

# The Hobo Corner: Testimonials and Snitches

By Jack Kauppila



Hey Everyone - It's Jack here, from the Hobo Bakery in Vernonia, my new hometown.

My beautiful, sweet, little town where I feel more at home than I've ever felt before. I caught myself recently, sitting on the front porch with my sweet sweet Mary. There were dogs at our feet, the whine of a chainsaw in the distance, wood smoke in the air, and a cool lemonade on the table between us. And all we had to do was be there and love it. What a dream...

This month we have our first customer testimonial and my first big snitch!

Now, I try to keep the Hobo Bakery patron's identities anonymous - it's nobody's dang business who's double-dipping into the cinnamon rolls, or how many maple-spice donuts Mr. Larry is eating. But two of our dearest customers have given me permission to write up a glowing testimonial on which they promised to sign off. Sounds dangerous, I know!

Donna and Brian have been there from the start for the Hobo Bakery. They love what I bake and they know I do it all for love and service - they really seem to get what we're up to around here. Their enthusiasm and support has been constant, and their feedback just melted my heart one particular weekend. Especially considering what happened the week or so before. And then what happened next...

Buckle up - here comes the big snitch!

So the other day Donna and Brian got a Chupacabra Boule (yup, all that sharp cheddar cheese and hot jalapenos comes in boules!) and told me all about it on their next visit -

"Jack that Chupacabra bread was amazing! We started tearing into it in the car and we just couldn't stop!"

In fact it caused a bit of conflict when Donna pointed out that if they didn't stop eating, the whole thing was going to be gone before dinner time! But Brian wasn't done yet and Donna was having too much fun picking around the jalapenos to enjoy the soft, pillowy, cheesylicious bread to stop, so they nibbled the rest of the way home in silent acquiescence.

I LOVE THAT!

I don't, however, like why they got a chupie boule in the first place...

I like to make my Hobo bread to order - I like to know who I'm baking for, so I can fill the order with all the peace and love and mindfulness my process can bring. And my heart just breaks when I have orphaned boules, so I need to know they have a loving home. I

have people email me, or stop by the bakery, and Donna has been great about getting her orders in right on time.

So, in good faith, Donna placed an order the other day for two boules of Hobo Olive for a gathering (the perfect thing for any gathering!), with a Saturday pickup. I immediately replied "of course we'll have that for you! Thanks for the order!" and promptly set about not thinking of it again!

Saturday rolled around as scheduled and Donna came in, as scheduled, and I had completely forgotten about her order! Aaagh! My heart sank to the bottom of the deep dark sea as I walked out to face up to my horrible horrible negligence. Donna was disappointed and I was mortified - if there's one dang thing I should be able to do it's get people what they order!

I offered what I had available, part of which was a still-warm-from-the-oven Chupacabra boule. Donna shared her disappointment (she's not a jalapeno fan), but acknowledged I owned my mistake and accepted the replacement boule.

And that brings us current, almost...

As I mentioned, Donna and Brian raved about that chupie boule when I saw them next, even suggesting that I include customer testimonial in my writings and that I could start with them. Not once did they mention that the reason they had that bread to begin with was because I screwed up!

That might just be the definition of Grace.

They picked up a Chupie and a Jackie (the Chupie's kinder, gentler cousin the Jackelope, with sharp cheddar and sweet bread and butter pickles) for the road and we all went about our day with a warm feeling in our hearts. Almost...

Soon the front door dinged and poor, sweet Donna was back.

"Brian didn't want to be the bearer of bad news," she began, "but I said you'd want to know..."

Bumbum buuuuuuummmmm...

"The Chupacabra with the jalapeno on top is filled with pickles and my Jackelope is full of jalapenos!"

STOP THE BUS! I WANNA GET OFF!

Now remember, you liked me when we started this article.

I had rolled out our Jackies and Chupies that morning, making ABSOLUTELY SURE that I marked them with a pickle or a jalapeno, so as to avoid confusion. Oh holy monkeys, how do I do it?

I got to practice owning my screw-

up again.

I offered Donna an additional Jackie and Chupie, hoping that through some sort of Freaky Friday exchange they might swap fillings somehow. Donna graciously (again) accepted and we went on with our days, my heart not quite so warm as before.

I snitch because I care. I used to call it 'ratting myself out,' but I don't think we want to associate rats with a bakery so...

I want to own my mistakes, learn from them and make everything better because of them. I will do whatever I can to make it up to you. Of course maybe these weren't mistakes as much as happy accidents...

No, I'm not trying to wiggle off the hook! Listen:

So, forgetting the first order got Donna and Brian to try a Chupie boule, leading to our first customer testimonial.

Then, the very next day, one of my favorites came in and said "Jack, did you do something different with those jalapeno rolls? Mine seemed to have pickles in it!"

oh, please not again...

"That was awesome!" he raved. "I think you're on to something - I love that mix of spicy/sweet!"

And there you have it! The second mistake led to the birth of the ChupaLope! Spicy jalapenos and sweet bread and butter pickles with sharp cheddar cheese, suspended in my luscious hobo white bread.

That's all I have from the Hobo Corner this month. Thank you all for your time and patience. Peace and Happy Happy Toasting!

## Community/ Superintendent Wednesday Chats

Vernonia School District Superintendent Aaron Miller will be holding several Community-Superintendent Chats throughout the 2019 school year. These informal meetings are meant to provide another avenue for parents and other community members to hear about some of the great things that are happening in our schools, and to ask questions regarding any aspects of education here in Vernonia, the State of Oregon, and the nation.

The rest of the year's schedule is listed below. If you are unable to attend one of these meetings, Superintendent Miller is available to answer questions or address concerns by appointment at the District Office: (503) 429-5891.

April 24 Vernonia Schools 6-7 pm  
May 29 Blue House Café 12-1 pm

## CASA for Children to Host their 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Auction

On Friday, April 5 CASA for Children of Multnomah, Washington, and Columbia Counties will host their 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Auction at the Portland Art Museum. In 2018, this event raised more than \$780,000 thanks to the generosity of Portland-area individuals, corporations, and foundations. This signature gala, a sold-out event for the past several years, features a silent and live auction, wall of wine, and various raffles. It is among Portland's best loved and anticipated charity events.

Nearly 550 guests will gather at the Portland Art Museum for an evening of philanthropy, gourmet cuisine, and a stellar selection of fine Oregon wines. Guests represent a wide range of business and community leaders. Many are long-time supporters who use this event as an opportunity to introduce new individuals to our organization.

All proceeds raised from the Auction directly impact CASA's ability to serve more children with a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer. A CASA passionately and tirelessly works to guide a child through the trauma of the court system. Oregon law gives CASAs unusual authority as a 'party to the case' so that they are able to ensure that the system does not ignore a child's needs and that the judge has the information to act in the child's best interests. A CASA is trained to work with judges, social workers, teachers, foster parents, and family members to ensure that the safety and well-being of the child is front and center.

If you are interested in helping make a difference in a foster child's life, please contact Laura Collins, Interim Director of Development and Communications, at (503) 988-4170 or [lcollins@casahelpskids.org](mailto:lcollins@casahelpskids.org).

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