



Carol Marino

Couple ends spin around the world

Readers may recollect a column last September spotlighting Stefan and Julia Meinhold, the German bankers-turned-tandem cyclists who blew through Kalispell via Waterton Glacier International Peace Park, en route to Yellowstone National Park on their trans-world tour. (That day, Sept. 17, they were greeted by hefty Flathead headwinds from here down to Polson.)

Throughout their trip, their e-mails and Web site have kept their family and friends updated on their travels.

They started their ride on New Year's Eve 2006 in New Zealand aboard their "Hummer of a bike" tandem — a wedding gift — and have since biked from Hawaii to Anchorage to South America and Barbados. After taking time out to spend the holidays back home in Germany, they began 2008 by cycling the whole of Baja California and the Pacific Highway from San Francisco to L.A.

Now, they've decided to "stop when it is at its best." After a year and a half on the road, the stalwart cyclists have decided to end their tour, putting the "grand" in its finale by cycling some of their favorite world spots.

Currently they're cruising the 800-kilometer Camino de Santiago, originally a medieval pilgrimage route, across northern Spain to France. From there they plan to follow the Tour de France route to the Alps and Switzerland, and then come, full circle, back to Germany.

In September they plan to fly to Peru to hike Machu Picchu, and climb a few mountain passes to Lake Titicaca astride their trusty tandem.

Wed just prior to launching their around-the-world trek, the couple are quick to reassure everyone that:

- No, they have not had a fight; they are still in love.
- The tandem is holding up just fine and has not broken down.
- Julia is not pregnant.
- They are still above water financially.
- They have not lost their motivation and they are not ill.

They just think they've been on the road long enough. Stefan plans to return to the world of banking in Frankfurt and Julia will be greasing the gears to finish their book about life on the road on a bicycle built for two.

You can find them on the Web at www.bankerbiker.de.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING to get away but don't have any extra \$50 bills to stuff in your gas tank, take a road trip to the Miracle of America Museum in Polson next weekend.

The museum is hosting its 18th annual Live History Days July 19 and 20.

Live demonstrations, from spinning and weaving to piloting and blacksmithing, will be going on throughout the day, along with steam engine and tractor exhibitions.

Take a ride in a vintage car or military vehicle, or on an antique tractor or miniature railroad.

The museum is home to an ever-growing eclectic collection of memorabilia. No matter if you've been there before, you're guaranteed to see something new every time you visit.

On Sunday afternoon the Old time Fiddlers will entertain. The museum is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday and exhibits are open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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Lifestyle

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'She was the kind of teacher who could change your entire life. You just wanted to be like her.'

■ Dorothy McGlenn



DOROTHY SCHOKNECHT



Photos courtesy of Museum at Central School

DOROTHY SCHOKNECHT, who died in March at 101, left long-standing impressions on her students. She taught at Bigfork and Flathead high schools and at Central School in Kalispell.

Late teacher lives in students' memories

By CANDACE CHASE
The Daily Inter Lake

Dorothy McGlenn spent just one year in Dorothy Schoknecht's classroom but she never forgot the much-beloved biology teacher.

"She made every student feel so special," McGlenn recalled. "You would want to learn in her class. All of my friends felt the same way."

Schoknecht, who died in March at 101, remembered McGlenn as she did all of her students. McGlenn still has a card that Schoknecht wrote to her about nine years ago. "She remembered exactly where I sat in her biology class," McGlenn said. "Think how long ago that was — in the early '40s."

Schoknecht, a member of a prominent family in Kalispell, taught at Bigfork High School from 1934 to 1936 and then for 20 years at Flathead High School. Between the two, she spent a year teaching at Kalispell's Central School, which now houses a museum.

Because of Schoknecht's history at the school and dedication to education, the Northwest Montana Historical Society has kicked off a campaign to raise \$100,000 to name her former classroom the Schoknecht Gallery at the Museum at Central School.

"WE'RE PRETTY positive that her classroom was where the U.S. Forest Service display is — in the northwest corner of the museum on the second floor," said Gil Jordan, executive director of the historical society.

It's appropriate that the museum has begun converting the proposed Schoknecht gallery to house a new Flathead Valley history exhibition. According to Rosalie Heinecke, a friend and former student, the Schoknechts were early movers and shakers in the valley.

"Her family was very prominent

— they were early pioneers," she said. "They were all timber people — the Neils were Dorothy's mother's heritage."

By virtue of living to 101, Schoknecht recalled a very different Flathead Valley from the golf courses and resorts of today. Nancy Morast, Schoknecht's caretaker for 17 years, enjoyed hearing some of the stories.

"She would talk about Buffalo Hill when buffalo were roaming around," she said. "There were also Indians up there with tepees."

MORAST SAID Schoknecht had a personal relationship with the founding families of Kalispell.

"She talked about playing with the Conrad children, with one of their daughters," she said.

Later in life, she served on the board of directors of Conrad National Bank in Kalispell as well as Valparaiso University, an international Lutheran university where she earned her bachelor's degree.

Schoknecht's niece Paula Sandman said her aunt defied convention by earning a master's degree at the University of Washington in the male-dominated fields of chemistry and microbiology.

"She grew up feeling strongly that education was the key to success," Sandman said.

According to her niece, Schoknecht was planning to attend medical school when her brother's death from spinal meningitis brought her back to the valley. While home, she agreed to fill in for a teacher at Bigfork High School.

It was a life-changing experience. "She just found that she loved teaching," Sandman said.

HEINECKE remembered that Schoknecht served as the sponsor of her 1940 class at Flathead High School. She described her teaching

style as very precise and not the least bit flamboyant.

"She was a classic teacher of that era," she said. "She just had a presence."

McGlenn said that Schoknecht had the ability to make her students want to excel. She said she was no fan of biology (cutting up frogs in particular) but she worked hard because she didn't want to disappoint her teacher.

"She was the kind of teacher who could change your entire life," she said. "You just wanted to be like her."

Heinecke agreed that Schoknecht was an important role model for young people. She said she was the woman that mothers would point out to their daughters.

"She was a very poised, charming woman," Heinecke said. "She was what my mother would call a lady."

REMINISCING WITH Morast, Schoknecht said her years teaching were the happiest of her life. Schoknecht shared one of her secrets, which was to pinpoint the top potential troublemaker early and get "on his good side," then the others would fall in line.

After making the difficult decision to retire, she volunteered for years as a German teacher at Trinity Lutheran School while also serving as her mother's caretaker.

Her former students continued to seek her out to make sure she knew the impression she made on their lives.

Morast said every time she took Schoknecht to the grocery store or out to lunch they ran into former students who inevitably said she was their favorite teacher.

Because Schoknecht never married or had children, her students became like her children. Promising young men and women received more than quality instruction from Schoknecht.

Sandman said that her aunt and her father, Mark, set up a fund when her grandmother died. They awarded five to 10 scholarships each year.

Schoknecht continued to contribute much of her personal money to educate deserving students.

"SHE WAS THE sweetest and most giving person," Sandman said.

She remembered in particular a young man who came each year with his family from Texas to pick cherries at the orchard the Schoknecht family operated on Flathead Lake. Schoknecht told Sandman that he always came up to the house looking for additional duties. "She recognized what a bright young man he was," she said.

Schoknecht helped him get scholarships to go to college, then contributed to send him to medical school.

"After medical school, he went to Africa to work as a medical missionary," Sandman said. "He was there for most of his career."

She said he was one of many.

AFTER HER AUNT'S death, Sandman said cards came from all over from people she had helped attend the seminary for the Lutheran Church.

"There were a lot of lives that she touched," Sandman said.

It was so until the end of her life. She was fortunate to have constant reminders of the impact she made on her students.

Morast recalled a poignant incident when Schoknecht moved into Brendan House where she lived for the last two years of her life.

"One lady, who had hardly spoke at all, looked into her eyes and said 'Dorothy Schoknecht, my teacher.'"

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Museum seeks support for Schoknecht gallery, other needs

Gil Jordan, director of the Northwest Montana Historical Society, said the society's board launched a major campaign on Thursday to honor Dorothy Schoknecht and name a gallery after her.

"Dorothy led an exemplary life and contributed in a profoundly positive way to the lives of nearly

three decades of students," he said.

According to Jordan, the money raised from naming museum rooms and galleries supports lectures, free admission days for seniors and others, activities for local students, and presentations of Montana history and other exhibitions.

One in development is "Wild

Montana," an exhibit featuring the flora and fauna of the Flathead Valley.

"We've been working on it for a couple of years," Jordan said. "We've finally got some seed money."

Permanent exhibitions of interest include Western Native American Culture, Frank Bird Linder-

man, the Hall of History, Sand Monkeys, Tie Hacks & River Pigs, ALERT and Early Kalispell and Demersville.

To keep the museum's annual operating budget under \$200,000, Jordan said the museum relies on a large number of volunteers,

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