

Why we need Christmas

Merchants around the world depend on the Christmas season each year for 20 to 50 percent of their yearly sales.



GLENN MOLLETTE
SYNDICATED
COLUMNIST

The travel industry from airlines to gasoline stations see a nice bump during the holidays. People are going to buy airplane tickets and buy gasoline.

Grocery stores do better during the holidays. People cook more for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's. The alcohol industry does well during holidays. Wine, beer and whiskey all do well normally and more so during December.

Charities and churches enjoy December. People give more money to the church in December than any other month. People who want to give make sure their gifts are given by Dec. 31. Churches normally have special children's and music programs during the month that increases attendance.

Counselors see a spike in activity during December. More people are depressed during the Christmas and New Year's Eve holidays than any other time of the year.

Funeral homes are busy in December and January. Check your local funeral home obituaries for last December and January and you'll be amazed at how many funerals took place.

Fitness centers and gyms across the country prepare for their biggest month of the year, which is January. Millions of people will drag into their local fitness center and sign up for a 12-month membership. About 50 percent of these people or less will use their memberships only a few times during the year but will be stuck in 12-month contracts.

Christmas is a profitable time for many it seems.

The greater value of this wonderful season comes with the opportunities of Christmas.

You have a good excuse to call or visit people. Christmas is about personal relationships and connecting to real people. The Christmas story is about a personal God who came as a real person to help real people with real needs.

Christmas is family time. Don't exclude anybody. God is inclusive. He came to love all the people of the world. There are always people who feel excluded, unloved and seem to be the ragamuffin person in the family. No one is perfect. Everyone has failed in different ways.

Christmas is a different day. Most stores, restaurants, workplaces and businesses are closed on Christmas. What are you going to do? Be happy, reflect, give thanks and don't feel sorry for yourself. Take time to focus on the one that so many Christmas songs have been written about, "Christ, the savior is born."

We need Christmas because we need the savior of Christmas. We need peace on earth and good will to men. We need a silent night and a holy night. We need the toy to the world as sung in the famed Christmas carol. We need to know the grave is not the end. We need to have the hope of eternal life. We need help to deal with our grief and strength to face tomorrow. Jesus came to give us this and more. That's why we need him and the message of Christmas so desperately in our lives.



Your views

Sams: Donations to Cultural Trust help preserve Oregon's quality of life

To the Editor:
Google Oregon's top attributes, and along with the great outdoors, audacious beer and green living you will find our famous quality of life. One of our best-kept secrets is how the Oregon Cultural Trust protects and enhances that quality of life.

As uniquely Oregonian as public beaches and the bottle bill, the Oregon Cultural Trust was established in 2001 to support art, heritage, history and humanities — which together define our diverse cultural character.

The Cultural Trust empowers Oregonians to double the impact of their cultural giving at no additional cost to them. Here's how it works: Make a donation to one or more of Oregon's 1,400-plus cultural nonprofits, then make a matching gift to the Cultural Trust by Dec. 31. You get 100 percent of the Cultural Trust donation back when you file your state taxes — by claiming the cultural tax credit — and the state Legislature invests that same amount in Oregon culture. That's right: The state of

Oregon funds our music, our libraries, our museums and our monuments, but only when you demonstrate how important they are to you.

In 2017 alone, gifts to the Cultural Trust totaled close to \$5 million. Working with statewide and regional partners, the Trust redistributed more than \$3 million of that amount in 2018 grants and funding and invested the remaining donations into a growing permanent fund for future projects.

In Umatilla, Morrow, Union and Wallowa counties, grants were awarded to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, \$40,195; Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts, \$11,116; Eastern Oregon Regional Arts Council, \$11,131; Liberty Theatre Foundation, \$28,171; Umatilla County Historical Society, \$30,513; Morrow County Cultural Coalition, \$7,645; Umatilla County Cultural Coalition, \$15,409; Union County Cultural Coalition, \$9,344; and the Wallowa County Cultural Coalition, \$7,114.

According to our 10-year impact study, by ECONorthwest, the Trust's geographic reach is "remarkable." The study will serve us well when we ask the Oregon Legislature

to renew the cultural tax credit during the 2019 Oregon legislative session.

I encourage you to total your cultural donations, give a matching amount to the Cultural Trust and claim your cultural tax credit on your state taxes. We are trusting you won't keep this important secret to yourself. Thank you for preserving Oregon's quality of life.

Charles F. Sams III
Chair, Oregon Cultural Trust
Pendleton

McHaddad: BMTD explains KTVB outage

To the Editor:
Many TV viewers in Union County found themselves without the ability to view KTVB last week. The problem was worse in Baker County — a power outage on the Blue Mountain Translator District's Baker translator, located on Beaver Mountain, resulted in a complete blackout of channels in Baker County.

We are thankful for OTEC's quick work to restore power, and want to take this opportunity to remind viewers how signals are delivered here. KATU, KOIN, KGW, KRCW, KPTV and KPDX are sent to Island City over a fiber optic network and microwaved

to Mt. Fanny above Cove. These channels are hopped to Mt. Harris above Imbler and Beaver Mountain south of Baker City. KTVB is sent directly from Boise to Beaver Mountain then hopped to Mt. Fanny before reaching Mt. Harris.

Problems in Island City or Mt. Fanny can prevent Portland channels from being broadcast anywhere in Union and Baker counties. Problems on Mt. Harris can prevent all channels from being broadcast in northern Union County. Problems on Beaver Mountain, such as last week's power outage, can prevent all channels from being broadcast in Baker City, also affecting the transmission of KTVB in Union County.

BMTD continues to work with partners to improve the resilience of our network, most recently by installing new components on Mt. Fanny in October that make our equipment less vulnerable to lightning-induced power surges. For more information, visit www.bmtd.org, email bmtd.org@gmail.com, call 541-963-0196 or visit our new office on the third floor of the Joseph Building in La Grande.

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Blue Mountain Translator
District Secretary/Treasurer

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