

# The Western Montana Fair Midway Dispatch

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ANIA CHANEY/Midway Dispatch

**Young ladies** spent Thursday morning playing a match-up game at the Sweetheart Princess Tea Party.

## Girls become princesses at party

By **MARIELLE GALLAGHER**  
Midway Dispatch

At 11 a.m. Thursday, there's a crowd of princesses in the Culinary Building.

Twenty-three girls attend the Sweet Heart Princess Tea, an event put together by Holly Matz, the first runner-up of this year's Miss Montana competition, and Darleen Block, the head of the culinary building at the fair. The building in question sports an abundance of pink and white, and several tables are covered in regal-looking dishes and tablecloths.

The girls – all under age 11 – are here to participate in activities such as pin-the-princess-in-the-castle, an etiquette lesson and a princess walk. Each girl wears a dress, a tiara and a sash they received upon arrival.

From one side of the room comes the ruckus of miniature princesses, all rushing back and forth, adjusting dresses and congregating in bubbly little circles. The other side holds the noise of busy adults in the kitchen area, putting final touches on food for the girls. Everyone involved seems glad to be here, from the girls getting their pictures taken with Holly – who wears a red gown and glittering tiara – to Jennie Dixon, a mother to one of the princesses present.

Jennie's daughter Isabella, after delivering a surprisingly firm handshake, admitted she wasn't entirely sure what they were going to be doing, but she knew they would be drinking tea and she was very excited about that.

This lends credence to the notion that the girls are here less to display

themselves, and more to feel like princesses. They're certainly given the princess treatment in terms of food; grand champion truffle maker Sara Bauer made mini, heart-shaped cakes. A group of dedicated bakers prepared muffins and other royal delicacies for the girls.

Holly explains that she organized the event after participating in something similar while competing for Miss Montana. She says the goal is to help young girls learn etiquette and how to make heart-healthy lifestyle choices.

All girls involved receive prizes such as toy jewelry to remember the occasion by. And they all walk away feeling a little bit like royalty.

*Marielle Gallagher will be a freshman at Hellgate High School.*

# The messiest is the best

*At eating contest, adults are real slobs*

By **ANIA CHANEY**  
Midway Dispatch

The Messy Eaters contest Thursday blew away the stereotypical expectations – the kids were out-messed by the alleged grown-ups.

The messes got greater the older the competitor, but the whole thing was a bit feeble until the real adults bellied up to the ice cream provided by Cold Stone Creamery.

The rules of the contest were simple: no hands. But to make things even messier, blindfolds were introduced to teenage and adult competitors.

Also, the mascots of various Missoula sports teams were there to judge the children and assist the adults. The categories were toddlers, pre-schoolers, grade-schoolers, teenagers and adults.

The adult section was divided into two "heats," one being the coaches and celebrities, and the other being hockey players from the Missoula Maulers.

"The kids probably win napkins," one spectator said while watching the grade school portion of the contest. The winner of that contest stuck his entire face into the frozen plate amid cries of delight and laughter.

The winner of the teenage contest was the only girl of the three girls to compete to even think about sticking her face into the ice cream. She tore into the frozen treat with gusto, while the other two poked carefully at the sugary stuff with their tongues. "I like ice cream!" was the cry of triumph



ANIA CHANEY/Midway Dispatch

**Messy, messy:** KPAX news anchor Jill Valley makes a mess of things at the Western Montana Fair's messy eating contest.

from the messiest teenage eater.

When paired against three men – oft-renowned messy eaters – KPAX news anchor Jill Valley out-ate them. She and her assistant Slash shoveled and munched spoonful after spoonful of the chocolaty goo, smothered in whipped cream and chocolate sauce.

"Did I win?" She asked

through a face full of chocolate. She may well have.

The second "heat," which included the Maulers players, was far more frenzied and less civilized. It started off as an attempt to plaster the icy sweet stuff over their own faces, but ended with a member of the team getting pasted with everyone else's ice cream.

"I feel nice and cold," he said. "The boys took one for the team and helped me win. Yeah!"

Winners received certificates, donated from Cold Stone, Red Robin and the fair.

Fair marketing director Gretchen Kirchmann said she went to the owner of Cold Stone and suggested the Messy Eaters contest. The idea caught like

wildfire, and the entire thing was a dripping, slobbering mess of a success.

And let it be known: There will be another context next year, and there will be more hijinks to come.

*Ania Chaney will be an eighth grader at Washington Middle School.*

## Bleating sheep off to market, to market

*Some only a little sad to see animals sold*

By **IRIS OLSON**  
Midway Dispatch

If it's Kids' Day at the Western Montana Fair, it must be raining.

Swarms of damp children are pulled along by their equally damp parents, some screaming, some laughing. Above the chatter of cold fairgoers rises the uncomfortable bleating of recently shaved sheep.

They're being washed, in the rain, by freezing teenagers.

"Today's market," says one girl, leading her sheep by a leash. "They're all getting judged."

And how does one judge the dozens of eerily similar sheep at the fair?

"Well, muscle tone, straight back, strong round butt muscles. Sort of like how you judge a man," she laughs. "Don't quote my name with that!"

Fifteen-year-old Rachael Cheff raised her sheep Molly and Fred for a 4-H breeding project.

"I'm definitely nervous for market, but excited, too," she says. "I've got pretty nice sheep."

After four years of raising sheep, she's only a little sad to see them sold.

"Seeing people smiling in the ring makes it better," she says.

*Iris Olson will be a freshman at Hellgate High School.*



ANIA CHANEY/Midway Dispatch

**Rachael Cheff** preps her sheep Molly and Fred before Thursday's show.

## Black hole in trailer pulls you in

By **MARIELLE GALLAGHER**  
Midway Dispatch

There is a black hole in the fairgrounds. Its sucking, incomprehensible depths will draw you in and hold you tight, for only 2 bucks.

Actually, the black hole is in a trailer. The trailer is run by Denny and Joyce Jangula, who bought it from a friend seven years ago. They currently bring the highly transportable black hole to events in Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota, Washington and Montana.

Many people don't know what to make of the black hole. Some feel too much trepidation to enter it. The black hole is anything but scary. Joyce says it has been called "trippy, bizarre, insane and crazy," but never

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