

NOV. 2016

FREE

THE TIMES OF MINERAL POINT

ILLUSTRATED

ROLL 'EM!! - THE DRIFTLESS FILM FESTIVAL

MOVIE MANIA IN MINERAL POINT

12 Features & Documentaries
light up the Opera House stage
Nov. 3 thru Nov. 6th

The Driftless Film Festival returns for a seventh year to the Mineral Point Opera House on November 3rd with four days of independent cinema, live entertainment, workshops, filmmaker discussions, and networking opportunities for fans of regionally-produced cinema and popular independently films. This kind of movie fare is not typically found on small-town screens.

"We're really proud of our program this year," said festival director Eve Studnicka, who, as a young Cinema Arts student, contributed a film about Mineral Point in an earlier year at the Festival. "We are screening more features shot in Wisconsin than we have in the last few seasons."

The opening night film, *AMERICAN FABLE*, features a surreal scene in the local tourist attraction House on the Rock, and *THE SEEKER* is a feature-length narrative set to the music of the regional sensation Cloud Cult, whose members will be on hand for a Q&A.

The crowd-pleasing *WISCONSIN SHORTS SHOWCASE* will also return, featuring short films produced in-state.

Hard-hitting documentaries are also slated for the festival screen. *CHURCH OF FELONS* and *DIVIDED WE FALL* respectively tackle issues of drug abuse in rural Wisconsin and the state capitol's *Occupy* protest.

And, *NUTS!* is a zany, darkly comedic animated documentary.

"Temptations," a new late-night program, showcases short, risqué movies.

See details on driftlessfilmfest.org.

Full Festival passes are available at Berget Jewelers and on brownpapertickets.com for \$50; individual tickets are sold for \$10 per film.



Parrish Johnston, the distinguished manager of the Opera House, captures the spirit of innovative entertainment offered by the 2016 Driftless Film Festival.



Back in the day, as someone always seems to be saying, Autumn arrived with the day-by-day descent of the silver-colored mercury in the tube of a glass thermometer, the one hung on the porch wall near the front door.

Mercury is no longer the fluid used in weather instruments. Twenty states have banned mercury because it's toxic, and the thermometers sold in stores use a metallic strip for a digital model or a less accurate gadget with red glop in the bulb.

But, back in the day, most people saw mercury only after *breaking* a thermometer. And, those who saw the liquid balls of mercury scatter across the floor or countertop consider that element the most beautiful on the periodic table. For kids, it was "awesome."

No one knows why, but Autumn brings back odd memories like that one and other long-lost-and-weirdly-pleasurable experiences.

Fall provides sights, smells and sounds unique to the crisp, cool days of harvest time. There is much work to be done, for sure, to button up our lives for a harsh winter, but we get a reward

for our labors. We get tailgate cuisine after cheering the home team, a night with friends and family around the fire ring, and an off-the-interstate roadside symphony of gold, scarlet and bronze.

We get Thanksgiving, our favorite holiday, free from heavy commercial pressures and pointless giftgiving.

Thanksgiving is more than a feast with football. It's an American ritual with all the right components: a shared time for people we love, staged in our homes, featuring food and fun, with good conversation (but *this* year, no doubt, with a "no-politics" pledge).

The secret of Thanksgiving holiday success is its central principle: it is a day devoted to humble gratitude, a day to count our many blessings, a day to admit that Life is Good.

For some, that realization comes despite loss and sorrow, despite ugly combat with fellow human beings, and despite hard economic times. But, the magic and mystery of Thanksgiving is that, as you drink in the beauty of color-splashed Driftless Wisconsin and add up life's abundance in these days of the harvest, it's hard to stay unhappy.



ART LOVERS HIT TOWN & LEAVE A FEW DOLLARS IN LOCAL TILLS

Twenty-three years, and counting!

The Fall Art Tour in mid-October was, as promised, a pleasant drive through the bronzed hills of Driftless Wisconsin, an opportunity to see and talk with some fifty of the region's artists in their studios, and an economic shot in the arm for local businesses, lodgings, bars and restaurants.

Joy Gieseke, Director of the Mineral Point Chamber, called the weekend event "a huge success—the crowds seemed good all three days"

Potter Diana Johnston has long been one of the coordinators for the Tour. She told us, "Some visitors come every year, some are first-timers; and, while we don't have hard data on sales, we find the economic impact is felt not only during that weekend but throughout the year because people who have discovered us return to Mineral Point."

LOOK FOR OUR NEXT ISSUE ON DECEMBER 6TH



THE TIMES OF MINERAL POINT

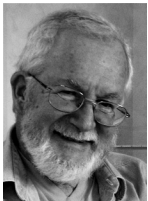
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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Check Sandee Beaman's
Online Events Calendar

<http://hwy23events.wordpress.com>

Simply click on an event
to get all the details.



A Trio of Bards Unveil Cornish Heritage Marker in Downtown Park

The first immigrants from Cornwall arrived in Iowa County almost two hundred years ago, but the impact of those early settlers is still a part of everyday life in Mineral Point, and local interest in Cornish food, architecture and culture is resurging.

The Southwest Wisconsin Cornish Society, founded in 1991, is keeping the Celtic spirit alive. And, this year's 24th Annual Cornish Festival gave us ample evidence of continuing devotion to the city's roots in Cornwall.

On a cloudy afternoon during the September CornishFest, celebrants unveiled an historic marker, a cast iron sign struck for the Cornish Heritage Park on High Street. Mayor Gregg Bennett saluted the Cornish Society for "a good start" at making the pocket park a suitable tribute to the city's Cornish heritage. Janet Jackson, President of the Society, was on hand to applaud the work of Pointer Preservationist Glen Ridnour, who spearheaded the project that brought the sign into being.

Ridnour drafted the words on both sides of the sign, working with Tamara Funk, Curator at the Pendarvis Site, and Jim Jewell, one of three Cornish Bards in attendance at the ceremony. (Jewell, Catherine Whitford and Marion Howard have been named Bards, the storytellers, poets, and singers who are tasked with keeping Cornish culture alive around the world.)

Students from the city's exchange with Redruth, in Cornwall, were also on hand for the unveiling.

The Cornish Society's goal is to add other artifacts in the park to tell the story of the early immigrants, the saga of mineral mining in the city, and the importance of keeping Cornish history a matter of Pointer pride.

So, why is our Celtic heritage important? Why celebrate it?

1. Family ties: Although exact counts are difficult, it's said that about 20% of Mineral Point residents have Cornish ancestral ties, and Linden claims roughly the same percentage.

2. Architecture: In the mid-1800s, tiny Linden was the largest Cornish settlement in Wisconsin. The village's United Methodist Church, built in 1851 of local stones, still stands. And, along Mineral Point's main street, the buildings erected in the mid-19th Century bear a striking resemblance to similar-era buildings in Cornwall.

3. Preservation: In the 1930s, the first resurrection of Cornish buildings was launched by Bob Neal and Edgar Hellum, who used a shoestring budget to restore the old rock buildings of the Pendarvis Site, now owned by the Wisconsin Historical Society. The geographic heart of the early city has been the focus of restorations at Shake Rag Alley and the Walker House.

4. Cornish Culture: The Pendarvis

Site is dedicated to events and activities that tell visitors about the Cornish way of life, with classes and workshops in Cornish language and crafts now a part of the annual Cornish Festival.

5. Cuisine: Although Cornish food is usually not considered "gourmet fare," many find it a treat for the palate. Tea biscuits, figgyhobbin and pasties top the list of Cornish food that are enjoyed at local restaurants, and residents line up when local churches cook and sell these specialties.

6. Work Ethic: The miners who came to Iowa County in the 1820s were in search of work because tin mining and other mineral trades had fallen off in England. When they landed here, they found Americans from other states scratching "badger holes" in the hills to take what lead they could unearth. The Cornish, however, were more skillful. They were deep-trench miners and good builders, as our inventory of well-made stone buildings testifies. Their construction is "vernacular," that is, built with whatever materials happened to be on hand.

7. Code of Conduct: Bard/Historian Jim Jewell told a CornishFest crowd about the region's smallest ethnic group, the Manx, who populated Sunny Slope Road and followed a strict behavior code, policed by peer pressure.

8. Music: Some of it rustic, obviously. Singers made history in the area, as soloists were brought in for church services and Temperance meetings that emphasized hymns and the melodic voices of Pointers.

9. Religion: An inherently religious and superstitious people, the Cornish evolved from ancient pagan practices to establish Primitive Methodist as the predominant following. Mineral Point's Primitive Church served a working-class congregation. In today's world, Celtic religions are a vibrant mixture of old and new with spirited celebrations of saints and special days on the calendar.

10. Play Ethic: The Cornish play as hard as they work. Jewell's talk spoke of an 1848 parade with "100 Men on Horseback," and, from 1868 to 1872, the annual Fenian Brotherhood Ball, an ethnic club celebration on New Year's Eve in Lenahan's Hall on High Street. The city also built an arch over High Street for a big conclave of the GAR, the Grand Army of the Republic. Then and now, a parade has always been a "must event" for all Pointers.

That's a "Top Ten" list. There are many reasons to search out the rich history of the Cornish in Driftless Wisconsin. And, there are many descendants to help you understand it. To begin to learn more, consider joining the Cornish Society. Check the website at www.cornishfest.org and/or contact Marion Howard, Membership Chair, 604 Keep St, Darlington, WI 53530.



THE BAD AXE BASH

A Cornish Festival account by local historian Jim Jewell told us how the city's rugged 19th-Century settlers found ways to have a good time.

Cornishmen knew how to dig lead from the local limestone and how to use that stone for cottages that stand 185 years later. They knew how to fight, often bare-knuckle style, and practiced the art frequently. But, they knew how to dance and sing. And, Oh Boy, how to throw a party for the whole town.

The longest and loudest party was likely the 1834 All-Nighter staged to honor the Battle of Bad Axe, the skirmish that ended the Black Hawk War.

Let's open the pages of the venerable *History of Iowa County, Wisc., 1881*, which describe the 1830s as a time when mining pits pockmarked downtown streets as well as the nearby hills, droves of new miners arrived in the city every day, and taverns known as "tiger's dens" entertained the "good fellows of the mining camp."

The 1881 history details the town's "harum-scarum amusements" this way: "During the day, it was hard work, and during the night and Sundays, revelry marked the hours. All was activity and excitement; money was plenty, and of care, apparently, there was none." And, of the Bad Axe Bash, the big red book's flowery language tells us, "Probably there had not been any demonstration of a public character previous to this time of such magnitude, so it was determined by the entire community that they would indulge in a grand barbecue with roast ox and everything on a magnificent scale. Uncle Ab Nichols [the inn-owner] was presiding genius at the feast, than whom no better would have been found in the State, and Capt. John O'Neill was Marshall of the Day and general Master of Ceremonies. At the proper hour, he, in company with a noble band of Dragoons arrayed in fantailed jackets of blue with peaked hats on their heads from which fluttered red feathers, and armed and accoutered with a nondescript collection of muskets, shotguns, horse-pistols, old army sabers and the like, mounted on slim, slick and slender long-eared and short-tailed nags, rode forth to meet General [Henry] Dodge, the principal figure of the occasion, and escorted him to the scene of operations. Who can adequately portray the scenes of the day? There was speech-making; then feasting in the open air under the protection of boughs erected on the banks of the Mineral Point Branch, just opposite the end of High Street, which concluded with a dance that began as soon as dinner was over and continued until the following day, when the fiddler was exhausted and they had to stop. And, the cannon which was being fired ceaselessly during the day was finally loaded to the muzzle and in one grand explode was blown to pieces."

The book's account ends with, "The crowd was immense for that time; yet that was nothing strange; nearly everyone was present from within 25 to 40 miles around. Those who were there will never forget the occurrences of that day, for they probably never experienced the like before or since."

All that, just seven years after Mineral Point was founded amid a cluster of log cottages in the Shake Rag valley.



Source: Jim Jewell, Bard,
Cornish Society of SW Wisc.;
History of Iowa County, 1881

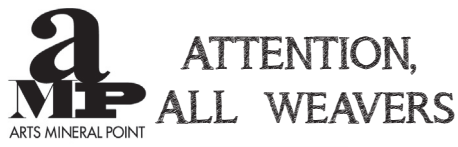


Pointers Nancy and Peter Schmalz are volunteering their time and music expertise to help bring more classical music to Mineral Point. The couple, both retired music teachers, recently moved to the city. Nancy is looking for classical musicians to join a chamber music ensemble, and she is currently compiling a list of classical musicians who would like to play or sing together in groups ranging from duets to larger ensembles, perhaps to perform at local events. Singers, pianists, string, brass, & woodwind players are all welcome. Interested musicians may call or email Nancy as she assembles the information to allow musicians to contact each other. Arts Mineral Point (AMP) will help set up performance opportunities in Mineral Point. In the photo, Nancy played her flute in a tent in Library Park during Fall Art Tour to promote the Mineral Point Chamber Musicians Initiative. Contact her if you are interested in playing, singing, listening, or otherwise supporting this new musical adventure. (608) 987-1652.



The Larry Busch Band will headline “Ragtime,” the fall fundraiser for Shake Rag Alley Center for the Arts, on Saturday, Nov. 12th, from 7-10 p.m at the Lind Pavilion. To help would-be swing dancers, Sue & Jim Coatney, who teach dancing at Lands’ End, have volunteered to teach a 45-minute dance lesson at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$30 pre-sale or \$35 at the door. Dance lesson tickets are \$5 per couple. Buy tickets online at <http://www.shakeragalley.com/events/> or by phone 608-987-3292, or in person at 18 Shake Rag Street.

All proceeds will help Shake Rag Alley continue its mission: to inspire creativity and bring quality art and craft classes to Wisconsin.



Arts Mineral Point (AMP) has just received two donated looms and a spinning wheel, and has added them to the craft area at the Cannery Arts Incubator. Joy and Ray Gloeckler of Portage made the generous donation, which raises the number of looms in the incubator to SIX—sitting alongside all the equipment and supplies needed for YOU to experience weaving at any skill level.

Check it out on www.artsmp.org

...and in December

Dec. 2,3,4 and 9,10,11 - The Nutcracker, presented by SABA
Dec. 3 - Gallery Night and Candle light Shopping in Mineral Point



HIGH WATER & HEAVY DAMAGE AT SHAKE RAG ALLEY SCHOOL

Imagine you are on a bicycle, headed down the long hill from the Pit Stop on the Ridge to Hook’s Cheese, downtown. It’s raining cats and dogs. You’re picking up speed with each foot you travel, and you have to hit the brakes several times as the rainwater spreads slippery layers across the roadway.

By the time you roll to the bottom of the hill, gushing rainwater that has drained from the hills on the north, east and west plunges into the low places, pools, churns and then rushes on, seeking an outlet. When the flow is heavy, and there’s nothing stopping or diverting it, it becomes a flood.

And, floods can destroy a place, a neighborhood, a city, or most of a state. August 2016 was a wet month in Mineral Point, as severe storms hit the town, its power lines, its streets, buildings, and its trees.

One of the hardest-hit locations in the city was the Shake Rag Alley Center for the Arts, which occupies the valley just below that Route 23 downhill ride you tried to imagine. The school’s acreage and its nine historic buildings have been frequent targets for floods, but this year was the most damaging in a long time.

Sharon Stauffer is a former Board member at Shake Rag Alley, and for many years has tended the grounds at the school as “a labor of love.”

“Every year since I can remember,” she told the *Times*, we’ve experienced one or two ‘gully-washers’ that cause the Federal Spring in our grounds to jump its bank. Those rains cut ruts, tear up brick paths and wash gravel to the front of the property,” she said, “but never like this year.”

“Normally, the damage is a nuisance, and we just clean up the mess and move on.” But, “The first (5”) rainstorm cut ruts two or three feet deep, the bricks were completely lifted and scattered, and some of the dry stream bottoms were washed away down to bedrock.”

A week later, it happened again.

And, a few days later, there was a third flood, not as devastating as the previous two, but the stream again jumped its banks and the brick driveway to Shake Rag Street became a river.

The school borrowed equipment to begin repairs but quickly realized the project needed professional expertise. Ivey’s was contracted to repair the paths with fresh gravel and AG lime (a suggestion from an engineer from Galena who had toured the damaged property). Paths were again usable but everyone realized a more long-lasting solution was needed.

Before the stormy month of August ended, Shake Rag management went before a sympathetic City Council and conducted a topographic survey of the stream areas in the school’s valley. A

subsequent meeting began discussions to draft a plan for dealing with the flooding on a permanent basis.

It’s important to point out that the overflow from rainfall is a problem for the entire area surrounding the “Five Points,” intersection, where Commerce and Doty Streets meet Route 23. That

low area acts as a sump, catching the drainage for a wide swath of turf in eastern Mineral Point, the land above the Shake Rag “bowl.”

Talks between the Shake Rag school, the City, and civil engineers will continue. Everyone acknowledges the problem is complicated, and a fix will be expensive. But, everyone is working in a cooperative spirit to make sure the fix will be a solid, long-term solution.

“We’ll have workable ideas after spending the winter in discussions,” said Mike Christensen, President of the Shake Rag Board of Directors. “City government will help us, and we may do some fundraising in the spring.”

“Our school is an asset to Mineral Point, and a magnet for students in arts and crafts throughout the Midwest,” Christensen said, “and we must protect this historic and dynamic place.”



Photos: Ben Russell

No place to walk

IF YOU’D CARE TO HELP THE CITY’S PREMIER CENTER FOR ARTS AND CRAFTS,
SEND AN EARMARKED CONTRIBUTION TO THE SHAKE RAG ALLEY OFFICE AT 18 SHAKE RAG STREET



To engage our next generation of National Park visitors, supporters and advocates, the White House and Federal Land Management agencies have launched “EVERY KID IN A PARK,” a program that gives every 4th grade student across the country a free pass to federal public lands and waters for the 2016-2017 school year.

Go to www.everykidinapark.gov and get a card for ALL our National Parks.



Community Comment by Frank Beaman

The *Times* is a “soft-news” tabloid, but from time to time, as Editor, I’ve tried to prod fellow citizens to move forward with good ideas or needed improvements. This is one of those times.

So, nag, nag, nag!

A few editions ago, I retold the old story of Rip Van Winkle, the fictional character who falls asleep one day, wakes up twenty years later, and is shocked by the changed world around him. He’s not pleased; he’d have done better things for his town, he thinks, had he not been slumbering.

My intent was to remind Pointers that the passage of time always changes the scene, not always for the better, and the wake up call may be unpleasant if you haven’t managed change well.

Maybe the Rip Van Winkle metaphor was a bit too subtle.

To be more blunt, I have to say that some good ideas and suggestions for community improvements die a slow death in Mineral Point. The pattern seems to be: old fashioned inertia at the beginning, weak support at mid-stage, and failure to follow through to the end.

More than two years ago, this newspaper put the High Street winter water main breaks on Page One. The paper’s article prompted small talk, but we *still* have lead water mains under our main street, a few feet away from the old stone foundations of storefronts, and now they’re 110 years old, not 107.

This newspaper also arranged a meeting of local Economic Development leaders and SWWRPC, the Southwest Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The attendees all agreed the city’s “too-old” Comprehensive Plan needs an update, which requires city funding, to give Pointers a survey of community priorities and a workable blueprint for progress.

That meeting was two years ago. And, while we have dallied, Monroe, Dodgeville, Barneveld and other cities have started and/or completed their Comprehensive Plans with an assist from SWWRPC consultants.

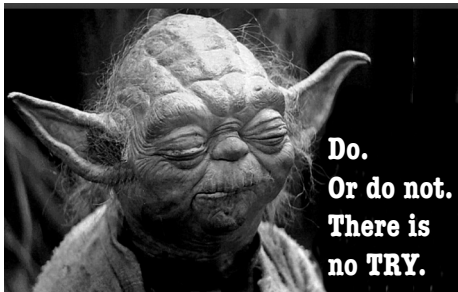
I know, I know. “We’re a small town,” “money is tight,” “it’s hard to get volunteers,” and “it’s too much work.”

And, yes, I know many people love this amazing town “just the way it is.”

But, as Rip Van Winkle would tell you, a long nap doesn’t preserve the status quo. It’s a recipe for DECAY.

Think about it. Talk about it. Ask sensible questions. If need be, make demands of those who can make something important happen. Then, join up!

Yoda, my favorite philosopher, gets the last word for those who’ll “try to...”





Could we? Should we?

Here's a "What If?" for you.

What if the USA wasn't spending more than half of the federal budget on Military adventurism, and, instead, plowed that \$601 billion into a massive program to build roads, bridges, levees, parks and other public projects?

President Franklin D. Roosevelt took that path in the 1930s, enrolling millions of men and women in jobs in the Works Progress Administration(WPA). That infrastructure-building campaign touched Mineral Point. The WPA built the swimming pool in Soldiers Park, and the WPA Wisconsin Writers group gave us a lasting history of the city.

What if, instead of sending our young men off to prison or an endless and pointless war in the MiddleEast, we were to recruit them to a revived CCC, modeled after Roosevelt's 1933-1942 Civilian Conservation Corps, the hard-working young people who turned the Great Depression into a great opportunity for America's outdoors.

Roosevelt founded the program as part of his New Deal bid to find employment and impose order on the large number of jobless young men of the Depression. The idea was simple: men who joined the CCC were given military-style lodging, food, and pay in exchange for working on conservation projects throughout the country. (Though the majority of participants were white, single young men, men of color also served in the CCC, though they were forced to stay in segregated camps and faced discrimination in some parts of the country. A separate "She-She-She" camp system was proposed for women but was short-lived.)

CCC members were given a uniform, strict military-style routines, and went to work in camps all over the United States. For their toil they earned \$30 a month but could keep only \$5; the rest was required to be sent home to their impoverished families.

Also called "Roosevelt's Tree Army," the CCC is credited with planting a whopping three billion trees in just nine years. The forests beautified the nation, reduced erosion, and provided shelter from the wind and drought that caused and fueled Dust Bowl conditions on the Great Plains.

Ultimately, the CCC was one of the New Deal's most productive—and popular—programs. Its three million members built over a million miles of forest roads and trails, stocked over a billion fish and put in over 6.4 million man-days fighting forest fires.

So next time you're walking through a national park or enjoying time outdoors, think of the CCC and how an economic disaster turned into an environmental legacy for the ages.

Eight years ago, when the economy tanked, President Obama floated the idea of a reconstructed CCC as part of his 2008 Recovery and Reinvestment Act. But, the air went out of that balloon when the idea went to Congress.

Could the idea be revived?



ADVENTURES IN RETAILING - Before Walmart and Amazon.com changed everything.

Frank Woolworth opened the first of his stores in 1878. With \$300 and work experience in a dry-goods store, he opened "Woolworth's Great Five Cent Store" in Utica, New York. The store promptly went under. He tried again in 1879 in Pennsylvania with merchandise priced at a dime. His "dime stores" undercut prices of local merchants, and differed from traditional stores because shoppers could pick up and handle merchandise without the assistance of a clerk. That idea clicked, so Woolworth spent \$127 to open a second location. By the time he died in 1919, the "five and dime" Woolworth Corp. was worth \$65 million and owned more than a thousand stores worldwide.

At that point in history, money went from the pocket or purse of a customer into a drawer opened by the clerk. All transactions were "cash and carry."

But, as anyone could have guessed, technology was on the way. By 1950, clerks stuffed customer's dollars into a cylinder, and a pneumatic tube whooshed the money to the store's central office to be deposited, then, with the right change rattling inside, the tube returned to the Customer Service counter. That system still called for human beings, and charge cards had not yet replaced cash with credit.

The department store, named for the way the store was organized, became the premier retailing institution of the USA in the first half of the 20th Century.

They were essential components in the commercial, architectural and cultural heritage of their communities. But the second half of the century saw department stores closing their doors. The great retail names vanished. The successful stores followed America to the suburbs where people with dollars were moving. Thousands of malls, "shopping centers" and Big Box megastores were slapped up, displacing the familiar "Mom and Pop" stores and the downtown department stores. Walmart built a box in every town, it seemed, as thousands of local stores closed their doors, victims of the "all things cheap" WallyWorld marketing approach that has produced 6,300 stores worldwide.

Then, along came mail order retailing. Lands End was a prominent name in the early days of "hands off" buying, as customers scanned the catalog mailed by the company and used their telephone and their credit card to place an order from "those friendly and knowledgeable women in Wisconsin."

Fast forward to today's complex retail universe. Credit cards have replaced folded dollars at the checkout counter. But, many shoppers don't even bother with a checkout counter.

They simply look down at the screen on their phone or tablet, click a few times, pay by "swiping," and wait for the box to thump on the porch.

As a rule, stuff in the box was made in China, and robots plucked the item from shelves in a retailing *factory*.

Do you see the emerging pattern in the evolution of retail trade? Here's a hint: count the people!

In today's marketplace, the interpersonal human interchange is gone, or suffers only as a ghost of previous times. In once-thriving stores, the aisles are empty: a few customers search for an employee with experience, and eventually find a clerk lucky enough to have escaped the store's layoffs. The General Store, one-time gathering place for small towns, gave way to the Mom & Pop store, which gave way to the Big Box & Upscale Boutiques in the malls, which gave way to Mail Order Warehouses, which gave way to the *Amazon.com* age of the present day.

Retailing has traveled from Macy's Christmas Windows, where parents took children to watch toys dance, to the barren facelessness on the floors of vast Internet Distribution Centers.

Multinational *Amazon.com* racked up 2015 net revenue of \$107 billion, up from \$75 billion just two years before. As we buy with 1-Click, *Amazon* will dislocate 136,000 jobs, nationwide, in a single year. And, thousands of communities will struggle to make up for \$420 million in lost tax revenue as some 30,000 retail businesses are driven out of business by the Internet giant.

Consumerism in the USA is vitally important; our purchases are the pump for 70% of our national economy. And, all evidence indicates the American consumer is driven "by price and convenience." Which means, sadly, that the sensible plea, "Buy Local" will not be heard. At least, it won't stop the march of technology and marketing that now characterizes the universe where, once upon a time, "the customer was King."

Woolworths is ancient history, the Mom & Pops are a bit of nostalgia, the malls are being bulldozed, and lonely customers in the Boxes & Surviving Stores often search empty aisles to find a clerk who knows the merchandise.

In Mineral Point, where we have "one of every kind of store, but only one," our merchants do the best they can to stay financially afloat. They value their customers as neighbors and friends. Every sale is precious. And, they keep a smile on their faces. Not the smiley-face that pops up on the little screens we all carry. No, a real smile.

Andy Warhol once said, "All Department Stores will become Museums, and all Museums will become Department Stores."



MADE IN THE ???

What could be more American than the Woolrich Shirt-Jac, the essential garment for outdoorsmen for fifty years. A line in the firm's catalog says the pattern was woven in their Pennsylvania mill, the one that launched the company in 1830. But, there's another line in the catalog's listing for this item that reads "Imported." Hmmmm.

Woolrich has "gone global," like so many old Yankee business places. Six generations of the mill-owning John Rich family stood aside and have now watched as Asian container ships bring their products to waiting warehouses. Some fabrics, blankets and sox are "Made in the USA" but most of the inventory is assembled offshore.

Pres. Roswell Brayton Jr. (not a member of the founding family) traced the history of Woolrich from its early days making tough outdoor clothing for men, through the weaving of blankets during the Civil War, and up to 1975, when the writing on the wall of competition and "shareholder value" forced Woolrich to outsource by sending their fabric overseas for cutting and sewing. They closed ten of their eleven plants and laid off 1,500 employees in 1990 after reaching peak employment of 3,000 just two years earlier, and a sales slump in 2013 reduced the staff to 200. Today, the total worker group is 500. (We don't know how many offshore contract employees are represented by that "Imported" label.)

Mr. Brayton says the company is in good financial shape, its bottom line is healthy, and he says the shrinkage in human beings is a part of natural evolution in the highly-competitive clothing industry. He uses the smooth jabberwocky of corporate America to explain that Woolrich is no longer a stitchery producing classic outdoor ware; it is, instead, a chaser of market share, and a player in the marketing game called "leisure brand."

He says the brand is grand.

The sox were spun off to Seneca Knitting Mills, the iconic plaids were shipped off to the sweatshops. But, please note, they recently opened a division to satisfy customers with bottled water. Would that be "Mineralrich?"

Global, indeed.



**The Modern
American Family:
WIRED
but not connected.**

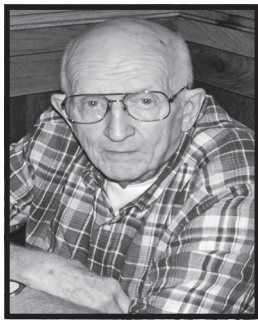


TOO-TALL POINTER KISSES BLARNEY STONE

Facebook, the indispensable guide to all things worth knowing, recently yielded charming photos of hardware-man Mike Mitchell and his family as they enjoyed a vacation in the British Isles. Noting that Mike was too tall for a Cornwall doorway, we asked him if that was the only problem he encountered on the visit. His response, printed here with light editing, was the warmly congenial reply you would expect from “Mineral Point’s Unofficial Emcee.”

“We visited Scotland and Ireland as well as Cornwall. My grandfather was adopted (by the Mitchell family) and we don’t know our actual heritage on Dad’s side, but I can say this: as I talked with people from all three areas, I could very well be related to *any* of the Irish, Scots, or Cornish. They are wonderful people — funny, and mostly happy.”

“As you saw,” Mike said, “my height could be a negative, but the ‘Mitchell blarney’ was a certain positive. And, yes, I did actually kiss the famous Stone at Blarney Castle.”



Dean Connors

1926-2016

Bookseller
Historian
Benefactor
Local Legend

With sadness we note the passing of Dean Connors, who opened the Foundry Bookstore in 1995 after a long career as a hospital pathologist and laboratory director in Madison.

A lifelong learner, he found many interests in his retirement, including a study of early Wisconsin history and restoring historic buildings. He nobly served the Mineral Point Historical Society, and a fellow past-president, Pointer Jim Stroschein, told us:

“Dean could appear gruff and loved to play the role of the curmudgeon. His sense of humor was highly cultivated and, with a few well-chosen words, (uttered out of earshot, of course) could reduce any prima donna or pompous politician to shreds. He was blessed with an incredible mind. In the apartment behind his bookstore he often had three televisions going at once and, as I discovered, could comprehend each of those streams of information. A customer in his store could converse with Dean about diplomatic efforts in the Middle East, the Chicago opera season, or the long-demolished buildings that once made up the sprawling Zinc Works in Mineral Point.

Gayle Bull continues to operate his bookstore, and a book, map or manuscript from the Foundry is a link to a fascinating man and the city he loved.”

THE “ROUGH RIDER” IS ROUGHED UP, BUT RALLIES IN TIME FOR THE RALLY.

Teddy Roosevelt takes a bullet, chats with his would-be assassin, and makes a speech.

In the Campaign of 2016, you may think you’ve seen and heard everything that might have made history, but you may not have encountered THIS startling story, now 104 years old.

President Theodore Roosevelt was shot at a Wisconsin campaign stop just before the election in 1912. Roosevelt had just gotten into a car outside a Milwaukee hotel when John Schrank, an unemployed saloonkeeper who believed he had been given orders by the ghost of Pres. McKinley, shot him with a Colt revolver from a distance of five feet. Schrank had been stalking Roosevelt, intending to stop him from pursuing a third term as president. It had been an ugly campaign with deep divisions in the Republican Party, and Roosevelt left the GOP and ran as a member of the National Progressive, the so-called “Bull Moose,” Party.

The crowd tackled the shooter, but Roosevelt’s composure was not ruffled in the least. He asked Schrank why he’d done it, and turned the man over to the police when he got no answer. Roosevelt then coughed experimentally into his hand and deduced that the bullet had not penetrated his lungs because he didn’t cough up any blood.



He then insisted on moving on to the Milwaukee Auditorium and delivered a 90-minute speech as scheduled.

He began by calling for quiet and told the stunned crowd: “I don’t know whether you fully understand that I have just been shot - but it takes more than that to kill a Bull Moose!” He opened his coat to reveal his blood-stained shirt, and credited the 50-page speech in his breast pocket for saving his life. Roosevelt blamed the media for provoking the shooter: “It is a very natural thing,” he said, “that weak and vicious minds should be inflamed to acts of violence by the kind of awful mendacity and abuse that have

been heaped upon me for the last three months by the papers.” He predicted that such shootings would become more commonplace, should the government fail to care for the well-being of all its citizens (his campaign plank).

A few days later, Roosevelt came in second to Democrat Woodrow Wilson. He got 27 percent of the vote, the most any third-party candidate has received in an American presidential election.

Oh, and Schrank’s bullet remained lodged in Roosevelt’s rib for the remaining seven years of his life.

SOURCE: “The Writer’s Almanac,” presented by American Public Media

IF EVERYTHING IN OUR POP CULTURE IS A SMASH IS ANYTHING, REALLY?

Netflix claims its streamed series, “Orange is the New Black,” is a smash hit, and the mainstream media repeat the claim. But, is it actually a hit, and how much did it smash?

We don’t really know. Online shows are not measured by the traditional broadcast ratings, so we don’t know the size of the audience.

And, if *Netflix* has hard data, they don’t share it.

This is a phenomenon throughout modern media. When almost anything or anybody can claim major success, we’re not sure what is a genuine “hit.” Measuring a smash used to be easy in the day when you could count the viewing audience. In that not-so-long-ago time, broadcast networks made money by proving people watched the shows they ran. Nowadays, they make money because somebody pays: an advertiser, a cable company, or a viewer directly. It’s no longer about eyeballs; it’s about demographics and targeting a niche audience.

And, with DVRs now in half of American homes, and people watching as they walk with their Smartphones, counting depends on how long you wait before you total up the viewers. Further, today’s viewers can watch on demand, on Hulu or Amazon or iTunes. HBO just claimed “Game of Thrones” topped “The Sopranos,” but can you really compare the two

shows? Tony Soprano did his thing in 1999, when the flip phone was cutting edge technology, and the smallest TV screen was the size of a pizza box.

As the TV audience counts became more complex and less reliable, the computer, tablet and phone started playing a major role. Nielsen now measures “Twitter ratings,” to add up all the chatter on social media. So, late night talk shows brag about their viral “day-after” YouTube traffic as much as their “overnight TV” ratings.

And then there’s revenue from foreign showings, syndication, and streaming to add to the confusion of measuring American pop culture.

The topic is not simply a matter of dollars. Who’s watching what and which show is truly a hit are important to the identity of our national *emotions* — what influences our beliefs, what lingers in our minds, and what will later define the period we’re living in.

The days of Top 40 and the Big Three Networks were simpler, not always a good thing because the rules discouraged experiment and creative flair. But, there’s a trade-off. As our culture becomes more diffuse and digital, we have less sense of where everyone else is and what everyone else thinks.

When everything in our collective society is a smash, figuring out what *really* hits us in ways that *really* count is more mysterious than ever.

RELATED PET PEEVE: Does EVERY entertainer deserve a Standing Ovation?



An Awesome Accordian

The photo, snapped at a dinner stop on a “Badger State Entertainment Tour” sponsored by the *Friends of the Wisconsin Historical Society*, shows Roger Boll, President of the Milwaukee Accordion Club, with his spanking new digital squeeze-box.

As he sings, he’s reading the song lyrics from the screen of an iPad on a stand before him and striking keys of a player nothing like the accordian we remember from the old Lawrence Welk Show. For many years, he lugged around a bellows-and-keyboard that weighed 36 pounds, but his same-size *digital* box weighs only 14 pounds. The computer inside allows him to coax out 300 sounds, which, when combined with a little clickory-dickory, give him more than fifty musical models: the harmonica, tuba, clarinet, guitar, banjo, honky-tonk piano with rhythm, and (when necessary) the sound of an old-fashioned accordian.

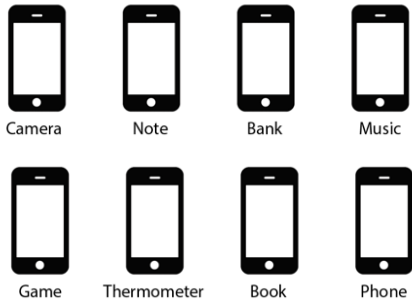
If you thought ANYTHING was exempt from rampaging technological change, you’ll have to think again.

FURTHERMORE: Digitalization is also changing visual images and symbols we’ve commonly used to identify or represent something. *Iconography*, the work of designers, depends on a widespread, shared understanding of the meaning of images.

To communicate something simple—like a camera, for example—we rely on a shared image of what something that takes pictures looks like. But today, what a camera looks like is unclear.

Many of us remember that cameras once had a clicking shutter and stuff called film which, when exposed to light, captured the image in front of us. They used to be much larger, then, like everything, they shrank into something handheld, portable, affordable: a digital device called a smart phone.

So, what does a camera look like?

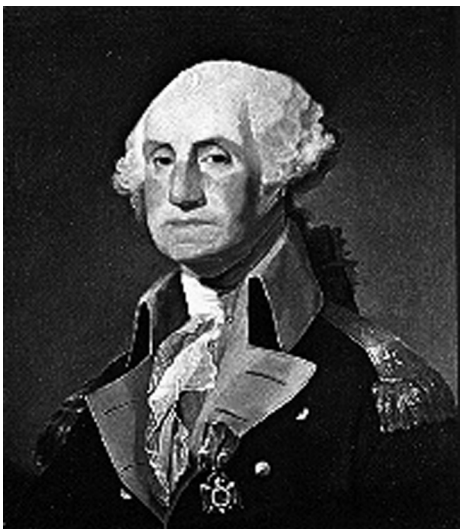


To increasingly more of us, a camera looks likes like a rectangle with rounded corners. Which is what a phone looks like. And a bank, a note, sometimes a therapist. And so many other things. As digitalization widens, our understanding of objects flattens.



So, soon enough, one single image could be used to symbolize ALL of the professions. [As shown above]





Father's Advice

In 1796, as the Father of Our Country left office, the 6,058 words of his famed Farewell Address were printed in the *Daily American Advertiser* as an open letter to the young nation's citizens.

General George Washington's most-famous "speech" was never actually spoken. It was a team effort by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, who had compiled the *Federalist Papers* to introduce and explain their proposal for the U.S. Constitution.

Seven years after its signing, Washington feared the Constitution would fall prey to the whims of popular sentiment, which he equated with mob rule.

His Farewell Address has historic importance. It documents the dangers he feared could undermine America's great democratic experiment. His warnings reflect his wisdom, experience, and sincere concern for the future of the nation. Here are twenty of them:

- Be vigilant, people will seek to use the government for selfish ends.
- Avoid overgrown military establishments; they are hostile to liberty.
- Prevent all obstructions to execution of the laws.
- Control bureaucracies; make sure governmental agencies all work together.
- Be suspicious of administrators who serve themselves rather than the people.
- Watch for consolidation of power in any department of government.
- Avoid political parties; they cause divisive factions; unscrupulous men will use them to undermine the government.
- Give allegiance to the Constitution; improve it as necessary.
- Do not alter the Constitution lightly, or based on hypothesis; apply the experience applied when it was created.
- Preserve existing checks and balances and add more where power needs to be checked.
- Religion and morality are essential to create the virtue necessary to preserve the union.
- Promote wide education; democracy requires literate citizens who understand the system of governance and take responsibility for themselves.
- Avoid debt; immediately discharge any debt created by war.
- Taxes must provide needed revenue, but are unpleasant; government spending should be candidly conducted.
- Cultivate peace and justice toward all nations.
- Avoid alliances; maintain neutrality among nations.
- Avoid dependency; a weak state that allies with a stronger state will become its servant.

If you marked a score card, you are aware that most of Washington's warnings were overlooked or discarded during the 220 years since the Address.

Pres. Dwight D. Eisenhower warned of the Military-Industrial Complex in his Farewell Address in 1961.

Generally, we ignored most of what "Ike" told us to do, too.

SHAKE RAG!

A MINERAL POINT PAGEANT



A MID-1960S PRODUCTION WAS BROUGHT BACK TO THE OPERA HOUSE STAGE IN A BRIGHT 1986 COMMUNITY-WIDE REVIVAL

"There are innumerable touches that enliven the evening, and the whole play, with its attention to authentic details, is an entertaining lesson in early Wisconsin history. It should be a great success and should stimulate other communities to the same sort of interest and pride in their past."

That's how the *State Journal Register* saluted the July 5, 1964 performance of "Shake Rag!" on the stage of the Mineral Point Opera House.

The Madison staff writer spoke of the "gilded splendor" of the theater, praised the planning and hard work of local townspeople, and raved about the "frock coats, ruffled taffeta dresses, the period furniture, and proper props" used by the pageant's actors as they portrayed lead miners, farm folk, rowdies, and Driftless dignitaries who were part of the history of the city from its early roots in 1836.

The all-local play, with fifty actors—men, women and children recruited from the area—enjoyed two standing-room-only houses as Pointers celebrated the 1964 Independence Day weekend.

Mary Kate Tews, a teacher from Madison and author of twenty plays, created "Shake Rag!" and with husband Tom Tews directed the production and designed the elaborate sets for the full-length pageant. The couple had visited the city as tourists and became fascinated with its rich history.

Twenty years after the 1964 opening of "Shake Rag!" an apparent attack of nostalgia brought about a community-wide call for a revival, and the Mineral Point Historical Society met with the local Shake Rag Players to add a few elements to the play and open it again during "Founders' Day 1986."

Six scenes told the city's story: "Just Outside Heaven" was a Pearly Gates gathering that included Gov. Henry Dodge, Chief Black Hawk, Matilda Hood and Mrs. Alexander Hamilton. They were there to block the entry of the despicable John Featherstonaugh, an Englishman who had aroused the citizenry with a scathing tourist review of rough-and-tumble Mineral Point in the 1830s. (Jim Harris took the role of

the villain. His father, Parmley Harris, was Governor Dodge. The late Gerda Engels was Eliza Hamilton, widow of Founding Father Alexander Hamilton, who was staying with her son, a lead mine owner in Hamilton's Digs, present-day Wiota, WI.

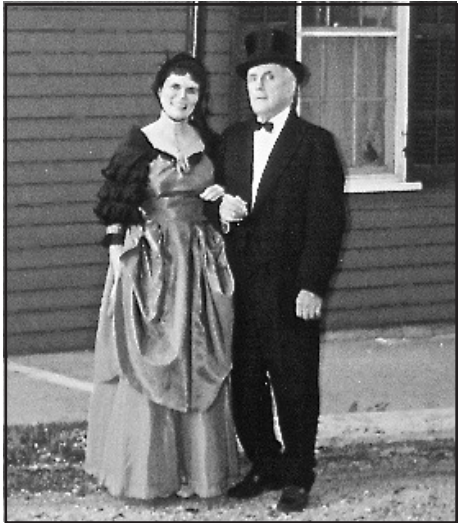
After the heavenly protest scene came the play's flashbacks: the first in the notorious tavern of Ab Nichols (Bob Carter) where, among the many patrons, were fiddler Kentuck (Paul Biere), Faro Player (Mick Nelson), and a Sleeping Drunk (Bob Kubicek).

Scene 3, the Mineral Point Inauguration of the first Governor of Wisconsin, featured Mrs. Christina Dodge, played by Mary Alice Moore.

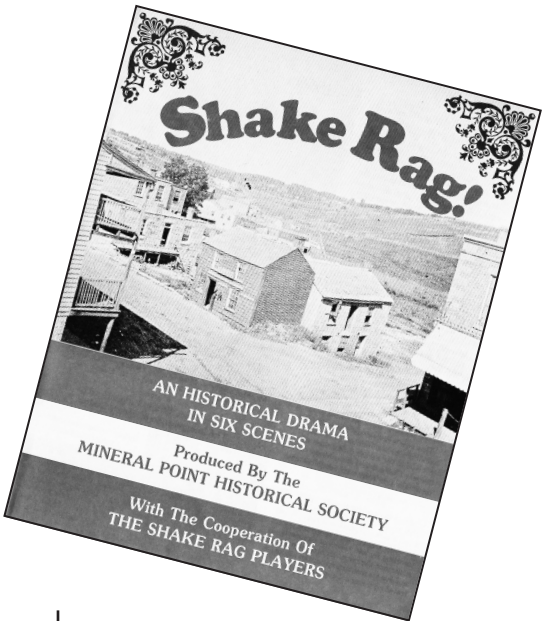
Scene 4, a glimpse of a farm family with a boisterous handful of children, was set at the 1842 Tregloan Cottage.

Scene 5, "Down in the Ross Mine," included a trained animal and locals Paul Barrette, Seth Studnicka, Shawn U'Ren, Mike Oneby and Ed Bendick.

The pageant ends with spectacle. In "The Hanging of William Caffee." Mike McDermott took the role of the colorful hangee, and the event's crowd included actors Dodie Baker, Andy, Craig and Cathy Palzkill, most of the cast already noted, and others who filled the stage for the execution of the murderous Caffee in 1842.



Striking a theatrical pose in Jail Alley, local actors Mary Alice Moore and Parmley Harris portrayed Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dodge in the 1964 production of "Shake Rag!" (Frontiersman Dodge was Wisconsin's first Governor, sworn into office in Mineral Point).



The 1986 revival of Shake Rag! was a return engagement for a few Pointers. Mary Alice Moore, Curator of the city's Archives at the Public Library, played the wife of Gov. Dodge in both productions. She told the *Times* "I was so young, so green, in the first show, but more confident twenty years later." She also recounted a few pranks played on actors by "cut ups" in the basement dressing rooms at the Opera house.

The late Mick Nelson and Gerda Engels also played in the early show and again in 1986. And, Ted Landon was the production's leader in both shows. John Rohr, who played the role of Featherstonaugh with a crisp British accent in 1964, was killed in the Vietnam War. In all, twenty-four of the 1964 actors are no longer around to remember, with fondness, that "summer on the stage."

But, there are many Pointers in the cast of the 1964 production still around to cherish their memories:


Pete Eckstein, Larry McNeill, Jim McNeill, Eric Nelson, Joe Ceniti, Greg Gorgen, Diane Hanson, Paul Ewers, Tom Ivey, Dixie Rideout, Mary Coogan, and Dominick Mangrardi.

If you see one of these voluntary thespians on High Street, be sure to ask about their adventure "on the boards."

SHAKE RAG!

was a remarkable local history brought to the stage by remarkable volunteers from a remarkable small town, a twice-told testament to good will, cooperative spirit, hour after hour at rehearsals in which the only compensation was the satisfaction of bringing a night of joy to their friends and neighbors.

The reviewer in the Madison newspaper of July 5, 1964 summed it up best when she wrote, "Mineral Point is reliving its colorful past this weekend and is having a fine time doing it."



BACKSTAGE STORIES

Just writing and directing "Shake Rag!" wasn't enough work, it seems. Here, Mary Kate Tews poses for a newspaper photograph while trimming the sideburns of one of the local actors in the Opera House dressing rooms in 1964.

During rehearsals, actors worked hard to catch the local rough-country dialect of farm and town Pointers, and listened to tape recordings sent over from friends in Redruth, our sister city in Cornwall, to perfect Cornish accents.

Auditions were held to cast the role of Jenny the donkey, who worked at the bottom of the Ross mineshaft.

The 1964 scene-stealer was Ermandine Martin, as Matilda Hood, tough-talking, pipe-smoking wife of a soldier in the Black Hawk War.

DUMB & DUMBER

★

EVERY DAY A NO-BRAINER

BY FRANK BEAMAN

Let me take you back to 1968, a year often called “The Great Unravelling” or “The Year the Dream Died,” when Bobby Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King were murdered, American cities burned, the Democratic Convention turned bloody, the Vietnam War raged, 382,000 men were drafted to fight it, cultural chaos shook the world, and Richard Nixon ran for President on a tough “law and order” platform.

This newspaper’s editor was the host of a radio talk show in the “Soybean Capital of the World.” WSOY-AM served Decatur, Illinois, by presenting music the listeners said they wanted to hear, along with serious local news, sports, weather and farm information.

The turbulence of the mid-Sixties inspired WSOY’s first call-in radio show—an effort to enrich a hometown audience each weekday afternoon by inviting a studio guest for a 15-minute interview followed by telephoned questions from the audience. We aired sessions with local elected officials, holding them accountable to their constituents. We interviewed newsmakers and a diverse cast that included authors, physicians, auto mechanics, gardeners, and sports figures—anyone who could satisfy a curious audience. And, of course, we talked politics, local and national. As the program host, I knew neither the identity or viewpoint of callers. I relied on a mechanism that silenced the outgoing broadcast if a caller became offensive or profane. In my 59 months on that show, I used that “bleeper” only twice. The audience in that blue-collar farm town of 100,000 was polite, respectful and sensible. People tuned in to learn something or get their questions answered. And, most of them displayed a solid understanding of what we once called “Civics,” a required course in public schools on how government worked, which issues were important and which topics deserved study and serious debate.

By most measures, that 1968 audience was more worldly, better informed, more “adult,” than a comparably formulated audience of 2016 citizens. It’s only my impression, but I’d bet on it.

I hosted that talk show for five years, and covered politics as a reporter in the field for thirty years, so the “dumbing down of America” is personally painful for me. And what makes our “dumbing down” so infuriating is that Mr. and Mrs. America have grown more and more stupid as the total available information has expanded to the breaking point. “Info-content,” the stuff of our electronic devices, now fills our days with words and images. But, most of it is not making us smarter; it’s simply stirring the Stupidity Stew.

Back in 1968, there was no Internet, no Cable TV, no PBS. Our political education came from the newspapers and Walter Cronkite. Newscasts were read by underpaid/experienced journalists. We were challenged intellectually and we were prompted to learn more.



But, today, we are pacified—and quite often terrified—by the media’s habit of serving up trivial news: fires and car crashes, celebrity and sensation stories that challenge no one to consider anything significant. Most newscasts air “grabbers,” but few newscasts dare to air a boring-but-important story. And, the immense profits go to huge conglomerates, not independent, locally owned broadcast firms. The big newspapers close their bureaus and lay off the experienced reporters; or go out of business. Six out of ten young people now get most of their information from social media and don’t even bother with newspapers, magazines, or broadcast news.

Instead of helping us comprehend the complexities of 21st-Century life, the news media has often sidestepped its responsibility to an adult audience by curtailing investigative journalism, shrinking our vocabulary to a sixth-grade level [look it up!], and reducing daily news reporting to tweet-driven “sorta-news,” regurgitating someone’s press release, repeating gossip, inane “he said/she said” feuding, and other forms of juvenile entertainment.

Our schools need to teach students more about politics and our role in the political process, but schools are under pressure to equip students for *jobs or college* more than for life as thoughtful citizens with civic responsibilities.

But, the dubious First Prize in the Dumbness Derby goes to the general public, more guilty than the mass media or classroom. Our hunger for spectacle and mindless amusement seems to be stronger than our hunger for knowledge, so we’ve traded our minds for a few laughs, for *Facebook’s* dancing cats, for *Pokeman Go*.

Our nation was founded on the principle of an “Informed Electorate.” Sadly, today’s electorate—the voting American—is *badly* underinformed.

We desperately need an antidote to a system that drives our political and social intelligence lower and lower, but we’re not getting help from most current sources of “information.”

As a consequence, we measure our world and what happens in it with buzz words, slogans and gut reaction, not reasoned, sensible reflection. That’s how politicians exploit our ignorance to run campaigns based on blatant lies and raw emotions: fear and anger.

My intent in writing this is not merely a stroll down memory lane. No, I’m promoting a continuing search for trustworthy journalists (fact-check ‘em), and to suggest a kinder, gentler form of public dialogue—sparring.

We are drowning in information, but there’s precious little sparring, which is the exchange of views in a low-key, cordial and intelligent setting.

Finding such a setting may be difficult in today’s noise; and, to be able to hear, we may have to notice that our TV sets, radios, computers and Smart-phones all have an “OFF” button.



Uncle Walter

To Understand the Language of Politics

PUT IT IN ITS PROPER FRAME

Local Climate Group Gets the Word on Left-Right Leanings and Parents that Nurture or Discipline

Citizens’ Climate Lobby(CCL) is a non-profit, non-partisan, grassroots advocacy organization working to change attitudes and enact legislation to deal with Climate Change and other environmental concerns. A local CCL chapter meets in Dodgeville, discussing proposed powerline expansion, renewable energy sources, highway clean up programs and a variety of topics usually found on a politically-liberal agenda.

CCL pushes for passage of a carbon tax levied against sources of greenhouse gasses that most scientists say cause Global Warming. Canada has just passed similar legislation.

Iowa County’s group leader is Chuck Tennesen, who tells the *Times*, “It’s highly unlikely a carbon fee bill will succeed in Congress unless it’s embraced by members of both sides of the political aisle. And, given that reality, we often hold monthly teleconferences featuring speakers who are knowledgeable in bridging the divide between Democrats and Republicans.”

The October speaker was George Lakoff, Professor of Cognitive Science and Linguistics at UC Berkeley.

He wrote the best-selling *Don’t Think of an Elephant!* ten years ago. The book says Conservatives, using powerful emotion-charged words and images, often control the framework for public debate on vital issues more effectively than Liberals, and the Right stays more

firmly “on message” than their left-wing counterparts. According to his scientific research, conservatives have comprehended that brain functioning is grounded not in logical reasoning but in *emotional* appeal. As a result, huge portions of the citizenry have accepted the way Republicans frame political issues; which leads voters to empathize with a GOP point of view.

Lakoff suggests the divide between conservatives and liberals has its roots in early family life, in the moral atmosphere and language of the family setting. He says parents who follow a “Nurture” pathway with their children usually produce liberal offspring, while a “Strict Father” household is likely to produce more conservative adults.

His conclusion is that if citizens and policy-makers better understand brain functioning and the role of political propaganda, slogans and images, we can hope to ease societal conflict and foster a more cooperative human spirit.

Tennesen sums up, “Lakoff’s talk helped members of our local CCL chapter understand why it’s so difficult for liberal-minded folks to see things from a conservative perspective, and vice versa. As our current election politics clearly shows us, learning to respectfully engage with opposing political positions is an increasingly important skill. And, getting along with the opposition begins with the language we use to frame our policy positions.”

a right-wing extremist killed thirteen people and wounded more than 200.

But, after 206 years, the Bavarian Oktoberfest must be considered a huge success. It’s the largest festival in the world. Some six million thirsty visitors quaff more than a million gallons of beer.

The odd Prince Ludwig would, no doubt, be pleased with what he started.



A Toast to Oktoberfest

The first Oktoberfest had its origins in Munich in 1810. The occasion was a royal wedding: Ludwig, Crown Prince of Bavaria, an eccentric, over-assertive, art-loving, womanizing writer of truly bad poetry, was marrying Princess Therese of Saxony-Hildburghausen.

The royal couple wanted to invite all of Munich to their wedding reception. They threw a parade and a huge party in the field outside the city gates, and it culminated in a horse race.

The citizens of Munich had such a good time they decided to repeat the horse races at the same time the following year. When that first anniversary rolled around, the organizers added an agricultural show, to bring attention to the Bavarian farming industry. The horse races are no longer held these days, but the farm show is still a big part of Oktoberfest in Bavaria.

In 1818, a carousel and a couple of swings were added, and the organizers set up a few modest beer stands, which grew to become huge beer tents and halls by the end of the 19th Century.

The Oktoberfest was canceled on a few notable occasions, usually because of war or cholera, and in 1933, when the Nazi swastika replaced the flag of Bavaria, the festival was canceled for the duration of World War II. And, in 1980, a bomb planted in a trash can by



TRIGGER WARNING:
THIS IMAGE MAY BE DISTURBING



If someone falls off a boat, it is no longer proper to shout, “Man Overboard!!!” Or even “Person Overboard!!!” because such an outcry could be taken as “a subtle rejection of the falling person’s private gender choice.”

Committing a gender gaffe during a sea rescue would be “non-inclusive” or “micro-aggressive” and might traumatize the person in the water. It would also mark people at the ship’s rail as “shameful oppressors.” So it might be best to let the person drown and get the gender right later, at the autopsy.

“Fifty percent of people won’t vote, and fifty percent don’t read newspapers. I hope it’s the same fifty percent.”

- - Gore Vidal



FLOTSAM & JETSAM

BY THE EDITOR, FRANK BEAMAN

Does anybody want any flotsam?
I've gotsam.
Does anybody want any jetsam?
I can getsam.



The publication date for this edition of the *Times* is November 1st, one week before the Uninformed Electorate of the Divided States of America (about one-third of eligible voters) casts ballots for either the Wicked Witch of the Elite East or the Court Jester of Hell.

Whatever the outcome, kind reader, I ask you to again consider a line of copy I've written several times during this dreadful year of chaos:

"We get the politics we deserve."

I wish it weren't true. But, sadly, it is. Politics reflect the will of the people by revealing the people's intelligence, and compassion, or the lack of those qualities. Politics is history unfolded, showing us what we have become.

We've spent fifty years chipping away at the moral certainty of the post-World War II years when the U.S. emerged as the new world power.

Americans, in 1945, were generous people, fair-minded, respectful of others, working for an ideal we called the Common Good. In that optimistic and upwardly-mobile time in history, America was the envy of the world, leading by our good example.

But, as an Empire-in-Training, we used post-war decades to fight expensive but unwinnable wars, and futilely tried to pay for our wars while cutting taxes. We tried Reaganomics, trickle-down, austerity, voodoo, and other jumbled economic policies. We were pals with friendly foreign powers who later turned out to be our enemies. We stopped making things, and became a nation of money-shufflers as computers and cutthroat capitalism revolutionized the Finance Industry.

Following a blueprint drawn up in the 1970s, Big Business devoured the Congress, Statehouses, and even some of our City Halls. Dark Money auctioned politicians to the highest bidders.

And, the multi-national corporations replaced Middle Class American workers with robots and Asian sweatshop slaves. So, today, we speak of a "Gig Economy," in which the work force takes multiple jobs to scratch out a living by satisfying the demands of the Rich Elites. In that kind of economy, the CEOs and shareholders are "too big to fail," and the Poor are failures because "they *chose* poverty and should be punished for making bad decisions."

As the years went by, we surrendered the Common Good by trading Good for Greed; "We" became "Me."

And, wracked by our mistakes, we became fearful, suspicious, and hostile.

Truth is, we got a bit spoiled. The "Go-Go" years gave the Middle Class a good income, and television told them how to spend it. For many, a house, two cars, a snowmobile and a week in Cancun wasn't "enough." The nation's slogan was, "Bigger is better."

Then came the 2008 Recession and massive income stagnation for the Middle Class, whose members are among the most frustrated of this year's stormy rally crowds.

Their finger-pointing is aimed at the political establishment in Washington D.C. But, there are plenty of targets for the wrath they express so lustily.

On the short list of villains is the mass media, which has abandoned much of its public service responsibility. The political professionals who run the campaigns are beyond forgiveness. But, the misinformed and uninformed voter, the result of the Big American Dumb-Down, is the *real* problem.

This year's campaign has degraded democracy's most cherished privilege, the right to examine, judge, and choose our government's leaders in a public forum. Name-calling has displaced debate and the propagandists, acting without scruples, have created a carnival of anger and deceit. We've chosen sides for combat in public discourse that takes no prisoners. In an anxious age of suspicion and cynicism, we don't even listen to opposing viewpoints in our everyday conversations.

Many of us are ready to retch. We've watched debates, rallies, and an army of cablevision pundits while clutching a vomit basin, not a bowl of popcorn.

Yes, Donald, things are "a disaster," but not the disaster you shout about. The real "disgrace" is the **attitude, tone** and **rhetoric** of current politics, which have created a tidal wave of fear and hatred.



It's far from perfect and needs a lot of work but it's not a "disaster."

You'd never know that by listening to election-year discourse. In that pile of ugly words, we've ignored the truly important issues to focus on hot-button points of tension, with both political parties merely hurling lies and insults back and forth. The overheated tone of this year's contests, the blatant lies and the outright cruelty of public dialogue has pulled us into a sewer where we flail the mucky waters alongside our "candidate of choice."

We've got to crawl out of the sewer. We must find fresh air. The best way to start is with the language we use.

"Left-Right, "Liberal-Conservative" and "Democrat-Republican" have lost meaning in crazy-quilt contemporary politics. The true axis of ideology is not a **horizontal** line from left to right; it's a **vertical** line that charts monetary wealth from the top to the economic bottom. Old labels are often as silly as the elephant and the donkey.

Could we disagree with a person or a point of view without using the word "hate?" Could we read more widely and watch more than one TV channel to find *actual* "fairness and balance"? When talking with people we know, could we work to be reasonable, even if being a reasonable person requires listening to friends who are trapped in the false world of the Big Lie?

As we struggle to identify Truth in an age of folly, fraud, and falsehood, could we listen to a quiet voice from somewhere deep in our souls? You know that voice; you call it Common Sense. It reflects your education, your life experiences, the sum total of who you have been and who you are. It speaks, not of what's Right or Left, but about what's Right and what's Wrong, what's True and what's False.

In my youth, my father lectured on what he called "The Big Three," the core of his old-fashioned moral values. "Don't lie, cheat, or steal!" he'd say. "Got it? And I mean Don't. Ever."

Dad hoped I'd honor simple moral principles, recognize what's Right and what's Wrong, and judge someone's Character by what they said and did, not by the false image they created by lying, cheating, or stealing.

Some say using the Three Big Sins is "smart." That makes us cringe. Or weep.

We're aware that after Nov. 8th, a monstrous problem remains. The ugly, fact-free attacks by both sides of the political spectrum are likely to outlast the messengers, and the toxic effects will have to be addressed. Some of the scary creatures who live under rocks have been handed a megaphone that amplifies their hostile rallying calls.

So, after we vote, we must respond to outrageous behavior. We'll need to study and speak out on *real* issues, to demand civility from public servants. And, we'll need to practice decency, ourselves, in everyday conversation.

Let's toss "Take Our Country Back!" in the dumpster, and apply a bumper sticker that reads, "E pluribus unum," our proud national motto that declares, "Out of many, one."

MINNEAPOLIS - Scientists have discovered a powerful new strain of fact-resistant human beings who may threaten the ability of Earth to sustain life, a sobering new study reports.

The research, led by the University of Minnesota, identifies a virulent strain of humans who are virtually immune to any form of verifiable knowledge, leaving scientists at a loss as to how to combat them. "These humans appear to have all the faculties necessary to receive and process information," said Davis Logsdon, one of the scientists who contributed to the study. "And yet, somehow, they have developed defenses that, for all intents and purposes, have rendered those faculties totally inactive."

More worryingly, Logsdon said, "As solid, credible facts have multiplied, their defenses against those facts have only grown more powerful."

While scientists have no clear understanding of the mechanisms that prevent the fact-resistant humans from absorbing data, they theorize that the strain may have developed the ability to intercept and promptly discard information en route from the auditory nerve to the brain, so absorbtion of all factual information is blocked as soon as they hear it. "The normal functions of human consciousness have been completely nullified," Logsdon said.

The long-range impact of the anomaly is unclear, but the study would indicate that, in the future, widespread denial of scientific fact or verifiable information would likely reverberate through the realms of global warming, medical progress, and food safety.

While reaffirming the gloomy assessments of the study, Logsdon held out hope that the threat of fact-resistant humans could be mitigated in the future. "Our research is very preliminary, but it's possible the species will become more receptive to facts once widespread denial of accepted scientific fact leads to an environment without food, water, or oxygen," he said.

SOURCE: Andy Borovitz, the Borovitz Report, *New Yorker* Magazine, with the assistance of the entire TOMP Staff.

NOTE: It's only satire, folks! Probably.



"Whenever I watch TV and see those poor starving kids all over the world, I can't help but cry. I mean, I'd love to be skinny like that, but not with all those flies, and death, and stuff."

-- Mariah Carey