

THE TIMES OF MINERAL POINT

ILLUSTRATED

Vol. 3, No 1

May, 2014

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

THIS JUST IN: A BIT OF SPRING WEATHER

CLINIC'S AUCTION

—★—
Fun & Funds
—★—

The bidding was spirited, as more than 150 guests took part in the annual silent/live auctions of the Community Connection Free Clinic (CCFC), in April.

Auctioneer Larry Springer's gavel fell, and donated dollars flowed in, supporting Clinic services for residents without adequate health coverage.

The fundraising effort will provide as much as 33% of the operating costs for one year's work at the 7-year old clinic.

Coleman emceed the event, and Medical Director Aaron Dunn and Nurse/Manager Molly Zuehlke thanked supporters, gave the audience a progress report, and spoke of the impact of Obamacare on clinic procedures.

Dr. Dunn summarized, "We can be proud that we're a community that believes *everyone* deserves basic health care."



QUONSET HUT READY FOR WORKSHOPS

The first phase of the vintage reconstruction will be complete in mid-May, and Shake Rag Alley's schools will begin using the space for events and workshops. With its new floor, framing, insulation, wiring, walls and windows, the big room will also be available for rental by groups that are looking for a unique gathering spot.



At Anglin's Nearwater Farm

Forsythia's golden explosion and his-n-her mudboots, drying in the sunshine of a welcome spring season.



It's May! A Merry Month, our folk lore tells us, made even more merry by the slow realization that the historically brutal winter of 2014 has at last ended.

As Lady Macbeth used to say, "Out, Out, Damned Polar Vortex."

Those who keep track of such things can probably tell us how many hours they spent shoveling snow from portions of the driveway, coming in to thaw and drink something warm, and then going out again to shovel a few more inches of snow away.

And those who count may have recorded all the miles driven to load up on groceries.

A Wisconsin winter demands an attitude adjustment, not only for the physical labor required to dig out and stay warm -- but for the many challenges that can render you speechless, sitting by the window in a chilled daze, or railing against the cold with a bold string of expletives.

In ancient times, early humans worried, every year, that warm weather would never arrive. All they knew was that the cold and dark had been their daily life for months. They were afraid the gods were angry with humankind's folly, and would not be willing to end the punishment by restoring warm, sunny days.

It's an anxiety we've all come to share.

ARTS MINERAL POINT

On a Roll, and Doing LASTING Good

The formation of yet another non-profit "do-good" organization may have initially met with skepticism, but the record of progress by Arts Mineral Point (AMP) illustrates a successful launch for an invaluable community asset, one worthy of widespread membership and strong support.

In just a few months, AMP's volunteers gathered at Wantoot Gallery; and, with leadership from Ried Knapp, embarked on a pathway that has already proved beneficial to the city. The impact of AMP's bold ideas, and AMP's quick actions, can be measured in tangible ways.

The Arts Incubator project, nearing completion, brings promise of a welcome new home for creative people, in a place where the artists carry the cost of the space they rent. Those drawn to the downtown Incubator — today's "move-ins" — may be considered the "old timers" in future years.

The plein air weekend called "Paint Out" is set for August, a first-time event that will likely become an *annual* arts weekend, attracting a lively group of painters to the city. That will spell good times for both the community's artistic atmosphere and the local economy.

The sculpture parks — and there will be several of them, all new to Mineral Point — will infuse our landscape with vibrant public art, a hallmark of creative communities. Those parks, and their appealing artistic attractions, will be a pleasant surprise for strollers in future decades.

AMP's literature speaks of "developing a dynamic artistic climate." Clearly, it's happening!



ARTS BOOSTERS CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Arts Mineral Point (AMP), formed in 2013 to nurture and promote the local arts community, kicked off a membership and fund-raising campaign at the Walker House in late April. It was an evening of promise and progress for the young non-profit organization.

Diners heard a report of a committee's work to establish a new Arts Incubator in downtown Mineral Point, featuring gallery, office and studio spaces. AMP conducted a wide survey of local artists and recorded strong interest from potential renters, which could make the Incubator self-sustaining, with rental income balancing the cost of the studios. AMP will now work to find a suitable location for the facility, and draft rates, rules and regulations for the Incubator's creative clients.

Patrons saw the sketch/plan for a Sculpture Garden at the Walker House, then went to the window to discover the stakes were already in the ground. The garden is AMP's second such effort, following the High Point Sculpture Park, which was unveiled in the fall of 2013.

And, they heard plans for the "Paint Out" in early August, a weekend event in which artists come to town, set up an easel on the street, and paint the city's attributes in Plein Air fashion.

The ticket for the dinner included a membership in AMP, which is gathering funds to build arts awareness and new activity within the community.

The indications are clear: AMP is off and running well!



www.artsmpp.org

THE TIMES OF MINERAL POINT, FROM MINERAL POINT PRESS

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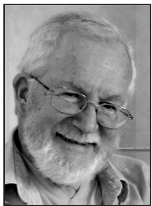
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PARTNERS WITH POINT FORWARD
2014

IN THE INTERESTS OF
COMMUNITY AWARENESS
AND FURTHERANCE
OF HISTORIC UNDERSTANDING



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THE
TIMES
ON
YOUR
DOORSTEP



When the very first edition of the *Times* rolled off the press in 2007, we pushed a wheelbarrow down High Street to hand-deliver copies of the paper to the shops, galleries and restaurants of the city. We mailed copies to a few readers, too.

We've adhered to that awkward distribution system, but now we are pleased to announce a better way, a new delivery system that fulfils our original intent — to put the newspaper in every Mineral Point household.

Working with our Pointer neighbor Brian Stewart, Sales Manager for the weekly *Shopping News*, we've arranged to slip a copy of the *Times* into their bundle of smart-shopping materials on the first delivery of each month we publish, May - December.

We'll keep a part of the old system: we will continue to place copies of the newspaper in a limited number of local establishments, the places where local folks hang out, where people have a bit of time to read something, and where tourists might pick up a copy of the *Times* and get worthwhile information to make their visit to the city more rewarding.

But we are truly excited to think we can now reach a larger readership, and readers won't inadvertently skip one of the monthly issues because they simply didn't stop in at the right place at the right moment.

YOU, as a reader, have a small part to play. If you value this newspaper, you'll need to dig through the pages of the *Shopping News* and pull the *Times* from the wealth of other materials.

Our great hope is that you'll think it's worth the effort.



A NEW
NEIGHBORHOOD
AT PENDARVIS
MEADOW



Local Trio Buys Acreage;
Seeks Homeowners
for Planned Community

The grasslands west of the historic Pendarvis rowhouse has long lain dormant, but three adventurous buyers have acquired the property, received needed approval from local government agencies, weathered a few complaints, and are drafting engineering/landscape plans for "Tin Top, a Planned Neighborhood."

Tim Freeman, Bill Grover and Amber Westerman envision a cluster of eight to twelve cozy, ecologically-built homes, surrounded by shared green spaces with small-scale gardens and natural walkways. Each of the partners has claimed one of the home sites, and now seek interested home buyers, who would become members of their recently-formed LLC dedicated to management and care of the lands, the new homes, and the organization's philosophic objectives: "stewardship in nature, in ecology, and in history."

After joining the LLC with a \$35,000 (approximate lot price) purchase, the buyer will plan the home, observing Tin Top guidelines: the homes will have a footprint of about 1,000 sq. ft., some two-story, some with a walk-out lower level, and some with garage, all compatible with the site's topography and local historic styles. The homeowners would likely organize a neighborhood co-op, emphasizing shared commons space and shared responsibility. Buyers would own both land and house, and pay a monthly maintenance fee for the property's upkeep.

The layout for the home parcels, their "fit" in the hill's landscape, will be determined by continuing engineering studies.

The sloping lawn south of the planned home cluster, between the Tin Top homes and several houses along Spruce Street, is protected by a conservancy agreement. It could be developed for garden and orchard growth. The hilltop north of the planned cluster is an organic meadow, now planted in hay. New foliage will be installed along the seven-acre site's borders.

Tin Top organizers say they will need participation from about half of the planned homeowners group before moving ahead with the roadwork and utilities. They invite interested parties to contact Bill Grover at 608.341.9256.



Tim Freeman, Amber Westerman, Bill Grover

Tin Top Open House & Kite Fly - May 18th at 1 p.m.

SIGNS OF SPRING

MINERAL POINT FARMERS MARKET

A sure sign of spring! Dozens of local vendors dazzle you with their produce and offer a wide range of other items in the pavillion at Water Tower Park. The market opens May 3rd.

Almost a "must" on Saturday morning — the place to find good food and great conversation with your friends.

A MAYPOLE AT FOLKLORE VILLAGE

On May 10th, a Maypole Dance highlights a Saturday Night Social, a potluck dinner followed by a happy springtime tradition: decorating a maypole with fresh flowers and dancing around it. For 40 years, the village's Saturday Night Socials have been a blend of the traditional rural Wisconsin "house party" and small town community gatherings. Bring the family and your favorite potluck dish. www.folklorevillage.com

THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S GARDEN

Students of all ages — even PreKindergarten — are planning the seeding and planting layout for their gorgeous raised-bed garden behind the school building.

Ryan Fox and Nurse Julie Pompos provide good advice, as the kids learn about healthy veggies, dig in the soil, and at harvest time carry their produce inside to the school's cafeteria.

UPLANDS GARDEN CLUB PLANT SALE

Always a biggie! Club members bring in many of their own plants and starts for the event. May 17th at Ley Pavilion at Harris Park in Dodgeville from 8 - 10:45, and they sell out quickly.

ORCHARD LAWN WELCOMES VISITORS

The Gundry House Museum opens its doors for guided tours by docents on May 23, and visitors will see first-hand how the restoration is continuing. Tours Fri, Sat and Sun., 1-5 p.m..

SHAKE RAG CENTER FOR THE ARTS

The Arts & Crafts season is underway, offering a variety of workshops and special events, including "Bangles & Beads" on May 16,17, 18th. Choose from eight introductory-level classes and make your own jewelry, funky or fine.

On May 24, 25, stroll the Shake Rag Alley pathways to see original fairy homes built for this tour. Bid on one of the treasures at a Silent Auction on Sunday, or make your own fairy home from materials supplied by the school.

CLAY IN MAY WILL BOWL YOU OVER

The annual self-guided Pottery Tour takes you to the studios of Joe & Christy Cole, Tom & Diana Johnston, Bruce Howdle and Frank Polizzi, known for their high-quality functional and sculptural work. Demonstrations, tours, talk-time with artists, and perhaps buy their work. Maps/info at www.clayinmay.com

PENDARVIS OPEN, PUB NIGHT ON TAP

The state historic site opens on May 7th, and its first event is the traditional Pub Night on Saturday, May 31st, from 7 to 10 p.m., \$10 admission, with live music, pub games, and a cash bar in the authentic Tiddleywink Pub. A bit o' Cornwall!

AND IF YOU'RE INTO STEAMPUNKING ...

Stonefield, another state-owned site in Cassville, WI, invites local adventurers to "travel across time and space to 1880's Tombstone, Arizona, a dusty town filled with heroes and villains of the Old West." A squaredance on Friday, May 23rd, and on Saturday a wild shootout will feature Steampunk Lawmen armed with blasters, against historic western desperadoes. That, plus a hunt for silver, a hootenanny, a fashion show, Grand Ball, and other steampunk events. www.stonefieldhistoricsite.org

FINALLY, AT THE CIDER FARM

Deirdre Birmingham and John Biondi are buzzing-bee-busy with grafting, pruning and planting. They just put in 900 new apple trees, using an auger mounted on the back of a tractor, as a crew from Wisconsin Public Television filmed the action.





UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Mineral Point Opera House

A reorganization is now under way, following the February resignation of Director/Impresario Phil Mrozinski, the long-time guiding force behind the theater’s operations. A ten-person Board has taken day-to-day tasks in hand, and is exploring ways to increase performances and community events in the 1915 building. “Revving up,” says Board Pres. Lauren Powers, “but slowly and carefully.” Veep Mike Wagner has outlined current plans to the City Council, which leases the theater. 2nd VP Keith Burrows has also accepted the Treasurer’s position, and Anne Palzkill will serve as Secretary. The Board is addressing possible employment of a part-time Manager. Other discussion centers on establishing a rental rate structure and dealing with the myriad details of successfully running a complex enterprise. So far, one commitment: “the Opera House will be open for tours during all the Gallery Nights and for all days of the Fall Art Tour.”

www.mineralpointoperahouse.org

SIDEBAR: Lynn Goninen, who sold popcorn at the Opera House as a teenager, will return as a member of the Concessions Crew.

Shake Rag Alley Arts Center

Megan O’Connell returns to Shake Rag Alley as the Executive Director, with the energy and cheerful personality she brought to the school in 2012, when she served as an intern. She’s a graduate of UW-Platteville.

Megan replaces Courtney Henson Brien, who brought a variety of skills to the office during the past two years.



Photo: SRA Website

Folklore Village

A shout-out to the new Executive Director at the Village, Terri Van Orman, a folklorist from Arkansas.

The Filling Station

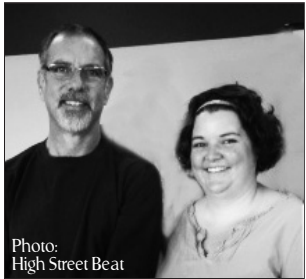


Photo: High Street Beat

Where Subway once stood, near the Quality Inn, a new Pasta/Sandwich Bar & Grill in the Wallace Family Restaurant tradition -- good solid food! Cierra Wallace (seen here with dad, Ken) is having good-natured fun with the gas station theme! Comfort Food and Wine & Beer Mon - Sat, 11-7

Ridge Lumber

As Greg Carey retires, capping a family business founded back in 1976, Mineral Point Builder Dave McCoy and his son, Joe, will remodel and run the Dodge Street lumber yard.

Tequila Point Grill/Margarita Bar

In the Old Royal Inn, it’s dinner with Southwest and Caribbean flavors. Richard Baumeister and Kirstin Kisgen greet the diners and Tim Apuzzo and Jared Rideout work the kitchen. Opening in mid-May, on Th, Fri, Sat.



GO, GO, LOCAL BUSINESS !



For April’s crowded Gallery Night, clay sculpture wizard Bruce Howdle mounted nine — count ‘em — nine big, colorful ceramic murals in his Commerce St. studio.

“My largest body of work,” he said.

CHURCH CANS POPULAR DRINKS



“Drink water,” says UCC

Perhaps the idea came during the winter days, when Mineral Point residents were ordered to continuously run their water tap, or perhaps the church was alarmed at recent news about sodas and obesity. Whatever the inspiration, the congregation of the United Church of Christ conducted a “Drink Water for Lent” campaign, asking members to forego coffee and soda, and donate what they would have spent on the popular drinks to a fund for the Iowa County Food Pantry. The Sunday School kid’s collection reached \$250, which translates to 750 Food Pantry meals for needy citizens. Dick Josh’s crew also distributed baskets, filled with church-donated food, during Easter Week.



Final Friday is ShowTime

The Library Board and the Mineral Point Opera House Board have agreed to show a FREE Mineral Point Library Movie at the Opera House on the last Friday of each month, beginning in May and running through the end of the year. To avoid conflicts with copyright restrictions, the Library’s film franchise specifies that promotion of the film may not include the movie’s name.

But, hey, you’ll get hints on the films’ identity, and the shows are free!

UP, UP AND AWAY GO FLY A KITE

The Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) is celebrating spring’s arrival with a number of play-days at state-owned historic sites in May and June. In Madison, at the WHS Museum on Capitol Square, kite decorating will take place on Sat., May 17, from 9 to 4. And, at Pendarvis in Mineral Point, kite-flying programs and other activities are slated for Sunday, June 8th.

The ASCENT



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Now that we’ve survived April’s annual Day of Reckoning:

The United States was founded on the basis of a document six pages in length. The words of the Constitution comprise 0.1 percent of the current Income Tax Code, which runs a whopping 14,000 pages. It has nearly tripled in volume during the last decade, from 1.4 million to 3.8 million words, the IRS admits.

It’s no secret the Code’s complexity causes accidental underpayments and encourages cheating – the best guess is that more than a trillion dollars is denied the government through write-offs, loopholes and deductions.

In the days leading up to April 15th, Americans spent an estimated 6.1 billion hours preparing their tax returns, the equivalent of three million employees working full-time.

We struggle to recall simplicity, as complexity rules. Sadly, the burial of simplicity stems from a false premise, the fallacy that if you provide more information it will lead to greater understanding. In fact, the opposite is often true: too much information creates fuzziness, not clarity, and when people can’t discern which words are really important or useful, they often stop paying attention. Or, as with their income tax, they simply turn an impossible task over to H&R Block.

If TV Trivia is your idea of fun, now hear this:

The first television commercial (\$9 cost for Bulova clocks) ran for 20 seconds during a baseball game in 1941. Today’s typical viewer has seen two million commercials by age 65. About 275,000,000 American homes watch the boob tube for about eight hours a day, and burn 4% of their total electricity that way.

But, enough about that — let’s talk about sex and violence!!

Okay, sex: TV first showed a couple in the same bed in 1947. Media scholars credit Lucille Ball and hubby Desi Arnez for breaking the bed barrier, back in the days when Lucy was pregnant but CBS would not allow the word “pregnant” to be broadcast. But by the 1990s, cable television changed the standards of acceptability forever. The first interracial kiss is traced to *Star Trek* way back in 1968, but in the past two decades almost all of the sexual taboos have toppled. Partial – sometimes not-so-partial – nudity is now commonplace, even in the commercials, and sex scenes leave little to the imagination. TV’s managers say we like to watch that stuff.

Violence? It’s the nature of a jerky medium that changes images every six or seven seconds, the “wow/pow” effect to dazzle or frighten the viewer. Crashes and combat — not talking heads.

Most top-rated shows contain violent scenes. By the time the average American boy reaches age 14, he’s seen 11,000 murders on the tube and, by age 18, that number goes to 200,000. The managers of all those channels say we like to watch that stuff.

By the way, not so trivially, television is on the way out. In a surprisingly quick time, we’ll get the same stuff on computers, tablets and smartphones, and toss the TV set into the junk pile.

Remington Outdoor Co., manufacturer of the Bushmaster, the rifle used to kill 26 people in Newtown, has seen its earnings soar 52% over the past year. Gun enthusiasts have flocked to stores to buy a weapon they fear the government might ban.

Many states have passed laws to EASE gun restrictions.

The Pledge of Allegiance was written in 1892 by a minister, Francis Bellamy, to enliven a campaign by *Youth’s Companion Magazine* that offered kids an American flag in return for every 100 magazine subscriptions they sold.

The Pledge’s twenty-three words were recited in public schools across the country and Congress officially recognized the Pledge in 1945. The words “under God” were added later.

Francis Bellamy was a Socialist.

Please DO NOT report this fact to Fox News.



A HUNDRED-DOLLAR COW

Basic Cow	\$100
2-toned Exterior	45
Extra Stomach	75
Storage Compartment/Flexible Dispensing Device	60
Four spigots @ \$10 ea.	40
Cowhide Upholstery	75
Dual Horns @ \$7.50 ea.	15
Automatic Flyswatter	35
TOTAL	\$445

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

“See, what we’ve got here is a failure to communicate.”
-- Prison Capt. Strother Martin, in “Cool Hand Luke,” 1967

by the Editor

We dressed up for the flight to Orlando. We did that, then.

Disney World had opened the year before my family flew to Florida on Delta Airlines.

Liz, one of four excited daughters, was to mark her sixth birthday on the day we were to leave Chicago. So, on an impulse, I asked Delta for a favor. It was simple enough: I picked the local number from the phone book, spoke with two pleasant women, and arranged an in-flight surprise.

We did that, then.

A taxi took us to O Hare, the curbside Red Caps whisked away our luggage, and we walked to our gate just as they were boarding Coach Class flyers. Halfway to our destination, we were handed the menu and made our choices for the in-flight meals, and when lunch was finished the magic moment arrived: two stewardesses came down the aisle with a small, white frosted cake, a candle burning on top, and they sang “Happy Birthday” to Liz, as the other passengers applauded.

That was then, 1972, when air travel was adventure, not agony.

Forty-two years later, a trip on a commercial jetliner offers few surprises, but dishes out a variety of disappointments and insults. You search for your travel route online, pay for trip and bags with a credit card, check yourself in at a computer kiosk, endure the security searches, and (if your flight is not cancelled) stow your luggage and strap yourself into a cramped seat to wait for the trip’s sole amenity, the “complimentary beverage.”

Delta’s profit for last-quarter 2013 was \$558 million, revenue up 6%, and operating expenses went down 2%. Thus, Delta Airlines was very kind to its shareholders.

But, not to its passengers, who don’t even get a package of peanuts. (The meager bag of peanuts was yesteryear’s “stingy airline joke.”)

...and so it goes.

We have seen the human connection, face-to-face and personal, vanish from most transactions between big business and customers. In today’s faceless commerce, you deal with a machine or a person who *imitates* a machine. You get the robot, or the zombie.

You push the right buttons, and you “Hold,” because “All of our Associates are Helping Other Customers.” Uh, Right!

What’s to blame?

There are many culprits. First, it’s the corporate mindset. The pioneers of retailing popularized the slogan, “The customer is always right.”

That little gem is a joke told in the break room in the big box stores, where part-time employees, hired without work benefits, struggle to avoid layoffs, cutbacks and other forms of corporate chaos. Shared loyalty between the company and its employees has almost disappeared. Today’s salespeople know their managers value the quotas and targets set for the next quarter more than smiles on the faces of customers.

Second, the computer must complete every sales transaction. It tells the clerk what he can sell, when, and at what price, figures the change owed the customer, updates the inventory — it tracks everything. And, when the computer says “No” for any reason, the transaction is simply frozen. All this, as the salesperson looks down at a screen, and not up and into the eyes of the nearby human being, the purchaser.

The computer-centered sale has all but destroyed customer contact in restaurants, gas stations, and theaters—anyplace money changes hands. And, did I mention air travel?

A lot of Americans have abandoned the retail operation altogether by shopping online. This, as Mom & Pop stores close and bulldozers begin to raze the Malls of the 1950s.

At Amazon.com, customers don’t even get a mumbled “HavANiceDay” at the end of the sales transaction.

Of all of today’s many disconnects, technologies and trends, which actually drive people further apart, it’s the Customer Connection that has suffered the most.

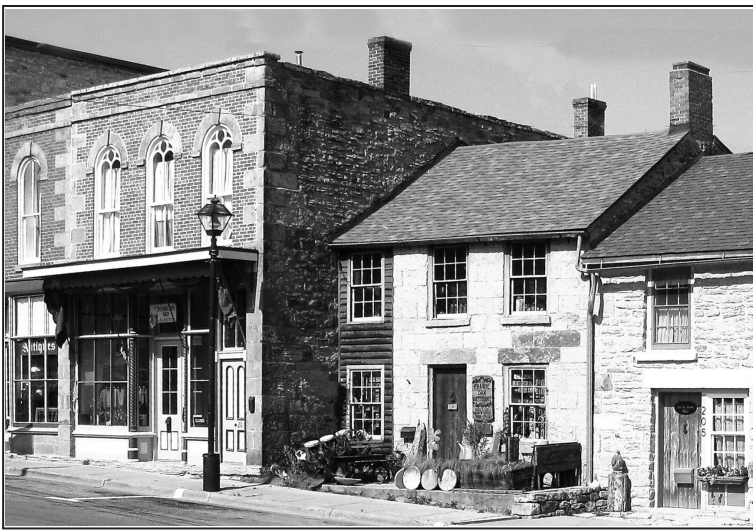
You talkin’ to me?

Aren’t we fortunate that in Mineral Point the human connection between seller and buyer is strong and warm? Aren’t we lucky that our neighbors who work so hard have found a way to do business that is friendly, personal and accommodating?

Aren’t we blessed that the zombies and robots of today’s cold, cruel corporate culture haven’t found their way to the streets of our little town?



If you enjoyed this piece, Press One. If not, Press Two. If you Could Care Less, Press Three. You can’t just “like” it – the Editor has no Facebook account.



WE’RE VERNACULAR

On High Street, as their smartphone snaps a photo, visitors often tell us, “This town is like a picture postcard.” Tourists use the same words in New England villages, and in other American locales that seem comfortable in their place, that seem just so “right.”

Have you noticed, tho, how most of the admired buildings are old, not new, and how few compliments go to the strip malls and the bloated quick-built houses piled upon the treeless lots of the so-called Bedroom Communities?

So, what makes a place “a picture postcard”?

It’s not the expanse or grandness of a place; rather, it’s the *limits* that defined the place when it came together.

Mineral Point was built in tight confines — a few rude shelters surrounded by the wilderness of the 1830’s. The crude 19th Century buildings were wedged into flat spots in the rough hillsides, and constructed of simple materials — the stuff on hand. That’s why so many old buildings appear married to the land. They usually accomodate irregularities of the lot. Their old streets follow the land’s contours, not a grid imposed by a committee or a developer working under a banner that claims, “Urban Community.”

Tourists do not snap photos of franchise restaurants, auto dealerships and the big retail barns lined up mile after mile on ugly urban thoroughfares. They do not sketch or paint suburban sprawl, rigid rows of outsized, vinyl-sided megahomes with manicured lawns and plastic fences, the result of growth without natural limits.

We love old buildings although we may not even know why we are drawn to them. We simply sense they are buildings built with care on settings that are appropriate. They reflect the way of life of the people who live in them.

Howard Mansfield’s book “The Same Ax, Twice” sparked this article

Architects usually describe Mineral Point’s inventory of old buildings as “vernacular,” denoting “indigenous construction based on local needs and materials, reflecting local traditions,” Our historic buildings are made of native stones, trees, and clay. The imported materials hauled in for the carpenters and masons included nails, mortars, and glass, but the *major* materials were often gathered near the building site.

Building techniques used in vernacular construction give us homes and shops fashioned by local craftsmen who often used intuitive designs and sometimes improvised building methods. Again, craftsmen working within their *limits*.

Our old buildings display architectural features handed down from generation to new generation, time-tested ideas. The builder took personal interest in his structure. He could picture his grandchildren living and working there. He built for *them*.

Today’s predominant building standards allow contractors to slap together a place engineered and manufactured with an expected life of only twenty years. The structure goes up with the bulldozer parked just around time’s corner.

Yes, it’s true: old buildings sag a bit, as did High Street in the mid-1970s. Gently built villages mature, however. They decay and are then reborn.

Our old buildings become Picture Postcard Images because, unlike so many of the modern-day techno-buildings (tossed on the land like thrown dice), our historic structures are graceful places, born of their *limits*: in materials, knowledge and time.

In the photo, the large brick bldg. is a harness shop built 1868-73. The middle bldg. is the O’Neill House, an 1837 storefront, the frame portion a remnant from 1829. On the right, you see a partial building, “built old style” of limestone just eight years ago.

LAST WORDS

Are you getting a bit weary with the incredible misuse of the word “incredible?”

in • cred • i • ble adj.

1. impossible to believe
2. difficult to believe; extraordinary

So, incredible is defined as “unbelievable” or “not convincing,” but it’s *informal* use (as “extraordinary”) is what we hear so often when it’s used to mean “amazingly good or beautiful.”

The almost-opposite usages are confusing, and make us pause to choose which meaning the speaker meant.

So, just to pick a random example, “The Bush Administration was incredible” can mean “it lacked credibility.” Or, “it was amazingly good and beautiful.”

(We heard it both ways.)

Then there’s “unbelievable,” which means, well, unbelievable, but in common usage has joined “incredible” as “something amazingly good and beautiful.”

Both are an unbelievably incredible affront to the proper English tongue, and provide yet another reason the English Major must always be vigilant.



If you aspire to the wealth and status of a professional writer, here are a few sage words of advice drawn from the pages of the usually reliable *Saturday Evening Post*:

“If you want to make your writing smooth as silk and as solid as a rock, avoid cliches like the plague.

A cliché is old hat, pure and simple. They’re annoying, too. If you were a fly on the wall, getting an earful of people spewing cliches left and right, you’d fall all over yourself to bid a fond farewell and get the hell out of Dodge.

So, to set yourself apart from run-of-the-mill writers, keep in mind that the cliché is your worst enemy. When you take pen in hand, work your fingers to the bone, nose to the grindstone, to find brand spanking new ways to put into words the things you’ve kept bottled up in your heart of hearts for lo, these many years.

And then, when at last your writing is as clear as a bell, you’ll be proud as a peacock and should give yourself a well-deserved pat on the back. Publishers will sing your praises and beat a path to your door.

So, just get with the program, and soon you’ll be in Fat City, sitting in the catbird seat, happy as a clam.

And, at the end of the day, you’ll suddenly realize it was as easy as shooting fish in a barrel.”



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