



Gildi Whiteside (center) is shown with her stepdaughter, Julie LaVine (right), and granddaughter, Nicci. Photos courtesy of Mel Whiteside

Bayfield suicide inspires efforts to reduce depression among seniors

JOE CADOTTE
For the News Tribune

Gildi Whiteside, 67, a retired special education teacher, spent her time volunteering throughout Bayfield County. Through the Bayfield nonprofit CORE Community Resources, she provided companionship to elderly people living in isolation.

But, while helping others overcome depression, Gildi was suffering from it herself.

On Oct. 14, 2010, the Bayfield County Sheriff's Office reported that a woman's body had been found floating in Lake Superior south of Bayfield. When the U.S. Coast Guard responded, they found Mel Whiteside in the water, holding Gildi.

With the discovery of a suicide note, authorities and Whiteside concluded the Bayfield woman had taken her own life by drowning.

Her suicide, however, has inspired a project to help older people overcome depression.

The "Gildi Project" is training volunteers throughout Northwestern Wisconsin's Chequamegon Bay area to identify depression in older people and help them find resources to treat it.

Mel Whiteside said Gildi Whiteside had hid her depression from him in the past. He

"She did hide her depression from me a lot. It's a part of her upbringing not to inconvenience others with her problems."

Mel Whiteside, talking about his wife, Gildi, who committed suicide in October

thought she had conquered it.

"She did hide her depression from me a lot," he said in a recent interview. "It's a part of her upbringing not to inconvenience others with her problems."

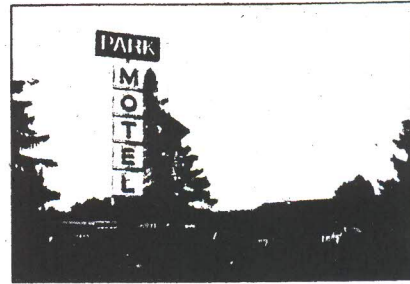
"I thought things were better because we were in such an ideal state," he said. "She had a nice house. We were (sailing together). She was surrounded by friends."

On Oct. 13, Gildi Whiteside told her husband she was going for a swim with some friends. By late afternoon, Mel Whiteside hadn't heard from his wife, so he and friends took a boat out to search for her. Gildi Whiteside's body was found washed up on the Lake Superior shore with her identification card in a plastic bag.



Gildi Whiteside was born in Czechoslovakia of German parents. This photo was taken on her first day of school.

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Superior police cordoned off a section of the Park Motel in Billings Park on Saturday until detectives and evidence technicians could be brought in to investigate a suspicious death. A body was found shortly after 1 p.m. Saturday. Gary Androsky / Superior Telegram

Police investigate death of man in Superior motel

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Superior police are investigating the suspicious death of a man whose body was discovered at the Park Motel in Superior on Saturday.

The unidentified man was found dead in a room at the motel at 3411 Belknap St. by house-keeping staff.

Police were called to the motel shortly after 1 p.m. and entered the room to confirm the person was deceased. He was.

Officers then backed out to get a search warrant, which is standard police procedure. Several hours later, with a search warrant signed by a judge, they went back in to begin their investigation to determine the cause and manner of death, said Capt. Chad La Lor.

La Lor declined to say why the death is suspicious or whether there were obvious signs of trauma. But when asked if the man could have died by natural causes, he said: "We don't believe so."

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Job growth elsewhere gives context to Wisconsin figures

DINESH RAMDE
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Gov. Scott Walker was correct last week in saying Wisconsin's net gain of 9,500 jobs last month was more than half the jobs added across the nation in that period — but looking at figures from other states makes the tally seem not quite as rosy.

While Wisconsin's monthly job numbers are generally released with little fanfare, Walker held a news conference Thursday to call attention to June's figure. He revealed that Wisconsin had added 12,900 private-sector jobs and lost 3,400 government jobs, for a net gain of 9,500 jobs.

Meanwhile, he noted, the U.S. recorded a net increase of 18,000 jobs for the month. All numbers are seasonally adjusted.

"In light of national job numbers ... our efforts in Wisconsin stand out," he said.

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Shock of Norwegian attacks touches Duluthians