

# THE TIMES OF MINERAL POINT

ILLUSTRATED

Vol. 2, No 1 Nov. 2013

WORDS AND WHIMSEY DEPICTING THE GOOD LIFE IN MINERAL POINT, WISCONSIN

## A NEWSPAPER RESUSCITATED

VINTAGE  
TABLOID  
OFFERED AS  
MONTHLY  
PERIODICAL  
—★—  
BUT HIBERNATION  
PERIOD LIKELY  
—★—

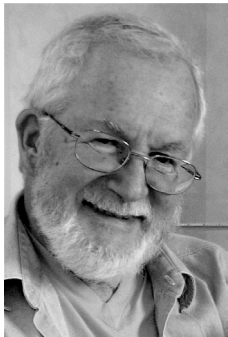
For those who carefully read the *Times of Mineral Point* in years past, its pages will look like more of the same, with the “look and feel” of a vintage tabloid newspaper. But, somehow, a bit different. These pages will reflect the editorial decisions of a staff of one, so the views and values are those of the Editor, who will often employ first-person singular, the use of “I” to show full ownership of the newspaper’s approach to news content.

### Competing with No Other Journal

This newspaper in no way competes with other regional publications, who offer their readers “hard news” and other forms of entertainment in print. The *Times* enjoys no franchise – its purpose is simply to reflect the character and culture of Mineral Point.

### Visit Local Business Places, Pick Up the Times

Distribution of the *Times* as a monthly newspaper during “the Season,” (May–December) is intended to give readers up-to-date news of current events. You’ll find the *Times* in participating Mineral Point stores, galleries and restaurants. Each issue is free to readers, and we proudly manage without advertising content or revenue.



The first edition of the *Times of Mineral Point* hit the streets five years ago; and as a small, eclectic tabloid newspaper, lived a charmed life for three years.

As its Editor, I hoped the stories and images on the pages of the *Times* would strike a responsive chord for readers. For many, it seemed, it did.

Then, as now, I made no claim to literary or journalistic significance, or to stunning design layouts for the paper. I was, in 2007, what I am today — a well-worn, old-fashioned news reporter equipped only with a fertile curiosity about the world we live in, and a reverence for the power and playful nature of words.

The community was good to the newspaper. Pointers were generous with their comments, even wrote a few checks to help pay for ink and postage costs. Readers actually applauded the many eccentricities of the paper. Eight issues were printed. Then, the weight of the tasks necessary to keep a one-man enterprise alive forced me to suspend publication of the *Times*.

Can we label my time away from the paper as “a hiatus?” Yeah, let’s do that! Fact is, I missed the writing and researching, the interviews, the discoveries, and the monumental luxury of expressing my viewpoints as if I knew what I was writing about. A few readers noted when I occasionally wandered off the track, but remained loyal to the *Times*. It’s evidence of good-natured tolerance. So, with no promise for the paper’s longevity — or for mine own, for that matter — I undertake the hobby of personal publication again.

Not because it is important. Not because it is needed. But because, for this writer, putting words on paper is just too much fun to stifle with the indolence of old age.

The “tone” of the *Times* will be personal, cordial and informal, serious when need be, but with touches of whimsy, all of it focused on our one-of-a-kind way of life in Mineral Point.

Frank Beaman

### DRIFTLESS FILM•FEST BRIGHTENS OPERA HOUSE

It’s Year Number Four for the Driftless Film Festival, which for four days splashes independent feature-length and shorter films onto theater screens in three Driftless cities and shares festival revenue in ways that perpetuate artistic cinema in local theaters.

Phil Mrozinski, Manager of the Mineral Point Opera House, and Executive/Artistic Director for Driftless Festival, tells the *Times* that twenty film makers, directors and actors will visit the city this month to greet movie-goers and discuss their work.

Home-grown films include “Of Some Fair Place,” shown on opening night, tracing Mineral Point artists and historic building restorers during two creative local eras. “Out of the Fire” gives us a peek at the city’s talented pottery artisans. “While it Lasts” is a short documentary featuring local collector Jamie Ross. The filmmakers will attend showings at the Opera House.

Among major features is a Sundance film, “Muscle Shoals.” At last year’s fest, 800 tickets were sold at the Opera House, and the city’s Tourism Bureau said the Festival’s crowd brought \$50,000 to the local economy.

Phil Mrozinski and Fest Founders Nicholas Langholff and Jeremy Patnaude work hard to make the Driftless Festival an important event for Mineral Point, Platteville and Spring Green.

Tickets are now on sale at Berget’s Jewelers — \$6 per movie, or \$22 for an all-show pass. Popcorn is optional.





# THE TIMES OF MINERAL POINT

is Published by



MINERAL POINT PRESS

216 NORTH IOWA STREET  
MINERAL POINT, WI 53565

PARTNERS WITH POINT FORWARD

2013

IN THE INTERESTS OF  
COMMUNITY AWARENESS  
AND FURTHERANCE  
OF HISTORIC UNDERSTANDING

EDITOR/PUBLISHER  
Frank Beaman

Photographs by the Editor  
unless otherwise noted.

[frankbeaman@charter.net](mailto:frankbeaman@charter.net)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kristin Mitchell  
Rick Terrien  
David Clutter  
Phil Mrozinski  
Ried Knapp  
Dan & Kathy Vaillancourt

PRINTED BY

WOODWARD PRINTING SERVICES

PLATTEVILLE, WISCONSIN

© COPYRIGHT 2013

# THE TIMES OF MINERAL POINT

is published without cost  
to its readers and printed  
without  
advertising content.



We place the **TIMES**  
in local business places,  
and we thank the city's  
merchants and galleries  
and restaurants for  
helping us distribute  
the newspaper.

Drop by, say Hello  
and pick up your copy  
of the Times.

**Dozen Distinctive  
Destinations®**

NATIONAL TRUST FOR  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION®



## MINERALPOINT to STUDY, BOOST & NURTURE THE ARTS

The city's always-active arts community is getting a much-needed shot in the arm from Arts Mineral Point (AMP), a new, small but ambitious group of Pointers now holding planning meetings to discuss constructive steps to enliven the city's art scene.

An independent, non-profit organization has been formed, under the auspices of the city's umbrella startup program, Point Forward. In the coming months, AMP will offer memberships and stage fundraising events to build a treasury.

The organization's goals are to develop a dynamic artistic climate, to promote and nurture local artists, and to boost the city's good reputation as a creative arts community.

In its early formative stage, Arts Mineral Point has about twelve active members, and enjoys support from many other local residents who have an interest in the arts. The photo above shows several AMP members celebrating one of the central objectives of the group: the creation of new public art in the city. The first of a number of sculpture parks was dedicated on Oct. 19, when outdoor art creations were unveiled in the plot of land west of gallery of Jamie Ross, across High Street from the Post Office.



Jamie Ross, left, contributed an object from one of his many collections, and Peter Flanery, right, donated other sculptures for the High Point Arts park. In the photo above, they take the wraps off a sign announcing the first of several planned public art projects.

The unveiling came during the Fall Arts Tour, as visitors dropped in on the working studios of local artists.

Arts Mineral Point set Aug. 7-9, 2014 for the first Plein Air Festival, a weekend event in which artists are invited to come to the city, set up their easels on the street or in front of a landscape, and execute paintings that capture the city's unique attractions.

AMP stresses the economic impact of a successful arts community. "The Plein Air event is all about bringing more people to Mineral Point," says Ried Knapp, of the Wantoot Gallery. "And public art gives tourists more to see when they visit the city and spend time on foot." Other planned AMP initiatives include developing studio spaces as part of an "arts incubator" to attract new artists and artisans, and creating new opportunities for the performance arts.

The organization hopes that growth in AMP membership will support a variety of arts-enhancing projects. And, as members of AMP see it, the formation of an arts council, or arts foundation, would give rise to an expansion of artistic endeavors that would make Mineral Points artistic climate more substantial and much more colorful.



In the  
Group  
Photo:

L to R -- Chris Taw, Kathy and Ried Knapp, Jamie Ross, Kathleen Nutter, Peter Flanery, and Jan Johnson.

## SHAKE RAG SALE!

On the weekend of Nov. 9-10, the Café and Cabinet Shop at Shake Rag Alley become craft boutiques, selling gorgeous one-of-a-kind handmade items fashioned by 35 talented students and instructors for the **Fourth Annual Holiday Jewelry and Art Sale.**

## TWO COLORFUL CHARACTERS

No better way to describe artists Tom Kelly and Audrey Christie, who team up to host a **One Day Show** at the historic Chestnut Cottage.

SAT., NOV. 9TH – 10 TO 6  
99 North Chestnut Street



## POEMSONG REVIEW

Nine Local Musicians brought Famous Poems to Life,  
With Jen Logueflower's Brilliant Musical Score.  
Listeners said "This show needs a bigger audience"



## CIDER FARM MILESTONE

Congratulations to John Biondi & Deirdre Birmingham, who transformed a shuttered dairy farm in rural Mineral Point into a specialty organic apple orchard. Ten years of work included battles with spring frosts and ravenous deer, while living in a mobile home on the property. Last month, they released their first batch of aged Cider Farm Apple Brandy, bottled by the Yahara Distillery in Madison. A larger batch will be released in 2014, and in 2015 the couple plan to add a line of hard cider.



## The DRIFTLESS CONSERVANCY

### The MAGIC OF NATURE

The Driftless Area Land Conservancy launched the Driftless Explorer's Club this past summer, and lured children into the great outdoors. Their experiences transformed "ewwww, yuck!" into "Wow, I just found another tadpole."

The weeklong day camp for kids aged 6 to 11 and their families taught the connection between people and the land.

It gave campers memories to last a lifetime. As one young explorer put it, "Come over here! We've found the perfect green! Look at it! It's the perfect green and I've never seen anything like it."

Over the coming year, the Conservancy will work with donors and supporters to find additional ways to link nature and agriculture to those who might not have an opportunity to experience it first hand.

Contact David Clutter, Ex. Dir.  
338 N Iowa St., Dodgeville  
(608) 930-3252 or click on  
[www.driftlessconservancy.org](http://www.driftlessconservancy.org)



## LOCAL FOOD

The Delicious Driftless Fare, an ambitious harvest-season weekend event in October, brought home the multiple benefits of growing, distributing and marketing local food.

And, oh yes, eating it, too.

The Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, in partnership with the host Folklore Village, gave visitors a day of pleasant local music, mixed with workshops on cooking and preserving food, an informative lecture and an opportunity to check out thirty info-booths where guests could strike up a good conversation to learn more about the ways a localized food system would boost both the nutrition and the economy of Driftless communities.

The Fare was a celebration of local food, farmers, and their products, and the role played by food in our unique regional culture.

The keynote was struck by Steven Deller, Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics at UW-Madison, who pointed to the impact of a close-to-home food system: on jobs, the environment, more equitable income for farmers, rural revitalization, nutrition, food safety, and food quality. Deller also spoke of community growth and development. "A shorter food chain," he said, "means a higher profit margin for the local grower. If you know the farmer you buy from, your dollars stay in the community." His example is a \$5 bag of apples. "If you buy from a local grower, he keeps five dollars, but if you buy apples from Washington state, that far-away grower gets only pennies."

The local, fresh-picked apples will likely taste better, too.

## Hooks' 15-year Cheddar Debuts

Widely heralded in its first public offering, the aged cheese is on sale again at the Mineral Point cheese store of Tony and Julie Hook. The 15-year product is accompanied by cheddars, aged three, five and ten years, along with many other prize-winning varieties. A bit pricy, to be sure, but a treat for cheese-lovers.



**INNOVATION  
KITCHEN  
A NATIONAL  
MODEL**

**Hodan Staff Offers  
Custom-Made Foods  
& Good Advice**

“It’s astounding progress,” says Rick Terrien, when asked the status of Mineral Point’s landmark food enterprise, the Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen, (WINK) operated by the Hodan Center.

The Iowa County Economic Development Director credits his colleagues Tom Schraeder and Annette Pierce, and dozens of Hodan client-employees for their work since the food service facility opened in 2010. “The Kitchen has become a role model nationally, even internationally, for artisan-scale commercial food processing,” Terrien says. In the early days, WINK was the typical “food incubator,”renting space and services by the hour. But the operations have changed to a new business model, focused on contract food manufacturing, which allows Hodan’s professional culinary staff to prepare custom recipes for small food businesses, food entrepreneurs, and farmers who want to sell products year-round.

The Hodan Center seeks to provide meaningful jobs for people with disabilities, and during a national recession the Kitchen increased its work staff from three to forty, and launched new services almost day by day.

Terrien is excited about food service industry ideas that were pioneered at WINK, which support local farms and regional food suppliers, and also create new jobs. The long range view is positive, as the Kitchen answers a growing demand for Local Food from consumers in nearby cities, while helping small family farms grow their business and establish new markets.

As the go-to man for the Kitchen, Terrien has designed and managed many start-ups, and he has discovered what works and what doesn’t.

Obviously, most of the ideas at the Innovation Kitchen have worked!

[See [www.iowacountyedc.org/report.html](http://www.iowacountyedc.org/report.html) for a snapshot of WINK in action.]



The peculiar grace of a Shaker chair is due to the fact that it was made by someone capable of believing that an angel might come and sit on it.

-- Edward Andrews

**The Historic Walker House  
and the  
Concept of Extreme Beauty**



The Walker House, with a rich history that reaches back to 1836, has been a source of swirling rumors for many years, but its operators, Dan and Kathy Vaillancourt want everyone to know these facts: the old building stands free of debt, and its rooms and grounds meet the building codes.

The historic inn had sat vacant for three years when the Vaillancourts moved in, and their ToDo list was long, complex and costly. They undertook a flexible and adaptive rehab program, and today the structure is sturdy, well-furnished, and fitted out for its mission, which is “to embody and to implement the philosophic concept of Extreme Beauty.”

A few words of explanation: this is the philosophy that Professor Dan Vaillancourt taught during his tenure at Chicago’s Loyola University; and, in his retirement, he travels widely to deliver lectures on his concept. “A medieval idea that was lost,” he explains. “The idea is to see the beauty that’s right in front of you, see it with your heart and not just with your eyes.”

He continued, “It is seeing beauty with all its flaws, with its brokenness, to experience a sense of place, to see people in

nature, people in action.”

Artificiality is discouraged. As a result, the Walker House has reduced its grassy lawns, and stone walls (“barriers”), while planting greens, flowers and vegetables in productive raised-bed gardens. Guest rooms’ furnishings have been fashioned from trees cut nearby, and fabrics in the nine guest rooms are locally sewn. Each room is a tribute to a Mineral Point artist, exhibiting the artist’s work on the walls. Shake Rag Alley School is a partner in lodging operations.

Lodging and Events (meetings, weddings, etc.) are the two mainstays of the Walker House, the result of flexible plans and trial and error with some of the inn’s facilities in recent months. The pub and restaurant will open to serve events and overnight guests.

With shared bathrooms, no TVs, and dining room tables arranged for brisk conversation, lodgers are encouraged to meet others and “see the beauty” of that meeting.

The Vaillancourts welcome inquiries from curious neighbors, questions about the inn, or the Philosophy of Extreme Beauty. “Send an email and then drop in,” they say.

[thewalkerhouse.org](http://thewalkerhouse.org) [walkerhouse1@gmail.com](mailto:walkerhouse1@gmail.com)



**WATCH  
THIS  
SPACE:**

**Shake Rag Alley Begins  
Construction on Quonset Hut**

A committee has been working to come up with a redesign of the former auto parts store, transforming rough rooms into space that will serve a multitude of Shake Rag needs.

Design plans are ongoing but the main focus is on creating:

1. A large multi-function room that can double as a classroom, and Alley Stage rehearsal/performance space, and as a large meeting room,
2. A large “messy” classroom for crafts such as mosaic and cement, that can also be used for set building and as work space for site maintenance building projects, (see “Before Photo,” above)
3. Much needed storage space including space for Alley Stage sets and costumes.
4. More ideas, including a catwalk, attractive exterior treatment and landscaping.

Board member John Lind generously established a matching funds challenge to pay for the renovation of the Quonset Hut. For each donation, the Lind Family will match dollar for dollar, up to a total of \$20,000. It’s a great opportunity for Shake Rag Alley, so please consider making a contribution. Go on line to ([www.shakeragalley.com/support](http://www.shakeragalley.com/support)) Or, send a check to:

Quonset Hut Matching Funds Challenge,  
Shake Rag Alley Center for the Arts



**WHAT FOOLS WE MORTALS BE !**

Jimmy Kimmel, the late-night program host, sent a “reporter” to a sidewalk on Hollywood Blvd. to ask the passing pedestrians, “Hey, for your health care, which do you prefer, Obamacare or the Affordable Care Act?” He did not mention the fact that the two are the very same thing. Overwhelmingly, the man and woman on the street chose the ACA. They heaped scorn on Obamacare as “anti-American,” or “socialist,”or “a hostile government takeover,” but they called the ACA, “fair and reasonable,” even “beneficial.” The reporter pressed the harsher critics on specific provisions of the health plan, and they admitted that, although they hated Obamacare, they liked most of what it would accomplish.



TV Guide says the highest-paid person on television is Judge Judy, presiding over a pretend court, for \$47 million a year.



In Florida, Attorney General Pam Bond delayed and then re-scheduled an execution, so she would be able to attend another event — a campaign fundraiser.



Two men walked toward the downtown farmers market in Appleton, WI with rifles slung over the shoulders and handguns in holsters at the hip. Police officers intervened. Now the pair are an item on the Internet. Some viewers say they were foolish to try such a dangerous stunt, but gun rights advocates say it’s an outrage that they were held at gunpoint and cuffed.



Remember Samuel Wurzelbacher? “Joe the Plumber,”the political mascot? In recent days, Wurzelbacher posted an article on his blog titled: “America Needs a White Republican President,” which said, “Admit it, you want a white Republican president again. That doesn’t make you racist, it just makes you American.”



Finally, followers of political extremist Lyndon LaRouche appeared in front of the Mineral Point post office, bearing signs that depicted Pres. Obama with a Hitler-style mustache.

The outspoken Mike Mitchell stopped his car, rolled down the window, and sharply pointed out to demonstrators, “If Obama was really Hitler, you’d all be dead!” ‘Nuf said.

**“WHAT FOOLS WE MORTALS BE”** says Puck, in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

The cartoon: Non Sequitur © 2013 Wiley Miller Ink, Inc.  
Used courtesy of the cartoonist and Universal Uclick. All rights reserved.



**FALL ART TOUR, 2013**

With more than 50 studios open for visitors, the 20th annual event drew good crowds and positive reviews. It was a scenic autumn drive and the very best way to chat with local artists.



# FLOTSAM & JETSAM

by the Editor

November. There's an expectant chill in the air. It's still dark at 7 a.m. We put away the Halloween decorations and watch helplessly as Mother Nature's browns, golds and scarlets turn to dull gray.

Before the last of the leaves turned, however, we enjoyed the Fall Art Tour. It's a pleasant drive in the country, but it's also a somewhat bitter-sweet event because it signals the beginning of the Shutdown Season. (No, I'm not referring to our government.)

Ahead of us lies a Wisconsin winter, a time of sweeping beauty and maddening inconvenience, a time for CoffeeTalk about how to deal with cold reality. For some of the city's business places, reality means cutting back on work hours and working with less staff — sort of shutting down.

The impulse to close up shop is strong when the economy is weak. Let's hope we can expect a solid recovery after five years of uncertainty.

I'm an interested observer, and only that, but I'm hoping our stores, galleries and restaurants will keep their doors open as much as possible. I meet too many out-of-town visitors on the street, asking "So, how come so many places are closed, and what's open, anyway?"

I know people working to earn a living have to watch the bottom line, but we also need to say "Welcome!"



As an English Major and somewhat bookish person, I was heartened by the conclusion of a study in the journal, *Science*, which found that after reading literary fiction, as opposed to popular fiction or serious nonfiction, people did better on tests that measured empathy, social perception and emotional intelligence.

The researchers said literary fiction often leaves more to the imagination, which encourages readers to make inferences and enjoy complexity and nuance.

The notion that reading influences social and emotional skills is not new. What IS new and powerful is that the findings suggest there's a direct effect from reading stuffy, old literature, even if you read for only a few minutes.

So, Chekov, anyone? Okay, that's too Russian, with too many characters. How 'bout a short story by Alice Munro, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature a few days ago?



Or, you might spend a few minutes with some really EXTREME fiction, like Good Ol' Norse Mythology:



When the madness of our Congress and the State Assembly get too much to bear, my mind unplugs from the real world, and I can picture Thor, son of Odin, joined in mortal combat with the Jormungandr, a serpent that grew so large its body circled the Earth. Once it was wrapped around the globe that way, Jormungandr bit his own tail.

But then the thought of something slippery biting its own tail takes my mind right back to today's self-destructive politics.



CABLE TV news is trusted by 46% of all viewers, much more than the TV Networks. And Fox News leads the field, with twice as much trust as CNN.



**Andy Pafko**, Wisconsin farm boy and baseball legend, died the other day. My dad took me to a baseball game at Wrigley Field when I was 7 or 8, and Pafko won the game with a grand slam homer. That's why I've been stuck with the Cubs all these years.

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY SETS LYCEUM DATES

The Mineral Point Historical Society has announced the dates of their Sunday afternoon 2014 Lyceum series.

Jan. 26 - MPHS Annual Meeting and the popular "Mineral Pointers Remember" with the focus on "High & Commerce Streets." It's about memories, and comes with the audience's participation strongly encouraged. 2 p.m., Methodist Church.

Feb. 16 - Annual Photo Show, a very special digital event. Nancy Pfothauer throws images of historic local homes on the big screen, and zooms in to spotlight the fascinating stories that accompany the Society's collection of glass plate negative slides. 2 p.m. at the Mineral Point Opera House

March 16 - A gathering to unveil an oil painting that has been restored by a Chicago art specialist, with celebratory food and drink. 2 p.m. at Methodist Church

## Jammin' on the Porch Hits All the Right Notes



Five Fridays. Free. Family. Food. Live music on the Gundry House porch has brought scores of people to Orchard Lawn, where the Mineral Point Historical Society has hosted local musical groups for several years. In 2013, the bands in August and September attracted crowds numbering well

over one hundred. MPHS President Matt Ostergrant and other volunteers pass the Tip Jar, to compensate the musicians on the porch. Carole Spelic has booked the talent over the years. We're grateful to her, and to the Society, for giving us many Fridays to remember.

**MPHS events are free and open to the public, but why not join the Society and support the city's historic heritage?**

## High Street Beat



It's a vibrant, colorful chronicle of Mineral Point, conveniently located on a website open to the community and visiting tourists. Local contributors splash the site with photos and good copy, telling stories and filling in the gaps with accounts of "what's going on." In its first year, the Beat racked up 35,000 online visitors. And counting! <http://highstreetbeat.net>

## FROM OUR SHAMELESS PLUG DEPARTMENT

Sandee Beaman, invaluable "Asst. Editor for the *Times*," has a lively online Events Calendar that reaches more than 800 households. Its readers say it's the area's best answer for "what's happening?"

Go to <http://hwy23events.wordpress.com>

If you want periodic event updates via email, send your name and email address to [sandeescalendar@gmail.com](mailto:sandeescalendar@gmail.com)

## NEW FACES on HIGH STREET

Christopher Taw is a painter in the realistic style who offers his work and specializes in the interesting framing technique of the shadowbox. Chris in his wife occupy the **Bottle Works Gallery**, at 26 High Street

**ifinder** is the name for Stephen Ladd's intriguing collection of antiques and vintage objects, at 138 High Street. Definately a browsing place!

And, Mark Lepinske is extensively remodeling the 1861 building at **231 High Street**, with the hope of attracting a tenant who will add to the plenitude of arts in the city.

## LAST WORDS

**WORDS matter.**

Words can ease the burdens of the day, and sooth the soul. They can excite the blood, amuse, and inspire. They can also be used as weapons.

The *Times* believes words can be, and should be, used as rays of sunlight for the community. Words bring home ideas, and when they describe art, literature and philosophy, and all the other big ideas, words can change lives and change history.

William Zinsser, in 1976 in *On Writing Well* he advocated a clean, spare writing style. He said,

"Clutter is the disease of American writing. We are strangling in unnecessary words, circular constructions, pompous frills, and meaningless jargon."

Ernest Hemingway rewrote the last page of *A Farewell to Arms* thirty-eight times. Asked "So what was the problem?" he said,

"Getting the words right."

**We DO have too many words, and they're being milled into mush. Nouns become verbs, such as "transitioning" or "impacting" or "gifting." We don't need to transist (?\*!!!) our perfectly acceptable words, any more than a good pianist needs anything more than 88 keys.**



## VOCABULARY DOWNSIZING

**It must be getting crowded lately on the tip of my tongue with all those languid words laid off, lethargic, lounging around in their underwear in despair of ever being called up again.**

**POETRY**  
by  
Maureen Tolman Flannery