

THE TIMES OF MINERAL POINT

ILLUSTRATED

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June, 2014

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

INFRASTRUCTURE: THE CITY'S DILEMMA

CRUEL WINTER PRODUCES MAJOR HEADACHE



Although it has long been a topic for spirited community conversation, little has been published about several acknowledged physical threats to local properties due to the city's aging infrastructure.

On this page, the *Times* undertakes an account of the 2014 winter's damage to the High Street water main, we point to the city's problematic infrastructure as a continuing problem that demands our attention, and we add some background information in an attempt to expand our reader's knowledge about a difficult community dilemma.

The *Times* joins others who are concerned about dangers posed by faulty city services. But, this newspaper cannot merely take a swipe at city government by demanding a "quick fix." The reality of a complex, expensive construction program is much more complicated than that.

THE THREAT TO HIGH STREET

On Friday, January 10th, as Mineral Point shivered in the clutches of a brutal winter, a water main running under High Street ruptured, and high-impact waters invaded the stone wall of the Koehler Law Office, flooded the basement, punctured the firm's common wall with Desiree's Hair Salon, gnawed through yet another wall at the rear of the storefronts and finally fell to Fountain Street, after washing out the gravel driveway behind the Bargain Nook. Downstream, Fitness Point stacked sandbags to protect the building. For both the building owners and the city, standard insurance policies provided no coverage.

That water main was buried beneath the city's main street 107 years ago.



Master Gardeners Janet Huebner, Jayne Wisler, Verna Pilling, Karen Crawford

And what is so rare as a day in June? Then, if ever, come perfect days.
-- James Russell Lowell

The 1907 water main has been patched by city crews, but the age of the pipe and its placement within a few feet of the rough stone foundations of so many buildings makes this component of the city's infrastructure a "clear and present danger" to businesses along High Street.

The risk of flooding makes storage in storefront basements a gamble, and building owners say the danger of a blowout lowers property values.

One High Street property owner told the *Times*, "The taxpayers deserve reliable basic city services, and a water main that fails without warning is unacceptable city service. It's time to replace the main!"

THE MAYOR SAYS "NOT SO FAST!"

In an interview with the *Times*, Mayor Gregg Bennett says broken water mains are just one item on a long list of problems facing the city, in company with rough streets, old sewers and faulty cisterns, pump repairs, worn paint surfaces, and a variety of other current infrastructure ills.

"The water main on High

Street broke because of the 2014 winter," the Mayor said, "and had not been a major problem before this year."

[Ed.Note: At least two breaks, in 2011 and in 2012, occurred on High Street.]

Mayor Bennett said replacing the old water main and then repaving would create a "Nightmare on High Street," in which businesses would struggle to stay open on a barricaded street for several months. He cited the length of recent construction on Doty Street, as well as its price tag, "If Doty Street cost more than a million dollars, think what High Street would cost!" He also expressed concern about sidewalk and street cave ins.

The mayor said the city's Priority List is under study and will be updated by civic planner Bart Nies of Delta 3 Engineering firm in Platteville. Nies is expected to report his findings to the City Council this month.

"Making a list is easy," the Mayor said, "but we have to choose our projects carefully." Money is the big question mark. "We're working without adequate funding from the state. That means there are no easy solutions."

CITY GOVERNMENT STRUGGLES TO BALANCE ITS LONG LIST OF PRIORITIES

Mayor Bennett said the City Council's Priorities List changes every day; and, at least at the present time, reworking High Street is not considered the city's most pressing problem.

"Each problem is important, but different advocates come before the city government to argue that *their* problem outweighs all *others*, so items tend to move up and down on the Priorities List."

Funding is scarce, he said, and the *real* financial solution is likely to upset taxpayers.

"The Governor has declared war on the schools and local townships," he said, "so with state aid out of reach we must try to live with our problems or increase property taxes, which is not a popular idea." The gas tax is inadequate, he said, and the city does not qualify for most current federal funding. "Oddly enough," he said, "it's because Mineral Point does not have enough low-income residents to meet federal standards for subsidy."

NEW WATER RATE TO CATCH UP WITH EARLIER CITY SPENDING

Mayor Bennett said a recent hike in the city's water/sewer rate will raise revenue to pay for *past* repairs, such as the Doty Street repaving (\$1.1 million) and pump work, painting, pothole repairs and improvements at the fire station. But, for future public works, the Mayor foresees only difficult decisions by the city government and the community.

The Mayor likened the city's current situation to running a business, or a household, with an ever-expanding demand for revenue but a fixed limit on spending. By law, the city can borrow only 5% of its \$180,000,000 assessed value, so only about \$9 million could be acquired to fund the total of city programs.

Tax revenue is the ultimate answer, of course. The Mayor suggested complaining property owners should compare their tax bill with some of the other bills they receive. "Just compare apples to apples," he said, "Add up the annual cost of a cell phone, or take your monthly heat bill times twelve. Doing that kind of comparison would put your tax bill in the right perspective."

Townpeople turned out to watch the city's repair crews as they battled the winter's damage. People talked. But, talk alone will not resolve our dilemma—a long list of urgent problems and a small purse.

The city needs to soberly discuss its options and share its findings with the public. A well-informed citizenry can discard rumors, conceive useful solutions, and take logical steps to adjust to reality.

We'll need cool heads, a sensible, pragmatic attitude, and positive action, all conducted in a "can-do" atmosphere.

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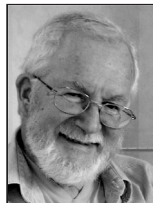
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2014

IN THE INTERESTS OF
COMMUNITY AWARENESS

AND FURTHERANCE
OF HISTORIC UNDERSTANDING



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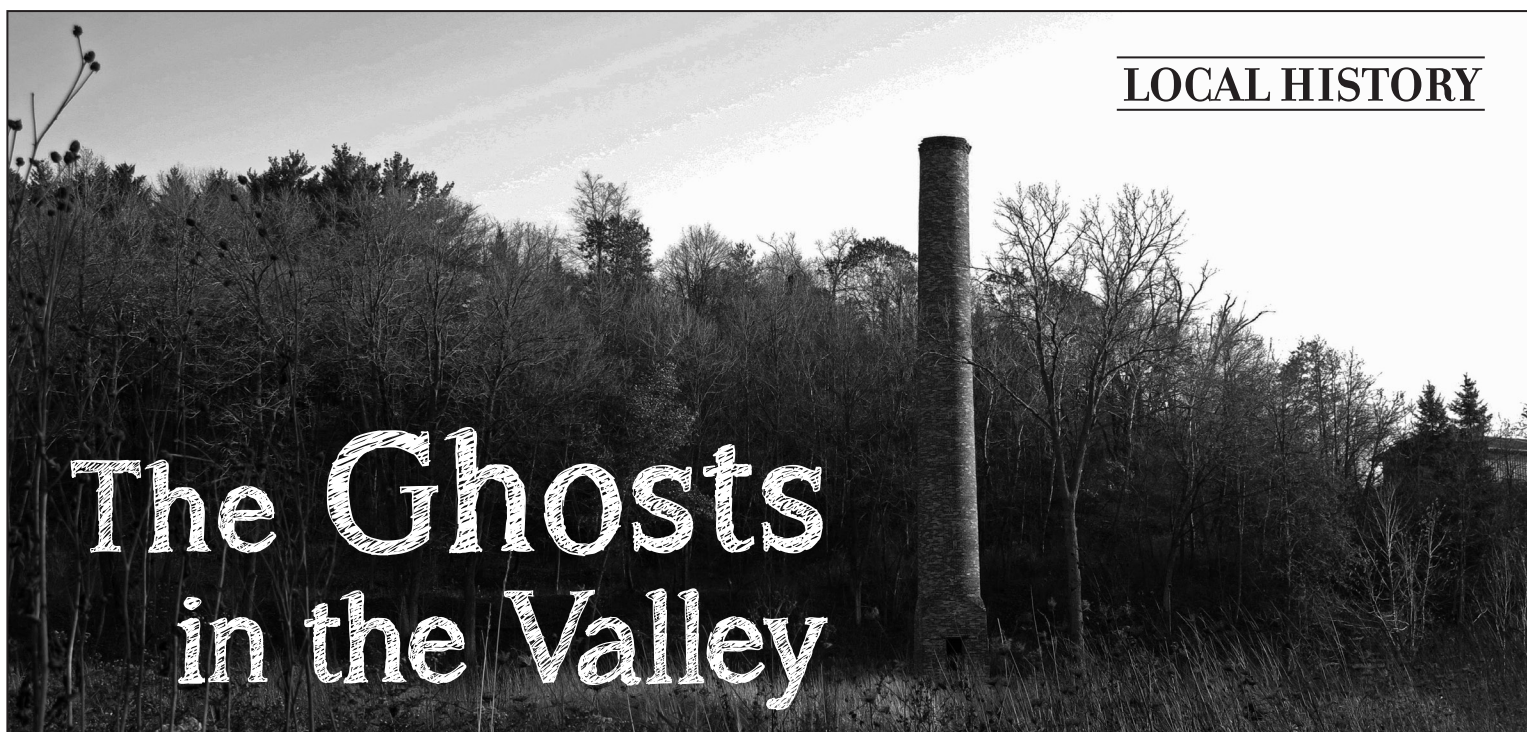
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LOCAL HISTORY



BOOM & GLOOM in the MINING INDUSTRY

The first miners of “gray gold” were the women of the Winnebago tribe, who scratched chunks of lead from the hillsides to fashion body decorations and small objects. The tribes of Wisconsin’s Lead Region lost their lead trinkets—and lost all their lands—as white settlers arrived in the 1820’s and began clawing into the abundant mineral deposits that laid so close to the surface.

Mineral Point was founded in 1827, after two cabins were built by the earliest families. Henry Dodge, later Governor of the state, brought his wife, nine children and his slaves to the city and opened a mine and smelter that produced a ton of lead a day. When a large vein of lead was discovered in 1828, the news spread rapidly, bringing squatters to “badger holes” in local hillsides where the miners lived and worked.

The ways of the early lead miners were simple: a team of two or three men would sink a shaft 20 to 40 feet deep, dig branching tunnels, and use a crude winch to pull the ore to the surface. They worked with pick, shovel and gad.

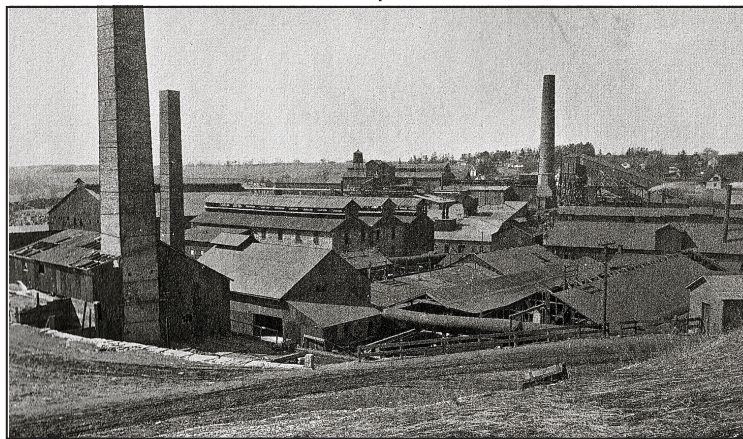


In those times, farming was *tolerated*, so long as it didn’t interfere with mining operations. There were a few small farms in 1833, when land sold for \$1.25 an acre, but serious farming would have to wait until 1847, the year that marked both the peak of lead production and its sudden collapse. Lead prices dropped, zinc was viewed as a waste byproduct and thrown away, and miners turned to the plow.

The economies of mining towns often careen from boom to bust, and there may be no finer example of that historic pattern than Mineral Point.

The 1847 collapse was preceded by another in 1830—the price of lead plummeted from \$5 to \$1 per hundred pounds. In 1830, Mineral Point was a young, dirty, brawling city with crude huts and noisy taverns. Cornishmen came in great numbers in the mid-1830s. High Street was dotted with miner’s pits. But, there were no farms for the town’s 500 residents; food had to be brought in. Miners and their families ate meager fare. When the market dropped, many miners left town. The men of the mines fled again in 1849, when gold was discovered in California and dozens of miners moved west every day.

The crunch of 1830 was to be reversed, however, by the boom of 1845. Copper joined lead in local production, and by the peak year 1847, the *Mineral Point Tribune* reported five furnaces smelting lead for the paint that covered America’s walls and the buckshot fired by the nation’s frontiersmen.



The zinc works filled the Brewery Creek Valley

By the middle of the 19th Century, Mineral Point’s population stood at 2,046.

At the peak of production, some 48,000,000 pounds of lead were mined in the upper Mississippi valley, 90% of it from the Driftless Region, and Mineral Point’s contribution to that total was 25,000,000 tons of the “gray gold.”

Following the 1847 peak, the bottom fell out. Gloom settled over the city until the Civil War brought prosperity back to Wisconsin’s hard-working miners. They supplied lead for bullets and harvested needed foodstuffs—the wheat and the livestock shipped to the Union’s field kitchens.

Mineral Point’s biggest boom started in 1860 with the production of zinc and zinc oxide, and in ten years grew to massive proportions in Linden, Highland and the valley of Brewery Creek. The Mineral Point Zinc Co. partnered with railroads to raise zinc production to its 1891 apex, when Mineral Point laid claim to “the largest zinc oxide operation in the U.S.”

The zinc boom lasted for a quarter-century, with sixty-five zinc concentration mills running by 1908, good wages paid to 300 workers, trains chugging day and night, all to reach a 60,000 ton peak in zinc production in 1917.

And, in 1930, after 26 years on local tracks, the Mineral Point & Northern Railway ceased all operations and sold its cars as scrap iron.

A handful of zinc mines stayed open through World War II. But, as Mineral Point endured a decade of decline, local banks failed, businesses closed, the population leveled, and declining property values gave the town a shabby look. The historic Railroad Depot was abandoned for twenty years, before reopening in 2004 as a railway/mining museum. The big locomotive roundtable was razed—Tony’s Tap fills the space today. The railroad right-of-way became a narrow band of neglected land, and wild flowers and grape vines gradually covered the signs of the railway’s better days. It’s now a recreational trail.

Dozens of buildings, the furnaces and foundries of the mineral valley, are now mere ruins, just rubble, with a few foundation stones showing above ground. A single tall chimney stands, a ghostly pillar in the overwhelming thicket.

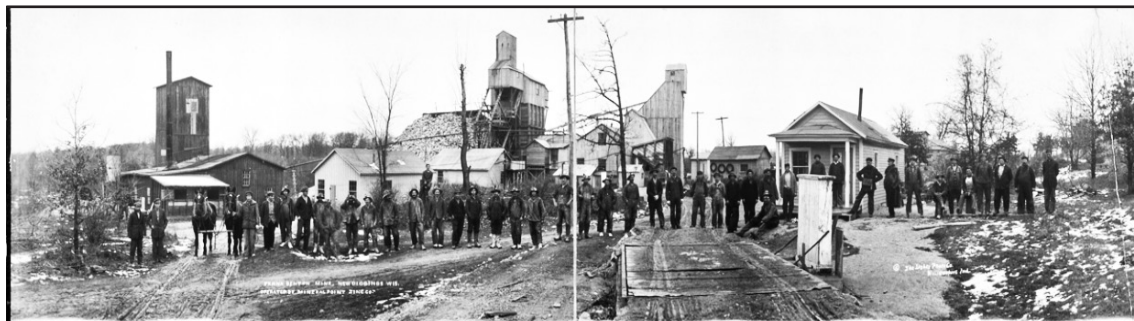
On the floor of the valley a roadway wanders aimlessly through the place that once provided jobs, tax dollars, and the bulk of the local economy, a place where blackened buildings belched flame, smoke and noxious fumes, trains shuttled to and fro, and Brewery Creek carried away the ugly wastes.

Mineral Point has shifted to agriculture, to life as a farm service community. In the 1870s, agriculture become the city’s economic focus. New stockyards were built in 1883, and by the turn of the century the dairy industry and crop farming was well established.

And, in recent years, the city has welcomed tourists, week-enders and workshop-takers, drawn to town by our “Art, Architecture, and Ambiance,” as the local slogan goes.

Add “Agriculture,” of course. And, just for fun, let’s pin a label on the newest feature of our evolution: “Artyculture.”

SOURCES:
Mineral Point, A History
by George Fiedler
History of Iowa County, 1881
Mineral Point Historical Society



ARTS MP ADDS NEW MEMBERS

... and more Public Art

Arts Mineral Point (AMP), after a successful Membership Dinner in April, has decided to make the convivial gathering an annual event.

The arts booster organization made a one-year membership a part of the dinner ticket cost, and AMP is actively recruiting more supporters to build a working fund for future arts-related events and projects.



One of the goals of the arts group is to increase the city's inventory of public art, and in recent days workmen planned to install a concrete base for a large new art piece in the High Street Sculpture Park. The steel/stainless steel work is by Chicago sculptor Jason Verbeek and is titled "Prairie Joint." It is expected to be on display for the June 7th Gallery Night in the city.

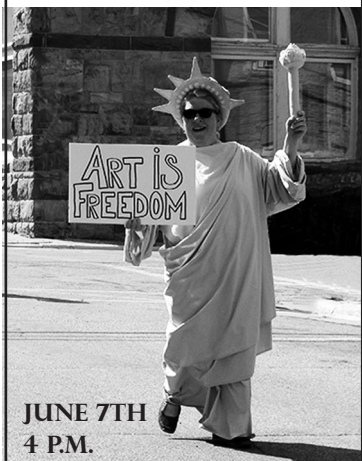
The First Annual "Paint Out," a plein air weekend in August, will attract artists from a half-dozen states, who will set up easels on the city's streets and in two days paint Mineral Point's visual features. Business support for the event has been outstanding, with ten sponsors already enrolled.

There are artist spots available, and AMP has posted a website prospectus and registration form on artsmp.org.

AMP is also building a list of artists interested in setting up a studio or exhibit area in an Arts Incubator Space, the first of several spaces planned to increase the population of local artists. Brian Stuart is spearheading AMP's incubator initiative, and interested artists should contact him at bstuart@wcinet.com.

The organization's mission is to develop a dynamic artistic climate, to promote and nurture local artists, and to boost the city's artistic reputation.

Arts in Motion A Free-Spirit Parade



JUNE 7TH
4 P.M.

Be sure to see an amazing launch for Gallery Night.



The ever-energetic, paintin', coachin', gutter-cleanin', garland-hangin', and—oh, yeah—the fast-talkin' man-of-all-works, a hearty sort of community volunteer, much more than just a pretty face.



10 CANDLES AT SHAKE RAG ALLEY

It's hard to believe ten years have slipped by, while the Shake Rag Alley School of the Arts has been building its programs and drawing visitors from all over the Midwest.

A celebration of the 10th anniversary is slated for June 7, at 1 p.m., in the valley's Green. "Cake . . . and fun" are promised.

THE SATURDAY MORNING MARKET



Quite simply, the place to be. Open 8:30 to 11 a.m., with locally grown foods and inviting artisan fare. Good conversations, too.

30TH ANNUAL DAIRY BREAKFAST

Great grub, great festivities! And a good way to salute the dairy industry in Iowa County. This year's big breakfast, staffed by an army of volunteers, is set for June 7th at the Dannenberg Family-Triple D Farms, at 360 Pleasant View Road, from 6:30 to 10:30 a.m. Special activities for the kids, and an opportunity to learn more about this vital part of our local farm economy.

PENDARVIS: THANKS, AND GO FLY A KITE

Stop by the state-owned historic site on Saturday, June 8th, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and welcome our warm temperatures on Visitor Appreciation Day. Admission rates are deeply discounted to say "thanks" to returning patrons who recapture Mineral Point's mining history at the Pendarvis rooms and buildings.

Kite decorating and kite flying activities are planned.

ANNUAL SHAKE RAG GARDEN TOUR

The 6th Shake Rag Alley Garden Tour and Plant Sale offers gardeners a glimpse at a variety of yard and garden plots, in the city and at select country homes. On Sat., June 14th, the self-guided tour begins at the Shake Rag Alley office (the day of the tour only). Your \$15 ticket gets you information and maps. Nearby, on the Green, a big plant sale will offer one-of-a-kind garden items made by local artisans, as well as low-priced perennials.

QUONSET HUT OPENS ITS CLASSROOMS

Shake Rag Alley and Ken Wallace Construction have completed extensive Phase 1 work, and the former auto parts store is open for workshops, events, and other activities this month.

Phase 2 fundraising begins in the fall.

JAMMIN' AT ORCHARD LAWN

The Friday evening series begins at 6 p.m. on June 13th. Bring a picnic, lawn chairs or blanket, and enjoy the music of local bands. A great family outing, every 2nd Friday from June through September.

Cummins OUR THANKS, CUMMINS

Cummins engines provide big power for vehicles, equipment, and generators around the world. Cummins is also providing new power for the economy of Mineral Point.

The company purchased Nelson Industries in 1999, and developed a factory in the huge space on Fair Street. The company recently announced an expansion to a second plant in the city. Cummins Emission Solutions, their second factory floor, is a quarter-mile away, and is now churning out emission control products, after a top-to-bottom renovation of a building that had been vacant for years.

Many of the firm's 470 employees live in Mineral Point. And, in addition to the household spending they generate, Cummins management and workers are great civic boosters, always turning out in good numbers to volunteer their skills and free labor to a variety of community projects.



[Ed.Note: If you're ever in Columbus, Indiana, take time to visit the Cummins home office, a showplace fashioned from the shell of the first factory the company ran. It was built in 1983 on the grounds of an old railroad yard.

Cummins CEO J. Irwin Miller had "a lifelong interest in architecture," and in the 1950s established a foundation to pay the design fees architects charge for new public buildings in Columbus.

Result? Some of the world's greatest architectural genius is on display in the Hoosier town—in dozens of buildings.

Admittedly, it's an unlikely setting for an architectural Hall of Fame, but the walking tour of the town is truly an adventure in bricks and mortar.]



Photo: Kelly Jo Mitchell, Facebook

The city's "Theater for All the People" is now conducting interviews with candidates for a salaried Part-time Manager position, the "go-to" person for daily theater operations.

The deadline for job applications was May 30, but there's some talk of an extension, to allow the Opera House Board additional time to find the right person for the job.

Check the website for details. www.mineralpointoperahouse.org

Holland is closing 19 prisons, due to a serious shortage of prisoners. Well, that's odd. In the USA, Prisons are one of two big Growth & Profit Industries. The other one, of course, is our Casinos.



EDITORIAL COMMENT

by Frank Beaman

Last month's article on the Tin Top Neighborhood project sparked a Letter to the Editor that ran in the local weeklies in recent days. The Letter used the by-now-familiar formula for media-bashing: it sorted and sifted the words to isolate phrases that could be construed as distortion or bias.

I respect the author of the Letter, a Tin Top neighbor, and respect his right to express his viewpoint, which I take to be, "Not In My Back Yard!" I will not rebut his allegations point by point, but here's one point I want to make: our community needs information about new ideas and new developments. Without such information, we tend to make things up, based on the gossip and whispers.

Oddly enough, the *Times of Mineral Point* is sometimes the vehicle for a journalistic "scoop." I say "oddly" because this newspaper focuses on art, history, entertainment and tourism, and doesn't pursue "hard news" or controversy.

Controversy, however, can find a home in these pages, when it's time to reveal a story that has been overlooked, or withheld, from an interested public.

The *Times* viewed the Tin Top project as an overlooked story of some interest to our readership. The plans and goals of the new owners of the acreage near the Pendarvis site had not been spelled out anywhere else, so the *Times* stepped into the void. I deemed as "very interesting" the stated aspirations of the project's partners: to create an ecologically sound cluster of small homes in a pretty place, run by a co-op organization. I judged the partner's ideas worthy of print. That's it. No dark plot, no special interest, just a good, tellable story.

That's what newssheets do; tell stories that stir interest and discussion among readers. And editors know they'll take the heat when readers are rubbed the wrong way.

Stories can galvanize action as they add to our knowledge.

That, by the way, is why I devoted all that space on Page One to a long view of the city's infrastructure dilemma. It was a story that needed to be told.

One of my primary editorial beliefs is, "Silence is Seldom Golden." I think our readers deserve writing that tries to look at life's messy truths.

Even if it upsets them a bit.

HIS WARDROBE
from THE FIELD
Summer Catalog
Duchess County, New York

Cotton-Linen Sweater \$ 175
White Tee Shirt 29
Cargo Linen Shorts 145
Deerskin Sandals 225

TOTAL \$ 574

THE EDITOR'S CONFESSION:

"I rely on the Bargain Nook for most of my wardrobe needs."

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

by Frank Beaman, Editor

It's not that I'm really all that frugal — I can spend with the best of them. But finding a right-sized something at the fabled Bargain Nook is a prime example of "Beating the System," which is a goal ingrained in those who grew up, as I did, during the Great Depression and World War II.

In those tough times, we learned the difference between scarcity and poverty, and we learned what constitutes true value — it's not just the price.

The guy in the photo may wear a Rolex. His privilege.

I strap on a Timex that I purchased nine years ago for \$16. Chris at Berget's changes the band and the battery when necessary. I think a cheap-but-reliable watch is "enough"

A useful Latin word is "satis." It means "enough." Not "enough" like "we have enough butter," but "enough" in a deeper way—"sufficient." As you've already guessed, "satis" is the root word for "satisfaction."

Depression babies also grew up in families who often talked about "our piece of the pie."

The "piece of the pie" was a down-home mathematical sort of metaphor used to describe the sunny economic climate in America in the years after "the Greatest Generation" won the so-called "Good War."

The pie nicely explained the American system of wealth distribution in those dynamic days of expanding growth.

Using a homely "pie model," if your company increased its profit (a bigger pie), you got a higher wage or a bonus—your proportional piece of the pie got bigger. On a national scale, if the economy of the U.S.A. jumped, individual citizens enjoyed increased economic benefit as well — a larger share of the pie.

But, if the economy shrank, or your company's revenue soured, your share of the pie got a bit smaller because of the smaller overall size of the pie.

Fast forward to today.

For many Americans, the pie is divided into a tiny slice, only 1% of the area, and a larger slice, something like 99%. For the Middle Class, it's just pie in the face.

The past three decades have changed the flavor, the very taste of the American Pie, as well as its shape. Individuals, business places, communities, and nations have adjusted all economies to the cuthroat corporate/consumerist model.

And we've turned inward. We are weary and fearful. We live in a culture of cutbacks, so we are often timid when we could act more boldly.

I know business owners who view the arrival of a new business, similar to theirs, as a threat to their economy. That assumes the pie has finite area and can't become bigger. But, if the new competitor attracts more attention and increases customer traffic, resulting in higher sales and better profits, isn't the shared pie bigger?

I've heard a few goodhearted not-for-profit Boards nitpick line items in their budgets, when they might be discussing the reasons they exist and the actions they might take to become bigger and better in fulfillment of their mission.

Americans, from 1950 to 1980, understood how and why to carve a pie. But, in 1980, they surrendered that skill to the rich and powerful elite, who live very well while imposing austerity on everyone else.

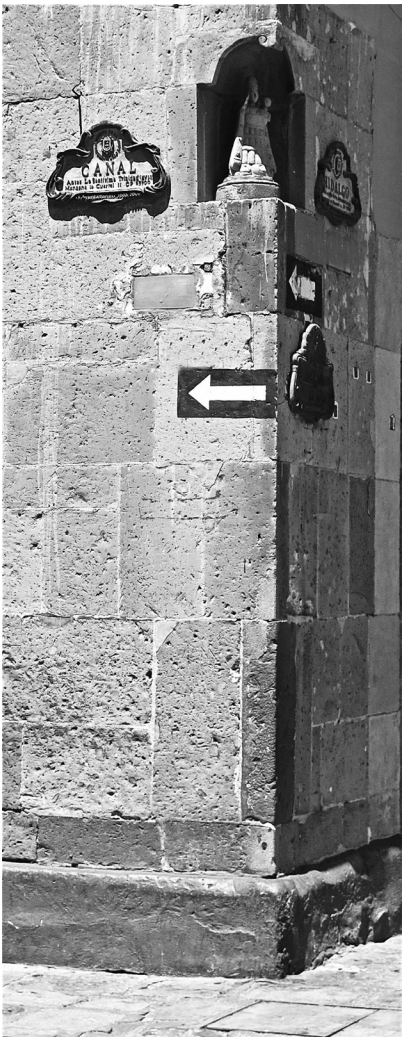
Austerity usually doesn't work. Growth works. It makes the pie bigger and that should give everyone a bigger slice.



STREET-CORNER COURTESY? HOW QUAIN!

In the beautiful, historic Central Mexico city of San Miguel de Allende, this is what a street corner looks like. Most streets in the old part of town have walls, two stories high, behind ribbon-thin sidewalks. The walls are pierced by entryways, and behind wooden entry doors are the homes, shops and factories of a city founded in 1527. You walk by, and you never know what you'll see if you're lucky enough to be there when the doors open: it might be a vacant lot overgrown in cactus, it might be a shed where dusty building materials are stored, it might be a fancy woman's clothing store, or an art gallery, and sometimes—often—its a lovely 200-year old home standing in splendor behind a carefully-crafted garden.

Some of the walls are soft sandstone or native limestone, left in its natural color. But, many walls are painted in all the bright colors of a Mexican rainbow.



But, let's go back to the streetcorner shown in the photo above.

The white arrows on the rectangular black fields are simply painted on stones in the high wall. Painted arrows are the only signs used to tell motorists the street is a one-way thoroughfare. There are no metal signs, no "Wrong Way" notices, no blinking lights. Nope. Just those simple arrows.

Wouldn't it be interesting to do enough research to add up the cost of One-Way-Traffic signage in the United States? Would we want to know what taxpayers spend on metalwork, installation, painting and repairing all those signs? It might be especially interesting in light of a recent study that found that American drivers see so many signs and signals alongside the pavement and overhead, they tune out the signage and the warnings don't register. The study basically said motorists minds simply go elsewhere to avoid the confusing forest of signs: stop, slow, no turns, no Uees, school zone, speed limit, coming speed limit, etc.

The most important thing about Mexican traffic habits, however, is the uncommon use of common courtesy by downtown drivers. One day, I ate breakfast by a window in a cafe, looking out at a busy four-way intersection (effectively a blind intersection because of the high walls), and I marveled at the criss-cross flow of vehicular traffic. It was is a sort of ballet on wheels. All the drivers slowed, looked at the other cars approaching from all directions, and with a nod of the head or a brush of the hand signaled other drivers that "it's your turn to have the right of way." Likewise, motorbikes and pedestrians weave their way through the traffic pattern, and vehicles allow them to cross.

There are no stops signs in downtown San Miguel.

There are no traffic lights, blinking, either.

No long lines of stalled cars, no stop-and-go, no gridlock.

But, there are virtually no collisions at the corners, no fender-benders, no pedestrian mishaps. That's extraordinary because the streets are narrow, cobblestone avenues, and the sidewalks average only two feet in width from curb to wall.

On the winding streets, you see a driver stop his car (often a vintage Volkswagon) in front of a shop, to help his grandmother climb out of the car and get into a wheel chair—it takes a while. The cars stacked up behind the Beetle see what's happening. They wait. When grandma is inside the store, they move on.

You seldom hear a horn honk in San Miguel. When you do, so it seems, there's an impatient Gringo sitting behind the wheel.



A Plug for Sandee's Calendar

Sandee Beaman, aptly titled "Asst. Editor for the *Times*," compiles an online Events Calendar that is the area's best answer to "What's happening?"

Go to <http://hwy23events.wordpress.com> and simply click on an event to open it for all the details.

If you want other local updates via email, send your name and email address to sandeescalendar@gmail.com

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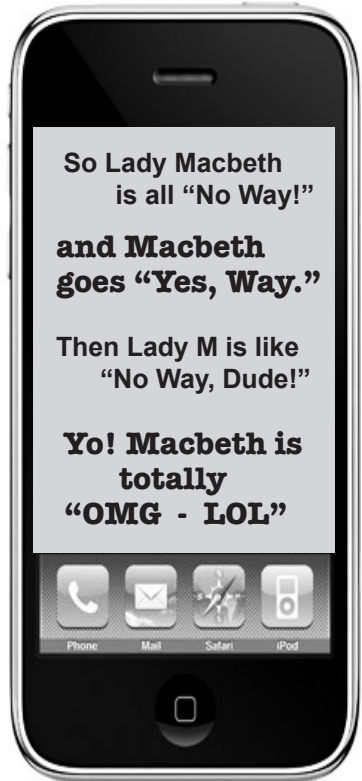
2014

We recently celebrated the Bard's birthday, and looked with gratitude at 450 years of magical wordplay.

William Shakespeare created unforgettable characters, a long list of creatures who transcend fiction and have become popular metaphors: the wily Iago, a playful Puck, dark-hearted Richard III, King Lear at the collapsing end of his life, and Hamlet, the crazy genius of tortured thought.

Many of the words his characters spoke are the words we now repeat every day. "The winter of our discontent" is a perfect description of 2014 in Wisconsin. Here are a few others: dead as a doornail, Greek to me, come what may, eaten out of house and home, forever and a day, heart's content, love is blind, wild goose chase, and "into thin air." All made up. There was no spellcheck.

But, Will's World is now shrinking, due to vocabularies shaped by television, and also because of today's technology, which demands abbreviated language and often sidesteps imaginative wordplay in favor of something much duller. Indeed, if "All the world's a stage," we are alive during a painful stage for the English language. To wit,



Obviously, "The times are out of joint." Thanks again, Bard of Avon.



This book has been named Winner of the autobiography and memoir category in judging for the 2014 International Book Awards. The new prize adds to earlier success with a Bronze Award for Best Midwest Regional Non-Fiction in the 2014 Independent Publishers' annual competition.

Coleman is a Mineral Point author, playwright, actor, an impresario, stage and sound man, producer, walker, dog lover, birder, and lodgeowner.