

# THE TIMES OF MINERAL POINT

ILLUSTRATED

## REAL ESTATE SALES: "PHENOMENAL!"

### A SPRINGTIME SPURT OF COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITY

#### LOCAL PROPERTY SALES SUGGEST END OF SLUGGISH REALTY MARKET.



The climb from the 2008 Recession has been a slog for Mineral Point, but the Spring of 2016 has produced a boomlet in property purchases that has enlivened both the commercial and residential real estate market.

A mid-May count of "homes for sale" on the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) shows 21 residences available for purchase. A year ago, in May 2015, the MLS carried 55 homes for sale in the city, more than double today's total.

Eight listed homes are now "under accepted contract," awaiting a sales closing to complete the transaction between buyer and seller.

"The home sales figures are simply phenomenal," says Mike Wagner, a realtor for First Weber Inc. "Sellers are getting their asking price with quick offers, sometimes on the same day the house goes on the market."

Commercial real estate, likewise, has come alive with promising potential for downtown Mineral Point. Of 13 "active" MLS listings for commercial buildings, five business places are under a contract for sale. When the sales are completed, the business climate in the city will be changed, and several vacant storefronts will be occupied and open for new business. [See the account in the right column on this page.]

The flurry of real estate activity began in January, and year-to-date figures are dramatic for a small town market: ten completed sales and thirteen sales pending in a bit more than four months.

At Potterton Rule Realty, Lucille May told the *Times*, "accepted contracts for property exchange are up sharply, but all the mechanics for closing the sale haven't kept pace. And," she added, "people are searching for rentals, but there's a real drought there."

Realtors May and Wagner supply a positive perspective to the surge in real estate activity. They take the hopeful view that the lethargy of the property market may be ending, an indication the Recession is at last becoming only an unpleasant memory.



Pat Skogen and  
Cynthia Dries  
welcome visitors

#### "50 OPEN DOORS" AN ENGAGING WEEKEND

It was, first of all, a good idea.

It was well-managed by its sponsors, staffed by cheerful local volunteers, and well promoted; it was a weekend event that brought welcome visitors to the city while giving touring Pointers a chance to meet and greet their neighbors at "50 Open Doors."

Marking the 50th anniversary of the federal Historic Preservation Act, the Chamber of Commerce and the Mineral Point Historical Society sponsored a mid-May celebration of local preservation efforts and provided the legends and lore behind the careful restoration of many historic business places and homes in the city.

Chamber Director Joy Gieseke and Ainsley Anderson, Historical Society Executive Director, spent weeks lining up willing hosts for the event, and the open houses on Saturday gave more than two hundred self-guided visitors a knock-knock tour of fifty historically-inspired addresses, about one-third of them private homes.

The day's activity was a treat for our natural curiosity and taught important lessons about historic preservation of our major assets: our old buildings.

The commemorative weekend also featured a matinee performance of "The Ten Dollar House," written by two librarians from Evanston, Illinois. The couple visited Mineral Point and were captivated by the story of the life/

business partnership of Bob Neal and Edgar Hellum, their restoration at the Pendarvis site, and their impact on the city's cultural, historic and architectural heritage.

The play drew 225 people to the Opera House. The actors earned a well-deserved curtain call.

Gieseke reports positive reactions from the crowd at the theater, the hosts at the fifty participating buildings, and the visitors to those places. Some asked about a repeat of the event next year.

"The goal," said Gieseke, "was to get people to think about what historic preservation means to Mineral Point, and I think we accomplished that goal."



Actors from "\$10 House" entertain a preview audience at Walker House

#### POINTER DOWN-TOWN BUSINESS SCENE IS ACTIVE



Recent property sales are encouraging economic news for the community.



The long-awaited surge of real estate sales, described elsewhere on this page, has resulted in a number of welcome new business ventures in the city and a flurry of construction work at downtown business places.

We list some of the activity with a warning to readers. A "SOLD" sign on the properties means buyer and seller have agreed on a transfer of ownership, an "accepted contract," but the sale is not really complete until the final close results in a deed for the property. The *Times* is honoring requests by some purchasers to withhold names until the contract is "signed/sealed/delivered."

Recent sales contracts are reported at the Kueler Law Office, the Stairway Gallery, and City Styles. Some of these transactions are still pending.

We can report one business headline-maker with names: the vacant Mineral Point Dining Co. will soon open its doors and fire up its oven as Popolo Pizzeria, an Italian restaurant owned by Sean Henninger and Wendy Dueling of Milwaukee. In a few months they will offer fresh-baked bread and chef Henninger's "Atomic Chocolates" in leased space at the former Set In Stone building on the corner of High and Commerce.

Now, let's work our way up the hill. Scaffolding and construction screens at the High Street Gallery and the former M Studio are evidence of ambitious rehab and restoration work. And, with remodeling now completed, Dee Construct will open this month. At 231 High St., a lease has been signed for a new fudge/pie shop, adding a tempting fragrance to High Street. And, although the burgers/pizza fragrance is much different in front of the Midway Bar, the busy tavern is headed for new ownership. And, up on the Ridge, the new owners of Redwood Motel are planning a summer remodeling project.

It's a season of economic activity that bodes well for our growing community.



# THE TIMES OF MINERAL POINT

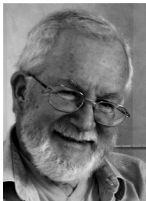
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EDITOR & PUBLISHER  
FRANK BEAMAN  
INVALUABLE HELP FROM  
SANDEE BEAMAN

CONTACT US:

[frankbeaman2@gmail.com](mailto:frankbeaman2@gmail.com)



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Laura Cisler  
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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.



## A Pointer Expedition to Peru?

Students in Mineral Point's schools recently shared a fabulous learning experience: a field trip to Machu Picchu, the sacred and mysterious Inca city in the mountains of Peru. But, the kids didn't leave the classroom.

5th grade teacher Lifka Bennett asked Google to showcase their new *Expeditions* program at the elementary school. *Expeditions* is a no-cost, high-tech educational product that allows teachers to take classes on virtual field trips, immersing students in visual experiences that bring abstract concepts to life and expand their understanding of the physical world.

Student reaction was enthusiastic: "The pyramids of Machu Picchu came alive. I felt like I could reach and touch everything in the view."

"This was awesome technology!"

And, "Can we ask our principal to score more of these shows for us?"

Prior to the visit, a box arrives with everything needed for the "trip": a tablet for the teachers and Cardboard viewers and headphones for each student. The teacher selects the destination and the entire class jumps there automatically. Then the virtual reality begins as students view panoramic photos, video, and 3D images. The in-the-box sights and sounds are annotated with details, points of interest and discussion topics that can be worked into the school's curriculum.

"While nothing replaces hopping on the bus for a field trip, *Expeditions* provides an unparalleled opportunity for supplemental learning," Bennett said.

"Students are able to go to a place they probably will never see, such as The Great Wall of China or Mars, and that makes it so exciting," she said, "so this is not about watching a video or sitting in front of a screen. This is about an *immersion* in learning. The students were completely engaged and learning from each other."

The Times captured this account of a heads-up team of educators by visiting the school's website, and we reflected on the important role digital technology plays in today's story-telling.

We also wondered how many local taxpayers are keeping up with the news from Mineral Point schools, and

we concluded there might be a gap between what people think, and sometimes whisper about, and more reliable information about school activities. So, we asked a few questions of Joelle Doye, the Communications Director for the district. She told us, "One form of communication for everyone doesn't work anymore. We still use traditional print for the quarterly newsletter, *White & Blue Review*, and we publish articles in local newspapers, but we're spending a great deal of effort to speak to the public online. People seem to want news instantaneously, and that means we must use social media."

Major stories about the schools, their administration, and their students are posted to the district's Internet webpage: <http://mineralpointschools.org>. That site is the home to School Board

agendas, policy information, and the schools' events calendar.

*Facebook* is our "Update Central," says Doye, the place where news of developments, reminders about local events, interesting stories and photos can all be posted.

Viewers need not open a *Facebook* account, or log in, to check local school news. Just visit [www.facebook.com/MineralPointSchoolDistrict/](http://www.facebook.com/MineralPointSchoolDistrict/)

To follow the schools on *Twitter*, go to *#mpschoools* — again, viewers can check *Twitter* without an account.

The district also offers a *YouTube* channel, where viewers can stream video recordings of School Board meetings and other events. Just use *Google* to reach *Mineral Point School District YouTube*.

There are good reasons to use the district's information sources to inform yourself of local school developments. Here are just two reasons: funding for the city's public schools is a major proportion of our property tax bills; and, more importantly, the schools are raising our citizenry, our future leaders.

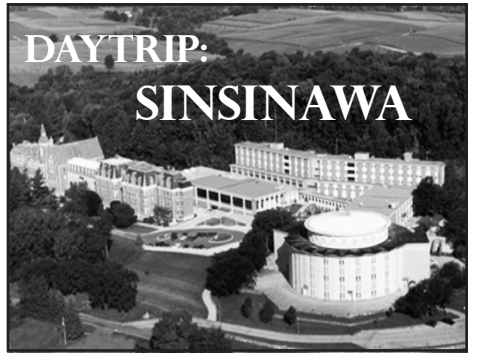
Give them a look and a listen. We think you'll discover our 700 kids are enrolled in a school system that's doing a good job with its limited resources.



Teachers Courtney Lutzen, Lifka Bennett, Judy Benish

Photos: Students Cooper Schaaf & Cylin Carey, big fans of *Expedition's* Cardboard video viewers.

## DAYTRIP: SINSINAWA



By Frank Beaman

Two destinations for a Friday on the Driftless Wisconsin roads: 1. Sinsinawa Mound, a Dominican Retreat Center near the Mississippi River, and 2. New Diggings, an intentionally-rundown old mining village in Lafayette County.

Sinsinawa Center nestles in 450 acres of woodlands, orchards and vineyards, with lush gardens surrounding the buildings. It's the ideal environment for contemplation, which is the goal of a religious retreat. The Catholic Order of Dominican Sisters observe a long tradition, "hospitality amid natural surroundings," as the sisters invite guests to retreats and other events to explore education, spirituality, and the arts.

Dominican Sisters live their lives as "teachers and preachers" supported by their "Four Pillars": community life, common prayer, study and service.

Their Mission Statement struck me as a document of simple practicality, clarity and purpose, remarkably free from church dogma, an oddly contemporary sort of blueprint for intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic awakening.

Here's a look at some of the words of their credo:

**TRUTH:** that which conforms to fact or reality. We take care how we talk to or about others, speaking with honesty and trust. We honor open dialogue respecting the beliefs and experiences of others. We seek accurate information.

**JUSTICE:** behavior which recognizes and respects the rights and responsibilities of all. We educate ourselves in the world's injustices, and commit our energy and resources to overcome racism and other forms of discrimination and bias. We nurture relationships that are nonjudgmental. We promote fair and suitable employment practices.

**COMPASSION:** mercy, empathy and care characterize our relationships. We are present to people of all ages, greet guests with warmth and respect, and support each other through prayer, acceptance, listening and understanding.

**HOSPITALITY:** a cordial, generous presence that enables strangers to become friends. We reach out in mutual sharing of gifts, resources and talents. We respect and celebrate all of God's creation.

**COMMUNITY:** the relationship of those who live and work at the Mound, linked by a common mission, fostering a sense of acceptance, belonging, and connectedness. We support involvement and cooperation.

Sinsinawa employees were setting up tables for a big picnic on the day our wandering fivesome visited. We found the church quietly impressive. We found the staff friendly and outgoing, perhaps reflecting the principles expressed in their mission statement. And, in the gift shop, amid a vast collection of religious and secular books, we found rhubarb pies to take home. Sinsinawa Mound whispers to its visitors. It's an island of calm in a sea of noise and despair.

Then, just a few miles away in New Diggings, the paint-starved General Store and Anton's Saloon spoke in a much different voice, a shout, a rough-and-tumble atmosphere in a place that has never known quiet, and never much tolerated contemplation.

We take water for granted. We shouldn't.

Water, and how we use it, is a worthy topic for study and debate.

The Mineral Point Historical Society is sponsoring a free exhibit, *Great Lakes/Small Streams: How Water Shapes Wisconsin*, where visitors will learn about the history of water in the state, decisions—good and bad—made over the years, the consequences of those decisions, and current concerns. The Wisconsin Historical Society's traveling exhibit offers solid



insights into actions that assure a hopeful future for the state's water supply.

See it from June 6-19 at the Old Bank Bldg., 203 High Street, 1-4 p.m. Sun. through Thurs. and 10 a.m. through 4 p.m. on Saturdays.

Lynne Diebel, author of *Crossing the Driftless*, will speak on Sunday, June 5th at 2 p.m. at Orchard Lawn. She will share the history, geology, and geography of the Driftless Area she crossed with her husband, from Southern Minnesota to Stoughton, in a canoe.





# Wussup, Wisconsin?

A new survey shows how residents of the Badger State feel about Politics, the Economy, and Life in General.

The Spring 2016 Wisconsin Survey is the latest in twice-annual polling by Wisconsin Radio and Television and St. Norbert College's Strategic Research Institute. In April, telephone interviews with 616 randomly-chosen registered voters focused on the upcoming presidential election, state races, the outlook for the economy, and other issues of concern to Wisconsinites.

Here are some of the findings:

Q: Are things in the **country** going in the right or wrong direction? A: Almost 2/3rds of the respondents said "the wrong direction."

Q: The direction in **Wisconsin**? A: 37% "right" but 35% "wrong." (A flip from the first survey in 2003, when "right" scored 52% and "wrong" 38%.

Q: What's the state's most important problem? A: Economy & Jobs 38%, Politics 21%, Education 12%, Budget & Taxes 7%, followed by Crime and Health Care. Moral Issues, Environment and National Security came in at less than 1%. (The economy jumped to first place with the arrival of the Great Recession of 2008)

Asked about today's political figures, the survey matched national polls measuring Democrats against Republicans. President Obama won approval from 53% of voters and 45% disapproved—generally his pattern over his eight year term. Governor Walker got a 43% approval rating but 55% disapproved of his performance (up from 48% when he took office). Sen. Ron Johnson had positive marks, 41% to 35%, but 23% of his responses were "Not sure" or "Haven't Heard Of." Sen. Tammy Baldwin fared better, with a 47% to 33% positive score.

Q: Can you trust Washington leaders? A: "Always" 2%, "Never" 20%, "Only some of the time" 70%.

Q: National economic conditions? A: "Not so Good" 44%, "Poor" 22%. And, in Wisconsin? "Good" 36%, "Not so Good" 49% (two years ago, the "Good" ratings were 15% higher).

Q: So, are you better off now, than a year ago? A: "Better" 36%, "Same" 36%, "Worse" 27% Q: What about next year? "Better off than now" said 43%, a slightly optimistic finding.

The survey, taken shortly after the Wisconsin primary election, showed those polled voted for Ted Cruz over Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders over Hillary Clinton, which matches the official results in the voting. Cruz supporters said he was "lesser of two evils." Trump supporters liked his "traits" more than his positions on the issues. Sanders supporters, however, cited his view of the issues as their reason for voting for him. Clinton supporters cited her political experience.

Asked how they would vote if the election were held now, Clinton came out the winner, 46% to 34% over Trump, and 9% said they were "not sure." Sanders would beat Trump 52% to 33% in the same scenario. And, in the Senate race, Russ Feingold defeats the incumbent Johnson, 51% to 41%.

Democrat or Republican? The survey shows Democrats ahead, 43% to 40%.

We're out of space, but for a glimpse into the Badger State of Mind on a variety of interesting topics, Google "2016 Spring Survey" and browse websites.



## A PARTNERSHIP TO SING ABOUT



The city's arts advocacy group, Arts Mineral Point (AMP) has entered into a unique partnership with the Fresco Opera Theatre of Madison, a union that promises to make AMP's Third Annual "Paint the Point" event truly special.

When plein air artists revisit the city for the competition in August, they will be joined in the local streets and landscapes by Fresco Opera singers and choral groups, a blending of talent from the worlds of art and music that will expand the footprint of the opera group while bringing new excitement to the artists and townspeople participating in the weekend event.

The announcement was made at the annual membership meeting of Arts Mineral Point. President Ried Knapp reviewed a third year of accomplishment, and Vice President Brian Stuart revealed the partnership with the opera company, introducing three of the company's management team.

Fresco Opera has recently completed a successful season at the Overture Center in Madison, presenting musical productions that played to sold-out houses.

But, this isn't your granddad's kind of opera! The Fresco Theatre pleases current opera fans and also cultivates a new generation of opera lovers by presenting opera from modern and offbeat perspectives. They boldly go where no opera has gone; for example, mashing up a Handel classic with "Star Wars" in a production they called "Rinaldo and the Galactic Crusades."

Since its inception in 2010, Fresco has stitched together arias from a variety of operas to form fresh, sassy plots with avant-garde flair. For their appreciative audiences, it seems to work.

Fresco also creates educational programs to enrich musical experiences and the company recruits future generations of singers and opera lovers.

Their musical approach should be a perfect compliment to the city's "Paint the Point" event on August 11, 12 and 13th. "Fresco" in Italian means "fresh." It means "outdoors" as well, and that's what the city's "Paint Out!" is all about.

Knapp said, "We're pleased Fresco has recognized the character of Mineral Point and look forward to helping make our city Fresco's second home." He added, "It's in keeping with our goal of strengthening the vibrancy of our arts community and making people aware of Mineral Point's strong arts legacy.

Knapp listed AMP milestones for the past year. The group is now a free-standing organization, and seeks 501C3 non-profit status that permits members to deduct donations from income taxes. Knapp cited efforts by AMP members to create a fourth sculpture park for public art in Mineral Point (up from zero three years ago). AMP installed Bill Grover's bison steelworks at the Walker House in 2015, and provided oversight for the Comma sculpture in front of the Lind Pavilion. The year saw increased attendance and merchant participation in four Gallery Nights administered by the arts organization And the AMP Arts Incubator, where artists can share creative spaces, gained four donated weaving looms and a donated potter's wheel. AMP scored a repeat award of a Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant from the state's Department of Tourism. The \$5,750 grant offers cash and Tourism's guidance to make AMP's promotional efforts for "Paint the Point 2016"

effective by reimbursing the organization for its qualified advertising costs.

Fundraising for the plein air painting competition is under way. AMP must add \$9,000 for artist scholarships, prizes, and "Paint the Point" marketing.

"That sounds like a lot of money," said Knapp, "but actually it's a great investment for our sponsors." When AMP applied for the JEM grant, it estimated that the August three-day art and music event will add \$130,000 to the business economy of the community.

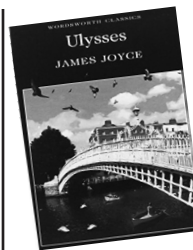
Knapp reminded dinner guests the Annual Arts in Motion parade will march down High Street on June 4th, a colorful accompaniment to that day's Gallery Night. AMP paraders will be dressed as butterflies, and members in costume are invited to a post-parade "butterfly wing party" at the Incubator at 6:30 p.m.

AMP also invited Pointers to check the website [www.artsmmp.org](http://www.artsmmp.org) to get details on five planned events in June. The first takes place on Saturday, June 4th, followed by Tuesday night sessions through the month.

AMP's ambitious work represents many of the components of an ideal voiced by Anne Katz, Director of Arts Wisconsin, at a recent Shake Rag Alley seminar. "Mineral Point," she said, "is perfectly positioned to succeed in today's new Creative Economy."



On a Volunteer Work Day, Mineral Point High School students pitch in to clear the High Street Sculpture Park of its less-desirable elements, allowing the public art pieces to stand out well.



## What are your plans for June 16th?

June 16th is BLOOMSDAY, and James Joyce fans all over the world are celebrating. It commemorates the day on which the events of his epic novel *Ulysses* take place. You may not have read this book. In fact, many literary critics are not certain *anyone* has actually read its 265,000 words. It's, let's just say, difficult. But, on Bloomsday at least sixty places around the world relive the scenes in the Irish novelist's monumental work.

Joyce chose a single day, June 16th, 1904, for the setting because it was the day of his first date with his future wife, Nora Barnacle. They'd met each other randomly on Nassau Street in Dublin on June 10th, chatted a bit, and agreed to meet up later. She stood him up on their first would-be date of June 14th. On the 15th, the 22-year-old lad sent a note, and they successfully met up the following day, June 16th. They went for an evening stroll on the south bank of the Liffey River in Dublin. There, their romance, uh, *bloomed*, and Joyce chose this day for both the setting of *Ulysses* and the name of the book's protagonist Leopold Bloom.

His publisher organized a celebratory luncheon in Paris on June 16th, 1929, seven years after publication, at a time the book was banned throughout the English-speaking world because of its language and its situations.

The first modern celebration of Bloomsday was in 1954, the 50th anniversary of the fictional events in Joyce's book, and thirty-two years after Joyce published his novel in 1922. Two Irish writers got together with a book reviewer and a cousin of author Joyce, to make a daylong pilgrimage around Dublin. They were to have stops at the Martello Tower (the opening scene of the novel), Davy Byrne's Pub (where Bloom eats a gorgonzola cheese sandwich) and 7 Eccles Street (where Bloom and his wife, Molly, lived). They roleplayed, acted out the dialogue, and rode around in horse-drawn carriages like those described in the scene of Paddy Dignam's funeral. They were supposed to end up in the red-light section of Dublin, where the 15th chapter of *Ulysses* is set, but the pilgrims got a bit drunk and distracted at a pub about halfway through the route and lost their ambition to finish it.

Some say the Dublin reenactments mimic the events in *Ulysses*. Some say, incidentally, that the plot/ events of the novel may have been the basis for the long-running television sitcom *Friends*, often described as "a series of half-hours in which nothing happens."

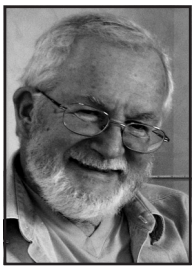
The truth of that allegation might be a discussion topic for a Mineral Point group led by Joyce fan Joel Gosse. They have been studying Joyce's huge and final complexity, *Finnegan's Wake*, written in Paris over a period of seventeen years and famed for its use of the "stream of consciousness" technique.

Source: "Writer's Almanac" with Garrison Keillor



**Garrison Keillor**, the 74-year old host of National Public Radio's "Prairie Home Companion" retires in the fall of this year. He launched radio's long-running variety show in 1974; and, along the way, took us to Lake Wobegon.





A TOUGH DECISION

# TIMES OF MINERAL POINT TO PUBLISH QUARTERLY

By the Editor, Frank Beaman

You’re reading the June 2016 issue. The next edition hits the streets in September. This newspaper is, rather reluctantly, moving to a quarterly publication schedule, with our front-porch delivery tracking the seasons in March, June, September, and December.

As truly faithful readers know, this will be a **third** experiment for my quirky little news sheet, launched in 2007 as a 12-page almanac, suspended for three years, and then revived in 2013 as a monthly publication.

I “went monthly” to bring readers timely information about events in our community. But, monthly publication demands much of an “Editor” who is actually the entire staff. I write every word, pull the pictures and graphics, and lay out the paper’s four pages on the old iMac in my home office. So, for the past three years, I’ve struggled with my deadline every month.

I need to pull back a bit. I want to keep the founding spirit of the *Times*: a consciously local journal of Pointer art, entertainment, philosophy and culture. I want to keep fussing with the words in my Page Four essays. I want to encourage growth in our community and applaud the courage it takes to grow. I need to prod the idle citizenry to action, and nag the naysayers.

But, I need to pull back a bit. Those who know me will say, “Well, it’s about time you acted your age!” True enough. But those who know me know that 83 years is not a retirement age for a curious mind and an active spirit. But, yes, I need to pull back a bit. My body, which tolerated physical neglect for many years, is telling me to slow down. Surgery on my back, a spinal fusion in October, has not been a total success. So, I’m now a member of the Chronically Aging Fraternity. And, as all my fellow members tell me, the worst thing a pain-burdened person can do is sit in front of a computer screen for hours at a time—the daily habit of a writer.

I know I need to be up and around much more. I know exercise always takes away pain. I know gardening is good, and any adventure in the outdoors lifts my spirit and strengthens my spine and troubled legs. I also know travel adds to my education. I know family and friendships are a source of pleasure and inspiration.

In short, I know I need to do less newspapering and more puttering. Publishing the *Times* every three months will help me do the right thing for the Old Timer I’ve turned out to be.

A deadline that’s weeks away, not days away, will give me more time to practice healthful habits. And, a distant deadline will allow me to polish my stories more, to add to their clarity and usefulness, and perhaps their impact.

A word about the mechanics of *Times* distribution: The paper will be tucked inside the Shopping News on the first Tuesday of March, June, September, and December, and we’ll drop off a higher stack of papers at business places that offer them to customers.

All that said, I can only hope you’ll keep reading, and enjoying, the *Times*.



## LESSONS LEARNED FROM RIP VAN WINKLE

Remember Rip from your Grade School days? Washington Irving’s tale takes us back to a small town during the American Revolution, where we meet a good, friendly, generous man whose big problem is a lack of motivation about work around the house. Dame Van Winkle is not his biggest fan, and to escape from her frequent criticisms, Rip walks into the Catskills hillcountry seeking a little peace. He falls asleep beneath a tree.

For twenty years! When he wakes up and discovers his beard has grown to his waist and his shotgun has rusted, he walks back into town and finds almost everything that was part of his life has changed. And, not always for the better.

I thought of Rip Van Winkle when I read about developments in two nearby cities. Monroe has updated its Community Survey and Dodgeville is working to update their Survey as well. The Survey is an important document because it tells a community where it stands and where it wants to go. It’s supposed to be updated every ten years. Mineral Point drafted their last Survey in 2005. (Read it online.)

Last year, I arranged a short meeting between executives of the Southwest Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC) and members of the Mineral Point Chamber’s Economic Development Committee. All hands agreed the city’s Comprehensive Survey needed attention, a little funding, and prompt action. There has been no movement.

There also has been little movement on most of the suggested improvements listed in the last thorough look at the city’s possibilities. That’s hardly surprising, however, when you note unanimous agreement on the response to the question, “How do you see Mineral Point in ten years?” (That is, in 2015) The surveyed citizenry agreed, “We want the city to be just the way it is today.” So, ten years ago, we the people were voting for “no change.”

Rip’s story teaches us that there’s no such thing as “no change.” Doing nothing to improve problems, or even to recognize problems, is not a recipe for maintaining the status quo. It’s a pathway to decay, to backward progress.

I hear Van Winkle shouting to us: “You’ve got a surge in real estate; build on it! You’ve got talented people; put ‘em to work in a **creative** economy! Find risktakers for affordable housing and small businesses! Elect dynamic leaders! Expand Heritage Tourism! Exploit friendly partnerships between varied occupations and social groups—and make cooperation, tolerance and compassion a living force for the good life! Don’t let good ideas die!”

Wait! One more shout from the Catskills, “Don’t curl up next to your beautiful little town and go to sleep!”



Automobiles were barely on the road in the 1920s before Americans started driving them hundreds of miles to warmer climes. Never mind constant breakdowns, the distance between filling stations, and the risks of soggy pathways through rivers and swamps because there weren’t any bridges. The travelers were starved for sunshine, and were determined to find it.

Today’s travelers move on super-highways and stay in modern motels; they also have the choice of piloting campers or recreational vehicles that offer many of the comforts of home. But, in the 1920s, clean and safe roadside lodging was far from certain. “Tin Can tourism” (using the car and a tent for lodging) became a common solution.

The Roaring Twenties was an exciting time in the USA. Cars were rolling off the assembly lines, most families were able to afford them, and Florida was beckoning with sunshine and the promise of an easy life and good times. Landowners and businessmen said “welcome” to prospective homeowners by providing facilities for camping in cars rigged up with folding side tents or converted trucks with sleeping arrangements in the truck-bed. Places like Sarasota, Arcadia, and Gainesville became campgrounds that were quickly developed for the new automotive age.

In 1919, the visitors organized at DeSoto Park in Tampa as a national club, the Tin Can Tourists. The name may have evolved because some early

camping vehicles looked like tin cans, or perhaps because the campers ate so many meals by opening a can of food. Or maybe because members could be recognized by a tin can soldered to the radiator cap of the member’s car.

A number of Florida landowners welcomed the migration from the north, establishing camp-for-a-fee shelters like the one shown in the photo above. A few landowners, however, were over-

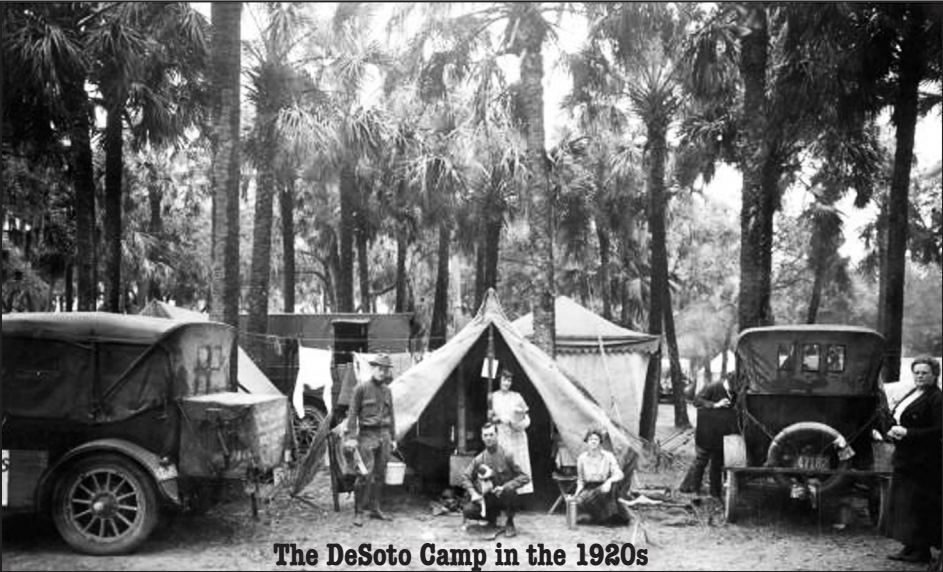
run with northerners, and closed down their trailer parks, but when membership estimates ranged from 30,000 to as high as 100,000, larger cities competed for rallies and conventions of the Tin Can Tourists.

What followed was fifty years of fued between cities and club chapters. Recessions took their toll of trailer manufacture, interest in camping faded, and the club was almost extinct by the 1980s. But the organization is still alive, as “a vintage motor coach club, committed to the celebration of classic trailers through annual gatherings of owners and friends.” And, this summer will see a number of club gatherings, most of them in sunshine states, but also in far-north Traverse City, Michigan, now considered a “primary host destination.”

Many members drive Airstream trailers, which look like sleek aluminum containers. Modern RVs look much less metallic. But, almost a century after its founding, Tin Can Tourism reflects the hardy spirit of Americans who chase the sun and enjoy the adventure as they hit the open road.



Member's Card



## LAST WORDS

What experience and history teach is this: that people and governments have never learned anything from history.”  
— Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, German Philosopher (1770-1831)