

Another Walk

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final blast stopping the bloom of these little buds overnight. But not at this moment. Today the colors of the rainbow, in all of its shades, are vibrantly showing up everywhere, as if the hand of God had sprinkled "jimmies" across the landscape. I smile at nature's color show and say aloud to myself, "Ah, spring."

I turn up Franklin Street and notice the music seems to be going slow. Even for the Grateful Dead. I look at my Discman and notice the little battery symbol in the corner is rapidly fading as it blinks. I neglected to check the batteries before I took off for my jaunt. They were running out of power and I didn't have

any replacements.

When I remove my earphones to place my Discman in my shoulder bag, I call myself an idiot for not checking my gear before going out the door. I felt a day like this called for music to enhance my enjoyment. What was I going to listen to now?

It took me a few moments to realize spring was already answering my question. The sky was filled with singing of birds. Not the lonely cry of a seagull lamenting over a lost French fry. Nor the bassoon-like caw of a Jersey vulture that is perched upon a tree near a desolate field. I mean robins, cardinals, blue jays and other birds whose images professional sports franchises have absconded with over the years. It was as if every bird imaginable was

there at that particular spot on Franklin Street singing their song.

I know. You are saying to yourself that I must be exaggerating this. Perhaps I am. Is it so bad to imagine that every bird, because it was spring, would sing their song for me? Or for you? For all of us? Each bird sounding like a musical instrument being used to create an aviary orchestral movement that could easily rival Beethoven's "Ode To Joy"?

For the naysayers reading this, I know that I will never win you over. That is truly a pity, for you will never hear the song. Yet if others are actually curious, let me make a suggestion. On one of these early spring mornings, don't allow yourself to be distracted. Sit quietly outside and lis-

ten carefully. It will start off softly but then it will soon crescendo into a symphony that will make you stand there in awe of its majesty. Or, as it did for me, it will make you smile at nature's music and say aloud to yourself, "Ah, spring."

After pulling myself away from the music, I finally get my destination, which is the Episcopal Church of the Advent on the corner of Washington and Franklin Streets. As I walk through the front doors, I pause a moment and listen for any noise that may sound like the roof would be collapsing. This is not because I doubt the structural integrity of the building. I do this because I do know some very devout people who have said, more than once, that due to my

infrequent nature entering any building of faith, whenever I do I should be cautious of the building falling down on top of me. Taking a deep breath, I cast my doubts aside and enter.

The church was tranquil. The congregation was gathered. The service's had just commenced. This was special service, though in retrospect they all are. But today, a little girl named Anna Maria was to be baptized. Her parents were holding little Anna Maria close. Her mother looking very maternal encased in the morning that's slipping through the window. Anna's father feeling extremely blessed. The reverend giving them all a look to signify that they are doing fine.

The whole congregation

prays. They promise to attest for little Anna Maria and help guide her path through life. Anna Maria yells as the water hits her forehead, as if she is acknowledging the congregation's promise with the statement "I am here, so let's party."

I see this rite as it unfolds before me and realize this is why the day has been beautiful. Why the flowers are blooming and the birds are singing. A new life comes to the congregation of man. Lucky us.

Ah, spring.

Johnny Wawa can usually be seen walking around Cape May.

Thomas Reed and Joseph Cannon: More powerful than presidents

We conclude our recent series on Victorian politics with a perspective emphasizing again that presidents were often neither their political party's leader nor the most powerful political force in the government. Recent columns have highlighted political bosses, their roles of kingmakers and controllers of kings (presidents) while often holding seemingly relatively inferior governmental positions. This week we focus on two men in the high office of Speaker of the House of Representatives who rivaled and often surpassed the president in real power. Keeping in mind the Victorian view of the president as steward and chief operations officers for Congress, which actually made policy and laws, this is not that surprising.

Early in the Victorian Era, prior to the Civil War, Henry Clay played such a role. Abraham Lincoln and the necessities of war briefly reversed the trend but by the 1870s presidential power had waned again. During the period of 1890-1910, two men, Thomas Reed and Joseph Cannon, raised the power of the Speaker of the House to its zenith and by doing so dominated these two decades, despite the presidency of



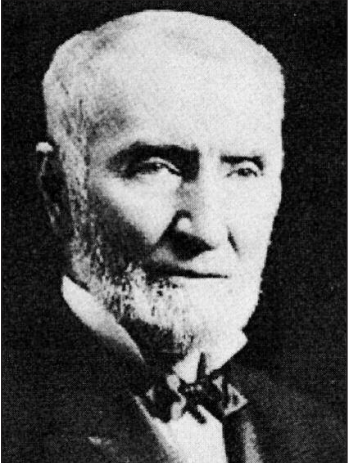
Theodore Roosevelt, one of our strongest presidents.

Thomas "Czar Tom" Reed (1839-1902) from Maine was Speaker from 1889-1891 and 1895-1899. He was a leading force in the House from 1877-1899. As such he ruled the Republican Party with a brilliant mind, acerbic wit, and iron hand. When a disgruntled politico grumbled that he would "rather be right than president" Reed commented tersely "he's not and he will never be either." He was as much respected for his intellect as his power. His social circle in Washington D.C. included such luminaries as Henry James, Mark Twain, John Hay, Henry Cabot Lodge, and Theodore Roosevelt.

Reed firmly felt "the best system of government is to

have one party govern and the other watch." One imagines he assumed that the governing party should always be the Republican as it was for most of his political career. Cunningly he stretched the powers, especially parliamentary powers, of the speaker and then ruthlessly exercising them to the maximum in squashing all Democratic opposition to the Republican agenda. Reed used the same power to ensure only those parts of the Republican or presidential agenda he approved of became policy and law. He was an especially strong opponent of the new Progressive Movement surging through the nation and even his own party in the form of Theodore Roosevelt.

By the dawn of the new 20th



Joseph Cannon



Thomas Reed

Century Thomas Reed was ready to retire and pass his czarism to his protégé Joseph Cannon. It would be Cannon who would have to deal with Roosevelt.

Joseph "Uncle Joe" Cannon (1836-1926), Republican from Indiana, built on Thomas Reed's power base and became the most powerful Speaker in the history of the House of Representatives. Cannon served in the House from 1873-1891, 1893-1913 and 1915-1923. Only the elections of Democrats Grover Cleveland and Woodrow Wilson temporarily halted his powerful influence in party

and national politics. He ruled as speaker from 1903-1911. Colorful, quaint, and coy, Cannon liked to affect the personae of a rural, paternal, "ordinary man", but really was as shrewd, autocratic, and ruthless as Reed. He vehemently opposed both Progressivism and Imperialism. Naturally, his battles with Theodore Roosevelt were epic. Often the two were forced into compromises for the good of the party. Once Roosevelt left office in 1909, Cannon thoroughly dominated his successor William Howard Taft. Taft's bending to Cannon's

will and policies was a major reason Roosevelt bolted from the party in the 1912 presidential election to run as a Progressive. With the Republican vote split, Democrat Woodrow Wilson won, ending almost complete Republican dominance of the presidency since the Civil War. From 1915-1923, Joseph Cannon returned to the House to first battle Wilson then dominate his Republican successor Warren G. Harding.

And so we conclude our series on Victorian politics. We've not only visited an era in which presidents were less powerful but an era of epic elections and electoral crises. Hopefully we can now observe and analyze contemporary political events with the added wisdom of enhanced historic perspective.

R.E. Heinly, a retired history teacher, school administrator and university professor, is a regular contributor to the Cape May Star and Wave. He is also an interpreter and the Museum Education Coordinator for the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts, and a textbook consultant.

Cape Regional

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supports Cape Regional, and has responded very well to a capital campaign for room renovation now under way. She said the hospital has received contributions from major donors, accepting \$1 million from the Brodersors.

"We were happy with the (survey) results. Is there

room for improvement? Yes. But we did well for our peer group in New Jersey.

Robinson said her position was created specifically to address patient Complaints concerns or concerns.

"The president has directed to me address these concerns and hopefully to address them to their satisfaction," she said.

Robinson said she talks to

family members, and the management team makes the rounds daily to see that patient needs were addressed.

"There has been a tremendous about of growth in last few years," Robinson said.

For a complete set survey results, go to www.hospital-compare.hhs.gov.

Win

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May, and is the vice-president of Kurkowski Market Research, which has its office just outside Cape May, just beyond the little Dread Creek Bridge. Kurkowski was elected to Cape May City Council two years ago, but enjoys little name recognition outside of Cape May.

"That is going to be an issue, but I plan to make myself very available in the next six months, and I will do a major media campaign as the election approaches," he said. "I'm confident people will know my name as well as LoBiondo."



Kurkowski said he is aware LoBiondo broke his own promise to limit his terms to

six, as well as ignoring the Republicans' 1994 Contract with America, which suggested members of Congress limit themselves to three terms.

"But that is not the major reason I'm running," Kurkowski said. "The country is on the wrong path, right now, economically...we are fighting a costly war, and LoBiondo has contributed to the problem. People are unhappy with it."

Kurkowski said people are unhappy toward gasoline prices creeping toward \$4 a gallon, and will milk prices at \$4 a gallon already. He said the state of the economy is affecting the lives of working people on a daily basis and something needs to be done about it.

He said estimates say the war in Iraq is costing us \$5,000 a second, while the city is trying to figure ways to buy a window and the local school is trying to find a way to pay a hire a single teacher. He said every day we are spending the money needed to fund social security or to take care of veterans who return from the war.

"In the long term we need to turn back from a wartime economy to a peacetime economy, so we can address the needs of our people," he said. "That is a major cornerstone of my candidacy. That is the message I will bring to the voters throughout this summer and into the fall."

Before starting his current business, Kurkowski formerly owned Current Leaders Publishing, and worked for the Vanderveer Group in For Washington, Pa. He was the Head Start director in Ambler, Pa., in 1971.

Kurkowski was selected Volunteer of the Year for the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts in 2004.

He has been married to wife Myra (nee Silverstein) since 1974, and is the father of three grown children, Susan, Daniel and Ellen.

School

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team services.

"We do not overspend," Zelenek said.

Nowotny said the school would spend some money in the future for enhanced security. The plan is to reconfigure the entrance so

visitors would have to go through the school office before being allowed to enter the school. She said the school received about \$286,000 in aid for the security upgrade, but the improvement is expected to cost more.

Nowotny said the school

budget was available on the school's website, www.cape-maycityschool.org.

Zelenek said a newsletter pertaining to the school budget would be mailed to city residents, who would vote on the budget on April 15. Polls are open from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

"'Tis easier to prevent bad habits than to break them."

- Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanac*, October 1744

Pictures from the Past

Do you have a historical photograph you would like to see in the Cape May Star and Wave?

Bring it by our office at 600 Park Boulevard in West Cape May between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays.

We're looking for everything from old family photos to class pictures or scenes of the past from the Cape.

Where have you been lately?

Taken a trip or been on vacation recently? Send us a photograph and tell us about it. Submitted pictures will be returned if sent with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.



The Cape May Star and Wave and Sure Guide are looking for reliable, talented writers and photographers to cover local events, programs and features. Coverage areas for these weekly newspapers include Cape May, West Cape May, Cape May Point, Lower Township and Cape May County government.

All ages and experience levels are welcome to apply. Send resumes to Jennifer Kopp at cmstarwave@comcast.net.



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