

THIS PLACE, THIS TIME
Lovesick Mark Twain
writes from Ohio

Speaker kicks off Kwanzaa in Akron by
urging unity among black Americans

COMMUNITY, B1



**BROWNS BEAT
RAIDERS 23-9
AS HARRISON
SETS RECORD**
SPORTS, C1

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MIKE CARDEW/Akron Beacon Journal

FIELD DAY

Jill Holcomb, science and math teacher at the National Inventors Hall of Fame School, leads Akron students on an October hike at the Panzner Farm wetlands in Copley Township. Teachers explored the site in September and were excited about the educational possibilities.

SWAMPED WITH IDEAS

Akron teachers consider unusual lesson plan after touring wetlands of Copley Township

By John Higgins
Beacon Journal staff writer

On a sunny, mid-September morning, the principal of the National Inventors Hall of Fame School and some of the sixth-grade teachers drove to a marsh in Copley Township, just over the Akron city limits.

Principal Traci Buckner and the teachers turned onto an unpaved lane off Wright Road to the 150-acre vegetable muck farm established in

1921 by Joseph Panzner, a German immigrant.

Panzner's grandsons, Steve and Jerry Panzner, who still lived on the land, had spent the last decade transforming the property into the Panzner Wetland Wildlife Reserve through a federal program to save endangered wetlands.

They had succeeded in restoring 96 acres into wetlands that looked like they would have about 10,000 years ago, at the end of the ice age.

Here was where the teachers would stage

their first big project, and they were as excited about the possibilities as they hoped their students would be.

Since spring, the teachers had been designing the project with professors from the University of Akron and a consultant from the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, a premier math and science high school in Aurora that specializes in problem-centered learning.

Please see **STEM, A4**

AKRON PUBLIC SCHOOLS spent five years designing a \$14.5 million math and science middle school where students will learn in ways dramatically different from traditional classrooms. Years of planning, millions of tax dollars and the contributions of practically every significant

public and private institution in Akron are riding on the effectiveness of these methods.

Akron Beacon Journal reporter John Higgins spent time with students and teachers as they experienced this new school.

TODAY: Teachers venture into the swamp to develop a lesson plan, and are excited by what they find.

TUESDAY: Teachers sink the hook, engage the students in a mission.

Trips, season tickets part of suspect's lavish lifestyle

Attorney for former employer shares the details of alleged \$1.8 million embezzlement scheme

By Ed Meyer
Beacon Journal staff writer

Fancy dinners with \$100 bottles of fine French champagne were hardly the end-all in the extravagant, single lifestyle of Karin Andrea Goeldi.

She had floor-level season tickets – “primo seats,” her former employer said – to Cavaliers home games.

Then there were South Florida vacation trips to Naples and Marco Island.

And the two apartments she kept in Cedarwood Village in Akron's Merriman Valley.

And the monthly living expenses she picked up for several young men who provided companionship around town.

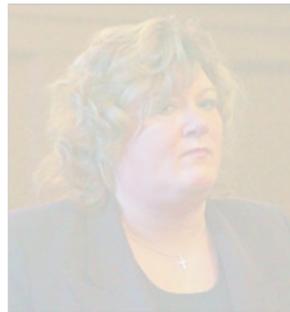
Investigators from the financial crimes unit of the Akron Police Department say Goeldi embezzled nearly \$1.8 million over 10 years as executive secretary of Cedarwood Development Inc., a Merriman Road real-estate firm with retail, of-

ice and residential projects throughout the United States.

Only within the past week have Cedarwood officials come forward to explain how a once-trusted employee may have managed to steal so much money for so long – without being caught or exposed years ago.

Goeldi, a 44-year-old native of Switzerland, is under indictment in Summit County Common Pleas Court on one count of aggravated theft.

The charge is a first-degree felony carrying potential penalties of three to 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 maximum fine.



Goeldi

After Goeldi and her lawyer appeared in court last week, informing the judge that they are actively involved in talks with the Summit County Prosecutor's Office to resolve the case without going to trial, Cedarwood attorney Alan W. Sponseller contacted the Beacon Journal

Please see **Scheme, A4**

Police probe Jackson slayings

North Canton man allegedly shoots ex-wife, another man, then himself at her duplex

By Katie Byard
Beacon Journal staff writer

JACKSON TWP.: Authorities are investigating a suspected homicide-suicide, in which a man apparently shot and killed his ex-wife and another man Sunday morning, then himself.

Police said Matthew A. Schneider, 30, of North Canton, went to a duplex in the 6600 block of Ravenwood Avenue Northwest and shot Brandy L. Schneider, 32, and Derrick W. Busto, 29, of Canton, then killed himself.

Matthew Schneider's brother, Lucas, called authorities shortly before 8 a.m. He had gone to the duplex “to check on the well-being of the individuals involved,” police said.

Lucas Schneider told a police dispatcher: “There's three people dead . . . at my brother's old house, his ex-wife's house,” according to a 911 emergency call released by police.

A neighbor told Cleveland television stations that a son was at home at the time of the shooting and he called his uncle. The boy is

Please see **Deaths, A3**

Obama orders security probe in plane scare with Nigerian

Another incident on same route Sunday ends in emergency landing

By Greg Gordon
McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama has ordered an investigation into possible U.S. security gaps that enabled a Nigerian man of known extremist leanings to keep his U.S. visa, smuggle explosives aboard a Christmas Day passenger flight and ignite them, the White House said Sunday.

Within hours of the White House attempt to calm the public, a new incident Sunday involving another Nigerian on the same daily route from Amsterdam led to another emergency landing in Detroit, heightening anxiety amid the year's busiest travel period.

The latest scare aboard Northwest Airlines Flight 253 involved what the airline described as a “verbally disruptive” passenger and triggered an examination of baggage on the Detroit tarmac to determine whether there were explosives on the plane.

Although the passenger spent an “unusually long time in the aircraft lavatory” – an echo of the Christmas Day incident – he was suffering from legitimate illness and is not viewed as a terrorist threat, the Department of Homeland Security said.

Sunday's scare underscored the concerns in commercial aviation that terrorists have found new ways to penetrate layers of high-tech security put in place since four deadly

Please see **Suspect, A3**

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snow showers;
up to an inch

Today's weather
30° High 15° Low
Forecast, Page B10



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STEM

Teachers see artifacts from prehistoric site

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First, they had to decide what they wanted the students to learn through the experience of solving the problem that would meet state benchmarks for their grades.

Ohio fifth-graders are expected to know how ecosystems work, and sixth-graders should know the basics of animal and plant cells.

Restoring wetlands

The University of Akron - one of the middle school's main partners - already was working on a real-world problem: how to restore a wetland area in the Bath Nature Preserve that had been drained for agricultural use in the 1920s.

What if a UA biologist, Jessica Hopkins, asked the school to help her determine the signs of a healthy wetland?

The UA restoration project at the Bath Nature Preserve was too new and fragile to withstand hordes of eager fifth- and sixth-graders, but the university did know about another, fully restored wetland nearby: the Panzner property.

The project would allow the teachers to hit as many state standards as they could in one place - not just science, but math, social studies and language arts as well.

Steve Panzner met the delegation from the school and gave a tour of the property, first showing the teachers a restored beaver pond, which he thought would make a good science station for the kids.

The middle school's program specialist, Beth Bugner, who was in charge of making sure the teachers had everything they needed for the project, asked him to repeat what he'd told her earlier about the kinds of things his family had dug up over the years. Some of it dated back to the end of the ice age, when mastodons, giant beavers and other massive, now extinct, animals once roamed.

"When you dig a ditch, you dig it very deep," Panzner said. "We went to 14 feet and we found a lot of different kinds of bones in that particular field. One of the bones we found was a beaver tooth, approximately a foot long."

"WHAT!?" sixth-grade math and science teacher Sam Crews exclaimed. "The tooth was a foot long?"

"Prehistoric," Panzner explained.

"That's awesome!" Crews said.

Other artifacts

That tooth is now in a museum, but the brothers kept the two bone knives they found with it. Humans had been living on this land since people using Clovis point spears had hunted those



MIKE CARDEW/Akron Beacon Journal

GARDEN VARIETY

Steve Panzner, co-owner of a 150-acre vegetable muck farm in Copley Township, hands a carrot from his vegetable garden to Eman Hassan, a fifth-grader at the National Inventors Hall of Fame School in Akron.

mastodons. The brothers had dug up samples and dated them by how deep in the ground they were.

"Using that plant life, we determined how we were going to put it back and what it was going to look like," Panzner explained to the teachers. "We knew that 5,000 years ago, that that was a beaver pond and you're looking at what it would have looked like, about 5,000 years ago."

Then he showed the teachers to a wetlands meadow that was flooded in the spring, but drier toward the end of the year. He had just recently blazed a trail through the undergrowth.

He led them along a freshly crushed path into the meadow of mostly flowering plants, including wool-grass, purple asters, orange and red spotted jewelweed, smartweed, wingstem, various species of goldenrod, wild marigolds and tall, swaying cattails shedding their seeds in bursts of white fluff.

"We've only come less than 100 feet away from the edge, and take a look where our wash house is," Panzner said. "You notice you can only see the roof."

The principal, Buckner, figured that maybe a quarter of her students, many from inner-city Akron, had ever been to a place like this.

"We need to take them outside around our school first, to

practice," she said to Bugner.

The fifth-grade teachers, who had been out to the property the previous week, had asked whether there was a field guide, and Panzner said no.

Bugner, who had a background in teaching language arts, seized on an idea: the fifth-graders could create their own kid-friendly guidebook based on their research, which they could give to the Panznors and keep in the school's library.

Panzner was thrilled that he'd have children exploring the property where he grew up.

That was the whole point: Preserve the wetlands and inspire future generations to do the same after they've experienced some of the wonder themselves.

"When I grew up, it was like everyday . . . I went out and found something new," he told them. "I used to come in with a snake in each hand and my grandmother would scream."

Guided tour

After the other sixth-grade teachers had returned to the school, the principal and Bugner stayed for a guided tour of a small forested hill overlooking the restored beaver pond.

Panzner explained how Algonquin-speaking Indians frequented the wetlands, harvesting edible plants and hunting and fishing in the lake with nets.

"The archaeology students thought this was the coolest thing because it shows just where they would have put the trail to come down in here to hunt and fish and then walk up there and camp," Panzner said. "If we dig into the hill, we find tons of charcoal pits, so we know they were there."

After circling the beaver pond, they emerged back on the lane. Buckner noticed the Panzner family vegetable garden.

"This is just our little family garden," Panzner said. "It's only an acre and a half." They grow peppers, tomatoes, squash, pumpkins, eggplants and leeks.

"Can the kids get to it and see that?" Buckner asked.

"Sure," Panzner said.

"Let's just take a peek," the principal whispered.

"Our kids don't see this very often," Bugner said.

"My family eats vegetables,"

Panzner said. "What can I say?"

He yanked a thick orange carrot out of the peaty black soil.

"Oh, wow, look at that carrot. Oh, my gosh," the principal said. Panzner wiped the dirt off and crunched into the carrot.

"Yeah, that's pretty good," he said.

They had figured out where to park the buses and where to

set up the science stations for all four days.

Now they had to present that problem to the students in a way that gave them just enough information to awaken their curiosity. They needed to set the hook.

John Higgins can be reached at 330-996-3792 or jhiggins@thebeaconjournal.com.

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Scheme

Company says 10 years in prison appropriate

Continued from Page A1

and spelled out some of the details of the alleged embezzlement scheme.

It was so extensive - beginning a few years after Goeldi's 1998 hiring as executive secretary to Cedarwood President Anthony A. "Tony" Petrarca - the company believes she should receive the maximum 10-year sentence.

"We do feel that is the appropriate sentence. One of the things that I'm looking at," Sponseller said, "is a kind of slogan-type thing: 10 for 10."

"She was stealing for 10 years and, well, maybe 10 years' incarceration would be an appropriate sentence. That's not how a judge is going to look at it, but that's kind of the way laymen look at it."

Laurie M. Cramer, spokeswoman for the county prosecutor, declined to comment about any details, saying it would be inappropriate while the case is pending.

According to state sentencing guidelines, judges are instructed that the "presumption" of prison time applies to defendants who are convicted or enter guilty pleas to felonies of the first or second degree.

No criminal history

Brian M. Pierce, Goeldi's chief defense attorney, also declined to comment about Cedarwood's claims about where the money went.

Pierce did say that Goeldi "regrets any hardship that has been

suffered by Cedarwood, but we're working and cooperating with the prosecutor to resolve this case in the very near future."

Summit County court records show Goeldi has no previous arrests for any type of criminal or traffic offense.

Sponseller, a Cedarwood vice president and chief legal counsel, said the company agrees with Akron police findings that the alleged embezzlement scheme was systematic, occurred over a lengthy period and did not involve unusually large amounts of money.

Akron Police Lt. Rick Edwards, the department's spokesman, said at the time of Goeldi's arrest in late July, she was an "authorized signer" on the company president's personal checking account. She is accused of writing "a multitude of checks" payable to cash or to herself, he said.

How can money vanish?

Sponseller acknowledged that those who cannot imagine how such a thing could happen, with such a large sum of money, are asking "a good question."

"Keep in mind that a large part of it went for living expenses for different things. If you're giving significant amounts of money for other people's living expenses, three or four other people, over 10 years, you can run up some hefty bills," Sponseller said.

"We also know some things, from looking at the receipts, that she liked to drink Cristal [champagne]. There would be \$100 bottles of alcohol, and so those types of things can add up pretty quickly."

The alleged scheme began in 2001 or 2002, he said, "and was increasing as time went by."

He said Goeldi "did everything you would expect a good executive secretary to do. And

she appeared to do it very well. That's what was so devastating to so many people here when this came to light. You don't expect this."

'Wall of intimidation'

Sponseller said Goeldi also was very protective of Petrarca, and that played into the alleged scheme as well.

"First off, you've got to give some credit to the person who's doing this. If somebody is really dedicated to stealing this kind of money, they're going to find a way to do it, no matter how stringent you are," Sponseller said.

"And she slowly but surely took control of a number of different things and would intimidate fellow employees by saying things like: 'Look, I'm doing this for my boss, and if you don't like it, why don't you talk to him?'"

"Well, when you've set up this wall of intimidation and call their bluff, they're not going to do that. So she started doing things systematically like this, small at first to see if she could get away with it, then building up over time."

Sponseller said a close examination of company books, for example, revealed one of the mechanisms Goeldi is accused of using "to cover her tracks."

"She would make these false entries for something in the ledger for \$200 - when it was really only \$20 - and she would pocket the \$180. She came up with a number of different strategies, but I can't go into all of those," Sponseller said, "because part of that is going to be in the prosecutor's case."

Goeldi, who is free on a signature bond, is scheduled for her next court appearance Jan. 14 before Judge Alison McCarty.

Ed Meyer can be reached at 330-996-3784 or emeyer@thebeaconjournal.com.

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