War II as Allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy, France.

Also on June 6:

- In 1606, French dramatist Pierre Corneille was born in Rouen.
- In 1844, the Young Men's Christian Association was founded in London.
- In 1918, the World War I Battle of Belleau Wood, which resulted in a U.S. victory over the Germans, began in France.
- In 1925, Walter Percy Chrysler founded the Chrysler Corp.
- In 1934, the Securities and Exchange Commission was established.
- In 1942, Japanese forces retreated in the World War II Battle of Midway.
- Next Tuesday's "666" superstitions are just like any other superstition.

For instance, when was the last time any of us freaked out over silly superstitions like:

If a dog is eating grass it will bring rain; or

It's unlucky to sit cross-legged when playing cards; or

Babies born with teeth become extremely selfish; or

A bird in the house is a sign of death; or

If the groom drops the wedding band during the ceremony, the marriage is doomed.

Here's some other doosies:

If you cut your hair on Good Friday you can prevent headaches in the year to come.

To drop a comb while you are combing your hair is a sign of a coming disappointment.

Never give a knife as a housewarming present or your new neighbor will become your enemy.

An itchy nose means you will fight with someone.

If a person was evil, weeds will grow.

Pregnant women should not attend funerals.

Of course, those are only a few to add to the better known superstitions related to ladders, salt over the shoulder, knocking on wood, or stepping on cracks.

One final note. When Tuesday rolls around, I plan on doing the same types of things I always do on Tuesdays.

I will get up, show gratitude that God has given me another day on this Earth, and pray to do his will.

After my morning prayer, I will go to work and try to be the best person I can be throughout the day.

God Bless and hope everyone enjoys their 6/6/06.

Decker is editor of the Free Press. Her column appears on Fridays.

The end of an American tradition looms

By Steve Haynes

If you're still upset because the price of a stamp jumped from 37 to 39 cents this year, hold on to — OK, men don't wear hats anymore — just hang on.

Things are about to get a whole lot worse.

The U.S. Postal Service has filed for another increase, one which will drive the price of mailing a letter to 42 cents by next year.

And the service says to expect increases every year for a while.

The Postal Service, which had been running a billion-dollar profit just a couple of years ago, now sees itself awash in a sea of red ink. The service sees sharp increases in postage as its salvation, but the truth is, they may only succeed in driving more business away.

E-mail and other electronic delivery have taken much of the service's once-lucrative first-class volume. Mailers faced with a 7.6 percent increase in costs on top of this year's 2-cent hike might start to bail out.

Utilities already offer bills by e-mail or a Web site. Other firms will join in. Many offer electronic payment options, and the list will grow.

Most people don't bother to write friends anymore. They go the computer and send an electronic message, e-chat or even an e-greeting

card.

As mailers jump ship, increasingly the postal system will be left only with advertising mail — what most of us refer to euphemistically as "junk mail."

And the Postal Service is getting ready for that future. It plans to consolidate mail sorting at a few large centers around the country that will be highly automated.

Postal carriers, who now spend part of their time sorting and organizing their mail, will just deliver packages to each home. Even a letter to your neighbor may travel hundreds of miles to be sorted by machine.

Of course, the service says its delivery standards won't suffer. They've been saying that ever since they took the mail off trains and started to fly most of it.

"Improved" service will result in even less mail, and the death spiral will accelerate. Many mailers fear the Postal Service is a dying dinosaur, and you don't want to be around when a critter that big is thrashing about.

Newspapers are left with a real problem, and so are our readers.

Service has gotten so bad for cross-country delivery that many of readers have given up. Others are perpetually disgusted. The shift to

central sorting could ruin the excellent service we get at local and regional offices in our area.

On top of that, the Postal Service wants a 24.2 percent increase in rates for newspapers delivered in the county where they are mailed. Never mind that publishers sort this mail in delivery order and take it right to the post office in most cases. The "economic model" says it's costly to delivery.

Out-of-county mail will see similar hikes, with already-poor service likely to suffer as sorting is centralized. Readers, we fear, will turn to Internet editions and publishers will be forced to hire carriers for in-town delivery.

It's a scary thought, but this could be the end of our two-century era of universal mail delivery, the end of getting your newspaper in the mail, the end for an American tradition.

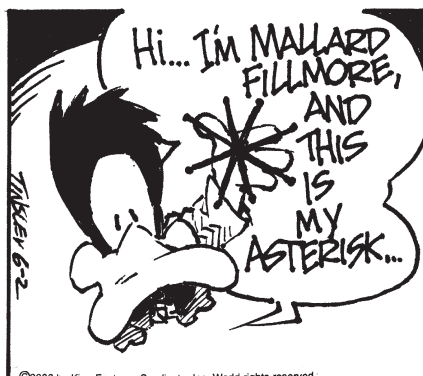
As publishers, we hope not. Our national groups plan to put up a fight. We hope the Postal Service will come to its senses and try to keep newspapers in the mail.

But don't bet on it.

You can, sadly, bet on slower service, higher subscription prices and more expensive stamps. — Steve Haynes is owner of Nor'West Newspapers which includes the Colby Free Press

Mallard Fillmore

● Bruce Tinsley



WHEN YOU SEE MY ASTERISKS, PLEASE LOOK FOR THE OTHER ONES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CARTOON FOR THE SOURCES OF MY ICONOCLASTIC DATA....

THIS MAY SAVE YOU THE TROUBLE OF WRITING TO ACCUSE ME OF MAKING UP FACTS THAT REFUTE THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM! FOR EXAMPLE, DID YOU KNOW...?

*99% OF PEOPLE WHO ACCUSE CONSERVATIVE DUCK REPORTERS OF MAKING UP DATA ARE HAMSTER-BRAINED IDEOLOGUES?..