

THE [telluride] WATCH

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36TH ANNUAL TELLURIDE BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

It's the Festivarians, the 'Bluegrass Community,' Who Make It Special

BY GRETA STETSON

TELLURIDE – Walking through the Telluride Town Park campsites on Tuesday night was like walking through a time capsule.

These people have been here, doing this, for years.

Even before the 36th Annual Telluride Bluegrass Festival comes to town this weekend, there has been a flurry of oldtimers

picking banjos and guitars, friends crowding into oversized tents, and music morning, noon and night.

And while the festival itself has evolved in its nearly four decades of life, and now brings to town some of the best musicians in the world, festival officials, for the most part, know not to fix what isn't broke.

On Tuesday, visitors crowded into a "room" in a campsite

see **BLUEGRASS** on TTW 13



PLENTY TO PICK AND GRIN ABOUT – West Virginians Scott and Nellie Coffman strummed it up next to their 1970 VW panel camper bus at the Town Park campground Wednesday afternoon. With their weekend living room all set up, Scott sat back with his open back banjo while Nellie joined in on her vintage 1940s stand up bass. (Photo by Brett Schreckengost)

Keystone Gorge Bridge Provides Public Access, Protection

Volunteers Needed To Finish Trail Reconstruction

BY MARTINIQUE DAVIS

TELLURIDE – “Sometimes, you just have to make that jump,” said Nature Conservancy North San Juans Project Director Peter Mueller, on how the organization, in just the last six weeks, has charged ahead with plans

see **TRAIL** on TTW 11

'IF YOU CARE, LEAVE IT THERE'

That's the Division of Wildlife mantra for this time of year in Colorado, when newborn deer, elk, pronghorn and other species can be spotted, seemingly alone, in the forest, in backyards, near hiking trails and along the sides of roads. In most cases, these animals have not been abandoned – but instead, deposited, intentionally, by their mothers. For more information, go to <http://wildlife.state.co.us>.

YARD SALE

The Telluride Mountain and Montessori School Annual Recycle Sale in the Willow Parking Lot (adjacent to the Post Office) has “something for everyone,” says organizer Dianne Pauls, from housewares and furniture and clothing for all ages to “raingear, pots, pans, sleeping bags, coolers, hats, chairs and even socks” for Bluegrass festiviarians. Unsold items will be donated to charity.

WE'VE GOT JOSH'S BACK

Come to the Spinal Tap 09 Fundraiser at Fly Me to the Moon Saloon Friday, June 26 for Telluride's Josh Williams, who broke his back in a fall. Probably potluck, please bring a yummy for folks to nibble on. Raffle/silent auction items needed; to pitch in, please contact Erin Raley (erinraleymail@gmail.com).

School Board OK's Liquor Sales at The Palm

3-2 Vote Establishes Nonprofit to Control Liquor License Application

BY MARTA TARBELL

TELLURIDE – The Telluride R-1 School District Board has voted, by a one-vote margin, to allow alcohol to be presented along with the performing arts at the

Palm Theatre. With former Board President Jenny Patterson and Margaret Cruzavala dissenting, the vote was 3-2 to create a nonprofit oversight organization to approve and apply for liquor-license applications for events in the school auditorium.

The Telluride Middle/High School auditorium, better known as the Michael Palm Theatre, doubles as a community performing-arts venue for everything from visiting dance and acrobatic troupes to live broadcasts from New York City's Metropolitan

Opera to full-on Telluride Repertory Theatre musical productions like this year's sold-out *Sound of Music* to functioning as the town's largest movie theater over Labor Day Weekend, when the world-renowned Telluride Film Festival comes to town.

A decade ago, when the Palm (and the school addition with which it shares its quarters) were still in the planning stages, Telluride voters approved an additional

see **SCHOOL** on TTW 14

This moly's not going anywhere.”

– Outlook Mining President Mark Levin after being turned down by Dolores County Commissioners in his bid for a 30-year period of vested rights to explore and develop molybdenum near Rico.



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COMMUNITY

Mountain School Students Travel Through Europe

Experiential Learning for Students Ages 14-17

BY MARK RIKKERS

TELLURIDE – I'll admit that I was a bit nervous. Four months earlier, I'd proposed a trip to Ernie Patterson, the head of Telluride Mountain School. The plan was to collaborate with the Telluride Institute/Centre for the Future in the Czech Republic to conduct a three-week course for TMS's upper-school students. Then, in the latter half of April – it seemed so sudden – I was in Slavonice, Czech Republic, when 13 students and three teachers arrived at the Centre's newly renovated facility to embark upon a tailored, 20-day education adventure that focused on European history, the European Union, art, architecture and renewable energy.

TMS is progressive in many ways, particularly when it comes to their integrated experiential education program. Beginning in the first grade, TMS students undertake a thoughtful balance of classroom work and field-based,

sense-of-place curricula that culminates in the spring. Like many people in the region, I'm not too far removed from my European roots – my mother, though she has lived in this country for almost 50 years, is still a German citizen, and our family is scattered throughout the continent. I'd venture to guess that many of Telluride's youth are no more than a few generations from Europe heritage, too. So when I think about sense-of-place and understanding where many of us come from, Europe is a natural place to start.

The students, who ranged in age from 14-17, were based out of Slavonice for the first several days of their trip. The town is quiet, steeped in history and, with some 2,500 residents, about the same size as Telluride. The stunning surroundings of the Bohemian Plateau, combined with the Centre's modern facilities and English-speaking staff, made it a perfect place to recover from jetlag and prepare us for the big city portions of the trip.

We began our adventure with a tour beneath the center of town. Donning Communist-era hipwad-

see **EUROPE** on TTW 30



EDUCATION ABROAD – Telluride Mountain School students visited with the Czech Minister of Culture after a private tour of the Ministry's facilities in Prague. Pictured in the front row, left to right, are Gregory Hope, Harry Kearney, Jonas Fahnestock, Alexa Posner, and Craig Wasserman. In the middle row, left to right, are Evan MacMillan, Cisco Fahnestock, Rachael Henson, Taylor Fortenberry, Ciara Green, Lane Stolzner, Sarah Barthelow, and Ernie Patterson. In the back row, left to right are Sam Engbring, Jamie Salem, Hagen Kearney, Minister Vaclav Jehlicka, and Abby Erdman. (Courtesy photo).

SCHOOL from TTW 1

mil levy to upgrade the planned auditorium into a venue suitable for the performing arts. Private donors later stepped up with additional funding to ensure that the 650-seat auditorium was generously outfitted.

But with no liquor license, the Palm has not been used for

such big-ticket Telluride region fundraising events as the Telluride AIDS Benefit, where the availability of alcohol facilitates, arguably, some of the hundreds of thousands of dollars TAB raises every year.

Telluride Town Councilmember Bob Saunders urged the board to vote against the change, voicing concern that the town is "trying to work cooperatively with the Town of Mountain Village" in terms of economic development, a cooperation potentially threatened by the Palm going up against Mountain Village's Telluride Conference Center for bookings, if it were to add the possibility of obtaining a liquor license to its booking package.

When it came time to vote, Patterson voiced her opposition, declaring: "We don't have near enough information" to vote on what is, ultimately, a decision re-

garding "is this best for our school and our children?"

Agreeing the decision before them was "awkward," board-member Davis Fansler (the former mayor of Mountain Village) pointed out, however, that by accepting funds from a consortium of arts-related organizations (and from individual devotees of the performing arts), "this school district is in the performing-arts business, whether we like it or not."

Following the vote (with Fansler joined by fellow board-member Banks Brown and Board President Lynda Tueller in voting yes) Superintendent Mary Rubadeau observed: "One advantage of this is that many of our donors would rather donate to a nonprofit entity" than to the school, "so there is that advantage" in forming a nonprofit that will manage bookings requiring liquor at the Palm.

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EUROPE from TTW 14

ers and headlamps, we worked our way through a labyrinth of tight, dark tunnels that historically served as a safe escape route to the fortified inner walls of the town in case of hostile, medieval advances. After coming up for air, we took the train to the neighboring town of Dacice to spend an hour with a group of English-speaking students. After a few awkward moments, the groups engaged in a spirited conversation about the differences and similarities in their schools, their interests and hobbies, their and plans for life after high school.

The second day's itinerary was busy. We started with a tour of Slavonice's school, followed by an hour in class with students, who gave a presentation on energy use in the Czech Republic and conducted an interactive physics lab. Back at the Centre, the group gathered to watch a newly made British Broadcasting System film on the European Green Belt. Slavonice is just one kilometer from the Austrian border, so it essentially sits on the former Iron Curtain. During the time this lengthy east-west divider was a militarized zone, the areas within it were not developed at all. So, ironically, it has become the backbone of an ecological network – the Green Belt – running from the Barents to the Black Sea, which is now a global symbol for trans-boundary cooperation in na-

ture conservation and sustainability. The movie was followed by a lecture on the history and present state of the European Union; a visit to a remote Jewish cemetery, where the students quietly wrote in their journals and drew in their sketchbooks; and finally a spirited game of soccer with locals, which continued well after dark on a lit field.

Our third day was one of our most memorable days in Slavonice. We took a 40-km bike tour through a section of the Green Belt, wending our way back and forth across the Czech-Austrian border, through fields, forests and ancient stone towns. Along the way, we visited twelfth century castle ruins at Landstejn and some of the myriad bunkers and other World War II fortifications that remain scattered – overgrown with flowering vegetation – throughout the landscape. Near the end of the day, in the tiny town of Stalkov, our hungry group was welcomed at an orchard where local families had gathered to talk and grill homemade sausages over an open fire. We coasted back down to Slavonice tired, full and elated.

Day four was the start of our whirlwind tour of three great European cities: Prague, Berlin and Vienna. One of the many beauties of Slavonice is its central location – in only a few hours you can be in either Prague or Vienna. In Prague, the director of the city's

progressive Nature School, along with several students, greeted us at the train station. "It was remarkable," says TMS head of school, Ernie Patterson. "It was a Sunday and this group met us, led us to our hostel, and then took us on a five-hour walking tour of the city's core. It was a perfect introduction and orientation to what can be an overwhelming city."

The group spent the next few days touring the city's massive castle, several museums and historic places of worship (including the John Lennon Wall). Of all the experiences the group had in Prague, one truly stands out: Meeting Neela Winkelman, currently a professor at the University of New York in Prague, who was a university student in Prague during the Velvet Revolution, at a quiet park just a block from the Vltava River. For two hours, we sat in the grass under flowering apple trees and listened to the first-person account of her early education under the Communist regime, the student protests during her university years, the subsequent fall of Communism and the Berlin Wall and the opening of the borders. I kept looking at the kids, who were totally rapt, and it struck me that *this* is education at its best.

At the train station the following day, the group was a mix of activity. Students played hackysack, drew and wrote in journals, read books and talked in small groups.

Others sat quietly, undoubtedly wondering what Berlin had in store for them. The following day, a Berlin native, Illiana, took us on a walking tour of the city that included museums and a few parts of the Berlin Wall that remain standing. That evening, we were treated to dinner and a private showing of *Odyssey of the Children* – a film that focuses on interviews with survivors of the holocaust and the deportation of Jewish orphans. "That was a powerful experience, and it set the stage perfectly for more in-depth experiences relating to Jewish history," explains Patterson. The following day, Illiana led us on a five-hour scavenger hunt through the city, ensuring that we saw a comprehensive cross-section of what Berlin has to offer.

Touring Sachsenhausen, the former Nazi concentration camp, comprised the heaviest and final day of the Berlin visit. "It was a challenging day," remembers Jamie Salem, TMS math and science teacher. "But it was really important, and our students were well prepared for it." Patterson is quick to put the choice to go to Sachsenhausen in perspective. "All students in our country learn about World War II and the Holocaust, but for most, it's such a difficult thing to comprehend," he says. "A lot of people are not interested in confronting the reality of it. There are so many other examples of genocide in the world's history, some very recent. I believe our students need to be clearly aware of this – they are becoming global citizens."

A long, stuffy overnight train ride brought the group to Vienna the next morning. "It was classic," TMS art and drama teacher Craig Wasserman recalls. "The train was packed, and we didn't get much sleep. We arrived in Vienna at 9 a.m. and told the students, 'There are the bathrooms. You have a half-hour to clean up and come out with your dresses or suitcoats on. We're going to the Spanish Riding School.'" Featuring the famous Lipizzaner horses, the school is the oldest classical Dressage school in the world, having operated for 430 years in the Renaissance tradition of the haute école. For the remainder of that day and the next two, the group toured some of the city's seemingly infinite art and history museums and had the opportunity to visit the U.S. Embassy.

On the bus back to Slavonice, the group was noticeably quiet. "We had experienced so much.... Our heads were full, and we were exhausted," explains TMS English teacher Sarah Barthelow. "We

were looking forward to being in Slavonice again, where we knew people, where it was tranquil... where we could reflect on all we had done." The students chose to do much of their reflecting by way of art, creating a variety of pieces that they hung on the walls of the Centre's building. Then they headed out to meet their former soccer rivals for a match of the locally popular floorball. "It was a lot of fun, and the local kids were great," says Wasserman, adding, "We got schooled."

The final push of the trip took place not far outside of Vienna, in Bruck. The students had traveled throughout Colorado in the fall, studying renewable energy initiatives. In Bruck, they visited the Energy Park and saw first-hand how the Austrians are working on similar initiatives. Perhaps the most exciting and unique part of that trip was climbing one of the 85-meter-tall wind turbines to look out upon the landscape through the huge, whirling propellers.

Once back in Telluride after a long trip home from Vienna, the TMS students got busy working on their individual immersion projects. Each student left for the trip with a chosen topic to focus on; now they are finishing their research and preparing presentations of learning. Lane Stoltzner, a senior who will be attending Colorado College in the fall, has been on numerous trips abroad, and this was her last one as a TMS student. "Every spring, after an amazing experiential trip, each student in the school does an immersion project to teach peers and the community about a particular aspect of the trip that they found interesting and worth a closer look," she explains. "These projects are both demanding and eye-opening at the same time. They definitely allow everyone to reflect more upon experiences that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives."

Back in Slavonice, at the CFF office, Alexander Stipsits and I were drinking coffee and talking, bouncing ideas back and forth. I said, "If I could start this trip over, one of the few ways I might change it would be to do less, so that the students could have time to reflect and absorb more. But I wouldn't know what to cut – it would be next to impossible to decide." Alexander smiled and nodded, knowingly. "Yes, less," he said. "We can do that, too. Next time."

For more information about tailored Central European tours for school and adult groups, contact Mark Ridders by email:

Telluride Mountain School's ANNUAL RECYCLE/MEGA YARD SALE



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Parking lot adjacent to the post office in Telluride

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