



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

BELLA stores in Baker City and La Grande are donating 10% of sales during December 2021 to three local organizations, with shoppers deciding how much goes to each.

BELLA fundraising campaign aims to 'Give More' to local groups

By LISA BRITTON
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Every “kerplunk” that echoes in a BELLA store this month means one more dollar for a local charity.

In December, the shops — one in Baker City, 2023 Main St., and one in La Grande, 1216 Adams Ave. — are raising money for three organizations chosen by the staff.

“They’re three organizations we’ve supported for a long time,” said owner Beverly Calder.

The organizations benefiting from the stores’ contributions are the La Grande Angel Fund, which is a food bank for homeless youth; Baker Relief Nursery, which serves families with children younger than 6; and the Baker City Quiet Zone, which seeks to reduce train whistles and improve railroad crossings.

BELLA is donating 10% of December sales to these causes, and the recipients are determined by customers.

“We’re going to let the people decide,” Calder said.

The theme for the month, she said, is “Give More.”

For every \$10 spent, a customer is given a hazelnut or walnut to put in a stocking labeled for the charity. Each nut represents \$1 for the organization.

“It’s really so heartwarming to watch people consider where the dona-

tion should go,” Calder said. “Many customers have involved their kids and let the kids help decide.”

Calder said education is part of the fundraiser as well — her staff members know the background of each organization, and share the stories with customers.

“We’ve been giving out a lot of brochures,” she said.

In addition to the stockings, a raffle will increase the fundraising.

Calder said BELLA received a donation from a woman who was raised in Baker City and heard about the “Give More” fundraiser. The donor — who wanted to remain anonymous — contributed \$300 for the raffle. Calder said BELLA added another \$100, and the combined \$400 will be split for a \$200 shopping spree in both stores.

Each shop is selling raffle tickets for the shopping spree, and the proceeds from the tickets will go the charity that receives the most nuts in each location.

Calder said the stockings are emptied each night, and shoppers in the La Grande store are supporting Baker City causes just as much as the Baker customers are donating to the Angel Fund.

“People like to see everyone benefit,” she said. “We’ve had a lot of fun with this and you hope, at the end of the day, that our enthusiasm is infectious.”

VOICES

An unintentional holiday tradition

By SARAH ZOLLNER CASE
Special to The Observer

One year when I was in third or fourth grade, my family’s Christmas plans were interrupted by forces of nature. As the holiday approached, Mom baked in preparation for our trip three hours south to my grandparents’ house. She made several fruit pies to contribute to the much anticipated Christmas dinner we would enjoy with my grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.

Our intention was to wake up Christmas morning in our own beds, open gifts around our tree, eat breakfast and then pile into the car and head to Roseburg for a few days’ visit. What happened instead was disappointing to say the least. A winter storm rolled in, and the east wind swept through our suburban town and left the roads encased in thick ice. To make matters worse, our neighborhood was perched high on a hill, and our neighborhood street that led to the main road was treacherous and impassable. Driving on it in a car full of kids was out of the question.

We were crestfallen. Of course we looked forward to opening the gifts under the tree, but our family’s approach to Christmas gifts was relatively low key. We knew there weren’t any Barbie Dream Houses or Nintendo gaming systems to be found, nothing amazing enough to distract us from being stuck inside at home when we wanted to be somewhere else.

When we woke up Christmas morning, my parents had hatched a cheer-up plan. After opening gifts, they announced that we were having pie and ice cream for breakfast. Mom laid out the spread of pies and we cut into all of them. We had free rein to build the breakfast plate of our dreams:

Choose your favorite kind or try some of each. Warm it up in the microwave if you want. Plop a scoop of ice cream on top. It was decadent and unexpected, and it raised the spirits in the room 110%.

Not surprisingly, we three kids immediately decided that henceforth, Breakfast Pie was the new Christmas Normal, and should be planned accordingly.

For more than three decades, as my brothers and I grew up, moved out, and established our adult lives, we kept on. Every Christmas, we would wake up in our own homes with our partners and kids, open gifts around our respective trees, and then drive across town to my parents’ house, where we would open more gifts and tuck into a pie buffet. Over the years, as spouses and partners joined our crew, or when other extended family members joined us for the holiday, they were always surprised and delighted by the magic of Breakfast Pie.

The truth is that Breakfast Pie was the most constant part of our Christmas celebration for many years. The tradition came with us when my parents moved from that house on the hill in the suburbs to a neighborhood in the city. Long after an ugly family rift severed our relationship to my mom’s sister and her kids — the cousins we were so excited to see the year of the ice storm — Breakfast Pie was our holiday companion. The church we grew up in folded, and we found new places to worship on Christmas Eve, but Breakfast Pie kept the faith. Our grandparents passed and there was no longer a house in Roseburg to visit, but Breakfast Pie was still with us.

I ate Breakfast Pie in a bathrobe at my parents’ house the year I was mis-

ANYONE CAN WRITE

Nearly 40 years in the business have taught me that readers are bombarded and overwhelmed with facts. What we long for, though, is meaning and a connection at a deeper and more universal level. And that’s why The Observer will be running, from time to time, stories from students who are in my writing class, which I’ve been teaching for the past 10 years in Portland.

I take great satisfaction in helping so-called nonwriters find and write stories from their lives and experiences. They walk into my room believing they don’t have what it takes to be a writer. I remind them if they follow their hearts, they will discover they are storytellers. As we all are at our core.

Some of these stories have nothing to do with La Grande or Union County. They do, however, have everything to do with life. If you are interested in contacting me to tell me your story, I’d like to hear from you.

—Tom Hallman Jr., tbhbook@aol.com

Tom Hallman Jr. is a Pulitzer Prize-winning feature writer for The Oregonian. He’s also a writing coach and has an affinity for Union County.

morning, and again years later, we gathered for pie the first Christmas after my young son died. There was something comforting and connecting in this shared rhythm of our holiday, joy in the midst of grief and disappointment, something solid and familiar when other parts of life were unpredictable and unwelcome.

In the beginning, mom made the pies, and there were always at least three or four to choose from. Apple, peach, blueberry and pumpkin made regular appearances. Later, my brother’s wife, who had lost her mother to cancer when she was 19, started bringing a homemade lemon meringue pie every year; it was her mother’s famous recipe. I added a Tollhouse pie, because if you’re going to eat dessert in the morning, why stop short of chocolate? Of

course there was ice cream and whipped cream too. We’re not animals.

And that’s how a nutritionally questionable meal that started in the 1980s as a consolation prize for disappointed grade schoolers became the stuff of family legend — a treasured tradition and a hallmark of the holiday.

For the past two years, various factors including the coronavirus pandemic have colluded to bring an end to the era of Breakfast Pie. Will we ever gather as an extended family and eat ourselves into a carb coma before 11 a.m. again? Hard to say. But for 35 years, this enduring family tradition did what we needed it to. Breakfast Pie got us through that first disappointing Christmas, and showed us that even something frivolous can become a meaningful touch point for family connection.



NOTICE



To the residence of Union County. This notice is meant only to teach, inform, and educated purpose only.

Did you know that the State of Oregon has no laws to protect your animals on your property. Your dogs and cats have no rights on their property. Even the owners of dogs and cats have no help from the state.

Our neighbors (renters) 30 feet away from my dogs decided upon themselves to place many frequency devices next to our home. They stop the dogs barking and keep them away from their yard. The whole surrounding area is affected. All of our neighbors who have one or more dogs are affected by these devices.

It is probably not known by many that these frequency devices cause a great deal of pain, illness and stress. Our dogs would cry and mourn for hours before we knew what was happening. Because of our dog’s pain they just added more devices. Keep in mind that our neighbors recorded our dogs (3) on 3 separate occasions. Union County Animal Control advised us there was nothing they could do. Our dogs were not considered nuisance barkers on any of the 3 recordings. If they were nuisance barkers the fine is 150.00 dollars. Union County Sheriff’s office also advised us there was nothing they could do. Both officials advised us to hire an attorney and let them know the outcome.

We said we will do just that.

We hired an attorney. His name is Geordie Duckler. He can be reached at 503-546-8052.

If anyone has any problems with neighbors hurting their animals this is the best person to hire.

He is very knowledgeable and very helpful.

If there is any attorney that would be interested in taking on this company that sells and builds these devices let me know. They express how they don’t hurt animals, that is a false statement in my opinion. Just ask my dogs, they will show you because they are smart. I have recordings and documents freely given if someone desires to protect our animals.

My address: PO BOX 2995, La Grande OR 97850.

Teresa McLucas
Cove OR.



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James R. Kopp, MD, MBA
Weight Loss Physician

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—Dr. Kopp

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*Personalized plans. Individual results vary.