

THE TIMES OF MINERAL POINT

ILLUSTRATED

NEW COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OPENS DOORS

TIES TO REGIONAL FOUNDATION HOLDS PROMISE FOR GROWTH OF GOOD WORKS

CIVIC-MINDED GROUP WILL SECURE GRANTS FOR WORTHY LOCAL PROJECTS

The will found the way! Thanks to volunteer work by a thoughtful group of local citizens, Mineral Point has joined other cities that make up Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin (CFSW), the non-profit umbrella organization that serves as administrator, legal advisor, and fund repository for more than six hundred charitable funds in nine counties. The CFSW maintains a growing pool of invested funds that totals \$45 million, from which grants are drawn when awarded by advisory boards in the participating component cities.

Kristin Mitchell is Chair of the new Mineral Point Community Foundation. "Our goal," she told the *Times*, "is to offer a way to fund projects in the Mineral Point area and keep the donor's dollars moving within the city."

Pointers Mary Jo Ceniti, Lisa Hay, Lori Pittz and Mike Wagner held the early discussions about the formation of a foundation. Ideas were formalized in January, and the newly-organized MPCF held its first meeting in May.

Nine members now serve on an advisory board that will take applications for local grants and make the awards with the proceeds from two endowments: a \$50,000 fund for community betterment and a \$10,000 endowment designed to benefit local schools. The board members dug deep for \$45,000 in individual donations and Platteville-based CFSW chipped in the final \$5,000 to complete the Community Endowment Fund. Dr. Sarah Fox and Julie Stephenson, co-authors of the popular *Super Snacks for Super Kids*, donated proceeds from their book to establish the Excellence in Education Fund.

"Anyone can make a tax-deductible gift of any amount to build the funds," Mitchell said, "and every gift goes back to the community in ways that touch everyone—helping pay for projects in the arts and culture, historic preservation, education and recreation."

"And," she said, "the more money we raise, the more we can give out."

"Nuts & Bolts" on Page 3



THIRD "PAINT THE POINT" A BLEND OF ART & MUSIC

The 2016 edition of "Paint the Point" was, well, picture perfect.

The mid-August event, sponsored by Arts Mineral Point (AMP), drew thirty-five plein air (outdoor) painters from several states. They set up easels in country fields, gravel roads and city sidewalks to capture Mineral Point's scenery and character on canvas. They took rainshowers in stride, working beneath umbrellas as, chasing the downpour, the sun came out and the temperature and humidity soared.

In the photo, plein air painter Lori Beringer, of Plymouth, WI is surrounded by Fresco Opera Co. (l to r) members Shane Magargal, Dana Eiler and Megan Gloss.

New this year, the Fresco Opera Co. of Madison sent visiting singers for a concert and street serenades.

More than 100 paintings were submitted for judging and public sale at three downtown locations. Touring art-lovers praised the paintings and purchased one-third of the finished landscapes. The four day event adds revenue to the local economy, AMP gains a commission on sales, so the arts organization and the community *share* in the success of the weekend.

EDITOR OF TIMES OF MINERAL POINT SETS UNCERTAIN COURSE FOR FUTURE ISSUES

BY FRANK BEAMAN

This newspaper has a one-man staff. Since 2007, as Editor I've written every word of this quirky little publication, shot most of its photographs, pulled images, done the research, and then finished with the computer layout.

It's fun, but it's also a lot of brainwork for a tired old radio scribe, and I've talked about "pulling back a bit" from the newspaper's deadlines and obligations.

My faithful readers have patiently looked on while I've "auditioned" a few publication patterns. I must admit I've

behaved a bit like Ted Striker, the traumatized ex-pilot who must land the big jetliner in my favorite film, "Airplane!" (Ted's muddled brain makes a safe landing unsure.)

So, like Striker, I'll take the wheel, soaked in flossweat, and try to hit the runway. But I'm not sure how and where I'll touch down. My current plan is to publish EVERY OTHER MONTH, so you'll see the *Times* on November 1st. Thanks for reading and understanding.

(Oh, in "Airplane!" everyone survives the crash.)



Forced to take the wheel



PIRATES AND PROGRESS IN HERITAGE PARK

The 24th Annual Cornish Festival has cooked up new events this year, including a swashbuckling musical concert, Cornish games for kids, and the unveiling of a significant historic marker at Cornish Heritage Park on High Street.

CornishFest runs from Sept. 23-25.

Traditional events include Pub Night and Crowdy Crawn at the Pendarvis historic site, lacemaking, quilting and blacksmithing workshops, tours of Mineral Point landmarks, a pancake breakfast, lunch in Library Park, and a pasty picnic at the Walker House.

But, there are other headliners planned, thanks to volunteers of the Southwest Wisconsin Cornish Society, principal educational resource for the region's many ties to Cornwall.

On Saturday night, Sept. 25th, the Opera House stage will "swash and buckle" during a professional semi-staged concert, Gilbert & Sullivan's "Pirates of Penzance," presented by Madison's Pilot Opera Company.

Mid-day on Saturday, kids will also enjoy "Games for Young Pirates," staged in Cornish Heritage Park, the green spot adjoining the Opera House.

And, in Heritage Park at 3:45 p.m., the Society will unveil a newly-struck historic marker that celebrates "Our Cornish Life & Heritage," pointing to the city's many ties to Cornwall and its people. The new sign is the first of several planned historic artifacts to be placed in Heritage Park.

The Cornish Society will distribute Cornish flags to downtown businesses, and restaurants will join in the spirit of the event by serving Cornish fare.

Go to www.cornishfest.org to check out the events schedule, and join the Cousin Jacks and Jennys for a memorable weekend in Mineral Point.

THE TIMES OF MINERAL POINT

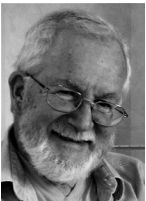
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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

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 GRAND IDEA FROM ACROSS THE POND



Despite the expected grumbling, the ooing and ahing about London's Garden Bridge was deafening when the project was first unveiled in 2013. The green walkway over the Thames River was the brainchild of popular British actress Joanna Lumley and was designed by big-deal British architect Thomas Heatherwick, offering the promise of a calm, wildlife-attracting green space in the heart of London. Brits found the idea agreeable. There was a lot to like, theoretically, about a "floating paradise garden" that, in the words of Lumley herself, will "bring to Londoners and visitors alike peace and beauty and magic."

What's not to like?

According to a growing number of detractors, quite a lot.

Now that Garden Bridge has quickly evolved from a starry-eyed bit of love-liness that many thought would never gain traction into a serious and, at 275 million U.S. dollars, seriously expensive infrastructure project, much of that early enthusiasm has been muffled by censure. Critics have weighed in with their doubts and disapproval about an "ill-informed," "preposterous" and "crazy-stupid" vision.

Money, of course, is the issue, and a number of donors have withdrawn their support, making the bridge's completion a question mark.

But, the Grand Idea is already having an impact on Britain's major city.

Energized by the appeal of a Garden

Bridge, London is now "greening" in unorthodox ways. From living walls and vertical vegetable patches to rooftop apiaries, plant power is taking the British capital by storm (with a little help from birds and insects).

Not so long ago, an aerial view of London (once dubbed the Big Smoke) would have revealed a never-ending succession of dreary grey rooftops and chimneys, punctuated by an occasional spire, a tower or television mast. But the skyline is becoming increasingly verdant. A 2013 map produced by the Greater London Authority shows 700 plant-covered roofs in central London alone, covering an area of more than 17.5 hectares (that's 25 football fields), with many more green buildings now in the design or construction stage.

In 2011, Mayor Boris Johnson's goal was to increase green space in London by 10% by 2050. The new Mayor, a Muslim named Sadik Khan, backs the bridge and calls for wider public use of it. Meanwhile, the city's businesses and home owners are taking the challenge to heart in a quiet revolution that will make London one of the leading "green roof cities" in Europe.

So, even if critics kill the Garden Bridge project, Londoners will win.

Construction is to begin this year and the bridge is slated to open for strollers in 2019. Stay tuned!

FYI: New York City scored well with a green **HIGH LINE PARK**. Check it out!



In "Where to Invade Next," the droll documentarian Michael Moore takes an American flag to a variety of nations and plants the flag to "claim their good ideas." In the process we meet a lot of people who are truly enjoying life, but are often mocked by American social commentators and assorted cynics.

In France, Moore joins children enjoying a four-course lunch in a public grade school. A photo of a school lunch that day in the USA disgusts the French kids. The two meals cost the same.

In Italy, Moore asks a couple, who think they'd like to live in America, if they know how much paid vacation the typical worker gets. They are aghast when told it's two weeks. They get eight weeks, government guaranteed.

When he asks college students in Slovenia about their student debt, they don't quite understand the question. College is, of course, free.

At a German pencil factory, Moore asks the workers how many have a second job. They look puzzled. No one raises a hand.

We see clips of smiling Norwegian prison guards who see their work as rehabilitation, not punishment.

A CEO in Iceland says she wouldn't live in a place where many people are left to go hungry or homeless.

Movie Review

FILMAKER MICHAEL MOORE LAYS CLAIM TO THE WORLD'S GRANDEST IDEAS.

A Portuguese policeman tells Moore that his country decriminalized all drug use but hasn't sent a single user to jail in 15 years, and drug use has actually gone down. Substance abusers get paid re-hab treatment in Portugal's universal health care system.

Free, government-supplied health care is a long-accepted standard in most of the world's developed nations, while the U.S. is torn by a system mired in rancid, conflicted politics.

The countries Moore visits, of course, have their problems; as Moore says, he went to "pick the flowers, not the weeds." But none of these countries are economically richer than the United States, and their people have benefits we seem to think we can't afford. We see people savoring their food. Relaxing with their newborns. Relishing their vacations. Enjoying college. All without the underlying financial anxiety that afflicts so many Americans.

"Where to Invade Next" is full of cringe-worthy moments for a patriotic American, and the film may disturb those who insist "We're Number One!"

But, Moore's latest movie shows us that "far-out promises" at election time can actually be achieved IF the citizenry demand Congress and our President go to work on a "People-First" agenda.



Brand's End?

A great American brand, famed for its stolid, dependable line of Midwest merchandise, is being reshaped along sleek European fashion lines.

We are being told, "Frumpy duds are out, strappy sandals are in."

Some of us are putting it a different way: "Italian haute couture at Lands' End? You've got to be kidding me!!

This newspaper always cheers for the home team, and the underdog, so we join the battle over the current status and the likely direction of our friendly retail neighbor from Dodgeville.

Indeed, it's a war of words, and there are different ways to describe the Lands' End wardrobe. Is it "boxy and unimaginative" or "classic and unconstraining?" Is it "old fashioned" or "tradition-rich?"

A recent broadside from the vast blogosphere caught our eye, and we feel it's our duty as Iowa County's watchdog publication to give blogger Kyle Smith's strong voice a hearing.

He points to Italian Fashionista CEO Federica Marchionni, who described the company's fashion-backward line as "ugly" and asks in meetings, "Who would wear that?" Under her tutelage, Lands' End buys ads in *Vogue* and hires a celebrity photographer for the shoot.

What's wrong with that?

Blogger Smith says a company in a small Wisconsin town should not be run by someone named Federica. "Lands' End is as unpretentious as a Ford-150," he writes. "The company should be run by someone named Mitch or Phil." Or Faye, *not* Federica.

"She must be fired immediately!" Smith says, before Lands' End is transformed into Pucci on the Pecatonica.

The fly-in CEO (2015 compensation was \$5,531,058) recently made a bone-head attempt to show off an unlikely kind of sophistication by inserting a cozy interview with activist Gloria Steinem in her catalog. She yanked the catalog when readers protested, then apologized to everyone for making the choices she made. Thus, she infuriated Gloria's enemies, then Gloria's fans.

Customers and Industry experts are already reacting with bewilderment to Marchionni's moves: Lands' End made hundreds of millions of dollars in profit despite an anemic advertising presence in the half-decade before the CEO's arrival, but swung to an actual loss of \$19.5 million last year, even as the firm's ad budget exploded. Employee morale and the company's stock price are in a downward spiral.

Smith sums up, "The Lands' End look is timeless; the cost is reasonable."

So, why change it? "She fundamentally misunderstands the company, and maybe the republic for which it stands. Lands' End is about America. It's not for walking the runway, it's for walking the dog. It isn't for pickup bars, it's for picking up the kids. It isn't about the sizzle, it's about the steak, maybe even the Ball Park Frank. Lands' End is 'small-d democratic', declaring its independence from fashion aristocrats who would dictate wardrobe styles to the citizens. We, the people, will decide what we like to wear!"



Mineral Point's new Community Foundation may prove to be a very big deal. The *Times* is optimistic local citizens will increase the size of the two endowment funds established to create the Foundation: the Community Fund (\$50,000) and the Excellence in Education Fund (\$10,000).

As generous Pointers donate to these growing endowments, earnings from the funds will provide grant money to pay for selected projects in community development, the arts and cultural endeavors, historical preservation, health and human services, the environment, youth, education, sports, and religious-related or leisure-recreational activity.

STRUCTURE: TWO FOUNDATIONS

The new Mineral Point Community Foundation (MPCF) is a component member of the larger Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin (CFSW), umbrella organization for 588 community funds, offering low-cost (1.25%) administrative services as "bank, bookkeeper, legal counsel, and advisor" to its component members.

Funds raised by members are deposited in the CFSW's \$45 million portfolio, a pool of assets invested in diversified holdings that increase in value as the market economy grows. The Foundation is independent of government.

Mineral Point's Community Foundation has an advisory board (names below) that invites qualified non-profit entities to submit applications for project grants. (Individuals and ad hoc groups cannot apply.) The advisory group meets monthly, considers the need and impact of proposed projects and awards grants to those considered most worthwhile, drawing a share (usually around 4%) generated by the total Mineral Point endowed fund.

HOW GRANTS OPERATE

To spin out an example: the project might be "Benches on High Street." (Grants often fund projects like that, which don't make the list as a local government tax-funded job, or fall short in voluntary fundraising.) Mineral Point, like thousands of other towns, has a list of such projects, and the MPCF may be able to pay for these "Do Good Efforts" by drawing on the Foundation's endowment. (If you're doing the math, you've deduced that 4% of the beginning \$50,000 endowment in the Mineral Point Community Fund won't go very far. However, the amount available for grants goes up as the fund grows.)

THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN.

The CFSW is a 501(c)3 organization, and its member communities share that designation under a non-profit tax "umbrella." That means your donation to the Mineral Point Community Foundation will qualify for an income tax deduction as a gift to charity. Many Pointers would take a 15% or 20% deduction against their federal tax.

OTHER POSSIBILITIES

The MPCF has set up methods to make donations easy on the donor. You can write a check, pay with your credit card or set up automatic debit at the bank. But, generous contributors have a number of alternative ways to help the foundation's endowment. Non-cash contributions offer unique opportunities for giving. If you have appreciated

assets, such as stocks and/or mutual funds that have increased in value, you can donate them, write off the gift and forget about the capital gains tax. If you own a building, car, boat, or a combine, and its fair market value can be determined, you might consider donating the asset instead of selling it. And, again, you avoid the capital gains tax.

Charitable contributions can also be made from traditional IRAs for donors age 70+. Distributions given to a charity are income tax free to the donor.

Thanks to the massive assets pool of the CFSW, you can even execute a more complex Charitable Remainder Annuity, a "win-win" contract that gives the donor both a tax writeoff and a lifetime income in return for the gift.

Further, a "gift-in-kind" is a qualified donation. You can also assign the proceeds of your life insurance.

And, of course, gifts to the local funds could be made as bequests, a part of your estate planning.

["Lawyer language" here: talk it over with your financial advisor.]

BUT, REMEMBER THE MISSION

Let's not get bogged down with the mechanics of giving, forgetting the real mission of philanthropy is sharing your good fortune with others. With that kind of sharing, individuals, families, businesses and organizations with common concerns commit long-term charitable dollars to a local foundation that meets pressing needs, strengthens our community and our schools, and increases our quality of life.

CFSW grants totaled more than \$1.7 million in 2014-15 and the foundation awarded \$700,000 in scholarships. That's truly "building social capital!"

Mineral Point is just getting started with the foundation way of improving our lives, but the building is under way. Since endowments are permanent funds, the fund is always intact. It's never spent; only the income generated by the endowment is spent. And, it can be spent only in the Mineral Point area, which adds to the local economy while accomplishing good work by funding local betterment projects.

It's an exciting opportunity for donors, a chance to help the city, enjoy a tax break, and participate in meaningful growth as gifts increase the size of the endowment fund.

The founding board members set the pace; now it's up to the rest of us.

OKAY, COUNT ME IN!

A \$1,000 donation or pledge makes you a Charter Member of the MPCF. Naturally, a gift of any size is welcome, and members of the advisory board are happy to offer advice to guide donors.

Google the website for the Mineral Point Community Foundation and read about the possibilities and the importance of helping this promising new organization.

MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY BOARD:

Kristin Mitchell, Chair. Monica Dunn, Sarah Fox, Nancy Harker, Lisa Hay, Jim Kackley, Lori Pittz, Mike Wagner, and Lowry White. Dr. Luke Francois and Joelle Doye represent the Pointer School District. For more info about the Foundation, contact a member of the Advisory Board or visit the MPCF's website.



It's an annual event that never loses its appeal, or its freshness. It's a brown/gold/rusty-red day trip in the color-splashed Driftless mid-October landscape, a weekend to learn the tricks of the crafts from Wisconsin's artists and artisans, and it's one of the state's best shopping events.

This year's 23rd Fall Art Tour runs from October 14-16th, as forty-seven private studios open their doors in the host cities: Mineral Point, Dodgeville, Spring Green, and Baraboo. The tour allows you to meet the artists, check out their workspaces, and watch as they fashion their creations "from scratch." You'll visit every kind of shop, see every kind of art as it's produced, and it's available for purchase in every price range.

The Fall Art Tour is often the big event of the year for Pointer artists, who begin work well ahead of the Tour weekend to be able to carry a good inventory for their interested customers. They sometimes use the Tour to "show off their new items," or to feature their time-tested favorites.

And, some of the local artists tell us they record a significant percentage of their business revenue during the three October days when crowds drift from place to place to explore quality craftsmanship and inspired creativity.



Yo, Ho, Ho! ... and a bucket of FUN

"Pirate Pete" has been on deck to entertain young people at the Cornish Park on High Street, Gray Dog Deli, and Shake Rag Alley Center for the Arts, as the peg-legged skipper prepares for Cornish Festival, Sept 23-25.

Pat Snyder, of Darlington, an active member of the Southwest Wisconsin Cornish Society, coordinated the events for kids in August, and has announced the plans for the CornishFest weekend: "Pirate Games" in Cornish Park on Saturday morning are followed by "Taste of Mineral Point" and a lively "Coloring Contest" during the afternoon. Shake Rag Alley and Pendarvis will host Cornish workshops. And the colorful musical performance, "Pirates of Penzance" will dazzle the audience at the Opera House on Saturday night. See www.cornishfest.org for details.

Get tickets now
and take in the
**DRIFTLESS
FILM FESTIVAL**
NOV 3rd thru 8th



LOCAL FARE



FINDING FINE, FRESH FOODS

We live in the Age of Foodies, and the current quest for all things local, organic, nutritious, and often exotic, rings a bit ironic when compared to the simple "grub" of 200 years ago.

An agrarian America followed Thomas Jefferson's solid advice, developing small-scale family farms where everybody ate local food because—quite simply—all food WAS local. And organic. Fertilizers and pesticides hadn't been invented. The horses that pulled the plow provided the compost, the cow provided the kids' milk, the hen the Sunday dinner, and the big garden all the rest. Families grew their own food, stored some of it, and traded carefully for their foodstuffs. There was no "Consumer Economy;" a family's needs were satisfied within the boundaries of their land.

During World War II, American's backyard "Victory Gardens" supplied *half* of all food consumed in the U.S.A. in the wartime years.

So, setting the table with local, just-picked food is not a new idea.

Jefferson liked self-sustaining farms because they fostered full employment as the kids grew into hired hands, and the farm passed from father to son. He warned against big city living and wage labor in the factories.

But, the nation ignored T.J.'s good advice, moved en masse to cities, went to work on an assembly line, and turned to overloaded supermarkets for tomatoes grown in Mexico and taste-deprived "food-like substances" or "flash-frozen meals" assembled in thousands of Industrial Parks.

We made the American food system a cruel joke: food grown far from the family table, sprayed with chemicals, packed in plastic, carried thousands of miles in refrigerated trucks (that beat up the highways), aged beyond freshness and nutrition expiration dates, processed by too many middlemen while the farmer who planted the seeds ekes out only a few pennies.

Generations of young people don't know what real food tastes like, where it comes from, or why it's vital to our physical well-being. And, the cheapest foods at the supermarket are junk foods we should not eat for good health.

So, now we try to make sense of the food system's insanity and make it work for us. The "Eat Local" and "Slow Food" movements are a good step.

In recent days, additionally, we've seen the growth of the "Foodie Fad," in which everyone talks about food and photographs every plate of it.

But, ya know, we really don't have to be that fussy! As consumers, we can keep our diet simple, nutritious and photogenic, too. If we are careful shoppers, we can have the best of both food worlds. We can build our daily diet around seasonal and fresh foods grown by a neighbor we can greet at the Farmers Market, and at the supermarket we can read the labels, plan our meals, and choose from a cornucopia of fabulous foods. So, Bon Appetit!!

Kids today don't know
how easy they have it.
When I was young,
I had to walk 9 feet
through shag carpet to
change the TV channel.

WE REGRET TO INFORM READERS THAT ESSAYS, BROADSIDES AND OPINION COLUMNS ARE HEREBY SUSPENDED DUE TO THE CURRENT CONDITION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY, WHICH DEFIES ANALYSIS. EDITORIAL MATTER WILL RETURN IF ANY SYSTEM OR TRADITION BEGINS TO FUNCTION WELL OR IF ANYTHING IN OUR POPULAR CULTURE IMPROVES

BY THE EDITOR, FRANK BEAMAN

Just kidding.
As Donald Trump might say.
But I WAS tempted to type out that notice, because my mood had become so desperate. The Current Campaign of Crazyness had afflicted me with a few political ailments: Irritable Ballot Syndrome, Electile Dysfunction. and Postpartisan Depression.
I didn't take to my bed. I didn't visit one of my army of physicians.
No, I took a strong dose of history.
That's because I know history heals the sick soul and restores hope by teaching, "It's all happened before."
Luckily, an alert reader had recommended a book, *The Fourth Turning*, which opens with these words:
"America feels like it's unraveling. Though we live in an age of peace and comfort, we have settled into a mood of pessimism about our long-term future, fearful that our nation is rotting from within. America feels worse, in its fundamentals, than the one many of us remember from youth. Wherever we look, we see paths to a foreboding future. We perceive no greatness in our leaders, a new meanness in ourselves, and each election brings a new jolt, a new disappointment."
A pretty good summation of today's mood, don't you think?
Well, guess what? The book by sociologists William Strauss and Neil Howe was written back in 1997 when headlines spoke of the stock market breaking 7,000 but enduring a brief scare in November, a civil lawsuit against O.J. Simpson, and the death of Princess Diana—a bit anemic for a country that likes explosive stuff.
But, co-authors Strauss and Howe aren't digging for traumatic events. They say, "the reward of the historian is to locate patterns that recur over time and to discover the natural rhythms of the social experience."
History, they theorize, is cyclical, and since Colonial times American society has entered a new era—a new *turning*—every two decades or so. They describe the four historic rhythms as "growth, maturation, entropy (decay) and destruction." The Fourth Turning, destruction, is a decisive era of upheaval that propels the replacement of the old civic order with a new one.
Each turning comes with a mood shift, although it often surprises people.
Let's lay out the past eighty years — and their four 20-year *turnings*:
1945 launched the *American High*, as Eisenhower and Kennedy led a post-war country that was confident and muscular, conformist and complacent. The 1965 Turning brought the U.S. the *Consciousness Revolution*, and street revolts and Vietnam changed attitudes about war, race relations and women's rights. The Third (1985) Turning produced the *Culture Wars*, as Reagan's

Shining City on a Hill skidded down the slippery slope of national drift, government gridlock, institutional decay, and, after 9/11, relentless fear.
So, now we're at midpoint in the Fourth double-decade, and destruction so common to a Fourth Turning surrounds us. We are about to elect a President whom more than half of the voters detest. Our traditions and institutions are in tatters. Everybody seems angry, and thanks to the extraordinary heat of 2016 political rhetoric, Americans now feel it's O.K. to say ugly things they would never have said one year ago. For most of us, it's simply impossible to carry on a decent, civil conversation about politics. Many Americans feel we are drifting toward a cataclysm; people talk more about an Apocalypse than an Unraveling. The combatants in the current political campaign shout "Revolution!" and call for a bone-jarring turnabout so monumental that, by its end, our society will emerge in a wholly new form.
Is our nation traveling the track the two social commentators laid out, a pattern they say civilization has followed for five centuries? Are we floundering at the Low point, the Fourth Turning? And, when does the new High, the First Turning, start the new cycle?
Should we believe two guys who say, "Hang on, things will get better?"
Fact is, your Editor doesn't know the answers to those questions. And, I think it's O.K. to be uncertain during the senselessness of our times.
I try to avoid *dictating* a viewpoint. I work to provide information, but I want readers to draw their own conclusions. I encourage independent study, reasonable doubt, and healthy skepticism, the steps leading to Enlightened Logic. (My broad, small-college Liberal Arts education instilled in me the odd notion that Logical Thinking solves many of life's thorny problems.)
Logic, yes, and a good place to live.
In recent days—crazy days—I often felt the Logic Train had slipped off the rails while crossing a defective bridge and tumbled into the river below.
Then, I came to realize the swirling river was the Pecatonica, flowing peacefully through Driftless Wisconsin, my home for thirteen spirit-lifting years. That was the beginning of the healing process; my pain and confusion began to subside because I was certain the good citizens of Mineral Point would get a Common Sense Group together, pull the wrecked Logic Locomotive out of the water, and get all the rail cars back on the track so we could move on.
History eases despair. Hard work, a bit of luck, and a "good sense of place" help, too. The world is struggling in a Fourth Turning, but life is good in our remarkable little town. And, if need be, our town is a pretty good place to hide.



"War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength." ...from "1984"

Futurist Alvin Toffler died in July. With his wife/fellow researcher, Heidi, he wrote the best-selling *Future Shock* in 1970, followed by *The Third Wave* and *Powershift*, bravely forecasting many of the social realities of contemporary life and politics, including the frantic pace of daily life, the decline of the nuclear family, cloning, virtual reality, information overload, the threat of terrorism, and their central thesis: a knowledge-based new economy would replace the Industrial Age. Their work influenced world leaders and prominent innovators in many fields.
Some of the most accurate forecasts of future life, however, have come from writers of *fiction*. 19th century French novelist Jules Verne wrote of balloons and submarines, technology that were fantastic for his day but later became commonplace. H.G. Wells was the Englishman often called the Father of Science Fiction. In his "New System of Ideas," the author strives to make the story as credible as possible, even if both the writer and the reader know certain elements are impossible. Wells made *invisibility* and *time travel*,—two "impossibilities"—seem "possible."
Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) gave us a chilling prophesy in *Brave New World* (1932), his nightmarish look into a grim future world in which most humans are born in test tube factories and genetically engineered into five "castes." There are no families, people have sex all the time but never fall in love, and keep themselves happy by taking a drug called "soma" several times each day.
George Orwell (Eric Arthur Blair, 1903-1950) was an English novelist, essayist, journalist, and critic. His works mark his awareness of social injustice, opposition to what he saw as the menace of totalitarianism, and support for Britain's Democratic Socialism. In 1945, Orwell turned out his *Animal Farm*, a landmark of dark allegory, and wrote the dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in 1949, along with essays on politics, literature, language, and culture.
Animal Farm is a political fable about a group of animals who rebel against the humans from the farm they live on and run it themselves with hopes of being equal, free, and happy. In the end, however, the ruling pigs use their power and privilege for cruel tyranny.
The book wasn't a success at first, but is widely accepted as a classic today.
In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, a shadowy society of benumbed human beings,

constantly watched by Big Brother, gives us a chilling portrait of the use of technology by the rulers of a dark and sinister surveillance state.
The book features telescreens that are dual-purpose devices—they both play a steady stream of video propaganda from the controlled media and record everything going on. Telescreens are present in upper and middle-class homes, but not in the "prole" homes because the government doesn't care what poor people are doing anyway. Oceania, the book's superstate, rules in a world of perpetual war, omnipresent government spying and media manipulation to give its people the "safety and security" of ignorance. The protagonist of the novel, Winston Smith, works for the Ministry of Truth. His job is to rewrite past newspaper articles to assure the historical record always supports the party line, and he destroys all documents that have been edited and do not contain his revisions; in this way, no proof exists that the government's all-seeing Big Brother is lying.
Orwell's body of work conveys his fear of losing individual freedoms to an oppressive, modern, technological elite. His words live on. "Orwellian" now denotes totalitarian or authoritarian social practices, and has entered our lexicon (together with "cold war", "thought police" and "doublethink").
When Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* came out a few years after Huxley's *Brave New World*, critics compared the two novels, trying to decide which one was more likely to come true. Huxley argued that *his* imagined future was more likely, because it would be easier to control people by keeping them happy than it would be by threatening them with violence.
The bottom line—it seems obvious—is that Huxley, Orwell, and other futurist writers have studied human nature, read the warning signs, and speculated on the outcomes, often with stomach-churning accuracy. The "come-true" list is long and scary: We ARE fighting perpetual wars, we DO use drugs and mindless entertainment to stay anesthetized from worry and the kind of critical thinking that might prove troublesome. Many DO think if everything we do is monitored we will all be safer. And, for sure and certain, many ARE huddling under the dark clouds of man-made fearfulness, crafted to sell products and political points of view.
As we surrender to the skillful brain bandits, we may be safer, or not, but we are certainly a whole lot less free.
Reading Orwell, Huxley, and other futurists, most people shudder. Some, however, just shrug their shoulders. Scanning the day's headlines, reading the exploits of aspiring authoritarians who win their arguments with false promises, fear and prejudice instead of integrity and Reason, they say, "We're not the ignorant masses who've traded our freedoms for 'security.' No, no, that's not who we are."
But, is it who we are *becoming*?

