

HISTORY & PEOPLE

FIRST DRAFT

Daily Sentinel's first publisher was a diligent watchdog of Grand Junction

Author's note: Because The Daily Sentinel is celebrating its 120th anniversary this year, several of my columns throughout the year will focus on the Sentinel and its people.

On Nov. 20, 1894, the proprietors of The Daily Sentinel — I.N. Bunting and Howard Lee — printed an editorial celebrating the newspaper's first anniversary.

But it's the next item on the page that provides a glimpse of the newspaper's focus, then and for more than a century come.



BOB SILBERNAGEL

"The city fathers have decided to submit to the people the question of bonding this city for \$250,000 for a water scheme," the editorial said. "We predict the defeat of this proposition by an overwhelming majority."

The editorial complained that, in proposing the bond issue, the city leaders had no firm idea of the cost of the water plan or even the amount of water that would be available.

The editorial highlights what would be a passion for Isaac Newton Bunting during the 18 years he ran The Daily Sentinel (Lee gave up active participation in the paper a few years after its founding, and later sold his interest to Bunting.) Bunting would be an outspoken advocate of civic improvement for Grand Junction, but also a critic when he thought local leaders were off track.

Bunting's interest in the city led him to serve as mayor of Grand Junction while he was publisher of the Sentinel.

Most local residents know something about Walter Walker, the longest-serving Sentinel publisher, who took over in 1911 and remained in that job until his death in 1956.

But Bunting was just as important to this newspaper's history, and to the city's.

He kept the Sentinel going during its formative years, when there was tough competition, little circulation and not much money. He promoted the paper, the city and the surrounding region continuously. And he had the satisfaction of watching them grow rapidly.

Not bad for a man who had neither newspaper experience nor a political background when he arrived in Grand Junction in 1890.

Bunting was born in 1862 in Pottstown, Pa., one of five chil-



SENTINEL ARCHIVES

Isaac Newton Bunting was cofounder of The Daily Sentinel and its publisher until his death in 1911.

dren of a reasonably well-to-do family — his father operated a successful hat and fur company. Isaac Bunting graduated from a seminary in New Jersey, then became a salesman for different firms, including a shoe company in St. Louis.

In 1886, he married Maude Wilson and moved to Kansas to enter the cattle and mercantile business with his brother. When the business failed, Bunting became a schoolteacher.

In 1890, he learned of an opening as business manager for the Grand Junction Star, the city's first daily newspaper. Despite his lack of experience,

he got the job. But Bunting chafed under the leadership of the Star, which was basically a house organ for the Grand Junction Town Company.

So in 1893, he and Lee purchased a small printing press from Denver, and on Nov. 20, 1893, the first edition of The Daily Sentinel hit the streets of Grand Junction.

By 1904, the paper's circulation had grown to more than 800, and the Sentinel had six full-time employees, including a young reporter and editor named Walter Walker.

Among the early crusades undertaken by the Bunting-led

Sentinel was an effort to get equipment to sprinkle the dirt streets of the city and reduce the dust.

The paper also pushed to establish a YMCA in the city, to get the federal government to build the Highline Canal and to establish Colorado National Monument.

One of the newspaper's most ambitious projects — to convince the city to stop using Gunnison River water and obtain its municipal supply from the pure waters of Grand Mesa — took years to complete.

In 1906, the Sentinel reported how the City Council, led by

SENTINEL SLOGANS

Through the years, The Daily Sentinel has included a number of slogans or statements on its front page or editorial page, although sometimes there were none. Here are a few that were published:

- 1894: "The official newspaper of the city of Grand Junction"
- 1923: "Official newspaper of the county of Mesa" and "Official newspaper of the city of Grand Junction"
- 1933: Instead of a slogan, the Sentinel ran above its banner, "Yesterday's press run," which was about 6,200 at midyear
- 1943: "Today's news today"
- 1963: "Read every day by more than 60,000 people in Western Colorado and Eastern Utah"
- 2003: "Western Colorado's Chronicle of Record since 1893"
- 2013: "Your community news source since 1893"

1909 may have been the greatest year for Sentinel slogans. That year's front page included these items:

- "1893 - The Leading Newspaper of Western Colorado - 1909"
- "News of the Day, the Day it Occurs, that is Real News"
- "Beats all other papers. Just 12 Big Hours, That's the Sentinel"
- "Exclusive Afternoons Associated Press Report for City of Grand Junction"

The same year, Daily Sentinel invoices included these statements under the paper's name:

- "A Paper With A Bonafide Circulation"
- "A Paper That Stands Upon Its Merits"

Mayor Bunting, rejected all of the bids for the water project because they were too pricey. And someone at the Sentinel wrote an editorial explaining why that was the right decision, despite what a competing newspaper said.

In 1911, the Sentinel launched a campaign for the state of Colorado to take over the former Teller Indian Institute, which was then closed.

The property would eventually become the State Home, now known as the Regional Center.

It would be Bunting's last major crusade. He died Dec. 3, 1911, while giving a speech at the Elks Lodge, one of several local organizations to which he belonged.

The Daily Sentinel's front page the next day was filled with news about Bunting, his death and upcoming funeral.

The most eloquent tribute was written by a man named A.C. Newton.

"Mr. Bunting has gone into the homes of hundreds and increasing hundreds of the people of this city; he has gone with words of counsel, of reproach, of consolation and good cheer; in every home there is today, as it were, a vacant chair; we have not agreed with him; we may even have bitterly opposed him, but in every issue of his paper there was much to praise and much in his life to esteem."

Thanks to Zeb Miracle of the Museum of Western Colorado and Daily Sentinel Managing Editor Laurena Mayne Davis for assisting in the research for this column.

Have a history question or column idea for Bob? Email Bob.Silbernagel@gjsentinel.com.

PEOPLE

Carrey gets serious about career, grandparenthood

By MICHAEL CIDONI LENNOX
AP Entertainment Writer

LAS VEGAS — Jim Carrey has delivered more than his share of great performances. But this undercover act wasn't one of them.

While receiving press in a Las Vegas hotel room, he was wearing large sunglasses and a sparking gold patchwork blazer.

"This is my Vegas camouflage," he joked. "If I walk around town in this (jacket) no one can see me. It's fantastic. It's the way I blend in in this town. Isn't it nice? I mugged Gustav Klimt," Carrey said, referring to the Austrian painter whose early 20th century works featured gold galore.

That's about as funny as Carrey would get on this day in Sin City promoting "The Incredible Burt Wonderstone," opening today.

The Vegas-set comedy is about a burned-out old-school magician (Steve Carell) threatened by a newcomer (Carrey) who'll literally risk his life to wow audiences and attain fame.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Actor Jim Carrey arrives Monday at the premiere of "The Incredible Burt Wonderstone" at the TCL Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles. Carrey is in the middle of transforming his career.

"This is the guy with the Christ complex," Carrey explained. "This is the guy

who looks at other people like he knows everything and they know nothing, and their prob-

lems amuse him."

It is perhaps the darkest character that Carrey has ever delivered in an out-and-out comedy.

"I could never be the type of person who thinks, 'Now this works. So, I'm just going to do this forever,'" Carrey said.

It's just the latest transformation for Carrey, who last year had a solo exhibition of his paintings and now has a children's book on the way — something Carrey said he did in part for his grandson, born to Carrey's daughter Erin in February 2010.

"Sometimes when you go to a movie, that can be that. But when you read your kid a story, that is just a little slice of heaven," he said.

Carrey's also making music, having teamed with indie-rock band The Eels for his new single, "Cold Dead Hand," which has an anti-gun theme. "Charlton Heston would not like it," Carrey commented.

"You know, I'm always risking it and pushing it," Carrey said. "I've got nowhere to go. I have no other options. I don't have a trade."

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