

FIRST DRAFT

CMU professor seeks to preserve history of the Teller Indian school

Enrolling students for the Grand Junction Indian School was difficult, so superintendents traveled far and wide to sign up students. One superintendent got in trouble with federal Indian school authorities because he was poaching students from Arizona, which had its own Indian boarding school, said John Seebach, a professor of archeology at Colorado Mesa University.



BOB SILBERNAGEL

The Grand Junction Indian School, also known as the Teller Institute after Colorado Sen. Henry Teller, operated from 1886 to 1911 where the Regional Center now sits.

Seebach has spent considerable time examining the history of the Teller Institute, including traveling to Washington, D.C., last year to conduct research at the National Archives. He is particularly interested in the cemetery that was established at the school, but its exact location is unknown.

At least 22 Indian students from seven different tribes were buried in the cemetery, possibly as many as 25, Seebach said.

Causes of death included accidents, such as drowning in the Colorado River or breaking a leg and succumbing to infection. Diseases, including typhoid fever and the flu, also claimed many students.

Seebach obtained approval from the state of Colorado and has support from the CMU administration to search for the cemetery using cadaver dogs that can find bones up to 300 years old. He has sent requests to all of the Indian tribes involved, asking their permission, as well. He plans to involve CMU students in the continuing research.

Seebach's goal is not to dig up the bones, but to preserve the cemetery and its remains in place, and to honor those who are buried there, while educating the public about the school.

The Indian boarding school system was created in the 1880s as the policy of assimilation — forcing Indians to become part of the white culture — became the preferred method of dealing with Native Americans.

With that in mind, the Dawes Act was passed by Congress in 1887. It sought to eliminate communal land holdings among tribes and hasten assimilation by giving tribal members plots of land on their reservations. But it led to large chunks of Indian land being sold to non-Indians.

Enrolling students in the



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MUSEUMS OF WESTERN COLORADO

Students at the Teller Institute Indian School, circa 1900. It operated from 1886 to 1911.

Indian schools was supposed to be voluntary, but that frequently wasn't the case. "Was there coercion? Absolutely," Seebach said.

Once students were at the schools, leaving was a crime. One Ute youngster who escaped from the Teller Institute and returned to his home in Utah told of being hunted down by a posse after his first escape attempt. He and several other students were "driven back to the school like wolves," then threatened with imprisonment and hanging, the young man told federal investigators.

Ute suspicion about white intentions, and stories like that told by the Ute youngster, kept most Ute parents from sending their children to the school, even though it was originally intended primarily for Utes.

In 1899, the Teller Institute listed 155 students, 113 males and 42 females. Only eight of them were Utes.

A dozen different Indian nations were represented in the 1899 population at the school. They included Navajos, Apaches, Hopis, Pimas, Papagos (now called Tohono O'odham), Pueblo Indians and even eight tribal members from the Upper Midwest. The students ranged in age from 5 to 23.

The community had a mixed relationship with the Indian school, Seebach noted.

On one hand, the community celebrated accomplishments of the students, such as winning football and baseball teams, a star long-distance runner and a talented girl's mandolin group.

But there were also solitary-confinement cells in the Mesa County Jail that were occupied frequently by Teller Institute students if they misbehaved while at school or while out in the community, Seebach said.

Locals were also very interested in the money that came into the area and the jobs



Members of the Teller Institute mandolin band, circa 1908.

offered at the school. Residents of Mesa County were happy to utilize the older students for farm labor or as in-house servants.

By 1911, when the school closed, Indian schools across the country were shutting down. It became clear the schools had minimal success in encouraging assimilation. Often, students couldn't find jobs in the white world, and they were ostracized among their own people because they had lost many of their cultural traditions.

Worse, the schools were expensive to run. One Interior Department inspector said it cost more money to keep a student at the Teller Institute for a year than the annual cost for a student at Harvard or Yale.

The Indian schools were turned over to the states in which they operated. Originally, that was to be only for education purposes, but in the case of the Teller Institute, the mission was broadened to allow the housing of mentally impaired people.

That facility eventually became known as the Grand

Junction Regional Center. In recent decades, it has been reduced in size, and it is now planned to shut down entirely.

Seebach hopes that, if and when that occurs, further investigations can be conducted for the cemetery that once existed at the Indian school. He also wants to conduct archaeological studies of the old privies that existed while the school operated, which likely contain many important artifacts.

Additionally, he hopes that grant money can be found to provide public education about the role of the Indian school in this region. Perhaps at least one of the four still-existing buildings that were part of the Indian school can be preserved and opened to the public.

Information from John Seebach, the Museums of Western Colorado, "Cesspools, Alkalai and White Lily Soap: The Grand Junction Indian School 1886-1911," by Donald A. MacKendrick, Journal of the Western Slope, Summer 1993.

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alan Bangerter points to a 20-acre field where he grows vegetables in Farmington, Utah.

Utah farmer hoping to save his land from becoming soccer fields

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FARMINGTON, Utah — A fourth-generation farmer is fighting to save his farmland from city officials in Farmington who want to buy 0.02 square miles to make new soccer fields.

Alan Bangerter contends there are other plots of land where soccer fields could be placed without harming "a productive farm" and is seeking to save his property as an Utah Agricultural Protection Area.

A protection area designation would protect the property from any future zoning changes and local governments could not exercise the right of eminent domain without exhausting other possible remedies, Bangerter's attorney Randall Edwards said.

An APA — which is good for 20 years and can be renewed — also protects farmers and ranchers from nuisance lawsuits from neighbors who move in and later claim the farm is too noisy or foul-smelling.

Bangerter, who grows and sells fresh green beans, sweet corn and other vegetables at grocery stores and farmers markets, is awaiting a public hearing, which is scheduled May 1 during a Farmington City Council meeting.

Bangerter is gathering signatures of support through an online petition at MoveOn.org. He already has more than 4,300 signatures.

"I want to keep farming," the

67-year-old Bangerter said last week.

Bangerter said that after he retires, his children and grandchildren are interested in continuing the family business — officially named Chas W. Bangerter & Sons Inc., after his father, Charlie.

The Utah Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration last October finalized the route for the West Davis Corridor. The Utah Department of Transportation will take some of the Bangerter farmland as well as an adjacent park — with soccer fields — owned by Farmington to build the 19-mile freeway.

While the Department of Transportation will pay Bangerter for his property, the state must replace the city park with another one of equal size somewhere else in the city.

City officials have told the Department of Transportation that their preferred site is a plot of land that Bangerter owns.

"The Bangerters are being significantly impacted by the highway, and I don't blame them at all," Farmington City Manager Dave Millheim said. "I'd be upset if I was in their shoes, too."

Millheim said the city is in a Catch-22, because no matter where the fields are relocated, a property owner is going to be upset.



DENVER — The Senate completed its work on the proposed \$28.9 billion budget for the next fiscal year, but because of differences in the House version, the bill will head to a conference committee, which comprises the same six-member panel that drafted it in the first place, the Joint Budget Committee.

Today: The House Finance Committee is to hear HB1202, a measure by Rep. Dan Thurlow, R-Grand Junction, to ask voters to take severance taxes out from under revenue caps mandated by the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights.

Tuesday: The Senate Local Government Committee is to debate SB221, a bill introduced by two Montrose Republicans, Sen. Don Coram and Rep. Marc Catlin, to allow voters in counties that have only three commissioners to have them elected by county district, rather than

countywide.
Wednesday: The House Transportation and Energy Committee is to hear SB3, a measure introduced by Sen. Ray Scott, R-Grand Junction, to reauthorize the Colorado Energy Office.

Thursday: The House Judiciary Committee is to debate HB1314, a measure that would create a new crime for using a drone to interfere with law enforcement or firefighting efforts.

Next week: The budget should return to both the House and the Senate for final action. Only then will Colorado see what the final version looks like and what is funded and what is not.

Scheduled committee hearings are subject to change. All floor action and committees can be watched or heard on the Legislature's website, leg.colorado.gov. Check that website to see which measures are available for remote testimony, and how to register to speak.
— Charles Ashby

Coal mining company considers bankruptcy

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BILLINGS, Mont. — A Colorado company with three coal mines in Montana and one in Wyoming said in a statement to shareholders that it may consider bankruptcy.

Englewood-based Westmoreland Coal Co. is facing declining demand and more than \$1 billion in debt.

The company said in its recently released annual report that it may seek Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection from

creditors and a reorganization of the company.

Yellowstone Public Radio reports that Westmoreland executive Jesse Noel said Thursday that the company has debt to restructure and he doesn't know what's going to happen.

Noel is Westmoreland's director of environmental and regulatory affairs. He was participating in a discussion of coal and oil industry representatives. The company has 14 mines.

BLOTTER COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF

Missing 6-year-old found safe, in good condition

A 6-year-old boy who was reported missing Sunday afternoon was found safe and in good condition a few hours later, according to the Grand Junction Police Department.

Police scoured the area in the 2800 block of Texas Avenue after a boy named D'mitri was reported missing.

Police sent a reverse emergency call out to a number of people in the area to look for the boy.

Domestic violence alleged

Colin John Ellsworth, 29, was arrested April 3 on suspicion of domestic violence-related charges after a woman reported hearing the victim telling Ellsworth to quit choking her.

Officers arrived at an address in the 400 block of Pintail Avenue where a woman told police that Ellsworth had choked the victim and punched her in the face, giving her a black eye, according to the Grand Junction Police Department.

Both the victim and Ellsworth ran from the scene, but police caught up with Ellsworth.

He told police the victim wears a lot of mascara and did not have a black eye.

Ellsworth was arrested on suspicion of third-degree assault, harassment, domestic violence, escape and a parole violation. The suspect told police in an interview that he and the victim are methamphetamine users, according to the affidavit.

According to the Mesa County Sheriff's Office:

Deputies investigated a theft from a vehicle in the 400 block of Summit View Drive on Tuesday.

Deputies responded to a report of harassment in the 3400 block of Pronghorn Drive on Wednesday.

Larry Kubisch, 27, was arrested Thursday on suspicion of multiple domestic violence-related charges.

Dede Michele Bowers, 45, was arrested Saturday on suspicion of felony menacing, second-degree assault with a deadly weapon, child abuse not causing injury or death, reckless endangerment and harassment.

Christen Lee Cichoski, 44, of Las Vegas, was arrested Saturday on suspicion of special circumstances in a conspiracy to distribute, manufacture or sell drugs.

According to the Grand Junction Po-

lice Department:

Abbey Grace Casey, 20, was arrested Saturday on suspicion of first-degree criminal trespassing of a dwelling and being a minor in possession of alcohol.

Kervin Bestor Glover, 25, was arrested Saturday on suspicion of first-degree criminal trespass of a vehicle.

A home in the 2800 block of Bookcliff Avenue was burglarized on March 23. Damages were more than \$2,000.

Preston Redhouse, 30, was arrested April 1 on suspicion of domestic violence charges of menacing and harassment.

Patrick Gill, 38, was arrested Tuesday on suspicion of trespassing on Union Pacific property. Gill, who was wanted on a warrant, fled officers and resisted arrest.

Erik Lopez, 25, was arrested Thursday on suspicion of being in possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia.

Karl Pilliroog, 28, received a summons Friday on suspicion of drunken-driving after crashing into a tree in the 1700 block of David Street.

Octaviano Sanchez, 34, received a summons Saturday on suspicion of drunk-driving and driving with a revoked license after being contacted in the 500 block of Princess Street.

Pick 3 Midday Sunday: **3-6-8** Evening Sunday: **0-8-8**

Cash 5 Sunday: **13-19-22-29-30**

For information, go to www.coloradolottery.com.

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The Daily Sentinel (ISSN 1445-8962)
Published every morning at 734 S. Seventh Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501.
Periodical Postage paid at Grand Junction, CO.
Carrier home delivery prices: 13 weeks - \$65.00, 26 weeks - \$130.00, 52 weeks - \$260.00.
Weekend delivery packages: Wednesday thru Sunday - \$244.40, Friday thru Sunday - \$197.60,
Saturday & Sunday - \$163.80, Sunday only - \$163.80.
Weekend Delivery includes the following date in 2018: Nov. 22.
Single Copy: \$1.00 daily and \$2.00 Sunday.
Mail (USPS): \$30.00 per week, \$1,560 per year. *POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Daily Sentinel, 734 S. Seventh Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501.*