

Carousel of Smiles hosts champagne reception

Chance to learn about the restoration process

By Reader Staff

Since its unveiling two years ago at the Bonner County Fairgrounds, the Carousel of Smiles has been undergoing an artistic transformation of epic proportions. To get a glance at that transformation process, the public is invited to a free champagne reception Thursday, Dec. 19, 6:30-9 p.m. at the Mountain West Bank on the corner of US-2 and Division Avenue.

There will be 15 ponies on display at the reception, each showcasing a step in the restoration process. Carousel of Smiles volunteers will also be in attendance to explain the process, answer questions and share hopes for its permanent operating location.

“The energy, talent and enthusiasm that our volunteers have brought to this project is amazing. Words can’t begin to properly convey my thrill at how this project is progressing as



a community endeavor,” said Carousel of Smiles co-founder Reno Hutchison. “This celebration is a chance for all to come see some of the amazing work happening, and feel the

excitement for themselves.”

The Carousel of Smiles group is restoring an intact and original Allan Herschell Carousel from the 1920s, which is comprised of

**Carousel of Smiles
Champagne Reception**

Thursday, Dec. 19; 6:30-9 p.m.;
FREE; Mountain West Bank,
1323 US-2, 208-255-2046,
thecarouselofsmiles.org.

36 hand-carved ponies. The machine operated as a traveling carousel until 1952, then was abandoned in a farmer’s field outside of Kansas City.

Following her childhood dream — sparked by the 1973 fire that destroyed her beloved carousel at the Columbia

Gardens in Butte, Mont. — Hutchison and her husband, Clay, serendipitously found and were able to purchase the machine before it was broken up and sold at auction.