

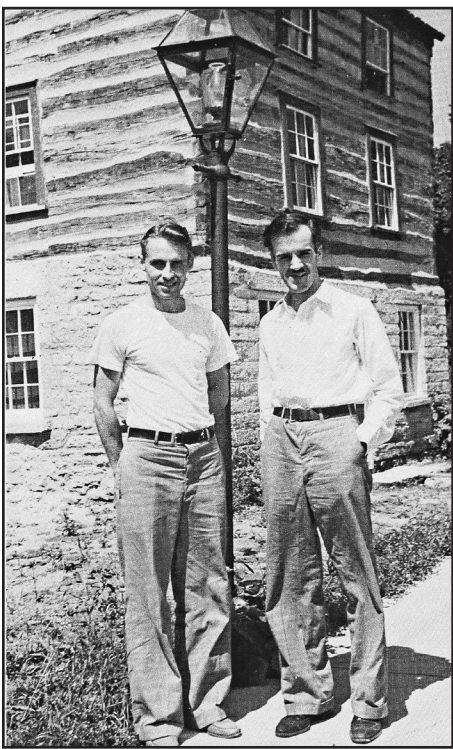
THE TIMES OF MINERAL POINT

ILLUSTRATED

A CASUAL COMPENDIUM: WORDS AND WHIMSY TO INFORM AND AMUSE THE LOYAL READER

POINTER PRESERVATION PARTY PLANNED

OPEN HOUSE AT 50 HISTORIC HOMES and NEAL-HELLUM PERFORMANCE



As part of the Preservation Weekend, the original drama “Ten Dollar House” will entertain a matinee audience at the Opera House on Sunday, May 15th.

Evanston, Illinois playwrights Rick Kinnebrew and Martha Meyer fashioned their production from the work and life partnership of Bob Neal and Edgar Hellum, a story of their devotion to the old stone cottages that now make up the Pendarvis Historic Site. The two men rescued the limestone buildings from the scrap heap, launched an unlikely success in business with the Pendarvis cafe’, and encouraged artists and adventurers to come to Mineral Point during the Great Depression.

It’s a story of dreams, hard realities, and a remarkable small town. In “Ten Dollar House”, it’s told with affection and good humor.

Produced by Pride Plays & Films, “Ten Dollar House” premiered this year at Broom Street Theatre in Madison.

Tickets are \$10, available at the Chamber, Berget’s, or at the door. A limited number of \$25 tickets will be sold for a dinner and preview with the playwrights and cast on Sat., May 14th.

More details in next month’s Times.



PHOTO CREDITS: Bob and Edgar at Polperro House; Polperro under construction, from “On the Shake Rag”, State Historical Society 1990, courtesy of the Pendarvis Historic Site.

“Table at Pendarvis” by the Editor.



CORNISH SOCIETY MEETS ITS GOAL TO CREATE HISTORIC MARKER

The Cornish Heritage Park, a patch of green next to the Opera House, will soon erect a cast-metal historic marker, produced by the Wisconsin Historical Society, to commemorate the men and women who came to the city from Cornwall in the 1830s and brought us a Celtic culture with lasting impact.

The Southwest Wisconsin Cornish Society has successfully raised \$2,000 from its membership and local contributors, the sum needed to complete the casting, cutting and installation of the new marker.

To fill both sides of the iron sign, Pointers Glen Ridnour, Jim Jewell and Tamara Funk composed a history of Cornish immigration to the city and the examples of Cornish traditions that live on in the city’s daily life. The marker features a lead miner, one of the human figures in the Seal of the State of Wisconsin. The emblem was designed in 1848 when Mineral Point was the center of the early lead industry.

The target for unveiling the historic marker is the Society’s Annual Cornish Festival staged during the last weekend in September.

Ridnour is spearheading the effort to develop the pocket park west of the

theater as a community meeting place where residents and visiting tourists will be reminded of the influence of Cornish traditions and the dramatic historical record of this ethnic group in the evolution of Mineral Point’s industry, economy and culture.

Ridnour spoke to a recent meeting of the Cornish Society and emphasized the importance of the early settlers from Cornwall. He asked his audience for a show of hands and then observed,

“Only a few of us have actual blood ties to Cornwall, but we have a strong relationship with the Cornish heritage in our city because it surrounds us every day in our buildings, our food, and our stories.”

The Cornish Heritage Park, designated by the City Council last year, will serve as a starting point for community awareness of our Cornish history; and, over time, artifacts and other educational objects will be added to the site. “The Cornish story in Mineral Point is rich in history,” Ridnour says, “but most people don’t know that story.”

“We need to realize that we can choose the heritage we want—the heritage that fits our culture best,” he said.

“And we choose to be Cornish.”



Cornish Festival in September: Don’t miss “Pirates of Penzance”

Words and music of Gilbert & Sullivan’s Comic Cornish Operetta

MID-MAY WEEKEND CELEBRATES CITY’S WORK TO PRESERVE ARCHITECTURE/ART HERITAGE

President Lyndon Johnson signed the landmark National Preservation Act in October, 1966. It was the most far-reaching preservation law ever enacted in America, and it created the National Register of Historic Places, a list that now includes the entire city of Mineral Point.

Historic preservation is arguably the characteristic that gives our city its unique charm and identity. So, it’s fitting for Pointers to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Act with a weekend of celebration on May 14-15.

The Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring “50 Open Doors: Mineral Point” on Saturday, May 14th, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., an event that will feature “open doors” at many locations: public buildings, businesses and private homes.

Of special interest will be welcoming activities at Pendarvis, where the city’s pioneering preservationists Bob Neal and Edgar Hellum launched a restoration movement in the 1930s, and the Gundry Home, Orchard Lawn, where the Mineral Point Historical Society has conducted a careful restoration of the 1868 residence for several years.



Next month’s edition of the Times will go in depth with information on historic preservation efforts in the city.

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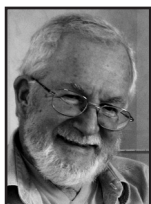
MINERAL POINT PRESS

216 NORTH IOWA STREET
MINERAL POINT, WI 53565

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IN THE INTERESTS OF
COMMUNITY AWARENESS
AND FURTHERANCE

OF HISTORIC UNDERSTANDING



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ainsley Anderson

Joy Gieseke

Parrish Johnston

Phil Mrozinski

Glen Ridnour

Carole Spelic'

Chuck Tennesen

Brian and Diane Stuart

PRINTED BY

WOODWARD PRINTING SERVICES

PLATTEVILLE, WISCONSIN

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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

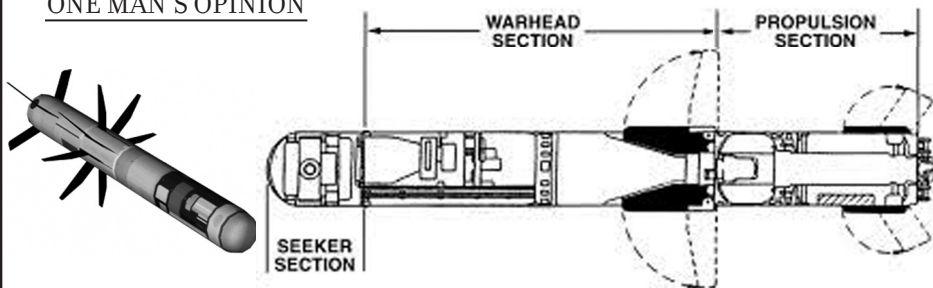
Check Sandee Beaman's
Online Events Calendar

Go to

<http://hwy23events.wordpress.com>

And simply click on an event
to get all the details.

ONE MAN'S OPINION



OVERKILL?

Javelin is a portable "fire-and-forget" missile with automatic self-guidance, used by armed forces since 1996 against vehicles, buildings and helicopters. It "seeks" targets with a deadly infrared imaging system. It is fired from the missile launcher and reaches a safe distance from the two-man operating team before the main rockets ignite, so one man can fire while the other looks for the next target. [army-technology.com]

This device is assembled by Ford Aerospace, Hughes, Texas Instruments, Raytheon and Lockheed-Martin.

Each Javelin costs \$80,000.

The skilled artilleryman behind the trigger makes about \$80,000 a year.

The man killed by the missile on a dusty Middle East pathway most likely won't make \$80,000 in his lifetime.

But, we're pretty sure he's a "Bad Guy," and we kill Bad Guys, right?

Yes, and our missiles kill women and children too, but that's some of the "collateral damage of war." Check!

Others use the Javelin, too, and in the heat of battle, some of the missiles we've sold to them are fired back at U.S. troops in the wars we are fighting.

But, those who rattle the sabers in Congress, on the 2016 campaign trail, and in the news media, may well take comfort from this FACT: in the ranking of the arms market, "USA! USA! We're Number One!!"

The United States is, by far, the largest seller of weapons on the globe. A non-partisan study prepared for the Congress says American weapons sales tripled in 2011 to a record \$66.3 billion, then settled at \$36.2 billion in 2014, driven by sales to Persian Gulf nations concerned about Iran's regional ambitions. Russia was a distant second, with \$10 billion in 2014 sales.

The biggest customer for American military goods is, of course, the United States. That's to "keep us strong."

And, incidentally, to provide profits for our defense contractors, some of the largest corporations in the world.

Ronald Reagan tapped those contractors to build a massive military, to "wear down the Soviets" in the final years of the Cold War. He boosted the military budget to 43% more than the *total* expenditures during the Vietnam war. He recruited thousands of troops, built more overseas bases, bought more weapons and equipment, and beefed up intelligence programs.

Following the "Might Makes Right" line of thinking, Reagan and all the subsequent presidents have escalated U.S. military spending to a point close to what the entire rest of the world spends on defense. At \$610 billion per year, arms spending accounts for more than half of the "discretionary spending" portion of the federal budget.

China is second at \$143 billion; other nations trail at much smaller totals. We spend much more than the next seven countries, combined.

When Bill Clinton took office in 1992, the Berlin Wall had fallen, and there was a short-lived buzz about a "Peace Option." An authoritative expert on armament said a budget of only \$60 billion—10% of today's total—would support U.S. foreign policy IF that arms budget reflected a DEMILITARIZED view of a Post-Cold War world.

That kind of radical reduction would require a *renunciation* of War, withdrawal of bases around the world, and less spending on armor and armament.

So, as anyone could have guessed, we did not choose the option offered us, to "beat swords into plowshares." Instead, we listened to the voices of the SuperHawks, and expanded the most powerful military machine on earth into a juggernaut even more gigantic.

We looked for new enemies, and, quite predictably, we found them. So, now we must deal with the consequences of our choices: perpetual war amid loud and angry demands for more soldiers, missiles, guns, tanks, ships, planes and overseas fortresses—all of which requires our Congress to choose between the nation's military might or its domestic plight, between weapons of war or our schools, roads, bridges, and much-needed social reforms.

The fact is, no foreign military force could inflict any significant numbers of casualties on the American military in a conventional war.

Our M1 Abrams tank has seen more combat than any other tank on the battlefield and has never been knocked out by enemy fire. We have 8,700 of them; China has less than 500. We have 10 aircraft carriers; the rest of the world has 10. There are 8,400 attack helicopters in the world, and 6,400 of them are ours.

In recent years, we've fought every type of ground warfare: mountains, jungles, deserts, and cities. We have some of the most experienced warriors in the world. No other country comes close. And, U.S. troops are stationed in 150 countries, at 662 bases.

We own the satellites that guide GPS systems, stealth technology, the latest sensors, the latest information systems.

The rest of the world knows how powerful the U.S. military is. Oddly enough, however, most Americans know very little about our *true* military strength. Some information is properly classified, but much of what we need to know is obscured behind the posturing of politicians and pundits who warn of "weakness." Their song, "Rally 'Round the Flag," bankrolls our armies *and* all those corporate weapons-makers.

Thus, as years of warfare spin by and elections come and go, infrastructure, public transport, health care, poverty, and other programs beg for dollars.

No one seems to be asking a simple question: "Do we need 1,000 times the lethal power of our closest military foe . . . or would 100 times suffice?"

"Every gun made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed." -- DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, April, 1953



UPDATE: UW-P ART SCHOOL CUTBACKS

In our January edition, the *Times* pointed to possible staff reductions at UW-Platteville as the university squeezed its Art Department to meet the harsh cutbacks imposed by the state's 2015-17 austerity budget.

Several Mineral Point artists serve in the adjunct faculty in Platteville, and these teachers were described as "Endangered Species" as the school's administrators jiggled the payroll to satisfy mandated reductions after Madison legislators passed the Walker budget with its \$250 million slash in funding for the UW System.

Four months later, the beancounters are still debating the proportions, but we have these figures, supplied by one of the Pointers:

Sculptor Peter Flanery, crusader for public art in Mineral Point, lost his job.

Diane Sterba will keep her creative spirit, but not her job, and spend a year of travel, without pay.

Muralist/Clay Artist Bruce Howdle will take a 20% cut, but continue to teach his popular ceramics classes.

Painter Richard Moninski emerges with 80% of his past compensation.

Carole Spelic' will teach two classes and maintains past pay levels because of her work with Pioneer Academic Center for Community Engagement, the campus-wide scholarship program.

Daniel O'Brian, a Cuba City artist, takes a 40% pay cut.

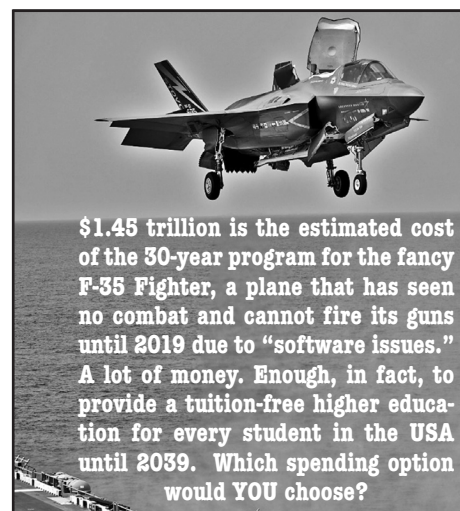
All are members of the adjunct, or "lecture faculty," where modest pay is the rule. In the current UW-Platteville spending plan, the pay for tenured teachers escaped the state's cuts. (But, given the legislature's mood on higher education, the rules for tenured instructors may be changing, too.)

It's no secret that few artists can make a good living with their art alone and often rely on a working spouse or a job in academia, so the news from the UW-Platteville Dean is a blow to both morale and pocketbook.

Will our artist/teacher/neighbors continue with reduced pay, drop out of teaching and take other work, or move to a home in a different city? Will class size increase? Will classes offered every other year result in frustration at registration, delayed graduation, and higher family costs? Will the quality of the Art program be reduced?

Stay tuned.

In Badgerland, it's a very tough time to be a teacher.





Students in the public schools will wear green garments, play a hot game, study the recycle bins, and hit the fields as Earth Day #46 dawns on April 21st.

In programs coordinated by Chuck Tennesen of the environmental group Sustain Iowa County, kids in Grades 5 through 8 will participate in various activities focusing on environmental challenges and opportunities.

On April 22nd, 5th Grade students will spend some of their school day in a climate change discussion. 6th Graders will listen to a presentation by the Faherty Recycling Co. of Platteville, the firm that picks up paper, plastics and glass each week. 7th Grade students will listen to a climate change lesson, and will play “Cool It,” a global warming game. And, armed with loppers and clippers, 8th Graders in protective clothing will move into local fields to study invasive prairie plants. For this experience, Don Hawkins and Don Hay will join Tennesen.

Throughout the week, the schools will also feature an eco-art display in hallways, along with an enviro-book showcase in the libraries.

Sustain Iowa County is one of the volunteer discussion and study groups of the Grassroots Citizens of Wisconsin, an organization formed to encourage local dialogue on important issues.

TWO CORNISH SPECIALTIES

AS A PUBLIC SERVICE, the *Times of Mineral Point* offers this very useful information to readers who don’t often encounter such helpful material in the popular press. The following is presented to broaden knowledge of our Cornish heritage:

‘OW TO EAT PASTY from Aunt Hazel Paynter’s scrapbook

“Well, you take’n hout of the h’oven with lovin’ care. Pick ‘n hup in both ‘ands. Start from the corner and work in. Tissn’t nawthin’ ta ‘oller ‘bout till you git ‘bout ‘alf way in or more. That good ol’ juice is layin’ theer, restin’ comfortable in its bed of taters, ‘honions and mate. H’it’s waitin’ theer to run all over yur face, be’ind yur h’ears an’ in yur ‘air, if you got any. H’it gits better with ever’ bite until it runs down yur shirt. H’its ‘ot, an’ full of taters and mate - right down ta the last bite.

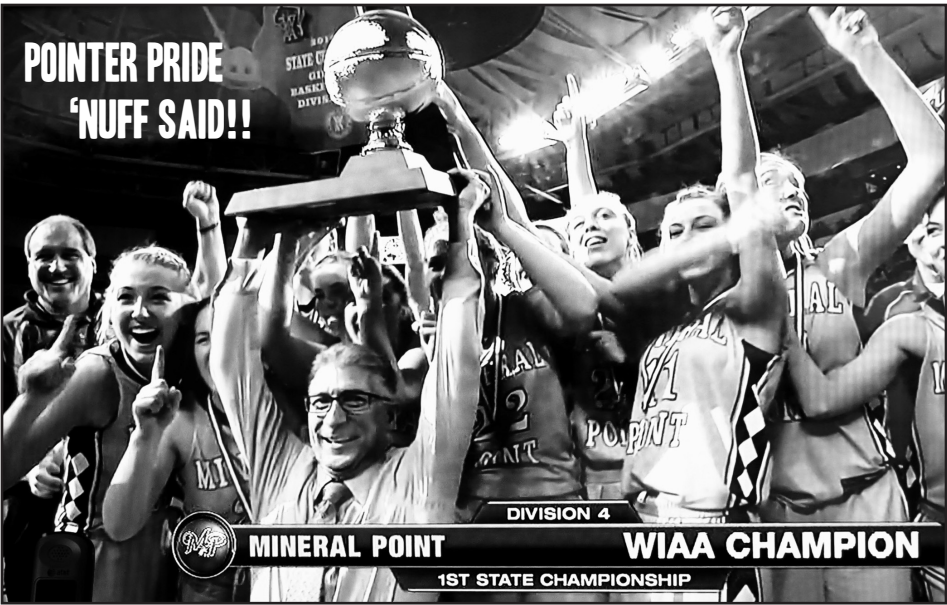
An’ thet is eatin’ a good pasty the way h’it should be et.”



When penning an ode to a pasty, one is tempted to use the word nasty. But if one knows how to do it, beef, potatoes, onions and suet the result can be almost tasty.

-- Roland Sardeson

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APRIL 2 - Salute the city’s artists and artisans and greet your neighbors as we celebrate the arrival of spring with the first **GALLERY NIGHT** of the year. Now in a 16th year, this “first Saturday” event showcases galleries, shops, restaurants and lodging, and draws good crowds looking for art treasures and a pleasant stroll along High and Commerce Streets. Shop and Gawk from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

APRIL 9 - The Opera House welcomes the **UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN RUSSIAN FOLK ORCHESTRA**, now in its 18th season, performing Russian and East-European folk music on authentic Russian instruments, balalaikas and domras. The repertoire consists mainly of Russian and other Slavic folk songs, dances, ballads, etc. The orchestra also plays music of Russian classical composers, and occasional Western and original works. Concert at 7 p.m. Tickets \$15.



APRIL 10 - The **BRAIN GAMES** are back, as competing teams work to answer 100 questions in four 15-minute rounds of whacky intellect, trivia, and other brain fare. Good fun from 1 - 3 p.m. at the Quality Inn. Be there, and cheer your team, as team member or spectator!

APRIL 15-16 - **CITY-WIDE GARAGE SALES**, a weekend dedicated to disposing of your possessions and prowling until you can acquire someone else’s treasures.

APRIL 16 - Support the **COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS FREE CLINIC** as you enjoy their Spring Auction, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Wisconsin Riverside Resort in Spring Green. Silent and/or Live Auction of fabulous prizes, music, cash bar, and fancy hors d’oeuvres. Tickets \$30 advance, \$35 at the door. Info at 935-7023.

APRIL 16-17 - The **KANOPY DANCE** troupe, resident company of the Overture Center for the Arts in Madison, has accepted the invitation of the Southwest Academy of Ballet Arts to teach a dance workshop all day Saturday, with a Sunday dance performance at 2:30 p.m. Tickets \$15



APRIL 17 - The third **MINERAL POINT HISTORICAL SOCIETY LYCEUM**, postphoned in February, provides its audience with historic notes on an American institution: The Potluck. And the local event is—you guessed it!—a potluck, “Mineral Pointers Remember: Local Food Traditions.” Bring a dish to the United Methodist Church at 400 Doty Street for the 11:30 a.m. event.

APRIL 18-21 - It’s **RESIDENTIAL CLEAN-UP WEEK** in Mineral Point, a chance to get your banished stuff to the curb. One pickup stop per household, no commercial property. The city asks you to put junk in bags or neat piles in a space no larger than 10 X 4 X 4 feet at the curb. Also, there will be no Clean Up Week in the fall, so make good on your disposal plans this month!

April 18th & 19th -- trucks cover homes on the south side of Fountain St.
April 20th & 21st -- crews pick up at homes north of Fountain St.
No brush pickup on these dates. Rules specify no pickup for appliances, batteries, electronics, tires, and construction/remodeling materials.

APRIL 30 - Saturday Evening with **MILES NIELSEN AND THE RUSTED HEARTS**, a Rockford, IL-based band that works with Western-influenced rock music and classic 60s soul to “blend a country-esque drawl with growling guitars, and throw in a little doo wop.” The music starts at 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$15.

NOTE: Tickets for Opera House events are on sale at the Opera House, at Berget Jewelers on High Street, or online at Brown Paper Tickets.



1ST ANNUAL MINERAL POINT CAR SHOW - COMING IN JUNE 2016



April Fools Day

A day for good-natured pranks, hoaxes, and general silliness.

April 1st and acts of foolishness are knotted together now, but the foundations of this odd “holiday” go back to 1392, and Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*. The story features Chanticleer, a vain rooster, being tricked by a fox. There’s a reference to “March’s thirty days and two,” so some believe that’s how the date March 32nd may have been linked with good-natured trickery.

To celebrate the spring equinox, many cultures practice lighthearted celebrations around this time of year.

And, the best part of foolishness is that, once started, it’s so contagious.

Pranks produce pranks, even pranks about other pranks. For example, one scholarly explanation for the holiday was written by Joseph Boskin, a professor of history at Boston University. He said the practice dated back to the reign of Emperor Constantine. He was challenged by his court jesters, who claimed “a fool could run the empire as well as a king.” Constantine appointed Kugel the Jester “King for a Day,” and one of Kugel’s first acts was to decree an annual day of merriment.

The Associated Press ran with the story, and didn’t realize Prof. Boskin had made the whole thing up until a couple of weeks later.

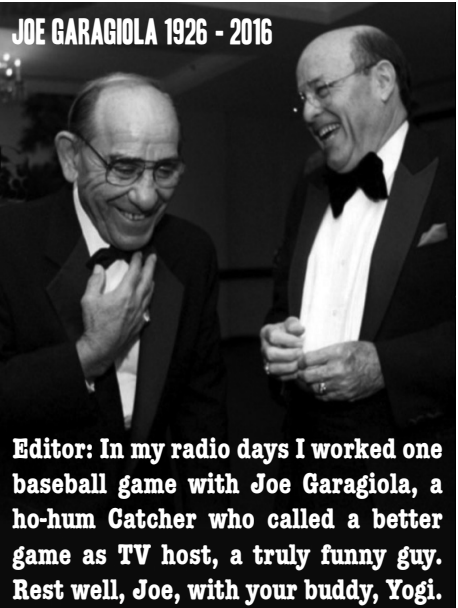
Google has a good track record for creating the newest, most advanced technology around. So in 2007, when they announced their new product, *Gmail Paper*, people were more than curious. Google’s new service promised to print out all your emails for you, stack them neatly in a box, and ship them to your door. Many Gullible Googlers bought into the gag.

In 1998, Burger King published a full page ad in *USA Today* announcing the “Left-Handed Whopper,” in which “the condiments were rotated 180°.” The next day, thousands of Southpaws showed up and were turned away. They had believed that whopper.

And, in 1957, a British news program set the bar high for epic April Fools pranks. They managed to convince legions of TV viewers that spaghetti could, and would, grow on trees.



Alongside all of the elaborate pranks and fancy hoaxes, there are easy, simple and low-cost ways to celebrate the day. Like the fun of “Toothpaste in the Oreo Cookie.” [OK, swallowing toothpaste is unwise, so consider that one an April Fools joke.]



Editor: In my radio days I worked one baseball game with Joe Garagiola, a ho-hum Catcher who called a better game as TV host, a truly funny guy. Rest well, Joe, with your buddy, Yogi.



FLOTSAM & JETSAM

BY THE EDITOR, FRANK BEAMAN

Donald Trump takes the stage as his background band plays the Beatles' tune, "Revolution," a song written in 1968 as a warning about false prophets peddling mindless revolts.

Bernie Sanders takes the stage to pound the stump of his Revolution, and his followers talk, text, and Tweet, but may not actually vote.

It's a season rich in irony.

And, it strikes me, to reach a curious conclusion, both revolutions may have already played out: one grew too big, and the other didn't grow enough.

In less than a year, Trump turned the political arena into a noisy middle-school playground. The "unthinkable novelty" has become today's "unlikely front-runner," and he has recruited millions of new voters—many of them "first timers"—for a Republican Party that would now like to sidetrack him.

He's also given the corporate media what *they* want: good copy, pictures, and tons of cash from highly-rated TV shows. And the media now shakes its head, realizing they've been hijacked.

Trump knows how television works. He knows what audiences want to see and hear, and he has used those skills to tap the anger of Republicans frustrated by the GOP's establishment for more than fifty years: John Birchers, Dixiecrats, Reagan Democrats, Goldwaterites, and current members of the Tea Party. They're unhappy in a "pay-check to paycheck" economy. Many have lost their jobs. They've held their noses while dutifully voting for Dole, McCain, and Romney, GOP nominees who lacked the "strength" they were looking for. But, Trump *exudes* chest-thumping strength and the muscle-bound nationalism that goes with it, so he can say anything and his followers will say he "tells it like it is," meaning "he tells us what we want to hear."

Fact is, Donald Trump has given a loud, often savage voice to many ugly, bigoted, and belligerent beliefs, which for years have hidden in the shadows of politeness and political correctness and found public expression only in coded language. (Ex: "Can't use the N-word, so speak of "forced busing" and "welfare queens.")

The Trump Treatment for protesters at his rallies is a natural outcome when the arena is filled with a vengeful spirit that makes violence inevitable.

So, the Trump revolution has produced a bumfoozled Republican party that asks how it could have happened and what they might do about it.

Bernie Sanders' People's Revolution is unlike the Trump Phenomenon, in almost every way imaginable.

It deals with the nation's deep, most complex issues—not just the popular hot buttons. It calls for trauma: sweeping systemic change, not a quick fix with a magic wand. It commands difficult legislative, social and cultural activity, not fuzzy promises. Oh, and higher taxes (gulp!).

Bernie's campaign planks are specific, but complicated. He provides numbers, but asks voters to take the time to study and sort until they catch his drift. Most voters, of course, don't.

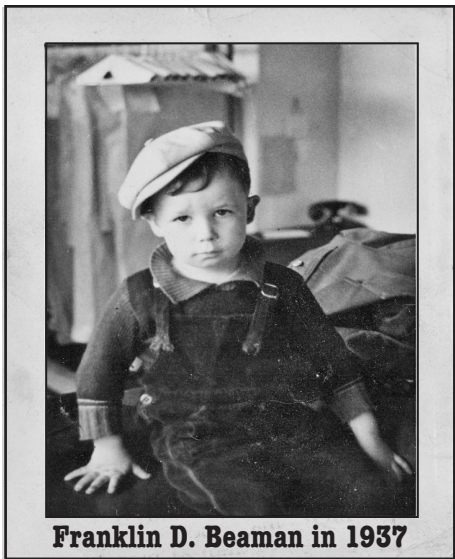
So, Sanders is not "winning" his revolution. He trails in the delegate count for the Democratic nomination. His campaign objectives are declared "Pie in the Sky." And, portrayed in the media as a grumpy old man who admires the way of life in Denmark, he gets only about one-third of the media attention showered on Trump.

But, he has produced tangible effect on his political party and the front-running Hillary Clinton. Sanders and Sen. Elizabeth Warren have galvanized left wing Democrats with their positions on Wall Street, war, inequality, criminal justice, climate, education, immigration, and the infrastructure. They have moved the Democratic party significantly to the Left, and have dragged Hillary much further Left than where she ran in 2008. She now calls for tougher regulations on the financial industry, criticizes trade agreements she once championed, muses about higher taxes for the wealthy, and leans toward a Left-wing approach to the market economy—a real change from the past 25 years of Democratic policy-making.

The GOP has been pulled Left, too. To meet growing Latino and Millennial demographics and evolving expectations and demands, it's generally believed that if a Republican president is elected in November, he would be forced to govern to the Left of George W. Bush.

In fact, the entire nation may be moving Left, even though the citizenry has seen conservative ranks grow since Reagan's 1980s. Surveys show a softening of attitudes about virtually the full list of social issues. Conservatives are more conservative, Liberals are more liberal, but many surveys show a sizable majority of the American people have simply moved on.

So, if their objective was to create radical change, Donald and Bernie have ALREADY DELIVERED major aspects of their revolutions.



In 1933, the Beaman household lived in rented rooms behind the family's shop in the grubby, blue-collar steel mill city named Hammond, Indiana.

Baby Franklin D. was born twenty-five days after Franklin D. Roosevelt was first sworn into office as President. (No, don't jump to a conclusion about "FDR's young namesake." Dad ran a small business and small businessmen, then as now, scorned Democrats.)

Beaman Cleaners sent customers' garments to a large dry cleaning operation but used on-site steam appliances to iron and press clothes and block hats in two small rooms facing the downtown street. Our family quarters were tiny, wedged beneath wooden stairs to the apartments above, with a back yard blackened by the nearby steel mills and Hammond's constant railroad traffic.

Many of our neighbors were Greeks. The Dramonos kids took my sister and me to 10-cent movies at the Orpheum, a block away. Our daily life, however, relied on the firm, loving, and constant care of our Scotch-Irish grandmother Anna, who came to live with us when her husband died young.

Mom and Dad worked long, hard, hot days at Beaman Cleaners, and were able to eke out a decent living because during the grim years of the Great Depression, men wore a wool suit, tie, and fedora every day, and women dressed up for a night on the town. Thus, a small, family-run steam-cleaning/pressing business could enjoy steady customers and a trickle of cash, not big money but enough to "get by."

We were never hungry. We were careful, worked hard, expected little, and put away a few dollars to chase our dream in 1939 when we drove our Ford to Santa Monica, in sunny California, confident we would find pleasure, promise, and prosperity. Mom kept track of our total expenses for the trip: thirty-nine dollars.

That's an account of one family's success, however limited, in a tough neighborhood in tough times.

Many others were not so fortunate.

For millions, the 1930s were cruel. America's farmers were hard hit when the nation's economy collapsed. Forced to leave their acreage and move to the city, many families were struck down by poverty and hopelessness. And, in some cases, by starvation.

Carolyn Meuer, a history-lover from Dodgeville, told a moving Depression-Era story at a recent historical society meeting. We'll call her family story "The Day Grandpa Jack Threw Down His Napkin." Here is a re-telling:

John E. Harris, his wife Clara, and their four children lived on a farm near Hollandale. They rented, of course, because in the 1920s everything about farming was unstable: crop success was iffy, and they weren't lucky enough to have inherited a place in the country.

Farming was hard work, and not a way to get rich, but life on the farm

POSTER BOY FOR THE GREAT DEPRESSION



JACK THROWS DOWN HIS NAPKIN



Two Real-Life Stories from 1930s America

was almost self-sustaining: they kept a big garden and fed chickens and other barnyard animals, so most of what they ate was on hand inside their fences.

In the cities, the Roaring Twenties were building an economy headed for the stock market crash at the end of the decade, the Dust Bowl loomed, and the national farm economy was going sour.

In 1925, the Harris barn burned.

"Jack" Harris went broke. He was, however, a proud man, too proud to take bankruptcy. So the family moved to another farm, and Jack was able to borrow a team of horses to go to work as a laborer on a road grading team.

As the nation slogged through the Great Depression, Jack struggled to stay ahead of the bill collectors. Road-building was steady work, if poorly-paid, and the family could still grow its own food and preserve it in the fall.

Two of the Harris children grew to adulthood and left the household, so Jack and Clara rented a smaller farm.

But, the wolf knocked again on the Harris' door. The borrowed horses "went back," repossessed. The family left the country for a house on Pleasant Street in Mineral Point.

Jack, still too proud to quit, looked for work every day. He walked the railroad tracks and picked up chunks of coal to feed the furnace. He gratefully cashed the checks sent home by his son in the Civilian Conservation Corps, one of President Roosevelt's massive public works programs.

And Clara, in her own way as proud as Jack, always "set a perfect table," although she had lost the garden and the animals that supplied their food and had run out of most canned goods brought from their last farm home.

One night, home after another day in fruitless search for a job, Jack Harris sat down for dinner with Clara and the two kids, and discovered the meal consisted only of her homemade chili sauce, served with salt and pepper.

Clara verified the bad news. No food.

The proud man sat quietly, crushed by his circumstances. And, slowly, stubborn pride gave way to resolve.

He stood, threw down his napkin, and told the family, "Tomorrow I'm signing up for the WPA."

He did. And his family "got by."



After a characteristically brilliant speech by Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic Party candidate for President in 1952, one of his supporters stood up, waved, and bellowed, "All thinking Americans will vote for you!"

Legend has it Stevenson shouted back, "That's not enough; I need a majority!"