

JIM C'S QUIZ OF THE WEEK

MONDAY – 11/14/2006

Election Day (11/7/06) was called a red-letter day for Democrats.

HOW DID THE TERM “*RED-LETTER DAY*” ORIGINATE?

Definition: A very special and usually very happy day, most often a memorable occasion of pride and joy, fortunate or auspicious.

Origin: The term originates from Medieval Roman Catholic Church calendars and illuminated manuscripts, which often marked initial capitals and highlighted words in red ink, known as rubrics.

325 AD – The First Council of Nicaea decreed the saint's days, feasts and other holy days, later printed on church calendars in red.

1385 – The root adjective "red letter" was first used.

1549 – The full term came into wider usage with the appearance of the first Book of Common Prayer in which the calendar showed special holy days in red ink.

1887 – “*Red-letter day*” was being used in its modern secular "special occasion" sense, as when the British (Victorian) novelist Anthony Trollope wrote, "I used to dine and pass the evening with Dr. Jeune; and these were my red-letter days."

Conventional Wisdom: Red-letter Day = A time of celebration

M of Z: Once religious, now common, but still a red-letter day