



Other Viewpoints

Governor works at short-term job

Kansans never elected Gov. Mark Parkinson to his current post, and it is a shame they won't get the opportunity to do that next year.

Parkinson was elected lieutenant governor and took the governor's chair in April when former Gov. Kathleen Sebelius became secretary of Health and Human Services in the Obama administration.

Parkinson didn't intend to run for governor even as a lieutenant governor, saying in January that he planned to return to private business. Despite the urging of other Democrats, his mind hasn't changed.

That is too bad. Not because Democrats seem to have no one else to put up against the presumed Republican candidate, Sen. Sam Brownback. Or because Brownback wouldn't be a good governor.

It is just that Parkinson seems to have mastered the job and gained bipartisan admiration in his five months in office....

The best example was his swift work brokering a deal to break up a stalemate over the proposed Sunflower Electric coal power plant expansion. He took the middle road in the controversy and won immediate concessions on some key environmental measures he had sought and in the process got state regulators out of the way of Sunflower for a scaled-down project.

The coal plant might never even get built in this environmental and financing climate, and it doesn't seem to matter to Parkinson, because he has the state moving forward with wind and other renewable energy initiatives....

Because Parkinson is operating on borrowed time his administration is working "near a sprint" to get his agenda accomplished. That means he will continue to be productive.

Still, his departure looks like it will be a lost opportunity for the state.

— The Hutchinson News, via The Associated Press

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Bug blitz ends summer with a buzz

Ah, the last, fading light of summer.

A gorgeous, hazy afternoon with the mercury headed to the high 80s, the cicada's singing and nothing much to do except mow the lawn. And work, of course. On Sunday, there's always work.

And so it was until sometime after sundown, when they emerged. And then, it was like being in some bad horror movie, only the bugs were real.

Thousands of bugs. Millions of them. All flying around the street lights, the yard lights, the patio lights, the porch lights.

And did I mention, trying to get into the house?

The back screen was covered with bugs of every sort, big and small. Thousands of 'em. And they all wanted in.

Every time we'd go in or out, a couple hundred bugs would come in. And since we were grilling out back, we had to go in and out a lot. Eventually, we turned off the light out front and started using that door, but by then, the damage had been done.

Bugs were everywhere.

We had to pick them out of our plates, our drinks, our hair. They circled the lights above, then plunged to the table, dead. They landed on our plates, next to the steak. They flew



Steve Haynes
• Along the Sappa

around our heads.

They would not leave.

There were, literally, every type of summer bug imaginable except june bugs and millers. Guess it's too late for them.

The bulk of this air force seemed to be the little flies that spend the summer as worms in leaf galls on trees. At the end of the summer, they emerge en masse to drive humans crazy for one brief moment of time. They lay eggs, fly around and die. But before they die, they flock by the thousands to every light in town.

There were squadrons of these little guys, but other bugs of every description: leaf hoppers, beetles, moths, wasps, flies, you name it. A blue dragonfly landed by my hand at dinner. I took it out the door to release it, but I think it just came back in. It was a beautiful thing, though.

In the morning, the carnage was awful to

behold. Dozens of dead bugs littered the dining-room table. More filled the covers of the kitchen lights and the shades of any light that hung down. It will take all week just to clean the lights out.

When I got out to the car to escape, I found more bugs. A hundred or so, apparently attracted to the glow of the GPS screen, had died right there on the dash below it. I'll need to sweep the car out.

What happened? I guess the warm, summery day just woke up every bug in the district, all those that had slumbered through the cool nights of late August and into September. They saw one last chance to fly, to feed, to breed, to live life before the frost comes. And that won't be long.

Summer is over, the autumnal equinox was Tuesday and fall rode in on a cold front late Sunday night. Bug scrapers will soon be exchanged for frost scrapers. And bugs will soon be but a memory.

But what a night they had.

Steve Haynes is editor and publisher of The Colby Free Press and president of Nor'West Newspapers. In his spare time, whenever that is, he like to ride and watch trains.

We need to change along with the world

Don't confuse me with facts! Most of us won't admit this attitude, but why else would we forward email messages without bothering to check the original author's reliability or knowledge? Why else would we accept or reject opinion of others based solely upon our own theoretical opinion?

We theorize when we don't have empirical proof to back up our opinions. As technologies advance, we have more and more trouble defining "empirical" evidence. As ancient manuscripts of the Bible and other religious writings as well as secular history are found, we have problems maintaining absolute positions, whether theological or political. As science brings to light new knowledge, we sometimes refuse to accept it.

Cultures change! What is perceived or emphasized as acceptable practice changes with the culture. Whether you adhere to an absolute theory of evolution or an absolute theory of creation, human relationship with the rest of the world has changed. (Notice I said theory, neither of these "theories" have empirical evidence.) Man's relationship with the Judeo/Christian God of creation or the pagan gods of the world has changed.

Does this mean that God or the gods have changed? Not necessarily. It does mean that man has changed, sometimes to the good and sometimes to the bad; depending on whose theoretical opinion you accept. The results of those changes are only visible as time and history reveal the consequences. Sometimes they are immediate; other times it takes years or centuries to understand the full impact of changes.

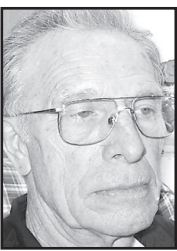
What has brought about those changes? Man's ability to record messages to be read and understood by someone else is probably the most important change. Even before that, the discovery of the lever and fulcrum allowed man to overcome obstacles limiting resources for food and shelter, as well as providing security from predators. Man has gone through patriarchal systems, anarchy – where no one has authority – the bronze age, the iron age, the invention of the printing press, the industrial revolution, unbelievable advances in visual and audio communication – the list is inexhaustible.

Where are we now in this cultural journey? We are a little over 200 years past the birth of a new nation. A nation brought about with the efforts and sacrifices of political agitators who challenged the most powerful political structure of their time. They represented a conglomeration of colonies populated by ethnically, religiously, and vocationally diverse people who demanded freedom from the old cultural, religious and political structures of Europe. Their first experiment in establishing a central government, the Articles of Confederation, was failing. They were wise enough to admit they had little chance, separately, of overcoming the challenges of the new continent or the reassertion of power by the government from which they had gained independence. After considerable and sometimes confrontational debate, they were able to put together the central structure known as the United States of America. They designed a governing document known as The Constitution. That document outlined the parameters limiting as well as mandating the powers of that new government.

Have there been any cultural changes in society that would indicate revision or changes in interpretation of the original limits and mandates of that document? From the very beginning, the need for new regulations began to appear. Complex business structures demanded uniform, workable regulation. Social changes in the structure of families, communities, and local judiciatories presented new challenges to the protection of individual freedoms, as well as demanding new responsibilities from members of society. At a very young age, our nation was compelled into a costly and disastrous civil war by differences of opinion on how to interpret the constitution regarding involuntary servitude of a class of people. Only in the last half century have we even begun to address the civil rights of that group. Now we are being challenged to protect and enforce civil rights, medical, and economic issues facing a much larger segment of our citizens.

Will those challenges destroy our nation or will they bring us together as the challenges in the late 1700s brought together those men and women known as the "patriots" that put together our nation?

We cannot and will not survive without bringing together a diverse representation of all religious, ethnic, and economic groups willing to debate the issues with open minds and the ability to give as much as they take. We can give a great deal before we jeopardize our own freedoms. We cannot protect our own freedom of choice and access to basic needs unless we are willing to protect that same freedom and access for others.



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Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

