



Whitefish Pilot



Dr. Jean Todd, Sabrina and Mikayla Wisner celebrate Todd's birthday at Bibler Gardens last week. (Julie Engler/Whitefish Pilot)

Centenarian supports local foundation that helps kids in need

By JULIE ENGLER
Whitefish Pilot

A gathering last week at Bibler Home and Gardens in Kalispell, originally planned as a funeral, was instead, a vibrant 100th birthday party for Whitefish resident Dr. Jean Todd.

"I'd come here a couple years ago with my daughters to plan my after-death party," Todd said. "Since I was having a birthday, I thought it might be more fun to be there myself, and it is."

As part of her celebra-

tion, Todd wanted to make a donation to a local organization and when she heard of Sabrina Wisner's foundation, Mikayla's Miracles and Blessings, she had a feeling it would be a good fit. That feeling was confirmed after she and Wisner met for lunch a few times and became acquainted.

Todd was a trailblazer in the field of dyslexia and helped many families negotiate life and school with a condition that was not yet recognized by the academic community nor the state of California.

Wisner's daughter,

Mikayla, was diagnosed with Acardii Syndrome and wasn't expected to live beyond 2 years. Now a 35-year-old woman, she is missing part of her brain, is nonverbal, non-ambulatory and has daily seizures.

Still, she smiles, laughs and can operate various toys, all things she was not expected to be able to do.

"Sabrina's daughter was born without a corpus colosum, and that's my field," Todd said, adding that the corpus collosum connects the left and right sides of the brain.

"I've never met anyone

in my life who was born without one," Todd said. "I've had a couple students who, when I got them to read, they seemed to switch to the left hemisphere, and it showed on the [testing]. But it's not the same as being born without one."

"Dyslexics are very often not using the left side, where most language activities are, in most people," she said. "I had taught people to read after they'd had brain injury, but [Mikayla] is still improving, and she's 30 years plus. She laughs and she gets interested in

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County to close air quality monitoring sites

By TAYLOR INMAN
Hagadone News Network

Flathead County commissioners voted unanimously Aug. 18 to decommission the Whitefish and Kalispell air quality monitoring sites after a request from state and federal agencies.

The proposal was brought forth by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality because the Kalispell and Whitefish monitoring sites no longer meet the criteria for regulatory data collection due to urban and vegetation encroachment, according to Jim Wardensky, environmental health manager with the Flathead City-County Health Department.

Montana DEQ Analysis and Planning Section Supervisor Jennifer Harris said it would cost about \$21,990 to replace the Whitefish site and that the yearly cost to maintain the existing site and monitor it is no longer plausible for continued operation.

Harris told commissioners that the Whitefish and Kalispell sites monitor PM10, or inhalable particles with diameters that are generally 10 micrometers and smaller. She said the main concern at the DEQ is more closely monitoring PM2.5, which comes from wildfire smoke, organic compounds and metals.

The Columbia Falls site has always monitored PM2.5, she said.

"PM2.5 is what you are actually inhaling and getting into your lungs that is causing the health concerns out there. PM10 is dan-

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Montana historian honored after restoring Whitefish's Bruck

By KELSEY EVANS
Whitefish Pilot

After restoring the Great Northern Railroad's only remaining Bruck, Whitefish historian Paul Snyder was selected as a 2026 recipient of the Montana Historical Society's Heritage Keeper Award.

The Bruck's roots go back to the early 20th century, when a one-coach rail line called the Galloping Goose carried mail, passengers and freight from Whitefish and Columbia Falls to Kalispell for nearly half a century. For economic reasons, Great Northern discontinued this short train in 1950.

Shortly thereafter, Great Northern ordered a rare, custom-designed bus/truck unit called the Bruck, No. 101, from Kenworth Motor Truck Corporation, to run the discontinued route.

The 44,000-pound rail

car on wheels was equipped with a 220-horsepower engine. Painted like a signature orange and green rail car, it looked like a runaway train as it traveled down U.S. 93 on its first trip to Kalispell on July 17, 1951.

The Bruck was a workhorse. It averaged six daily round trips to Kalispell for the next 20 years. The front section could accommodate 20 passengers with overhead baggage while the rear could carry seven tons of freight.

After Amtrak took over rail passenger service in 1972, the Great Northern's Bruck became part of a bygone era. The combo vehicle was later auctioned off.

Fast forward to the turn of the century, and the Bruck was spotted in a boneyard in Great Falls. Connie Hoffman of Great Falls purchased the dilapi-



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Historian Paul Snyder with the restored Bruck in 2006. (Photo provided)



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69	64	65	69	72	63	63
45	44	45	45	48	47	45
Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues

“I’ve walked in these people’s shoes. I’ve been without. I’ve needed and I didn’t have anyone to go to.”

— Sabrina Wisner

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Students running cross country this year